



Junior Cycling Development Program

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Team Swift Race Report #4

Cherry Pie Criterium, Feb 9, 2003

Pine Flats RR, Feb 15, 2003

Dinuba Criterium, Feb 16, 2003

Cherry Pie Criterium, Napa, California, Feb 9, 2003

Rich Weir from the Junior Race:

After nearly five months of training, bad weather and waiting I finally got to race again. When we arrived in Napa for the annual Cherry Pie Criterium it was ridiculously cold. Warming up did not last long because of the intense cold. I could not feel my fingers and could no longer shift using one hand after one lap. I then proceeded to roll out. After a few short words from the race referee we were off. The cold instantly neutralized all of the attacks. Although SGW put in many solid attacks, they were eventually pulled in. When the race was nearing the end, I begin to search for Adam's wheel. After seeing that Adam and Dan were in the back of the field I decided to see what I could do. I rode off the front and was joined by my friend Eric who rides for SGW. I felt instantly the lack of a proper warm up in my legs. We were able to get a pretty good gap because we were working together. As soon as the last lap came we began to feel the pack breathe down our necks. When we hit the last hill towards the finish line we both shattered. I tried to sprint but my legs were just too cold. About 20m from the line Eric and I were swallowed up by the pack. Alas our efforts were in vain as I finished in 5th place. Although I did not win or even get a pie this was an extremely fun race. I was once again reunited with my friends and we raced in the cold weather. That is what I live for, to race. I am looking forward to the rest of the season with hopes of some successful breakaways.

Dinuba Criterium

Nathan, Duke and our new, younger rider Rich Weir all raced the junior race. Duke and Nathan did a great job working with Rich on tactics and timing for attacking. All three of them followed the race plan exactly and broke away 1-2-3 for a Team Swift sweep of the field. Then I raced the women's race and won in a field sprint. Followed by Duke and Nathan racing aggressively in the Pro, 1, 2 field.

Nathan Miller:

Here is one BIG, HUGE, GIANT happy report for all of the races :)

Since there are no amazing stories to tell about any race in particular, I thought that I would write this piece about what it is like to transfer from a category 3 rider to a category 2 racer. So far, I have done four pro1, 2 races this season and have noticed the following changes.

The first and biggest change is the improvement in quality of the rider's bike handling abilities. It is nice to take corners in a crit four or five riders wide without having to worry. In a cat 3 race that would be imminent death! Now, we can worry about what is going on in the race instead of who is going to crash

into you.

An obvious difference is the speed of the races. You would think that it would not be very fun to suffer through races that are twice as long and twice as fast, but it is really awesome!!! Any attack on the flats when the field was moving along at just an average pace required either a 53x13 or 53x12. You would just see the opportunity to go, shift, and literally fly off the front. It's like the field is a car traveling down the highway and you're jumping out the window (only without the pain of smacking the ground!). As the wind starts to grab hold, you realize just how fast you are going. It takes everything that your already overworked legs can put out to accelerate your bike forward. When you look back, you may have gained at most ten seconds and you have one or two guys from Sierra Nevada and Health Net on your wheel. Then you realize just how hard it is to slip away unnoticed. You can try to pull with the Sierra Nevada riders, but then no matter which Health Net rider it was they would always sit up. Health Net didn't work in one break during the entire course of both races, but they were in all of them. This was extremely annoying! Why would they want to sit up when they have two riders in a break with only me and a considerable gap? They can obviously see that I'll pull until I fall over and die (which isn't anytime soon) and the two of them are both strong enough to take me at the line. They get first and second and I get third, that sounds like a good deal to me.

There is one other difference that is worth pointing out and this one is not such a good thing. This is the disrespect for junior riders. There is a very obvious pecking order that you are placed into based on what team you are on and juniors on junior teams are the very, very bottom. This means that before we can really expect to win any races we have to win the respect of the field and a position at the front of the pack. I think that Duke and I did an awesome job of this during the Dinuba crit. We were attacking constantly; sometimes I would come back from a break and go again a half a lap later. During the road race, one Sierra Nevada rider grabbed me as I was moving up and told me to stay away from the front. I told him no way and that I was moving up to pull in the break which contained two of his teammates and had about 20-25 seconds. I went straight to the front and lifted the pace as much as possible. I was at 195-200 bpm (my HR max is 205) during my entire pull. Every time I would look over my shoulder for help I would see blockers from Sierra Nevada and Health Net and no sign of relief. Within a few minutes I caught the group and could drift back for a rest. This was the only break that seemed to be of any danger and was far enough away to worry about. All of the pro teams were represented and they were working only moderately well together. It was great to let the other riders know early in the race that we had the horsepower to be at the front moving the race along and chasing people down. I think that this was one of the times we gained a little respect along with Duke breaking into the trains at the end of the crit. (I'll let him talk about that) Before the crit, I overheard a few riders from Health net talking about us; saying good things, not bad! I was excited to see that we had been slightly feared even by a team that outnumbered us in riders by 5 to 1! During our cool down after Dinuba, Duke and I both agreed that for two juniors, we had really tore it up during the previous hour and a half of racing. I think that when we race again this next weekend, we will have a few spots reserved for us at the front of the field.

Duke Schimmer:

It's the first weekend of real racing for team swift and already we are doing great. After a stellar showing at the pine flat RR where we were present in numerous breaks as well as initiating a few of our own Nathan and I were looking forward to the crit in Dinuba on Sunday. Our game plan was to be present in breaks and perhaps have a go at the finish. During the race Nathan rode spectacularly, covering many of the breaks of the day and really being a major protagonist in the race. One of the highlights for me was getting in a break with my friend/training partner Sterling Magnell, even if it was for only one lap. With the race winding down and Laura yelling at me to move up I made my charge the front to set up for the finish. During a slight pause in the pace I was able to move up to a good position, just in time also because the big teams, i.e. Sierra Nevada and Health Net, were organizing their lead outs. With 5 laps to go I am in the bunch fighting to get on the back of the Heath Net train as Sierra Nevada I pulling hard at the front. So I make the decision to move past Heath net and on to the Beer train. I somehow bump my way into the Sierra Nevada train with 4 laps remaining. Picture this: five to six Sierra Nevada guys on the front, me on their sprinters wheel, and the Health net train on my wheel. Not surprisingly the Health net riders weren't happy with this situation. When I say not happy I mean they were yelling at me, yelling

at each other, bumping me, and swerving at me. They were eventually able to tear me away from the precious wheel I had worked so hard to get by grabbing me, yes physically grabbing me, and pulling me back. After such a drastic loss of momentum from being thrown backwards by the hip I had a little trouble regaining my spot in the group and with 1 lap remaining I was a little further back than I would have liked. The last lap was blazing fast with both teams, Sierra Nevada and Heath net, driving at the front. I entered the last corner in around 10th spot and was able to maintain my place and finish in the top ten. This race was really exciting for me especially because I was able to mix it up in the sprint, something I have never done in a pro 1, 2 race. Hopefully in the future I can improve on my finish. Till next time, later.-Duke

Rich Weir:

The course was still wet when we arrived in downtown Dinuba. After registering we discussed our tactics for the junior race. We decided that we would send one rider a time up the road and not drag any other riders with us. The field was small and was mostly made up of the Tieni Duro team. The race started with mostly dry roads and after 1 1/2 laps Duke attacked. He quickly got up the road. Nathan waited for another lap and then bridged up. I waited for the chase to die down a bit. A lap after Nathan attacked, I attacked and bridged to Nathan and Duke. We worked together and caught what was left of the field. We then were on the front of the pack for the rest of the race. With 2 laps to go I attacked. I was able to slip away from the field and win. Duke edged out Nathan for 2nd and Nathan picked up 3rd. The good thing, other than the sweep, was that we executed our plan perfectly. I really appreciate Duke and Nathan with me racing and coaching me. It was a lot of help. I look forward to the next race I can ride with the rest of the team. Overall we had a great day.