

From Lubsko to *Tour de France* 2005

He has been keen on cycling for years, he traveled across half of Poland. He climbed *Śnieżka mountain* and he reached the ski flying arena in **Harravov**, Czech Republic. Very often at weekends he traveled 160 – 200 kilometers (two times) to **Jelenia Góra**, **Karpacz**, **Szklarska Poręba**, **Wambierzyce** and **Kłodzko**. He and his two friends reached sunny Croatia, traveling across Germany, Czech Republic, the Alps in Austria and Slovenia, once being there after 15 days of riding their bicycles, they returned exactly the same way they got there. He is one of the representatives of young generation who are trustworthy and cause friendliness. Those positive emotions are not only caused by his passion but also by his intelligence, good manners, and respect for self and the others. **Wojtek Mochocki**, 25, a dweller of **Lubsko**. This summer, riding his mountain bike, he left to the Western Europe with the Polish national flag and handouts promoting his region. He has always dreamt about riding by bike the famous stages of *Tour de France*. He has always wanted to see his idol - **Lance Armstrong** alive on alpine stages, he has always wanted to face the legendary mountain passes, and eventually he did it. His dreams came true. It took him 21 days to ride over 3000 kilometers. He shared his feelings and emotions in text messages which he sent to his father, brother and friends. Those all text messages have resulted in a very interesting record of the journey, it is the best possible source of information about his spirit, character, struggle with pain and weaknesses, euphoria, pride, and anger. This record also shows his great sense of humor, and also, down-to-earth care for everyday stuff. This is the authentic record of his extraordinary journey.

30th June, the first day (to **Piotr**) Dear friend! I have proven myself that it can be done against the aching tendons! I have gone 209 kilometers, **Freiberg** is 8 kilometers behind me. I would have done it a long time ago but there were those two long detours. After 9 hours my average speed is 20 km/h. Ain't I crazy? I made two stops, each lasted 25 minutes, I was riding steadily 25 -28 km/h, It is raining, bye.

30th June, the first day (to **Bartek**) I have gone 225 km in 9,5 hours and I am in **Freiberg**. I had to do additional 40 kilometers due to two car accidents and their detours. Tomorrow 160 km. Mountains have begun; it is going to be harder. Hey!

1st July, the second day, 9.38 pm (to **Slawek**) Well, it has been the second day – 197 km in 10 hrs, the average speed 19.7 km/h. I spent last night at a house with wonderful people, today on a field. I had two showers. The pain in knees and calves is intensive. Hey!

2nd July, 3rd day (to **Maciej**) Hi! Are you recording? How's **Lance**? It hasn't been raining today for the first time since the beginning of the journey. There are only 60 kilometers and I am going to reach the mountains, it is not easy to ride this heavy bike, there is almost 100 kg of myself and the stuff. Be good! Bye!

3rd July, 4th day (to **Piotr**) knees are aching. I spent the night at a home again. I had my own room and shower, loads of food! German farmers are much better off than Polish. I am welcome to stay there on my way back, they invited me. It is hot today. I am still going on, see you!

3rd July, 4th day, 3.22 pm (to **Wlodek**) Hi! I have made a short pause. I am heading for **Stuttgart**. There are about 85 kilometers left. Only if my knees were OK, I would climb far much better even with the luggage I have. Have you seen **Lance**? **Jan** is out.

5th July; 6th day, 12.38 pm (to **Bartek**) – Hi! Why aren't you writing anything? Today is the team-trial day. Be ready! I'm going to **Neustadt**. Maybe I will reach France tomorrow. The weather is fine at last.

5th July, 6th day, 9.39 pm (to **Slawek**) it is obvious Discovery ok! I am close to **Neustadt**, I may be in France tomorrow. My dear Slawek I would just fly over those mountains but the pain in knees is terrible, so far only 12km/h. Please write to me more often. Today 125km.

6th July, 7th day, 9.55 am (to Bartek) Hej! .Discovery Nr 1, **Lance Armstrong** in the yellow jersey! Ask dad for 30 PLN and take the money to Slawek and tell him to go to Plus and refill my phone account, important, I have only 20 PLN left, too little.

6th July, 7th day (to **Piotr**) Hey! It's the 7th day and it is raining, what a luck! It is raining everyday. My shoes covers are torn. I am sitting at a bust stop. It's cold. I will try to get to France, it is still raining. I have gone 70 km in heavy rain. My shoes are full of water, those covers are worth nothing. Probably they are good for cycling shoes. There is about 60 km to the border. It's cold about 8 degrees. I should have taken long cycling trousers and shoes. It is the 7th day and the 6th of rain! The main roads are for cars only. Bye!

7th July, 8th day (to **Piotr**) I came to France yesterday. I should be in **Grenoble** tomorrow. It has been raining since the morning. It is better now. Lance is closer. Tomorrow I am going to ride in the mountains. Bye!

7th July, 8th day 5.36pm (to **Bartek**) There are 200 km left to **Grenoble**, my left knee is swollen and if its condition is OK I should begin riding in the mountains on Saturday. At *Alpe-d'Huez* from **Grenoble** barely 30 km. Write more often or I will kick you. Keep recording with **Maciej**. Send me classification. The weather is a bit better. Yesterday I reached France. The pain is awful, the knee is two times bigger. I will try.

7th July, 8th day 5.42 pm (to **Slawek**) it is close – 200km to Grenoble. **Bartek** is coming to you with 30 PLN, add 20 if you can. I will give you back when I return. I am trying not to hurt my tendons.

8th July, 9th day, 1.32pm (to **Bartek**) here's your brother, I'm in **Grenoble**. Tomorrow I am going to fight with the passes, the first is the killer - *L'Alpe-d Huez*. I hope I can get to very *Galibier*, but *Telegraphe*. I stopped at some people's house for whole week, for free! I do not have to carry everything with me in the mountains, this is the most important! I hope my knee lets me freely struggle those legendary passes. I have to visit a doctor once I am home. Probably, I will have an operation. It is swollen. I am relaxing today. Tomorrow, painkillers, and the race to *d'Huez*. Write me if you got this message, I am sending it from the Net. My spelling is bad, isn't it?

8th July, 9th day 2.05pm (to **Slawek**) Hi Slawek! Thanks for refilling my account, tell me if you got this message. I am staring climbing tomorrow. I hope my left knee lets me do it. The weather finally is OK. I hope that I am able to do two passes in one day: the legendary *L'Alpe d'Huez* and *Col du Galibier* 2645 meters above sea. The stage is on Tuesday, I hope I meet more fine people. I am at home alone now, got my own keys. I can do everything I want, for example, walk to **Grenoble**. I am in a nearby village. Tomorrow's gonna be a massacre, but I have always wanted it! Lots of things are going to happen. Thanks! Bye!

10 July, 11th day 5.17 pm (to **Bartek**) Hi! You won't believe it! Hold on to something! Yesterday, although the aching knee (I ate some pills to stop the pain) I crossed all the four passes! I did it together with **Nicolas**, a decent guy, who lets me use his house, so in order of appearance: *Col du Glandon* – 27 km uphill at 1924 meters above sea level, next *Col du Telegraphe* – 12 km up and 1564 meters, then *Col du Galibier* – 19 km up and 2645 meters, and **Lance's** mountain– *L'Alpe d'Huez* – 16 km up to reach 1850 meters above sea level (I bought postcards there). Altogether, 200 kilometers, including 75 km of going up the mountains. The knee somehow endured it and I cannot still believe

what has happened! We started at 6 am. There was cycling race that day. Well, we were not on the list but we rode with professionals! There were 7 thousand people. We rode 200 kilometers in 10 hours. I saw only two people who had similar bikes as me – but far more better, they also had 26 inch wheels. I left many behind; they had equipment at least 300 Euro worth. There were many in front of us when we started our battle with **Telegraphe** but at the end only few. If I hadn't gone so many kilometers and had a better, professional, bike I could have fought for a decent place. Me, *Moho*, among the top 20. I am happy and proud, my dreams came true. I was riding in the famous mountains and did not dismount the bike at any time! **Galibier** was the toughest because it is just behind **Telegraphe**, then there is a short way down and then 19 kilometers up. Those roads are really steep! You would never say that once can ride a bike there and I did it in one day although I was going to do it in few. I took over 300 photos today alone. There are going to be plenty to choose from to put on the walls at home. Tomorrow I am going to try to go to **Courchevel** and climb **Medeleine**, spend the night there and wait for the race the following day. **Lance** lost the jersey today, I guess that he must be angry like a beast. But I hope he will make up for it on Tuesday. I must take as many photos as possible. I am planning to leave for home on 15th July. Mom called but roaming is expensive and we talked only 30 seconds. I am going to see the stage on Tuesday or Wednesday. Bye!

10th July, 11th day (to **Piotr**) Hi Piotr! You will never believe it! Yesterday I rode all the famous four passes! One by one: **Col du Glandon** – 27 km uphill at 1924 meters above sea level, next **Col du Telegraphe** – 12 km up and 1564 meters, then **Col du Galibier** – 19 km up and 2645 meters, and **Lance's** mountain– **L'Alpe d'Huez** – 16 km up to reach 1850 meters above sea level (I bought postcards there). Altogether, 200 kilometers, including 75 km of going up the mountains, sometimes the grade reached 12%. That is a good result, I guess. There was a race but I did not pay for the participation, this is what I would call god luck. I was riding for 10 hours, 200 km 75 of which uphill. I am feeling OK. I took 300 photos in the best quality. I don't know when I had time for it. Of course I had to stop for rest but my dear friend you would never say that such steep roads can be obtained by a bicycle; compared to it Austria is a piece of cake. Tomorrow I am going to **Courchevel**, spend the night there and wait for **Lance Armstrong**.

12 July, 13th day 1.06pm (to **Piotr**) Hey! Yesterday I crossed the fifth pass – the famous **Madaleine**. That was horrible! 25 kilometer up! It wasn't easy. I was dying but didn't get off the bike. I am halfway up to **Courchevel**. Watch TV carefully I am behind the gate with huge inscription ARRIVE 10 KM. Tell dad. Record it. I am not sure if I will be tomorrow. I have ridden all the mountains. My knee looks really bad. But I did it! Lots of people. There's the famous devil near me. I don't see any Poles here.

12th July, 2.49 pm (to **Maciej**) Hi! Keeps sending me messages where they are. I pay 2 PLN for each message and you only 0.20. Tell **Bartek** that I will kick him when I am back, he's an old miser, others have been writing more! I am waiting.

12th July, 4.45 pm (to **Wlodek**). **Tour de Lance!**

12th July, 5.22pm (to **Maciej**) Have you seen me on TV? Yes, I was close to the devil just behind the bend. I took a photo of Lance and some others. Wow! He is fast! I was just shooting photos without watching, I am happy. Keep recording!

12th July, 10.23pm (to **Maciej**) Hey!, Lance's the best. Send me the top 9 and their times. I am beginning my journey back home tomorrow. I have lots of photos of the cyclists, **Lance** was fast, but I have only one picture of him. My account is almost empty. Keep writing.

17th July, 18th day, 2.49 (to **Bartek**) *Moho!* Hi! I am in Germany now. Yesterday I had a really deadly stage – 215 km, God, I was sweating! I stopped at some good people's house again. I am watching the king's stage and the competition in **Pyrenees**. I guess that I may appear home on Friday. My left knee seems to hurt a bit less but it is far from being 100% OK. It is good I have this phone. The weather is

fine at last. Yesterday, the sun was burning mercilessly. I have 900 photos, their quality may not be the best but the weather was bad for the $\frac{3}{4}$ of my journey but some of them are really marvelous.

He reached hometown **Lubsko** on Wednesday, 20th July. Three days before the planned arrival. He was happy and brought experience for the future. All that was possible thanks to help of **Ireneusz Kurzawa** and the Town Council, **Antoni** and **Piotr Węclawski** – owner of the bike shop WANPOL. Next year he is going to go to Italy to meet the Alps and ***Giro d'Italia***; next is ***Vuelta a Espana***.