

Cadel Evans - You're My Hero

I know its a few days old, and I apologise to my cyclist friends who attended anger management yesterday about this...but I had to blog about it. I can't afford anger management.

I am still upset about Mia Freedman's rant on Monday about Cadel Evans on the Today show. I'm not just upset because I'm a cyclist, although I'm sure that's part of it.

I thought Mia Freedman was smarter than that. I thought she was articulate and intelligent. But for her to say she 'just doesn't care' and then later go on to say 'I don't know a lot about Cadel Evans' just reeks of stupidity and unprofessionalism.

She must have known what she was getting herself in for. She admitted she realised she would upset a lot of people. Then she writes a blog post saying she was in tears by 8:15am. An Australian did something amazing, and she just canned it. The day after it happened, when all the cyclists in Australia are overtired. Seriously?

Mia says that Cadel is just a man who is paid a lot of money to ride a bike. She wishes other people that she deems more important like doctors, scientists and social workers got paid millions of dollars.

Well that would be very nice. From a personal point of view (my husband is a scientist), I wish scientists got paid millions of dollars as well. But Cadel Evans doesn't control how much money people get paid for cycling. That's the way the world is.

I agree he gets paid a lot of money now, but it wasn't always like that. I follow a lot of athletes on twitter who get paid next to nothing and struggle on scholarships from the AIS or VIS and hope that they race well enough to earn more money. Often they don't. They face injury setbacks or don't do well enough to be sponsored.

The fact that Mia brings this up makes me think she doesn't understand how hard Cadel, and other athletes work to get to and succeed at that high level. The amount of training, and sacrifices they make is something that most people don't consider or could even fathom.

I find it funny that Mia was pointing out that he is a man who gets paid a lot of money to ride a bike. Well that's his job. He works very hard at it. Some people have jobs where they work in the media and don't research people before they bag them on national tv.

Mia also made the point (twice) that "he doesn't even live in Australia". He doesn't live in Australia because he's a UCI pro cyclist and competes overseas as an Australian. It would make no sense to live all year in Australia when there is only one UCI race here. In the off season he lives in Barwon Heads and Arthurs Creek.

Mia also says that shocking things happened over the weekend and Cadel is all that's in the paper. Well I'm sorry Mia the bad news bear, but some of us like to be able to celebrate things .

She says she thinks that its ridiculous "to call him a hero and stand up and sing the national anthem". Mia, no-one said that we were comparing him to a war hero or that other heroes are less valid. He is a sporting hero. He is a man who has worked so hard and failed many, many times. This time everything came together for him.

All of this had my blood boiling and then she says that she finds it hard to understand how regular people could go "this makes me feel good about myself". From a cyclists perspective I found it extremely motivating, understanding what he was putting his body through day after day for three weeks, the strategy involved. Incredible.

From a non-cyclists perspective its also a heart-warming story. The boy from Barwon Heads (or Armidale or Eltham depending on what newspaper you read) who achieved his dream and made history by becoming Australia's first winner of the Tour? I reckon that's pretty amazing. How could it not tug at your heart strings seeing him up there on the podium with the Australian flag and Tina Arena singing the Australian Anthem?

Mia is totally correct when she says that sports people do it for their own reasons. Of course they do. Cadel grew up riding bikes. He likes bikes. Ian Thorpe likes swimming. So what? He is a sporting hero. Not an ANZAC legend.

Everyone is entitled to their opinion. That's fair. Already two people have commented on a facebook status I had earlier this week saying they agree with Mia. That's fine.

But I think its a great thing that Cadel did. Even Mia grudgingly admits 'he won a bike race'.

He made history. Why can't we just celebrate his achievement? Why did Mia have to sit there and be negative about it?

Cadel Evans - you're my hero.

- Jen