



## Event Update

### **COVID Zaps 2021 Event but Planning Already Underway for 2022 Event**

**January 19, 2021**

Almost a year ago, we started talking with Steve Bohn with the idea of forming a new team to take on the role of running the Tucson Bicycle Classic. Since then, a new “race committee” was assembled to continue the tradition of this great Tucson road event. The new committee received excellent cooperation from Steve and his former race committee members as well as from the president of ABRA (Arizona Bicycle Racing Assoc.) and other TBC supporters. Here is a summary of our progress and challenges to date:

- March 2020 - COVID-19 raised its ugly head and shut down virtually all bike racing in the US for the rest of the year.
- September 2020 – the new TBC race committee felt that resuming the event in March 2021 might be feasible despite COVID. A race date was secured from ABRA. A lot of information about running the event was communicated from Steve’s group to the new race committee. Contact was made with Pima County DOT, the Town of Sahuarita and the City of Tucson about applying for special event permits from these three Pima County municipalities where the TBC last took place in 2019. Initial contacts were made with potential sponsors. But COVID was still looming over all our plans at that time.
- October 2020 – following an order from AZ Governor Ducey, a new special event permit was required from the Pima County Health Dept. for events in Pima County before any other event permits could be obtained. The Pima Health Dept. required a detailed COVID Mitigation Plan and a “COVID Safety Official” who would be responsible for enforcing the COVID plan at the event. We were looking at modified racing formats and other significant changes to the event to comply with our COVID plan.
- We were still hopeful about holding the TBC in 2021 so in mid-October we conducted a survey of 2019 TBC riders to gauge their interest in attending the event. The survey results were very encouraging so we kept working, spending most of the next month reviewing COVID mitigation plans from other events around the country and drafting our own comprehensive plan, which we submitted to the Pima Health Dept. on November

19<sup>th</sup>. But on the same day, the Pima County Board issued a memo cancelling all athletic events in the county for the rest of the year. The Pima County Health Dept. then contacted us and asked us to put our application on “pause” until mid-December.

- Other challenges during this period were road construction on Speedway Ave. that made the circuit racecourse near Pima Community College unusable in 2021, and also the closure of Old Tucson that closed the main parking area for the TT stage on McCain Loop. We seriously looked at several alternative venues for 2021 including the Colossal Cave loop and a course in Pinal County near Oracle.
- On December 15<sup>th</sup>, ABRA forwarded guidance to us from USA Cycling recommending that all cycling events scheduled for the first quarter of 2021 should either be postponed or canceled. Regional events like Redlands and Tour of the Gila were already following this guidance. At that point, we saw the writing on the wall and informed ABRA of our decision to cancel our dates in March 2021 and try again in 2022. We considered postponing the TBC to the fall of 2021 but that option seemed undesirable.

We tried hard to bring the TBC back in 2021 but it wasn't in the cards. The challenges we faced were similar to those faced by race promoters across the country. We are hopeful that as the vaccines become widely administered, road racing events will resume by this summer and that by March 2022, things may even seem “normal”. The new TBC race committee is committed to continue supporting El Grupo Youth Cycling (<https://www.elgrupocycling.org/>) as our primary charitable partner. See you in '22!