



A minute with... **TONY GIBB**

Former world track silver medallist 'Gibby' is now mixing it in the Premier Calendar road race series as part of a Plowman Craven-Evans Cycles double act with Kiwi Gordon McCauley

You recently found out something about your friend and multi-national champion James Taylor, do you think you should share it with the world?

Definitely. I've known him 16 years and I never even knew he had a middle name. Then, at the run-through for his wedding, there it was in the order of ceremony: "I, James McClaren Taylor". He was born in the same year that James Hunt won the F1 world title, and Hunt drove a McClaren, so his dad named him James McClaren. Thank God he wasn't born in 1979, otherwise he'd be called PSV Eindhoven.

Has cutting the distance of Premier Calendar races made them better this year?

Yes. The same people are there at the end, but having 15 or 20 more riders in the closing stages makes for more interesting racing. More teams are riding too, which helps. Now, if they would stop putting them up every hill in sight I think it would be perfect.

There are too many hills?

No, that's just a personal thing. I appreciate that hills create

a feature where a crowd can repeatedly see the riders at slow speed. I'd like some to be flat just to suit me. I've heard the Blackpool Premier is fairly flat, so I'm looking forward to that.

Anything else?

Yes, there is a northern bias, so I'm talking to southern race organisers to try and get them to go for a Premier Calendar race.

You sit on the BC road race commission, what have you learned from that experience?

An appreciation of the difficulties there are in promoting races, and in sorting out the calendar. As a rider you think some of the race clashes could easily be avoided, but it isn't that easy.

A recent change made by BC was to link the criterium series with the Premier Calendar races. Do you think that is a good idea?

Gibb is critical of crits and Premiers timing clash

To link them yes, but I'm not sure about having the crits on a weekend with the Premiers. That means a big commitment from the riders who work full time. I know why it's been done, there are good reasons for doing it, but I don't think it's perfect.

What about race safety? You ride Premier Calendars and local 'A' cat events. Are the Premiers safer?

The 'A' races are probably safer, as they use quiet roads. But I don't think either are particularly dangerous. There was a road in the Girvan that I didn't think was suitable for bike racing, but you have to take the rough with the smooth and appreciate the difficulties organisers have.

What about the criticism your team has had about the number of riders it fields in a race?

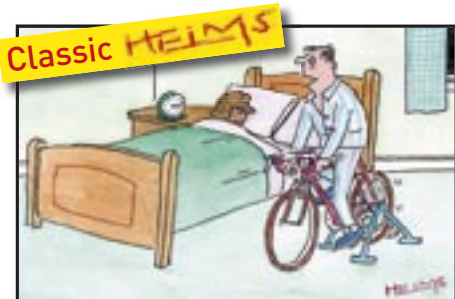
Well, it's very rare we put all 11 in one race, and a split team would mean two managers, two team cars and other problems. The number of riders happened because we were committed to eight when we decided to go UCI Continental registered, but that gave us so many extra boxes to tick. For example, half the team must be under 28. We ended up having to take on more riders.



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