



MONTGOMERY TOPS THE BREAK
 The final, longest, and most talked about race of the '83 Veteran Road Championships pitted '81 Ironman and 5-time national champion John Howard (Leucadia, CA) against defending champion Dave Mercer (Indianapolis, IN) and 2-time veteran criterium champion Jim Montgomery (Herndon, VA) in the 35-39 category. The 44-mi race began at noon in 90° heat, with a field of 36.

Howard was favored to win. 4-time winner of the Tour of Tallahassee, he had never lost a race on this course. While John motorpaced on the course in the days preceding the event, the media and the cycling community, too, was referring to the event as the "John Howard race."

No one expected that it would be Howard, who would say after the race, "Sometimes chicken, sometimes chicken feathers." He had been part of the 18-man lead group that had formed in the initial laps. At the 24-mile mark, he made an attack—for which he is famous and which the other riders had been waiting for—and took Mercer and Ronald Sutherland (Los Alamos, NM) with him. Montgomery saw the break being orchestrated and powered to it, after hesitating for just a moment in hopes that teammate Bob Schneider would go with him.

Unable to drop his breakaway partners, Howard settled in for the sprint, but was out-muscled by both Montgomery and Mercer. Sutherland had made a bid at the 1000m mark, but burned out and had to settle for 4th.

Veteran road champion for the 2nd time (he also won in '80), Montgomery conceded that, "If the race had been 2 laps longer—or even 4 or 5 attacks longer—it would have been Howard's. I was surprised that he wasn't attacking more in the last laps. He had plenty of horsepower left at the end."

Jim Montgomery (above) notched his 3rd national veteran title at Tallahassee (Phil Grout photo), while Jerry Nugent and Dick Poor (1.) attempt to beat the heat with a swig of cool, clear waa-ter! (Mark Wallheiser photo)

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Veterans TT, Road Nationals

by Pat Ennis