

STATUS of 2020 Cheaha Challenge & ULTRA, Chief Ladiga Cruise, and Time Trial: **CANCELED**

SAVE-THE-DATE: May 15 & 16, 2021

In 2012, I had qualified to run the New York City Marathon, one of my favorite courses, and I was so excited that my closest running partners were traveling with me to experience the Big Apple in such a unique way. We had trained hard for months to qualify, then continued training even harder to be able to enjoy the 26.2 miles of the course, the largest marathon in the world. But then Hurricane Sandy happened, and right away we knew there would be no NYC Marathon for us that year. Disappointed? Yes, but there was a much bigger picture to consider; **they were still pulling bodies out of houses along the course.**

While not insignificant to us, our ride is a small blip on the radar of the big scheme of things. We had to look at the big picture. Everyone really should.

Yes, this is bad news, but I have a lot of good news, too. Please take the time to read all of the information below, as I believe it will answer a lot of your questions.

Thank you for understanding. Thank you for your support.
Keep training, and stay healthy.

Brooke Nelson, Ride Director
brookenelson@amcvets.com
256-239-9001

BAD NEWS: Please understand, we put off making the call for as long as we could. Canceling is the right decision for us to make at this time.

What does that mean for your 2020 registration? I like options, so I think you will, too. There are no extra fees associated with any of these options, and you have two weeks to choose an option (Deadline to choose: April 17, 2020.). DEFER? DONATE? Or REFUND?

GOOD NEWS: 2020 registrants for the Cheaha Challenge Gran Fondo, ULTRA, Cruise, and/or Time Trial have ALL been deferred to 2021, and are currently listed as registered for the same events for 2021. You will choose one option.

1. **Deferral to 2021:** All fees waived.

If you would like to keep your deferral, you do not have to do anything at this time. After the deadline on April 17, you will receive an updated email stating you are registered for our 2021 event. The deferral includes registration, meal tickets, and Transport to the Top tickets.

2. **Donate your 2020 registration fees; get 50% off 2021 event:** Even though we acted conservatively, we still have incurred costs associated with our 2020 event, now canceled. The Northeast Alabama Bicycle Association (NEABA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, whose mission is

to improve lives through cycling, and fulfills the mission via offering high-quality cycling events (road, mountain, gravel), lobbying for cycling awareness and rights, conducting educational workshops and outreach, and supporting cycling for fitness and transportation.

*If you are currently registered, click the link below, and you can choose the option to donate your 2020 registration fees to NEABA. If you donate you will also receive a **50% off code** to be used for the 2021 events, if you decide you would like to register for those at a later date. This code will be active until online registration closes on Friday, May 14, 2021. Thank you for the support!*

3. Full Refund: *With the exception of BikeReg fees already paid.*

We are very relieved that we can offer our registrants a full refund for their paid 2020 registrations. If you are currently registered click the link below, and you can choose the option of a refund, back to your card of record. (Note: BikeReg fees and merchandise purchased are not included in the refund option. Comped registrations will automatically be deferred.)

Remember, you have until April 17, 2020 to choose an option; otherwise, your deferral is your choice!

[If you are currently registered, you will receive an email through BikeReg, too. It will have your link. OR you can get an edit link for your entry by entering your email address here: <https://www.bikereg.com/Edit/cheahachallenge> You'll then be emailed a link to a page where you can choose whether you'd like to keep your entry, donate your entry, or have your entry refunded.]

MORE GOOD NEWS!

- Cycling has not been quarantined! Keep pedaling. Keep training. We will race/ride again!
- **Virtual Event:** We are in the process of setting up a virtual ride for those interested. It will be on Sunday May 17th, our planned event date, and will start at 8 a.m. CT. While a virtual ride can never replace riding our course in person, we hope you will join us! More information to come.
- **SAVE-the-DATE:** Our event weekend is set for May 15 & 16, 2021
- The 2021 Cheaha Challenge Gran Fondo Century and Time Trial events will again be qualifiers for the 2021 UCI Gran Fondo World and TT Championships.
- The 2021 Cheaha Challenge will again be on the 2021 Gran Fondo National Series.
- The 2021 Time Trial will again be the AL/GA State Time Trial Championship.

WHY CANCEL NOW? WHY NOT JUST MOVE THE DATE?

Best Practices. I've spent the better part of the last three weeks reviewing and completing workshops about Best Practices for Event Directors, with a focus on having to cancel events. I've tried to communicate clearly and honestly in a timely manner. I've struggled to be level headed and respond with empathy in a wildly frustrating and uncertain time. I prepared a crisis management plan in the event we had to cancel. One directive stuck out to me, "Canceling early is forgivable. Canceling too late is not." Something the event directors for the NYC Marathon learned the hard way.

People need to know so they can change and rearrange their travel and their schedules. Our team has weighed pros and cons for canceling and those for staying the course. On Monday, I sent an email seeking advice again from a host of advisors and all the acronyms, including EMA, UCI, USAC, GFNS, JSU, NEABA Board, healthcare professionals, city officials, etc. 99% of them said in their opinion, canceling was in the best interest of our event – our cyclists, volunteers, staff, support crews – to cancel and look forward to 2021. The one holdout said they respected whatever decision we made because they knew we'd looked at this thing from every angle.

Moving to another date. Everything in our lives is uncertain right now. There would be no guarantee that whatever date we chose would not have to be subsequently canceled or changed. I felt it was important that we be able to offer a full refund to those riders who requested it, and if we moved to another date and purchased our massive amount of supplies, shirts, banners, etc., we would not be able to afford to offer refunds if we ended up canceling. We would have spent those funds.

Our event is a qualifier for the UCI Worlds and Gran Fondo National Series, which take place in the fall. So, if we had moved our event, it would have to be before those take place.

And when? What month? Would you really want to do the ULTRA in July or August? Safety of our cyclists, volunteers, and support is always #1. Also, we don't just throw out some cones and fire a horn. It takes a year to organize and schedule all of the moving parts of our event weekend, which includes more than 500 volunteers, staff, and support. Our venue, our awesome hosts at JSU, asked that we move our event to 2021, as they will not be holding classes on campus this summer, everything will be online. Once that request was made, we knew we needed to move to 2021.