



Race Report #5
McLane Pacific Crit & RR, March 22-23
Madera Stage Race March 15-16

McLane Pacific Crit & RR

Laura's Notes:

Our first NCR (National Calendar Race) of the 2003 season and we took the junior field by storm. Saturday is the Criterium so we had the full squad enter the Junior event at 8am. There were 60 junior riders entered. I point this out because only two years ago there were sometimes less than 10 riders in a junior event. All the people making efforts to help develop the sport of cycling from the ground up have been doing a great job. The other efforts higher up the ladder are equally as important so these new riders have a place to move as they get older, but without the growth of the young riders there would be no new American's filling those spots in U23 or Pro Teams. So, great job teams, parents, promoters, sponsors, etc...

Our goal: To Win the race by racing aggressively as a full team. Team Swift attacked strongly though out the entire 18 lap race by sending one or two at a time. We won most of the primes along the way. But the Junior field responded well and they raced hard. I am glad to see this so their racing and development will need to rise to a higher level to match this squad who is currently leading the way. We have an advantage now, but I saw some great riding going on out there! I was proud of all the racers. We applied great tactics to make a break away. Even though we have a super sprinter, I want to see an aggressive race. We are not afraid of having the field end in a sprint but I would not have my riders sit around and wait for that even if we could guarantee this type of victory. That leads to negative racing and hinders their development in understanding true race tactics. Steven Cozza made some really hard attacks showing he has great fitness. Rich Weir, as our 15-16 year old, is riding great too and able to contribute to the efforts of the 17-18 year olds. They all show they have great race savvy, think about team work, and love racing their bikes.

Text Book finish. Nathan led the field with one lap to go doing a total sacrifice for the sprint train. Brady came through for the final speed lead out and Duke then burst by in an amazing

sprint for the victory. Brady was able to grab a wheel after his lead out to finish an amazing 3rd. So Team Swift had two riders on the podium.

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| 1 st Duke Schimmer | Team Swift |
| 2 nd Daniel Holloway | Ofoto |
| 3 rd Brady Harter | Team Swift |
| 4 th Steven Cozza | Team Swift |

There is also a NCNCA Junior Points Series for the different junior categories. Our Elite riders are unable to attend most of the summer events since they follow the National Circuit, but I think it's a great series for the regional riders. Rich Weir placed 2nd in the 15-16 year old category and will make this series one of his 2003 goals.

In the Senior Criteriums later in the day Rich rode comfortably in the category 3 field and made a couple strong attacks off the front. Assistant Team Swift Coach Andrew Botterell, riding for his local team of Eastside Cyclery, placed 5th in the cat 3 event. Coach Laura was busy getting the download from the Cat 3 race and missed the start of the women's pro race. Oops. But was able to chase back on, race hard, and finish 10th. The Category 2 event was interesting to watch. I was glad to see the cat 2's have a separate event. I think it is unfair they have to race the top pro's and pay all the pro entry fees for less opportunity to recoup the costs. I am not saying they can't place. I wanted to see how the juniors would respond and race as a team in this field since I knew they could. Normally in a pro race it's just hang on and race for yourself. Unfortunately they did not apply the same team effort this afternoon. They each individually rode very strong. The upside is that I am very pleased with their race fitness and how they can perform in a large cat 2 field. The downside is that I wanted them to see that if they would have worked together they could have controlled that race as well. They will not be able to control harder races with the same tactics in the junior fields. This is just a great learning curve and better to understand these tactics before we get to the more important Junior World Cup Series Events. The first of the series starts with The Sea Otter Classic April 10-12 in Monterey, Ca.

Sunday: The RR was a blur to me. A group of us came down with food poisoning from some unknown source this morning. Great job to the riders who went out and just did the event. All I can say is the day and the drive home was tough with both Andrew and I ill.

Nathan Miller:

The focus of this weekend for me at McLane was not to place, even though it is a very important race, but to prepare for Solano and ultimately Sea Otter. I definitely got a good workout, and I learned several things as well.

The first race was the Junior race. The field size was great and everyone was really aggressive. We constantly had a rider or two off of the front, but we could never get anything to stick. We missed a few key opportunities to attack, like when a break was just being pulled in and everyone slowed down. Duke pointed this out as well. I thought during the race that I would have to go as soon as the group was caught, but many times I found that I didn't have the legs to follow through. (I didn't feel super great this race) After fifteen laps of racing that amounted to

no net result, I thought that I had a break that could stick. There were only three laps to go and I had slipped away by myself. I had the gear turning well, and it seemed that everyone was looking around deciding who was going to chase. I hoped that they would all sit and stare at each other for just long enough that I could establish a considerable gap. Another rider tried to bridge across and was promptly followed by the entire field though. I sat on the other rider's wheel when he rolled up to me and hoped he might drag me to the line. We were caught just a few moments later though and my hopes of placing were over with one lap to go. I rested for a quarter of that lap and then began to lead out the field. I am pretty sure that the order was me, Brady, Duke, Daniel (not on TS), and then Steve. Just before the final straight away I was beginning to feel it and Brady pulled through to finish it off. (I was hoping to be able to take them all of the way to 200m to go, but again I wasn't quite on it. Luckily, Brady was able to see this and willing to give up his number one position and take over for me) There is no telling what will happen in a sprint if it isn't started from a high speed. If you begin your sprint already close to top speed, then not much movement of the riders can occur. Conversely, if you start from only twenty some miles an hour, there is a greater risk that riders will be able to come around you.

The Cat 2 race was quite possibly the most frustrating race I have ever been in. I felt unbelievably better that race, but I could never do anything until I didn't have 100 riders blocking my way. I was constantly trying to move up, but usually to no avail. I was so angry at the large field, and constantly twisting course, that I was about to pull out of the race. After five to ten laps I finally got lucky and found an opportunity to use my momentum to shoot up to the front while everyone else slowed. I was so happy that I just continued to go straight off the front of the field. Nobody went with me and the field began to chase almost immediately. I got swallowed up and shot back about 20-30 positions in the field and didn't want to loose my place again. I spent a few laps battling up to between 10-15. Then, the rider next to me shifted and began to stand up. I got on his wheel right away and we took off. As soon as his pedal stroke began to look a little forced, I pulled through and told him "let's go for it". He seemed very willing to work with me. I ended up in a bad position pretty quickly though. We hadn't gotten too far from the field and a rider had already bridged to us. I had just finished a long pull, when the rider sprinted by us. The rider that I had originally broken away with sprinted off of my wheel and onto his. I obviously didn't have any kick left to catch up, since I was putting everything into staying away from the field. After the race, Laura pointed out how alert you have to be, even in a break when you don't think any riders are around you. If I would have seen him ten seconds earlier, then I would have been able to grab his wheel, but as he came flying by it was too late. This also made me think about one other thing. Since I started racing with Pro 1,2's I have put 100% into every break. The other riders are really strong and I want to put in my share of the work and make it stick. I had totally been forgetting to think about what my main goal of the break was. Was I supposed to cover it and sit on, or drive it to the finish? Did we even have a chance of staying away? I guess that I had gotten too used to Cat 3 races, were you could race all out and never have to worry about getting too tired to make the next break. This thought had crossed my mind once very briefly, but I never really took the time to think about it until now. After getting caught, I stayed at the front until the field swarmed up the sides and pushed me to the back. I was stuck here until the end of the race. Like I said, this race was really frustrating. I didn't like this race at all, even though I had raced ok, but I felt like I could have done much better. At least it brought me one step closer to Sea Otter.

Steven Cozza:

The racing has began and with a bang. The Mclane crit was the first race of the weekend and it was fast and fun. Team Swift kicked up the pace in the Junior race taking a 1st, (Duke Schimmer) 3rd (Brady Harter) and a 4th (Steven Cozza). We road this whole race like a team covering and starting almost all the attacks. When it came down to the finish of the race the last lap I tried to get away. This failed so the team quickly set up a lead out for Duke. Nathan was front man then Brady then Duke. I was the sweeper.

Later on in the day we geared back up for the Cat. 2 race. There was a lot of money involved in this race so I had to be at my very best the whole race. The second lap was for a \$100 dollar sprint and I decided to go for it. I just missed it by a mere foot. If I did not have my junior gears on I would have won the sprint but I was too spun out in my 14 and I was beet by just a foot. The rest of the race I was just working on covering a lot of the breaks and trying to get in a few. I felt really good the whole race and am definitely feeling stronger as the year goes on. In this race I proved to myself that I am a good sprinter and that I need to just get better positioning for when the sprint comes around. I learned from this day that Yes, you have to be strong to be a good sprinter but more important is just being in a good position for when the sprint starts. Positioning is everything.

The next day was an extremely long road race. It was a 96 mile day with only a few rollers. The race started and it was already raining. The first 10 miles a break got away with about 7 in it and for the next 30 miles we attacked and took pulls to try and bring it back. I tried to bridge up to it a few times but failed. I knew then that the only way we could bring them back was by just rotating pulls. We finally brought them back and the attacks began again. I got in as many as I could but none of them lasted for more then a minute. At the 70 mile mark I started to wonder where the heck my team was and drifted to the back of the pack to find out what was going on. I found Duke and he told me that they had missed their start. I rode to the front of the pack and started racing again. By the time we came to the finish I had felt that I had gotten a great workout and decided not to get in the dicey sprint. My plan for this race was to get a great workout in preparation for the big race this coming week the Solano stage race. Well I will talk to you later and thanks for reading.

Brady Harter:

Finally the Mclane weekend was upon us and I was really excited to race because for some reason this weekend of racing really gets the season rolling for me. So we all started with the junior criterium in the morning and I was really a great race probably one of the most aggressive and fun races I have ever done. There was probably a group of like forty to fifty guys and we raced hard the whole time. From the gun Nathan, Steve, Duke, Rich and I attacked and counter-attacked. It was sweet. Even though we were unable to actually get a way and start a break we were still able to get the victory by racing hard which is the most important thing. With about a lap to go we all realized that we weren't going to win alone so Nathan pulled for about a half lap then I took over and took our sprinter Duke to about 100 meters and that was it. Duke won and I was still able to get third. It was sweet to be

able to get two on the podium. The whole team worked hard for that one. I am sure this is just one of the many wins we will have in the coming year. Now this week we have Solano Stage Race where we race against riders like Jon Vaughters and Chris Horner which will be crazy. It should be pretty easy. SURE!! Talk to you all soon.

Duke Schimmer:

With the racing season in full swing now the team was faced with our first big race and the first race that we would attend as a whole team. For me McLane Pacific is one of the races that I had looked forward to for the whole year. It always turns out big fields and has some very fast and competitive racing. The Junior race was the first race early in the morning. I was amazed to see the turnout. There were nearly 60 riders in the race! It was awesome to see this as a few years ago fifteen would have been a big field. Junior racing has really progressed in the past few years. We started the race with the plan of taking total control of the race and trying to get some of our men up the road. The race started out fast and aggressive with attacks, mostly from us, going all the time. We were definitely the watched team as almost all of our attacks were covered and we couldn't find the right combination to get off the front. With the laps winding down it was looking like it would come down to a sprint. With a lap to go the team amassed at the front with Nathan making a super fast pull to take Brady and I to the last corner. As Nathan pulled off Brady took over. For the past few years Brady has lead me to numerous wins with his amazing lead outs and I have come to respect his ability to get me in the right place at the right time. I also have a great respect for the sacrifice he makes in leading me out as he could have easily won the race himself. So at 150 meters to go I can sense that the riders behind me are about to jump so I make my move and am able to take out my second race win of the season. Brady is also strong enough after his blistering lead-out to hold on for third place. The win definitely has to go out to the team, to Nathan and Brady for the lead out and the rest for making strong attacks as we all worked so well together. The second race of the day was the cat.2's. It is unique to have a race that is only cat. 2 as most of the races we do are Pro 1, 2. The race didn't go as well as we would have liked. We were just not able to really make an effort as a team and we rode more as individuals. This is not the way the team should be riding. Even though we weren't able to mesh as a team during the race I was still able to pull off a 6th place finish. If we had worked together more I definitely think that any one of us could have been on the podium. Sunday morning came way too quickly and as I looked outside the weather looked dismal. As we drove to the race it began to rain heavily. It seems that no matter how nice it is on Saturday this race always has sh!#\$y weather on Sunday. Oh well! During the race I felt good despite the weather. After this weekend I can see that my form is right on target for Solano and Sea Otter. Till next time-later.

Madera Stage Race

Laura's Notes:

I like having the Team Swift riders attend the Madera Stage Race. This is an opportunity for developing riders to do all three types of races compacted into 2 days. Madera has a TT and Crit on Saturday and a Road Race Sunday. Unfortunately our Elite Squad of Cat 2's were not able to

participate this year. Last year the Pro, 1, 2 field had too many centerline violations during the road race. So either the entire race would be cancelled this year OR just the category with all the complaints. There was no junior event at Madera either, although I bet there add one now that the junior fields are growing so much. Rich Weir, 16 years old from Livermore, was our Team Swift representative. Fresh off his win at the Dinuba criterium we decided it was time for him to upgrade to senior cat. 3. Rich had about all the types of mechanicals you could have in one weekend. But that's part of racing too!

Rich Weir on Madera Stage Race:

Saturday morning brought heavy rain. Although it had cleared by my start time the wind was still very much present. I was eager to begin my first Cat. 3 race. After racing with the rest of the team this spring I have already learned so much from the older riders helping me out that I felt confident I could move up in categories. The TT was 10 miles long and completely flat. The wind was super strong with only one tailwind section. I placed about midfield overall for the TT. I think that with a few more TTs and more time on my TT bike I could do much better. The afternoon brought with it sunshine and misfortune. It was a crit that was about an hour long and again flat. I was racing quite well throughout the race. I had chased breaks and initiated one. With 5 laps to go I began to get ready to put in some attacks and as I was trying to achieve a better pack position I hit a pothole and flatted on the backside of the course. After half riding and half running to the pit I got a new wheel but the damage had been done. I was not given a free lap and finished closer to last place. I ended up moving up in the overall somehow. I was looking forward to the road race after putting the bad luck behind me. The road race was about 70 miles including the promenade and except for a few rollers it was flat. It started well. It was quick and fun. We then hit the back side of the course where the road was all chewed up. We were just about out of it when I looked down to see an all too familiar sight. My rear wheel was flat. On my way out of the group to the side of the road I hit another nasty hole. This proceeded to bend up my rim pretty badly. Since there was no support vehicle I immediately was aware that I would not be racing any more that day. I changed my tube and made my way to the feed zone. I then went back to the car, changed and we left. So, hopefully I will have better luck next weekend.