

# SPORTS

## HEARD ON THE FIELD



### Watch Tennis? Yuri Has Other Plans

Serve? Check. Forehand? Check. Supreme concentration? Check. Maria Sharapova seems to have everything she needs to win her second Wimbledon title after a 6-1, 6-1 quarterfinal win over Dominika Cibulkova Tuesday. There's one thing different this time compared to her first title in 2004: She no longer travels with her dad, Yuri. "He never missed one practice of mine, no matter if he was sick or didn't want to be there," Sharapova said. "After a certain point I was really happy that he came to me and said that there are other things in life he wanted to do." —Tom Perrotta



### Lightning the Culprit in North Korea Loss

After Tuesday's 2-0 loss to the U.S. in the Women's World Cup, North Korea's women's soccer coach offered a peculiar excuse. Kim Kwang Min blamed the two goals allowed on a June 8 lightning strike during training in Pyongyang that sent "more than five" players to the hospital. —Laura Stevens

### Pitchers Finishing What They Started

Tampa Bay's James Shields will take the mound against the Cincinnati Reds Wednesday looking to become the first pitcher since Roy Halladay in 2003 to win four straight complete games. MLB starters are on pace to throw 194 complete games this season, which would be the most since 2003. —Jared Diamond



# Riding the Tour De Vegetable

American David Zabriskie Aims to Compete in the World's Most Grueling Bike Race—As a Vegan\*

By REED ALBERGOTTI

To climb the Tour de France's steep mountain passes and cross its scorching plains, cyclists have tried stuffing themselves full of steak and pasta, gulping down wine and cognac, smoking cigarettes, taking amphetamines and, of course, using other drugs during the race's 107-year history. On Saturday, American David Zabriskie plans to try something entirely new: Riding the Tour on a vegan diet.

Experts say he is the first cyclist to attempt the most difficult bike race in the world sans meat, dairy or eggs. (He will cheat slightly, he says, because he plans to eat small amounts of salmon two days per week to increase iron absorption).

Cyclists in the Tour de France can burn 8,000 calories a day—so many that some riders, already lean from their training, are unable to eat enough food to keep up with calorie loss.

The conventional wisdom is that eating plenty of meat and dairy provides protein to help cyclists' muscles recover, and that the iron in red meat keeps the body producing ample amounts of hemoglobin, which carries all-important oxygen-rich red blood cells to the muscles. Inigo San Millán, a sports-medicine professor at the University of Colorado and a former physiologist on Mr. Zabriskie's team, calls the cyclist's desire to go vegan "a strange concept." To many cyclists, he says, a vegan diet "doesn't make much sense."

Before last season, Zabriskie, who rides for the U.S.-based Garmin-Cervélo team, was a typical meat-eating athlete, scarfing down whatever he wanted so long as it didn't make him fat. But at the beginning of last season, his team's chiropractor gave him a blood test that screened his sensitivity to certain types of foods. The chiropractor, Matt Rabin, told Mr. Zabriskie he had the highest sensitivity to food on the team. Another blood test showed Zabriskie had the high-

est inflammation of his muscles.

During last year's Tour de France, Zabriskie turned down the red meat being passed around the dinner table because he thought it required too much energy to digest. In the late summer of last year, he began phasing out all meat from his diet and by October, he had also cut out dairy.

After nine months on the diet, Zabriskie says he's feeling better than ever. He has had some of the best results of his career and says he feels more focused. "I think a lot of people see food in terms of whether it's going to make them fat or make them skinny," he says. "I'm seeing food in terms of how it's going to make me think and will it give me clarity." Zabriskie says he's noticed that even small ailments, like canker sores and a persistent rash he used to get, have all gone away. Even his vision has improved, he says.

This winter, Zabriskie's team director, Jonathan Vaughters, caught wind of his new diet and gave him a call. Vaughters was concerned the diet would lower Zabriskie's iron intake, which is crucial for endurance athletes. He told Zabriskie that he could try the diet, so long as he took regular blood tests to monitor his level of ferritin, the protein that stores iron. He said Zabriskie should eat more dark, leafy greens and other sources of iron. Vaughters says he's fine with the diet, so long as the results are good. "At the end of the day, I just want him to go fast."

Vaughters says he was surprised when blood tests early this season showed Zabriskie's ferritin levels had remained stable on the vegan diet—which means his hemoglobin and red blood cell counts also remained normal. He says he's been pleasantly surprised by his performance. "He's won more time trials

this year than he has in his career," Vaughters says. "The proof is in the pudding."

To get guidance on the diet, Zabriskie consulted with Brendan Brazier, a triathlete and author of "The Thrive Diet," a guide to vegan diets in sports that has become something of a bible for the cyclist. Brazier lives near Zabriskie in the outskirts of Los Angeles and began joining him on rides.

Earlier this season, Zabriskie said his energy levels were down and he felt weak. He wasn't sure if it was a result of the diet or a recent bug he was getting over. He got in touch with Brazier, who advised him to take vegan protein shakes made from hemp seeds, flax seeds and brown rice protein, among other ingredients. (Brazier invented the shake and markets them under the "Vega" brand). Zabriskie says he now drinks three or four of the shakes throughout the day.



### Zabriskie's Vegan Menu

Here's what the cyclist plans to eat on race days during the Tour.

**Breakfast:** Oatmeal with black strap molasses; whole food optimizer; cacao nibs; nuts; cinnamon; two tablespoons of coconut butter; an apple; hemp seeds and flax seeds

**On-the-Bike Snacks:** Six Clif Bar Z bars (vegan); two Clif Bar shot blocks (vegan); two Clif Bars gels (vegan); dates; six to eight bottles of special team race drink

**On the Bus, Post-Race:** White rice with maple syrup and cinnamon; vegan protein shake; two bottles of special team recovery protein drink; goji berries

**Before Dinner:** Vegan protein shake

**Dinner:** White rice or pasta; salad with leafy greens; vegetables—including broccoli, spinach, carrots and beets.

**Dessert:** Fresh fruit and a vegan protein shake before bed



Zabriskie also consulted with a professional motorcycle racer, Ben Bostrom, also a vegan, who advised Zabriskie to include small amounts of fish a couple of times a week because of the incredibly large load he puts on his body during training. "He told me, don't get too hung up on the word 'vegan,'" says Zabriskie. The fish, Zabriskie says, helps his body absorb certain vitamins and iron.

During the Tour of California in May, Zabriskie won the time trial. Last month, he blew away the competition at the U.S. national time trial championships in Greenville, South Carolina. That victory, he says, reinforced his decision to change his diet. "I knew I had done everything right," he says.

Zabriskie is not a contender for the yellow jersey. He has raced in the Tour de France five times and finished it three times. He became the third American to wear the race's coveted yellow jersey in 2005 when he beat Lance Armstrong in the race's opening prologue. This year, if he just finishes, he could become a hero for advocates of the Vegan diet—at least those who don't mind the fish.

Mr. Vaughters says it might change the way professional athletes view veganism. "This is definitely the ultimate test of the vegan diet," he says. "If it works here, no one can ever say you can't do X,Y,Z as a vegan."

\*With a little fish thrown in

Feature: Photo illustration by WSJ; Associated Press (Zabriskie); Reuters (tomato); Getty Images (artichoke, carrot); Getty Images (inset); HOF (t-b); European Pressphoto Agency; Associated Press; Southcoast Global/Zuma Press