

## 5 cyclists crash during race

Accident » A man was critically injured and put into a medically induced coma.

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As an avid cyclist, Sterling Baer has seen his share of road injuries.

But he wasn't prepared for what he saw when participating Saturday in the 1,000 Warriors Bicycle Race in American Fork Canyon. Riding down the canyon on State Road 92 near the Timpanogos Caves shortly after 9:30 a.m., Baer came upon a crash scene with shattered glass and blood pooling across the road.

"It was horrific. I literally saw a river of blood from one side of the road to the other. A man lying there looked like he was unconscious or dead. I didn't know who it was. I didn't recognize him," said Baer, of Mesa, Ariz.

He slowed and recognized another cyclist lying on the ground. He then recognized another and another -- both covered in blood and both members of the Mesa-based Red Mountain Brumbys amateur cycling club, to which Baer belongs.

Shock set in as he realized the man lying unconscious turned out to be 45-year-old Dave Collins, an Arizona real estate developer and fellow club member.

The Utah Highway Patrol said Collins and four more cyclists from the Brumby club were injured when a black SUV driving down the canyon slammed on its brakes, leaving the cyclists with no place to go.

At least two cyclists, traveling about 45 mph, hit the back of the vehicle, and three more crashed trying to avoid it, said UHP Sgt. Jeff Nigbur.

The driver of the SUV possibly became nervous when a vehicle pulling a trailer traveling up the canyon swerved slightly into the SUV's lane, Nigbur said. It's unclear, however, if the other vehicle actually did cross into the SUV's lane or if the driver overreacted, he said.

The incident remains under investigation.

Baer said Collins went through the SUV's rear window. Glass cut him from his sternum to his ear and also severed an artery, which caused him to bleed profusely, Baer said.

Two of the cyclists that crashed along with Collins happened to be EMTs and immediately began tending to Collins' injuries, Baer said. Another cyclist held a rag to Collins' neck, trying to stop the bleeding.

"If they [the EMTs] were not there, he quite possibly could have died," Baer said. "It was a miracle they were there."

Collins was flown by helicopter to the University Hospital, where he underwent two surgeries Saturday, Baer said. He said his friend suffered a punctured lung, broken jawbone, broken facial bones and severed a nerve in addition to the cuts from the SUV's glass.

Collins has extended family in Provo who stayed with him at the hospital, Baer said. He said the club was informed that Collins' physicians seemed optimistic that he will recover. Collins remained in a medically induced coma late Saturday.

Two other members of the Brumbys, Steve Beck and Mike Skousen, were admitted to the hospital for lacerations they suffered in the accident, Baer said. Both were released Saturday.

Two more Brumbys members suffered minor injuries in the crash but did not have to be hospitalized, Baer said.

Saturday's accident closed the canyon road for about an hour.

Race organizer Rick Bennett said he had tried to obtain a permit from the Utah Department of Transportation to close the Alpine Loop for the race, but was unsuccessful.

Scott Thompson, a spokesman for UDOT, said Saturday that UDOT denied the 1,000 Warriors race a road closure permit. He said UDOT didn't want to close American Fork Canyon, a popular destination for recreation, on a Saturday.

He said UDOT learned of Bennett's request only a few days ago, when people started calling UDOT to ask about fliers posted in the canyon advertising that the canyon would be closed for the 1,000 Warriors race.

The Tour of Utah received a "rolling closure" for its race, with the Utah Highway Patrol riding ahead and behind cyclists during the race.

Tribune reporter Lindsay Whitehurst contributed to this report

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#### About the 1,000 Warriors Bicycle Race

In its second year, the 1,000 Warriors Bicycle Race is an event for amateur cyclists held in conjunction with the Tour Of Utah professional competition. The Warriors race was held along the same 96-mile course as the Tour of Utah, but began at 6 a.m., five hours before the Tour of Utah's start Saturday.

The 1,000 Warriors race serves as a fundraiser for scholarships for the children of wounded soldiers, said race organizer Rick Bennett.

About 650 participants rode in this year's race, including six marines who flew in from North Carolina and used training for the ride as part of their physical therapy from war injuries gained in Afghanistan and Iraq, Bennett said.

The marines were each honored for being awarded a Purple Heart as they crossed the finish line, Bennett said.

For more information about the event, visit [www.1000warriors.com](http://www.1000warriors.com).

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