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Transcript

Speaker 1

It's time for the outspoken cyclist your weekly conversation about bicycles, cyclists, trails, travel, advocacy, the bike industry, and much, much more. You can subscribe to our weekly podcast at outspokencyclist.com or through your favorite podcasting app to listen anytime. Now here's your host, Diane. Thanks.

Speaker 2

Hello and welcome to the outspoken cyclist. I'm your host, Diane Jenks. Thanks for tuning in today. I love talking about bike racing with escape collectives Joe Lindsey because he always has such a superb grasp of the sport for both men and women. Today, our conversation covers a little bit of the spring classics Perry, Nice, Milan, San Remo, both men's and women's editions, as well as looking ahead to Perry Rubay and on into the upcoming Big Tour. Having failed at Milan San Remo five times, Todd, he's not going to be satisfied until he wins that as well as any other monument he has in his sights. We muse about how Toddy will do at Perry Rubay next week, being the 1st to attempt it and the Tour de France as defending champion in the same season. Since Greg LeMond in 1991. I always learned so much from Joe. He reminds us this coming weekend. The 268.9 kilometer for men and 148 kilometer tour flounders for women pushes off on Sunday, April 6th from Brugge, Belgium, with a who's who of illustrious riders. You can watch the race via flow bikes, but unfortunately there won't be any other coverage here in the US. Of course, we talk about how bike racing is, or more accurately, isn't covered by the media, especially here in the states, and why we haven't embraced track racing as the perfect American spectator sport. So let's get right to it and welcome my guest, Joe Lindsey. Hi, Joe. Welcome back to the outspoken cyclist. Thanks for being my guest and thank you for indulging the fact that I screwed up our last interview. How are you?

Speaker 3

I'm. I'm fine. That's the the journalist nightmare, right? Is that you have a great interview and you look down and somehow you haven't recorded it. So I get.

Speaker 2

It yeah, I know. And this the the first time it happened and in fact it was the last time it happened. It was the head of the USA Cycling. So at least I've, you know, we're in rare company here. Companies. So we're going to talk. About spring racing and on into the

season and some of the things we talked about that didn't get recorded were really interesting about some of the dynamics of the teams and what we might see for who's racing what. So let's start with the last weekend's race.

Speaker 3

You know. Yeah, that was a very interesting and exciting pair of races for the men and the women. And I want to start with the women because it is the first time in 20 years that we've had a women's melonson. So I think there was a lot of anticipation about what that would mean for this modern women's peloton that is much different. The racing levels much higher than it was 20 years ago and we saw a fascinating race developed. And I think that they're with with Lorena Wiebes taking the win and as a small group Sprint, as whenever Webbies comes to the finish in a. In a group she's, you know, she's the number one favorite to win, even over somebody like Marianne Boss. You know the the the goat who got second, the rubies is just by far and away the best field sprinter and women's racing. And I think the question that arose for a number of people was whether. Or not. The race was long enough, and as you know, men's Milan San Remo was close to 300 kilometers long, always has been. And that's kind of the signature difficulty of the race comes from its length that after you know that that even long classics, other monuments like Parry Rubay and Tour Flanders are 260 kilometers or so, which is a. Very. Race. And so once you get another 40K and the legs after that the teeth sets in to the point where strange things happen and the women's Milan Center you know, was comparatively quite short. It's not anywhere near the longest place on the Women's World Tour. And so there's some question raised by some of the riders like Buck Beach or the Dutch multidisciplinary. You know about whether or not Maus and Rima women's melon shown son Rama should be longer. I think that's a really interesting conversation to have. I think we should have it. I don't know that the answer is an automatic. Yes. There's debate over that. And we talked about this before, but like, you know what I want. That's for women's racing, is that it doesn't fall into the trap of we should do this because this is what the men's racing does. Women's racing is its own thing. The racing is different, the dynamics are different. It is, I think, a lot of people who are fans of the sport feel like it's more exciting than men's racing. For. Those reasons, and I think to preserve that and to allow women's racing to grow in its own right. I think that the discussion should happen, but we should be open to like all of the different. Potential answers. I have a question about.

Speaker 2

What might be the reasoning for shorter races for women other than physiological differences between men and women? And I'm not saying they should ride exactly the same course or exactly the same stages or whatever it is, but it seems to me women trained just as hard, maybe even harder. In some cases, and they're certainly capable, and they're fierce on the road. So I'm just wondering just because it was that way in the past, why today would we shorten racist for women?

Speaker 3

I think a lot of this is just sort of institutional historical sexism, to be honest, that you know, when women's races were added, when women had been added. And I think that's the right word added to any sport in the past 150 years, they almost always deal with this sort of a smaller competitive environment. Shorter games, shorter matches, shorter races. You know there, it's tennis or skiing. Whatever. There's very rarely sort of this competitive parity with men in terms of the distance or length or physical effort of the event. And I think that's oftentimes been due to sexism in the case of bike racing, I think that there are reasons for the women's races to be shorter than the men's, but I question how much and the the, the reasons that existed for that are sort of slowly going away and that's what I referenced with respect to. The rising level of the women's peloton 20-30 years ago, the spread of ability in the peloton was in the women's in women's peloton was maybe not what it is today at the front of the race at the front of the race like Malone Sanremo. When you have writers like rabies or false or Tour de France fence champion, Demi, villain and Casiano adoma, these riders are like you said, they train incredibly hard. They are the peak of the women's sport right now and I think. I would like to see what they're capable of, and I think adding distance to a race like Milan Sanremo was an interesting way to fill out what that looks like, and that's why, when when Peter, when Peter says that she wants, when it's melonson Reno to be 200 kilometers long, I think well. Maybe we should try that. I don't know that that's automatically going to be the right answer for sure, but I also don't look at it and say, Oh no, there's no possible way that the women could. Raise 200 kilometers.

Speaker 2

Why not exactly? Why not? And do you think any of it has to do with eyes watching? It is more likely that someone might watch all of the men's. The race, as opposed to maybe only. Half hour or an hour of the women's racing, rather than watching the whole thing, they might find it to be less exciting. And and this is sort of a Devil's advocate question.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I think there is some of that. And I think again that comes back to some sexism and this is a tension that we have in racing right now where when we have major women's and women's events held on the same day. Like you know, this this next weekend we have the Tour of Flanders and the women and the men got the same integral on the same day as opposed to Peru Bay. The week after that, the women race on Saturday and the men race on Sunday, so each gets their own day. I kind of like the Bay approach because I want to watch both races. And it is difficult when they're on at the same time to really be able to watch both at the same time and get a sense for what's happening. You really kind of have to choose. It's really hard to sort of screen and screen that and and say oh, here's what's happening. And so wait, now there's something exciting happening in the women's race too. And so I think that's part of the

issue is that you're vying for the same. Have balls at the same time and it's not a massive audience worldwide. And so I think in doing that you sort of you risk splitting the audience a little bit. And I would like to see more sort of independence and we see that with some races that are women specific, like the Trofeo offered. Linda was a week and a half two weeks ago and that's a women's only race. That's they, you know, that they have their own spotlight that. Day. And I think that's great. The other factor for women's racing is and distances is that the UCI has implemented. Requirements over minimum broadcast time that races, but races on the Women's World Tour have to offer and they started out with a pretty low bar. It was like 45 minutes of live coverage or something like. And it's more now, but it's not that much more. And so for a race like Milan, San Remo men's Melanson Remo's broadcast start to finish on a timing TV. It's not here in the US where they're, they're the rights are with outlets for races for you know, have some streaming rights with like slow bikes and Marks and things like that. They will not show the whole thing. But why?

Speaker 2

Right.

Speaker 3

We'll show the the starting the lawn, they'll do the whole thing. They have a an Internet, so basically a tough time when they're racing with that, that the Breakers away and the race is kind of boring and not much is happening and they'll do kind of this half time thing, but they'll show the whole thing and they don't. Nobody does that for the women's races. I think there are a few stages of the women's trip to France. That are shown start to finish, but you know like if you go back to women's Better Bay, the 1st edition in 2021. I think when Lizzy Diamond one she was off the front solo when the coverage picked up and so it was kind of like alright can they catch your can they not it's like you did you missed the dynamic moments and missed the.

Speaker 2

Yeah. What happened to get her there?

Speaker 3

The definitive attack of the race, and I think that is harmful to Moon's racing too, where it's like you've got to get eyeballs on this stuff and the way to get eyeballs on this stuff is to have it on streaming coverage and have that accessible.

Speaker

Right.

Speaker 3

People.

Speaker 2

Let me reintroduce you. We're speaking with Joe Lindsey. He is managing editor of Escape Collective. Got it right this time.

Speaker

So let's talk.

Speaker 2

A little bit about the men's Milan San Remo, we've got some Americans doing some cool stuff.

Speaker 3

Yeah. So I'm not not in Milan Sanremo specifically, but the week before a week or two ago at. Very nice. We had really fantastic performances from two guys, Matteo Jorgensen and Magna Sheff. And Mateo was a name that that your listeners might recognize simply because he had a fantastic 2024. He was a young American who had kind of. Come up, sort of. A little bit outside the usual system he rode with the French development team for a little bit and then signed with Mobistar, a Spanish world tour team which is definitely not the. The usual. You know, in 2023 he had a fantastic season and kind of got on the radar for Visa, Lisa Bike, which is one of the top teams in the world and signed a multi year deal with them. And I think there was some question about you know coming in that's a very competitive team with a lot of very high caliber riders. You know this thing you go the two time Tour de France champion. Will help down there to be a classic specialist. You know it's crowded to get opportunities there and he made space for himself and he won Perry me stage race which I think was a surprise to a lot of people but not him and. This year he went back and won it again and they they sort of the back story on that was originally the team wanted to send them to a different race in Italy and he contacted his management over the winter and said, hey, listen, I got to level with you. I'm not motivated the way he the way he phrased it, this is I think this is interesting because these are his words. He said I'm not motivated to work through the winter. For torano adriatico. I want to go to Perry. Nice. And he said that knowing that then you go his team leader and two time Tour de France Champion teammate would be there and he still wanted to go and lo and behold, they go to Pyrenees and then you go unfortunately get crashed out with a concussion. But Jorgenson was there to take up the reins and. He managed to defend his title. You know, another fantastic ride from him. He's an extremely versatile racer. Last year he went very nice and then, you know, 3 weeks later won a Belgian Cobo Classic, which is about the two. Other than winning a Grand Tour and winning the Tour of Flanders like that at Pogacha has done, that's about the the biggest range of versatility that you can find in her racer. And then the other success story was Magnus Sheffield, who won broke away in one final stage. They went 1-2 on that final stage. They're both, I should add products of the same. Senior program here in the United States A-Team called hot

tubes. That's more than 30 years old, 30 years old on the East Coast that's been running all that time by a guy named Toby Stanton. And it's really one of the the kind of the pillars of junior development in the United States. So that was kind of a neat success story. But, but yeah, so that was. That was playing nice and the Americans and then Milan Sanremo for men's race was, I think, probably one of the best editions of the past quarter century as we saw today, the gotcha who desperately wants to win this race and is trying everything he can to, you know, to do it, launch the first long range attack in the race. They're serious. Long range attack and the risk that we've seen since 1996 and he went clear and he had two guys on his wheel, he had Philippe Ogana, the the Italian time trial specialist who rides for any US grenadiers. And he had Matthew Vanderpool, who liked that. I forgot you sort of one of these generational talents. And they had three of them came to the finish together and Vanderpool got him and put. Gotcha. Now I think has to be wondering, how do I win this race? What do I gotta do? Because I think he really does need to if he wants to win that race. I think he needs to come to the finish line alone. I don't think you can do it in a group. The course is not difficult enough for him to shed guys. Like Vanderpool, who's quite a bit bigger than him. For him to show guys like Vanderpool off his wheel. So he's now he's got to be wondering. Like, alright, what's the secret sauce to doing this? But it was just a really just a magnificent addition.

Speaker 2

Right. I would think more teammates would be a. Way did you?

Speaker 3

Know they they did. They did exactly what they were supposed to do coming into the second at the last line. You know, they had a basically like a. Few guys. On the front, ramping up the pace and did this basically a lead up for Pikachu to launch his own attack and everybody knew this was topping? So it was just a question of whether or not you were in position and and have the legs to follow and ultimately. Only two guys did. But those they're one of the guys who did, or actually both because gonna be in in the Sprint too, but both of. Those guys, you know? They were the two two of the guys who I'm sure and forgot she got away. He was. I'm. Like. Damn it, why didn't I have to get away with Matthew Vanderpool?

Speaker 2

Exactly why couldn't? He yeah.

Speaker 3

Why couldn't it be Tom Pidcock? Whatever. No, no offense to Tom, but, but but like I I think in a in a Sprint that I got, you would much rather face a smaller guy like Tom Pidcock than a big bruiser like Thunder.

Speaker 2

Well, and clearly facing him did not pay off in this. Case so so.

Speaker 3

No it didn't.

Speaker 2

I just this is just an aside because it came in. It's in the time between. I screwed up our first interview and today and that is today. Pogacha is headed for Perry Rubay and Jason Gay, who is one of my favorite guys at the Wall Street Journal. He reports on sports had a fabulous headline today. That said, he crushed the Tour de France. Now he's going. Going to hell. So what do you think that's coming up? Do you think he can do it? Is he gonna do it?

Speaker 3

Yeah, this is. This is fascinating. So production just to put it in perspective now that with bike racing now is you know it used to be normal for everybody to enter every race and now we're in a period of much more intense specialization. So your stage race or or you're a one day racer, but kind of not both and they got you as one of the few people who really straddles that. And he's going to become the first defending Turkey France champion to enter period basins. Greg Lamont in 1991. So that gives you a sense of of that. And the reason that these guys don't enter Para Bay is because it is the most brutal race on the calendar. You take a massive pounding from these 4 little 300 year old cobblestone roads. There's a huge risk of crashes with those crashes from the significant risk of injury that would obviously. May be a huge impact to pogacha's main target of the year, which is to defend his Tour de France title. So most guys in precocious position who want to be contenders for. The tour will not touch over the 10th pole. He wants to and I think that he hasn't said specifically about this choice, but in the past what he said is is that. He likes fresh challenges and he wants to kind of range widely. He wants to win lots of different races and different types of races. I think if he's. He's only 26 years old, but he's obviously they they one of the most generational talents we've seen in the past 30 or 40 years. And I think if he has an eye on any kind of legacy for himself, it's going to be less than ohh. I was a member of. We've got a group of writers who won the Tour de France five times and he wants to be more known as somebody who could win any race on any day, and in particular with races like Milan San Remo and Peter Rabe. Those are the two of the five of the sports so-called monuments that he has not yet won. There's only three guys in history. Whoever won all 5 monuments, he's not saying it, but I. Think that she wants to be in that club and he knows now how difficult it's going to be to win. Malone San Remo that he's gotta unlock this special, you know, sequence of events. That's gonna that. That's going to allow him to cross the line first there and I think he's really curious about Rebecca too. And I think he's not willing. Knowing what he knows now about Milan son Rima having raised it five times and come very, very close but never won, I think he also realizes that Ribery is the kind of race where you don't just drop in and winning. It's very rare, it's happened, but

it's very rare for someone to win Ruby on their first entry and so I think he looks at this. It's like I if I want to win this at some point, then I've gotta go there and see what it's all about. And that does not mean that he's not a threat to win or that he's not trying to win. But I think he probably recognizes that this is likely a multi year project for him to do and he doesn't want to wait until he's 30. To start that.

Speaker 2

You're mentioning that he wants to enter that rarefied club, winning all the monuments, but he also wants to win the tour again. So. So I'm just wondering.

Speaker 3

Yes.

Speaker 2

What kind of support he's getting for that? You know, obviously he has a mind of his own. I see him a little differently from some of the other riders because he makes up his mind. The team itself is not dictating necessarily to him, which it does to many of them, they do to many of their riders.

Speaker

Yes.

Speaker 3

He's he's one of the rare guys who really doesn't have to do this, team manager says. And I think we've seen already that his his manager is is. Not a huge fan of this Ruby gambit, he's openly worried about something happening about today getting hurt about it, you know, being a, whether it's a distraction from his training for the tour or for other events or that kind of thing. He's definitely got the heebie jeebies about it. And I think for today, you know, the the whole team basically exists. Around him, that team was built around him. They. Of over the past, you know, since he signed with the team in 2019 and then won the 2020, the 2022 to France, they realized that they have this guy who is the all world generational talent, maybe the best, the the best men's world racer since Eddie Merckx and they have built around that. And so they're not going to tell him no, they're they're going to lean on him a little bit. Trying to say today, I don't think This is why is that kind of thing, but ultimately today makes the decisions for where he goes and I think that's that is unusual. There's probably only a handful of guys in the sport who can.

Speaker 2

Let's take a short break. When we come back, I want to talk about some of the mechanics of the racing you're talking about injury and that's something I want to talk about. Well, what's happening on the road? We're speaking with Joe Lindsey. He's the managing editor of Escape Collective. If you do not subscribe, I would highly

recommend it. If you want great coverage of all aspects. Of high performance cycling, there's Joe. There's Kaylee. There's a whole bunch of cool people who report for this organization. Escape collective. You're listening to the outspoken cyclist. We'll be right back. We are back on the outspoken cyclist. I'm Diane Jenks. We're speaking with managing editor of Escape Collective Joe Lindsey. We talked to him several times a year to try and get our hands around or our minds around. What's going on with bike racing? We just finished. Talking about taddy. Who's gonna be racing? Perry. Rube and the tour? Fingers crossed that nothing happens at Perry Rubay, but let's talk a little bit about some of the mechanics of this racing, because there were some really bad crashes and people mention as we hear commentators mentioned Rd. furniture and things that go wrong in these races, and I know there were some questions in I think it was Milan. San Remo and some of the other races about. Why these courses are not better policed for problems?

Speaker 3

One of the issues there is sort of the the growth of what we call Rd. furniture in Europe 30 years ago, you didn't see all of this stuff and it has taken hold for a very good reason and not us to protect people like you and me. The 360, four days a year that there's not a bike race that comes through town and all this stuff slows down cars, it increases. Visibility for cyclists and pedestrians and makes it less likely that if somebody runs into us that will get seriously hurt or. Die. So it's a good thing. But whether it's a Ballard or a roundabout or a plant or a big stone planter, that kind of thing, this stuff is not something that can be moved out of the way on race day. And so riders and races race promoters have to figure out how they're going to handle that. It is sort of an economics and an optics stand. Point it's always best if you can have a classic finish in a in a city center. You know nothing looks like that there is something like Milan Sanremo, for instance. There's, you know, the the finish on the VIA Roma is sort of this iconic, you know, spot on the sport just like the shanzai is the iconic finish for the Tour de France to get there you got to go through some. And about, you know, bollards and things like that. The thing that I think a lot of people don't understand about bike racing is that it's not actually that wealthy of the sport outside of an event like the Tour de France, most events. We struggle to break even or really make much money and so of course safety is a cost you you've gotta go through. You've gotta set up. You've gotta plan the course. You've got to anticipate where there might be problems. You've got to do things like put hay bales or padding or that kind of thing on it. And that that's difficult to anticipate every one of those situations. But it's also expensive because that stuff adds up in cost. If you have 250 kilometer road race with however many corners and however many cities that it towns and stuff that it goes through and multiply that by the number of those pieces of equipment that you need and the people to place them and take them down and all this kind of stuff, it is expensive to do. Most race promoters just kind of don't. Worry about that. And most of the time it works out fine. Like if you look at Milan Sanremo, the. The signature point on the course is this climb, called the prodigal, which is not a long climb, but the descent is very fast. These guys go, you know, 60 some 70 kilometers an hour

down this thing down. Very technical switchbacks and what you'll notice in watching the race. Is it that there? Are there that this is where this sort of built? Terraced into a hillside and so there's 1520 foot drops on the other side of. Switch back as they go down that you will not notice much in the way of padding. You won't notice much in the way of netting, so I think every year it's sort of a miracle that nobody goes out over teakettle over that over the side of the road and gets seriously hurt as they could. And I think that's mostly a testament to rider skill because these guys know the course, they know their limits and and they are racing. As fast as they possibly can, and taking every risk. But they know how to handle themselves, and I think we've relied on that far too long. And I think that there need to be some changes made to to try to make courses safer. You cannot take, like I said, you can't take the road furniture out of it, but you can potentially try to devise different run INS to a finish. You can add things you can have. More more Marshalls on course, giving directions like anything you can have fewer vehicles. A lot of this core safety stuff comes down to promoters because we've seen already this year. In several minor races, if you're really horrifying incidents at this race called the 12 passage, there were several moments several days in a row where cars managed to get on onto a closed course, including one that was going the opposite direction from the riders. Half the teams decided that they didn't even want to continue in the race at. That point they just left. Because it wasn't worth the rest and they wanted to send a message. Now we've seen the same kind of thing happen in women's races. We saw another race earlier this year with the men's motorbike peeled off the course, and one of the riders followed him and LED half the pack down the wrong side of the barriers into the fans for the final. Sprint. So we get these kinds of things happening that's not on the riders, really they're they need to be given us safe playing field upon which to do their jobs. And that's something that I think is not happening to the extent that it needs to and instead we're getting distracted. The sport is getting distracted by all of these things. Around how to basically slow the riders down, we make the race safer by slowing it down, so the most recent is. The UCI announced just yesterday that they're going, that they want to move forward with the plan to trial gearing restrictions in races, basically limit the the the top size of the gears that guys can pedal and that misses it's well attention but it misses a lot of the reason that guys are running bigger gears so it doesn't have to do with with going faster. Is it has to do with drivetrain efficiency and so I don't think it's going to have an impact, but it's also sort of it's tangential, it's diverted our attention from the end, things that we could do that really would make a difference.

Speaker 2

Well, we do know that equipment has gotten lighter, stronger, faster. The riders are better conditioned than they've ever been. They're more powerful. I mean, we watched the descents last weekend and we're looking at a guy who lives right there taking these descents at breakneck speeds, but. He knows that course when you have people coming in from all over the world trying to do one of these. This is. And they haven't had

a chance to actually ride the whole course. And I guess that's a question I have. Do they have a chance to ride the course beforehand or do they do it?

Speaker 3

Yeah, I think. You know the analogy I would make here is almost like with World Cup skiing, where if you are a rookie, part of your job on that circuit, as if the money or as yourself with courses like the Honda COM or Cortina, Valda, you know you know the the way I think about this is that it is part of the writers job to do that. And we saw this in the women's race with Ed Milan, San Remo weather writer named Kat Ferguson, who is an 18 year old phenomenal talent on Movistar. The man who crashed. He kind of just had a very minor crash bottle on the descent of the Poggio. She was in the in the leading group and kind of took herself out of it and the first thing I thought of was that is inexperience happening there. I think she's an exceptionally good bike handler. She raised his road and cyclocross and is good at both. I have no question about her handling still. I think that's course. I already. To be honest. And so that's something where, yes, the writers do have chances to sort of Recon courses ahead of time, and especially for races that are one day classics like Monson. Reno like per day, it's imperative to do that, and you'll see this in the week before period. Repay is. The teams will go out and do recons of the course. They want to know, and particularly with the race. They they want to know what course conditions are like, how muddy is it? Has it rained recently where the puddles like what are the good lines of the cobbles? All that kind of stuff? So there are options for the for them to do that. And repeatability. The same course brought roughly the same course year to year for races like that can help as well, but again, promoters have to do everything that they need to do to make that course as safe as possible for those riders.

Speaker 2

So I want to move on. To coverage of races, we talked a little bit about it the last time that we spoke and. It occurred to me that we didn't talk about some of the races that happened in the United States on the big gravel races, for example, like unbound, that people are racing here and there's no coverage.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I think they're the. There are two issues there. 1 is money, one is technical. The the thing that people don't understand. We'll talk on money first. The people that think don't a lot of people don't know or understand about and now defunct race like the Tour of California is that they were on TV because they paid to be on TV. That was not something rare Peacock or anybody else. Bought those broadcast rights like you see the NFL signs of \$2 billion, deal with ESPN, blah blah, blah blah blah. That and cycling not only happens for a few races, for most of them in Europe on the world tour for most races, if you want coverage, you got to pay for it and so it becomes. It turns something from being a revenue stream to a cost center. Court race unbound. It's not at the stage where they can afford that, and that coverage can be expensive. It's it's some of it is a

logistical aspects of coverage and some of it is just the raw. Air. Time itself, then. For a race like unbound, you get into some significant logistical concerns where you are in the middle of rural Kansas. What do you use to cover? Do you use motorbikes? Do you use clouds? Do you use drones combination? How do you get that signal from those cameras to the, you know, to the relay uplink truck? All of those kinds of things, that's difficult. And that production value has to be high enough that people will watch. And so. What you get instead is basically a highlights package, which is well done, but comes together after the fact. It's, you know, it's reported, you know it's it's, it's filmed on course you get all the you know all the action and all that kind of thing. But it's not something that happens live in real time for most races. And if you think about it unbound as the. And the quote UN quote granddaddy of them all is the biggest travel race in the US If that's owned by lifetime events or publicly traded company. If they're not in a position to do that, then who else?

Speaker 2

Well, that's a good question. And that when you said drones, that was the thing that that probably caught my attention. I would think that maybe the right documentary in the right place that would start to make it exciting for people to watch, I'll bet. 9 out of 10 people. If you said unbound would have no idea what we're talking about, none the average person.

Speaker 3

So that that raised another question, which is sort of in gravel is similar to Rd. racing this way and that like if you look at Rd. Racing Rd. racing got it started as a way to sell. Newspapers. Right, right and. The whole value of that was that you could take this event and these, you know, the early turn, the front stages were just as long or longer than they are now. Some of them were even up to, you know, well beyond 300 kilometers. They would take 18 hours to do. Right. Guys would start in the dark. They'd finish in the dark and in a newspaper in a written format, just like a documentary like A. And dance documentary video. Format you have or something like Netflix's Unchained. You have the opportunity to sort of craft that into a compelling narrative. You have, you know that the hero's journey and a thing live coverage is different. And we see this with, like, if you're watching their Tour de France, listen to the commentators and listen to them. Have their five hours of commentary trying to weave together this castle and that crash and this long stretch where the breakaway has three minutes and nothing seems to change. You know for for 30-40 fifty kilometers at the breakaway has three minutes and the pack is kind of just sort of waiting around to make the catch. Nothing's really happening up front. Nothing's happening in the pack. And you have to put that together. I'll be honest that for a lot of people, especially for casual viewers, that's not that exciting to watch because, like, and if you think about in a context of like a football game. First of all, football game, even with the timeouts and all that, you know, all all the rigamarole on half time and everything. It's three hours. Most Rd. races are about 5 unbound. Is what like 7:00 or 8:00.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 3

Nobody's got time to watch 8 hours of bike race, sit down and watch 8 hours of bike racing on a Saturday, but we're we're all busy. We have lodged that kind of thing. Second of all, we're in a football game. Yes, there's the final score. Who wins and that kind of thing. But there's also ohh man, did you see that awesome touchdown run? Look at that. I have that cool interception of that sack in cycling. That takes the form of. Ohh man there was a bad crash so we have crash corn or sometimes. Ohh there's an interesting attack or that kind of thing, but those moments are a little bit fewer and further between and so I think that's part of the the tension that road racing faces right now and gravel racing with two with live coverage is how do you take. 8 hours of stuff and give people exactly what they want in a live context, right? That's really tough to do.

Speaker 2

So the only thing that makes sense to me for racing. In this country is track. And you can sit around, drink your beer, wait for your guy and hope that he goes down. On the on.

Speaker 3

I'm I'm always somewhat surprised that track racing isn't more. I know it is it like cyclocross, it's like the perfect thing to package as a TV sport. It's relatively short. It's logistically it's a lot easier to cover, and yet nobody cares.

Speaker 2

Yes.

Speaker

Got it.

Speaker 2

And if you actually watch it, like during the Olympics, they will. Peacock did a did a lot of track. It is so exciting to watch. Yeah.

Speaker 3

It's fascinating and it's action-packed and it's easy, oftentimes easy to understand. You know, if you have a team pursuit, it's like, OK, these two teams start on opposite sides of the track, which one crosses first. That's it. And it it. It's very basic and it's, you know, they I don't know. I like I said I'm, I'm getting on a tangent here. But I agree. Like I don't understand why things like tracker or or criterium or cyclocross racing aren't more pop

don't have more potential as spectator sports but they have consistently failed to break through at least in the US.

Speaker 2

At least in modern times.

Speaker 3

Yeah, for sure. Yeah, this is not and and and when track racing was popular, it was six days era largely before the broadcast television.

Speaker 2

Ratings. Right, right, right. Everybody sat around and watched people. Literally.

Speaker 3

Yeah, you drink money or you drink beer and bet on rices and you know.

Speaker 2

Right. What could be better, right?

Speaker 3

Exactly.

Speaker 2

OK, so any predictions coming up?

Speaker 3

Yeah. So this next weekend, this weekend, his scent level again, which is a kind of a major classic, but not one of the top ones next weekend that the first full weekend in April is the tour of Flanders. And that's where we will see the first big matchup of Todd, I gotcha, Matthew Vanderpool and Walt Vanert. All on the same race, Matthew and Todd, I have both won this race, but has not. That is an albatross around. It's not that the longer he he's a Belgian. The longer he goes without winning the World Championship of Belgium, which is the kind of what people call the Tour of Flanders is the the the Belgian world's longer goes without doing that. And he's now 30. They're kind of the more stress and pressure there's going to be on him to do it. So there it's going to be a fantastic race for the man, for the women again. Like you'll see pretty much all the top riders line up. You'll see Demi billing there. You'll see. You'll see Lauren webbies. You'll see a lot of Kopecky. And in a case like like Voller Ring and Capecci, it's going to be really fascinating because. There's there's a new dynamic now like for the past many years, they've been teammates, they've grown the same team as St. works, but this last off season, Demi Bowling went to rival team FDJ and there's definitely some tension and some bad blood there. Both sides aren't you know. Trying to be sort of diplomatic

about it, but it's pretty clear that there's not a lot of love lost there. And so watching those to go at it along with cash and new adoma and all of these other great racers, watching them go at it as true rivals is going to be really fascinating. As far as predictions I it's hard to pick between Pogacha and Vanderpool on the. And so I I really don't don't think it.

Speaker 2

Ohh, you're not even talking about.

Speaker 3

I I I don't think you can. You can pick between those two, but I think it's going to be one of those two for the women. I really like a lot of Quebec, Milan Sanremo. Learning Web is one in large part because lot of kapeka did the work to pull back the late breakaway being the final Sprint basically sacrificed all of our own chances for the victory. And did an incredible amount of work where I thought I thought the move was gone. I didn't think they were going to get it. And she pulled it back. And so now she's on her favorite terrain, the little Hailey there. She likes that she does a little bit better at that than Lorraine Weibes does. And I have no reason to suspect that she won't get another win there.

Speaker 2

And then Perry, rube.

Speaker 3

Ohh rube. That, that's that's so. That's in two weeks. That's an. Eternity from now, Diane. I know I I think I would say Vanderpool again, simply because he is. There's nobody better. At rising to big moments than him in the races that suit him, no, the guy who's better than him, and that is, is that a big gotcha? But the, the, the terrain of of rubay and everything favors Vanderpool. So I would say he's absolutely number one favorite to to take that for the women. I would really love to see Mario. When you know she has been around for so long. And she's watched these races come into being that she never had a chance to win when she was the lot of Quebec of the peloton, you know, when she was the 28 year old, you know, world, all world, you know everything. And I think that it's amazing to me that about 15 years into her career. But she's still finishing at the very front of braces, and it would be just really fantastic to see her take a win in a race like rebay that she is exists partly because of the work of people like her.

Speaker 2

She's a tough cookie.

Speaker 3

She is.

Speaker 2

Maybe. Let. Let's, let's. Give her a. Little you know, vibe here to go. Well, we will check back for the big stage races a little later in the season, but as always, it's so fascinating to talk with you. I love how much you know and we didn't talk about Commentation commentating. This time, and we know that. It makes a big difference when you hear people you're familiar with, like a Phil Liggett. Although you and I both agreed that some people loved him, some people didn't. Some people love Bob well, some people don't, but the quality of what they know and what they can relate when nothing's really going on in the race like this castle. Or that museum or whatever is it's just amazing to me. Or, as in the case of Bob Roll, who knows some of the other languages well. And seems to be able to converse in them.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I think when you one of the things that's always interesting to me is at the end of the race when they do a winners interview and it's not an English. And oftentimes Bob or you know, sometimes they hear like Antonio Mccrosson or other guys will sort of translate in real time. And you know, you're not getting exact verbatim. But to get that sense is always fascinating. For me, because otherwise a lot of us isn't as native English speakers and not much else would be locked out of that, and so that to to give us that that sense of the the winners, feelings in that moment is pretty cool. And I think that. For me, the magic of good commentary is to take those moments when the breakaway is sitting at 3 minutes and nothing is happening, and to make something interesting out of that to capture people's attention. And maybe that's something to do with culture or history or geography or that kind of thing. And maybe it's something like, hey, look at the way that the the peloton is shaped right here. Here's what this means. And here's what it is that you're seeing to give that sort of context and depth so that people can understand that what looks like this sort of static stalemate is actually anything but. And that's the kind of thing that I think gets people interested in the sport. Is like, what? What am I really watching here? Because it doesn't look like much. To me, but somebody who knows better can see it.

Speaker 2

Yep, and and convey it.

Speaker 3

Yeah, and. And tell me what it is that that I'm missing so that I can learn and become a more knowledgeable and engaged family.

Speaker 2

Right, exactly. Give listeners a little bit of help. Talk about escape Collective, and then we'll tell them how to follow you.

Speaker 3

Like as far as what? We do, yeah. OK, so we started two years ago actually this month and. Our whole approach is to basically show whether or not Member funding can be a viable media model in cycling. We don't take any advertisement from, especially not from inside the industry, from the brands and people that we cover. We do not do what's called affiliate commerce. So when you go on a site like Wirecutter. And you read a story and you click a link to buy. Or something. The wire cutter will get a small Commission off of each of those sales. Now, there's nothing wrong with that model. There are some plenty of of places that have done a fantastic job with that and what we call like DC Rainmaker as one within cycling. Who does it, who does an excellent job with that and has sort of stayed true to the. To the consumer centered consumer focused journalism that he. Has brought a lot of brands, a lot of media brands have now taken that to basically just pump out as much listicle and best of this, best of that, you know, the best Cannondale Rd. bikes. You know the best specialized bicycles with like nobody shops for bikes. That way if you see something that says, you know, what's the best Rd. tire? OK, for who? For what purposes? For by what metrics like these are? Oftentimes, these are things that are sort of. Devised just. To get you to click them so that they can earn some money off of it. We don't do that. We're 100% member funded and member funded only. So our thought is is that when you come to us, if you're reading a review that we write or that kind of thing that you can trust us because we're not. Financially tied to any of the people that were covering in any way. We also cover a lot of racing. We cover a lot of Rd. racing, we try to cover mountain bike racing, we cover as much gravel as we can. We're a small staff and we've read a lot about culture. We try to do things that we don't see a lot of other outlets doing. We've had a really good side light in doing personal essays, just about culture and connection to the sport that we all love and. I'd like to think that there's enough value in there for a membership, and I I would hope that people who come see the value in what we do and join, because that's the only way that we can survive.

Speaker 2

Well, and it's been a very consistent product. You know watching it over the last two. Years. You've never sort of gone away from your core idea and and I appreciate that. So escape collective. We've been speaking with managing editor Joe Lindsey. As always, it's a great time. To talk about bike racing? Thanks so much.

Speaker 3

Thank you. Alright.

Speaker 2

My thanks as always to Joe for taking time to talk with me. Follow him and all the other pro journalists at escapecollective.com. Remember, you can also find linksphotosinascriptofeveryepisodeoftheoutspokencyclist@outspokencyclist.com follow us on Facebook, Instagram. LinkedIn and YouTube. You can subscribe to the podcast on your favorite app so you never miss an episode next time on the outspoken

cyclist. We speak with superstar Allison Tetrick. We talk about her TBI recovery as well as the surgery she opted for to keep riding her bike when sitting on a saddle became unbearable. I hope you have a great day. Please stay safe. Stay well and remember there is always time for a ride. Bye bye.

Speaker 1

Thanks for joining us today on the outspoken cyclist with Diane Jenks, who welcome your thoughts and contributions on our Facebook page or visit outspokencyclist.com to leave a comment on any episode. We'll be back next week with new guests, topics, conversations and news. New world of cycling subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast app and you'll never miss an episode. The outspoken cyclist is a copyrighted production of DBL promotions with the assistance of WG JCU FM Cleveland, a service of John Carroll University. Thanks again for listening. Ride safely and we'll see you next week.