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Stretching Limits for Charity



Did you know that 1,000 kilometres (km) is also known as a megametre?

But what exactly is it about 1,000 km that is so intriguing? Could it be that 1,000 km is 2,500 laps round a running track? Or 1,000 km being (almost) the distance from Singapore to Jakarta?

Well, to the Kidney Dialysis Foundation (KDF), 1,000 km surely holds great significance as it is the distance that will be covered in our inaugural cross-border cycling marathon. Come 25 – 28 February next year, 40 cyclists will be hitting the roads to cycle from Singapore to Malacca, Kuantan, Mersing, and then back to Singapore in four days, to raise funds for KDF.

Some of you may probably be thinking, “Hmm... 1000 km... That’s quite far but probably still manageable.” I initially thought so too, but I could never be any further from the truth.

On the Road

As this is the first time KDF is planning for such an event, we decided to tag along on one of the trial ride to Malaysia conducted by our organising partner - EPIC Cyclist, to get a real feel of the ground. What I saw can be described in four words: sweat (a lot of it), exhaustion, determination, and teamwork.

Truth be told, I vastly underestimated the strenuousness of the trip. While we had it easy as support crew, cooling off inside the comfort of the safety vehicle, the 11 cyclists on the trial ride were constantly pedaling, braving the scorching sun and sudden rain, wet roads, flat tyres, steep climbs, and traffic.

For every 30 - 40 km or so travelled, there was a 15 – 30 minute break for the cyclists to rest, hydrate and replenish energy. At each rest stop, I came face to face with these sweaty and exhausted cyclists; some gulping down cold water or isotonic drinks, others gobbling up bananas, and a handful spewed on the ground, too tired to even move an inch.





While the support crew did our best to provide as much support to the cyclists as possible – be it refilling their bottles or distributing bananas – external conditions were beyond our control. Once they hit the roads, they were very much on their own.

As the cyclists shared the road with other vehicles, it had at times looked extremely precarious to me, especially in the city areas where space was constrained. Even on the highways, it remains quite surreal how they ride alongside fast-moving cars and huge trucks. You can judge for yourself from the video below.



Upon experiencing the ride as a supporter, the one thing that left me awestruck was the cyclists' determination and conviction that they would finish the journey together. In a group of 11, there is bound to be some variation in skill, physical limits and mental strength. However, what I witnessed on the trip was a strong sense of comradeship.

While those who were falling behind tried hard to catch up to those in front, cyclists at the front of the pack took turns to draft (reducing the overall effect of drag due to exploiting the lead cyclist's slipstream). When unexpected incidents such as falling or having a flat tyre occurred, those in the vicinity would also stop to help and to signal to the support crew.

Prior to this, I'd always thought that cycling was more of a solitary activity, but seeing how they supported each another and pushed forward together as a group changed my disposition. Perhaps, as sons and daughters of this little island-state we call home, this sense of comradeship is exactly what we need; healthy or most unfortunately stricken with illness, we should look out for each other and help each other within our means.

Be part of our journey and aid our patients to receive the life-sustaining dialysis treatments they need. You may show your moral support for individual cyclists by donating through GIVEasia or by sending us a cheque stating which cyclist you wish to give moral support to. You may also make an outright donation to KDF to support this event. Find out more at www.kdf.org.sg or at the [EPIC Ride facebook page](#)

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