

BEAT A MILE A MINUTE

Bicyclist Murphy, Paced by Train, Makes Record of 57 4-5 Seconds.

THE ENGINE NOT FAST ENOUGH

At the End of the Race the Rider Was
in a Demented Condition for
Several Minutes.

Charles M. Murphy of Brooklyn yesterday drove a bicycle a mile faster than any human being ever before drove any kind of a machine and proved that human muscle can, for a short distance at least, excel the best power of steam and steel and iron. His time for the mile was 57 4-5 seconds.

He was led—or "paced," as the technical term is—by a big eight-wheeled locomotive of the Long Island Railroad along a specially prepared track, with all conditions perfect—a grade of three feet rise in a hundred, no curve, the weather clear and cool and still. He ended his ride of less than a minute in good physical condition, but apparently bereft of his reason—a condition which continued for at least five minutes.

The track arranged for Murphy's ride, on which he was to endeavor to make a mile on a bicycle in a minute, was two and three-eighths miles long. It began half a mile west of Maywood, an almost unknown station on the Long Island Road, and went on toward Patchogue. Five planks, each 10 inches wide, and carefully planed, were laid together along the length of the course. The joiner work was without a flaw. The planks were not tongued and grooved, but they were fitted edge to edge so neatly that a spirit level laid across them anywhere left the bubble squarely at the middle. A billiard table is no smoother or more mathematically level than the track over which Murphy rode.

He is a blonde man, with blue eyes and light hair, five feet and seven inches high, and slimly built, weighing 145 pounds, although he looks twenty pounds lighter. He came out yesterday afternoon in the presence of a thousand men and women strung along the planked part of the railroad track on both sides. There are open fields, pasture lands, and fields of wheat along the track, and four roads cross it between Maywood and the end of the measured mile. In these fields and on the roads hundreds of people were clustered. Murphy's wife sat in a drag drawn close to the track in a road near the mile mark. She is a young woman with a strong and pleasant face, and had her little son with her. She wore a white skirt and waist and a white straw hat with a long feather stuck through the band.

Murphy wore blue woollen tights and a thin light blue jersey with long sleeves. He did not waste any time or perform any "grand stand" evolutions. He came on the track, where the engine with its one car attached was standing, riding his wheel, and gave his attention strictly to the task before him.

HOW THE TRAIN WAS ARRANGED.

The train, like the track, had been especially arranged for him. A hood had been built out from the rear of the car five feet, just the length of his wheel. This extended from within six inches of the track to the car roof on each side, so as to shut out any side wind. Exactly in the centre of the platform of the car a long strip of unpainted white pine five inches wide was set perpendicularly, its upper end extending some inches above the platform railing, its lower end just clearing the track. Murphy was ordered to keep his eyes on this strip and to follow and keep up with it. The back platform of the car was just high enough to catch the nut at the top of the handles of the wheel, allowing the front wheel to go under. A line of rubber bands was arranged at the edge of the platform, while underneath a rubber roller touched the track and swept it clean as the car ran.

The start was easy, comparatively, but the stop had caused the Long Island Railroad people some anxious thought. Murphy did not seem to care about that part of it. That he was to be given an opportunity to ride a mile in a minute was enough for him. He took no interest in the arrangements for his safety, and did not know what they were. The railroad people knew that if he rode off the planked track upon the ties at a mile a minute, or anywhere near that speed, he would unquestionably be crippled or killed.

If they undertook to check their car within the two miles the track ran, the chances were that, being unable to regulate his pace on the smooth track, Murphy would drive into the rear platform with a force which would wreck his wheel and probably injure him seriously. He asked no questions about how he was to get out, and his wife seemed to be as indifferent on that subject as he was. Their idea was to make the mile. About what was to happen after that, they were obviously indifferent. They took it for granted that the railroad company would find some solution, and they were right.

The beginning of the mile was about 200 yards east of Maywood Station. It was marked by a wide black line across the track and by flags at the sides. The quarters were marked in the same way.

A PRELIMINARY RUN.

At 4:30 the engine, tender, and car were run over the course to make sure that everything was in good order. Then they were backed to Maywood. Fifty men, reporters and representatives of athletic organizations, were in the car. Mr. Townsend, a bicycle dealer of Brooklyn, Murphy's employer, was also there, and was the most anxious man in the party. Two of the newspaper men were chosen by lot to stand on the rear platform with H. B. Fullerton, Special Agent of the Long Island Railroad, who has served his time at sea and roping steers in Texas, and J. H. Cummings, also of the Long Island Railroad, who is not only a fine engineering officer, but a big, strong man. These had been chosen with a purpose, as developed later.

A little before 5 o'clock word was given that everything was ready. Elaborate preparations were made to assure accuracy of records. In the car were "Bob" Stoll, of the New York Athletic Club, Charles Dieges, of the Pastime Athletic Club, W. H. Robertson, Sam See and Sheriff Frank D. Creamer, each with a split second watch and facing to the right of the train, where the distance flags were. The two newspaper men and the railroad men were on the platform to see that the riding was "straight."

The engine was No. 74, one of the best on the road, and the engineer was Sam Booth, regarded as the best on the line, with Ed Howell, a chosen man, as fireman. Everything in front was in tune. Back behind the car Murphy looked over the outfit quietly, and did not seem to be wasting a pulse beat. Dr. Holly of Brooklyn, who is his family physician, looked him over, and reported his pulse 76 to the minute, temperature 98 2-5, and heart action normal. Engine and man were in thoroughly good condition, and capable of doing their best.

THE START AND THE RACE.

The start was made at 5:10 precisely. Murphy was there at the rear platform holding the handles of his wheel, his fingers extended and partly closed over the rubber buffer along the platform's edge. He held on until he had kicked his pedals ten or twelve times, then he let go, stuck his head down, fastened his eyes on the strip of pine plank before him, and began to work.

Nobody who was in that ride can tell much about it. Inside the car it was a rush, a roar, and a slide, and the sudden appearance of Murphy being brought in at the back door, actually demented for the moment. Outside there was just a whiz and a rush and a cloud of dust. As Murphy whirled by in the wake of the car he looked like a part of the mass of dust hitched on to the rear platform. No eye could follow the strokes of his legs on the pedals. He and his bicycle seemed to be part of the train and working with it.

His wife, sitting on the drag just opposite the finish mark, saw him for the fraction of a second as he whizzed by, and laughed. She knew he had done his work. Then she looked along the track after him and saw a marvelous thing—the only man in the his-

tory of the world who has ever boarded a train in motion at more than a mile a minute. The big man and the agile man of the Long Island force had leaned together over the rear railing of the platform and lifted Murphy from his wheel. His feet caught in the toe tips and the whirling machine was lifted with him, coming to a sudden stop, but a third man leaned over and caught the wheel and rescued it.

MURPHY TEMPORARILY DEMENTED.

Murphy was carried into the car face downward. A cot had been placed in a corner forward, and he was stretched on it. His first utterance was:

"Carry me back to where my wife is."

Either he had caught a glimpse of her as he went by or he knew where she was.

Then somebody said to him that he had fallen back several times in the mile.

"Yes," said Murphy in a matter-of-fact way. "You see, I had to do that to get out of the way of the track, tearing all to pieces and flying up."

He believing then that the plank track he had been flying over had gone to pieces under him. As the train slowed down and was run back he recovered his senses; but in the first five minutes after he was lifted from his wheel he was as bereft of his reason as any man who ever went to an asylum. He did not seem to be surprised or particularly gratified when the timers, after some comparison and brief discussion, announced these figures:

First quarter.....	15 seconds.
Half-mile.....	29 2-5 "
Three-quarters.....	44 "
Mile.....	57 4-5 "

The watches varied by fifths of seconds, but the best of them registered these figures, and they were agreed on as official.

ENGINE NOT FAST ENOUGH.

The men on the back platform believe that if the engine could have done three seconds better Murphy could have finished with it. Six times he literally tried to run over the train—drove his wheel against the rubber buffer behind with such force that he fell back several feet. It is supposed that these bumps gave him the idea that the track was flying up around him as he pounded desperately on his pedals, and concentrated his whole soul and thought on following the fast flying strip of pine in front of him. All he said during the ride was "I can't see" when one of the men on the rear platform leaned over and asked him how he was.

Even after he had rested in the car and had heard the time announced and received congratulations, about all that could be gotten from him was:

"Boys, I've always believed I could do it. Now I have done it I'm satisfied, and so are many others."

Dr. Holly examined him soon after he was taken from his wheel and found his pulse 84, temperature 99½, and heart action healthy.

Murphy was given an enthusiastic reception by the Kings County Wheelmen, of which he is a member, and was promptly proclaimed to be the champion fast bicycle rider of the world.