



Cycling mates: I'll be riding shotgun, helping you with your son

Jane Armitstead, U On Sunday

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Scott Mullin, 45, Ferny Grove, project manager

Pat and I met through mountain biking when a mutual friend introduced us about seven years ago. We started doing lots of rides together and eventually Pat got me into road cycling and ever since, we've spent most weekends out riding together.

It's nice to have someone like Pat in my life, where if I'm having a bad day I can ring him up and say I'm coming over for a beer. He's been a huge support to me over the years and I'm not sure how I would have survived the tougher times without him.

In 2016, my son Brodie, who was nine at the time, was diagnosed with leukemia. I didn't believe it at first, I was waiting for the doctors to tell me they'd got it wrong and he was going to be fine. They never did. We knew something wasn't right with Brodie but we had no idea it was cancer. He had lots of little symptoms beforehand, like headaches, achy legs and getting really tired but it was when he got sharp chest pains that we took him to emergency. In the first 24 hours of being admitted to hospital, Brodie had four blood transfusions. It's been a long two years with countless rounds of chemotherapy, lumbar punctures and plenty more treatments but he is getting better.

My wife, Bianca, and I hated seeing him so sick, I felt so helpless because there wasn't anything we could do to help him get better. But I couldn't sit back, I had to do something and that's when I discovered the Great Cycle Challenge. I was already doing quite a lot of cycling and mentioned it to Pat, he immediately jumped on board to support me. We set the goal of doing 2000km throughout the month of October to raise money for children's cancer. There was a group of us doing it but Pat was the one who rode all 2000km with me. I was quite upset at the time and without him, I wouldn't have made it, each kilometre he was supporting me and riding by my side, he helped me through. We have done it every October since and we're doing another 2000km this month. I'm hoping to raise about \$2200 and I'm about half way there, that will take my tally to \$10,000.

It's been great having a friend like Pat by my side through it all. He's a really genuine guy who I know would do anything for me, on or off the bike.

Patrick Campbell, 37, Keperra, engineer

When Scott and I started riding together in about 2011, we realised very quickly that we were going to get along. We also discovered we lived close by to each other so most weekends after we met, we spent on long rides on the roads or on mountain bike trails all over Brisbane.

Two years ago, a few days went by where I hadn't heard from Scott, which is unusual for us so I got a bit worried and gave him a call. I can still remember the conversation telling me his son Brodie had leukemia.

I've had a lot of adults in my life impacted by cancer but when you have a really close mate's child go through that, it hits you hard. When you're a parent, it's a terrifying thought that one of your kids could be that sick so it was very close to home.

When Scott first mentioned he wanted to do the Great Cycle Challenge to raise money for cancer, I immediately wanted to help. He set the target of 2000km and to get up the kilometres we did the Brisbane River Loop six times and including riding from home

and back, we did 270km in one day. We're doing the challenge again this month and riding about 500km a week over October. It's tough on the body but it makes it all worth it knowing exactly where your money is going.

It's great to be able to be there for a friend for moral support and it's the least I can do for Scott, he's just a wonderful mate to have.

His positivity is unmatched and no matter what's happening in his life, he's never defeated by life. You can't underestimate the power of social interaction and honest conversation and having that time on the bike together is a chance to make sure everyone is OK.

To donate, visit greatcyclechallenge.com.au