

In January 2017 Charlie Craig passed away in his sleep. Following an inquest and several news stories, his loving family; Nick, Sarah and Thomas wanted to give this statement:

A Statement from Nick, Sarah and Thomas Craig

Charlie did so many wonderful things that made him a very well rounded young man. Not only was he a gifted cyclist; he played cricket, ran, loved to fish, played the drums, could knit, sew and make wonderful things with his creative mind.

He was also gifted in his ability to communicate to the young and old. He was relaxed, calm and wise beyond his years. Charlie always had time to use these special qualities to help others. He was respectful and never judged, this made him a very likeable, friendly, smiley boy who everyone loved to be with.

Following the large amount of information that surfaced as a result of Charlie's inquest, it was only natural for the press to select what they felt to be the most attention grabbing details, which were reported out of context. We feel that sharing awareness is a good thing. However, we also want to furnish you with our own thoughts, along with comments from the coroner to ensure the complete picture is out there for anyone who would like to understand more.

Charlie's Lifestyle

Charlie had no signs of pushing himself or any symptoms of anything wrong with his heart, he trained like many other riders and raced with a smile on his face. He never took stimulant's, caffeinated or fizzy drinks. He had a great respect for his health and his own potential; he enjoyed a very healthy diet, he followed the advice from professionals and his caring family. He was in tune with his body, he knew how and when to rest. Typically, he trained for around 6 hours a week - It is worth noting that the reference by the press to intensive training, would have been, a maximum of 1 hour on an indoor trainer with an average heart rate of 146 bpm, including short sprints, maxing at 190bpm - this is 15 beats below his maximum heart rate - very normal practice for any endurance athlete.

Coroners Findings:

Professor Sanjay Sharma, a cardiologist for the English Institute of Sport, explained to us that he believed the only thing that could have happened, in his medical opinion is that adrenaline mixed with noradrenaline had an adverse effect on Charlie. This could have caused a spasm in the veins supplying his healthy heart - resulting in damage. The coroner found that this had happened more than once with no knowledge or signs to Charlie. During his conclusion, the coroner, commented that there was no evidence to suggest that Charlie exercised beyond his own safe limits.

When Charlie went to sleep on the 20th January 2017, he was happy and we had no reason to be even slightly concerned about his health. The coroner said he thought Charlie was a very sensible young man with a great respect for his own health. He understood Charlie would choose not to race, if he was unwell. For example, when we drove to South Wales for the 1st MTB race of the season - Charlie didn't feel well so made the decision not to race; this was an example of a very mature young athlete, making a difficult but wise decision, particularly with the knowledge his gridding for the next race would be compromised. Professor Sanjay said that Charlie was only the second young athlete in his 20 years of experience to show these signs, he went on to say that Charlie was 1:50000 to experience this rare physiological reaction. He also pointed out that people who do regular sport live, on average, 7 years longer than those who don't. Our message here would be to reassure and encourage people to keep riding and enjoying the wonderful sport of cycling.

Moving Forwards:

As a result of the coroner's recommendations, British Cycling have agreed to ensure each athlete in the Great Britain Cycling Team - Within the World Cycling Program (including apprentices) undergo the following health assessments:

- a) Complete a health questionnaire with any areas of concern addressed by the GBCT medical team
- b) Provide a 'fitness to participate' certificate from their general practitioner
- c) Provide evidence that cardiac screening has been undertaken in the form of an ECG, where abnormalities are detected on the ECG, evidence must be given showing a satisfactory echocardiogram has been completed. Any abnormalities found at the time of screening should trigger referral to a sports cardiologist for further action including decisions on further participation in the performance pathway.

Athletes should now have received communication from British Cycling highlighting the additional screening recommendations and should now be taking the appropriate steps to cover themselves for the future. It is key for all athletes to be aware of and to action these recommendations.

We will continue to keep the spirit of Charlie alive through the opportunities made possible by www.rideforcharlie.com

We are so proud and lucky to have had our wonderful Charlie for 15 years. He loved life, seized every opportunity and never wasted a second. His sense of adventure, courage and determination is what keeps us going. Charlie we love you and miss you so much, you are with us every day in all we do...until we meet again...Dad, Mum and Thomas XXX

About Ride for Charlie

Nick and Sarah set up www.rideforcharlie.com in memory of Charlie. The fund supports young off road cyclists towards fulfilling aspirations inspired by Charlie- encouraging others to follow in Charlie's pedal strokes.

Their vision is to allocate funding to self-motivated young individuals, who will be appraised for eligibility by the trustees. To donate or find out more visit www.rideforcharlie.com