



Junior Cycling Development Program

P.O. Box 103 | Fulton, CA 95439 | www.teamswift.org

Race Report #8
Two Team Swift Riders Represent the USA in Europe

The USA National Team riders selected to race in Europe are:

Steven Cozza (Team Swift)
Alan Erickson (Team Swift)
Keith Norris
Clayton Peters
Tucker Brown
Craig Lewis

This Trip is from May 7 through June 6, 2003

Report #1

2nd Place Keith Norris
12th Place Steven Cozza

It was a dark and stormy night last night here in Izegem, Belgium were the six selected members of the Junior National Team are presently residing. We arrived early last Thursday from all geographic areas of the USA, and represent all the American walks of life; boy do the Euros have a misconstrued view of us Americans. Little do they know we have the same misconceptions of them. We are in the Upper West Side of the Compton (aka the small quiet town Izegem) and cycling is the life of this town. Cars are scatter amongst the thousands of bikes and mopeds, and are quite considerate of us cyclists. It is a dream come true, we are representing our country and doing what we love...making fun of Danny "The Saltinator", and racing our bikes, and experiencing what ever young cyclist wants to; a shot at the big leagues.

This past weekend we loaded up our four bullets and prepared to kick some Euro gluteus Maximums, and kick Euro Gluteus Maximums we did. Well on Sunday we did. On Saturday we learned a lot and accomplished nothing on paper but we learned enough to show the Euros that Americans aren't pushovers and that

they won't budge when they try to shoot around the outside. We discussed our downfalls Saturday evening at our team meeting and we learned what a "bullet" is. Danny told us racing in Europe is a battle, our legs are our guns, and we each only have four bullets in our guns, as where in America we could reload numerous times and we had the bullets to back it up. We left the table that evening with a rejuvenated spirit and the desire to take what we flew over here for, a top five placing. We didn't just want top five we wanted the whole top podium placing.

We set off early Sunday morning for a race in Holland, the race was Omloop den Kempen road race. The race was to be contested over the course of 123 km, and ninety kilometer loop with two fifteen kilometer loops around the town for a dramatic sprint finish in the Town Center. The race was underway with roughly 125 riders starting; only 45 would finish in the end. The race was quite fast, over narrow farm-to-market roads. The roads that weren't in the fields and were in the towns were littered with turnabouts and speed bumps, known as road furniture to the cycling community. Why is it called road furniture is obvious when 125 young men with raging hormones head directly at them on a four lane road, and then like cattle are directed to either side of the obstruction to a mere lane and a half. The game plan according to Danny was to keep our heads up, avoid any road furniture, ride in the front, avoid any big crashes, and to watch for any potential breaks. No sooner than 50 km into the race had Sweet Paradise begun to launch the attacks, and then more attacks. We made sure of it that there was a USA rider covering every move that was potentially threatening. Brown, Peters, Eriksson, Lewis, Norris and Cozza covered every break almost making it appear easy. Rest assured looks are quite deceiving, and if covering breaks wasn't a large enough feat the fifteen kilometers of cobble were sure to break us right?

Heck no, Cozza and Norris instigated the first real break with a Domo rider and managed to open up a respectable gap, but unfortunately that ended when the peloton picked up the pace ten miles an hour on the next cobble section. That was no small feat considering we were already cruising at a steady 41.5 kph! Norris and Cozza were caught, but Norris wanted to keep the pressure on, motoring away again with two more Domo guys. After Norris was established in the break USA went straight to the front to block and cover any unwanted attacks. Lewis covered the first attack which was unsuccessful and soon reeled back in. Cozza saw the next attack coming and without further thought attacked up the road, with three other guys who were about undertake the challenge of bridging a 45 second gap, and like a forty-niner looking for gold they succeeded, and they managed to not bring anyone with them. "When I saw that there was two Domo guys tag teaming Norris, I knew I needed to bridge up and help him," said Cozza. The remaining USA team members noticed the break had been established and went to the front to block. As soon as Cozza's chase group caught the leaders on the road, amongst them Norris K, they started working to keep the pace high. With 20 kilometers remaining the break had reached in excess of 30 seconds over the nearest chase group. "I knew that it was important to keep the pace up and to try and cover any attacks so Norris could save his legs for the

sprint," commented Cozza. As the race began wind down and the pace began to get wound up the breakaway was flying and the peloton didn't have a chance at a placing better than fifteenth.

With nearly 800 meters to the line a lone rider attacked the group and managed to get just enough of a gap over the quick responding Norris to hold on for the win. He was the lucky one because no one else could harness the head of stream he was charging with. He kept on powering, gapping the break with every pedal stroke, impressively finishing second, getting the US Junior National Selection Team their first podium finish this year in Europe. Close behind Norris was Cozza who held on through all the accelerations for a 12th place finish. The rest of the strong US squad came in with the main field. We were pleased with the results but we still crave what we came here for... the top of the podium.

Till next time... Peace in the Middle East.

-Logging off ... Steven Cozza and Tucker Brown
US National Team members

Report #2: Steven Cozza
Trophee Centre Morbihan , France
May 17 & 18, 2003

4th Overall General Classification for Steven Cozza
1st 7.5km Time Trial
6th 100km RR

This past weekend the Junior US National Team headed down south away from Belgium

to Race in the Trophee, Centre Morbihan, a two day three stage race in the region of Britania of France. We where all excited to not only race the French and other foreign teams but to be in the race with another US team Hot Tubes. We packed our bags and set off on our 7 hour adventure into France. This was my first time ever going to France so I was excited to go and on top of that race. The ride was very long but the whole way was very beautiful. We passed by wheat fields, mustard plant fields and cows. As we neared the town Locmane where are hotel was located we started to get into the hillier parts of France. After making many pee stops along the freeway we finally made it to our little town where we slept very well that night all dreaming of the race to come. The morning of Stage one, we rose from our little beds in our little hotel and went down stairs to eat our first French breakfast. Boy oh boy was it French. The morning meal consisted of a mound of French bread, ham slices, orange juice, and strawberry jam. The race was not until 2:30 so we went for an early morning spin to wake the legs up. After our ride we ate lunch packed our bags and headed off to the first stage.

Stage 1: Stage one had arrived and it was pouring cats and dogs. I was very stoked because I love to race in the rain and so where my teammates ha ha: We went over the course profile and race tactics with Coach and X pro Danny Van Haute. He told us that the race would be very dangerous because of the rain and that we must race smart at the front at all times and that we did. The Stage was 110 k with several climbs and rollers. In just the first 10k teammate Claton Peters unfortunately got a flat and had to go back to the team car to get a tire change when the race was going full speed ahead. He was not able to chase back on and had to leave the race. Many attacks where being launched coming from all the teams including the Hot Tubes team also from the US. With less than 30 k to go I drifted back a few positions to take a breather and take my vest off for it had stopped raining. As soon as I did that the winning break took off. I got to the front and they had already 45 seconds on the main peleton. I attacked and hammered the whole rest of the race but was never able to make any progress. The stage finished with six guys one of them being Jesse Anthony from Hot Tubes, already having a 1:40 on the rest of the 120 racers. I came across the line mad at myself for not being in the break and thought there would be no chance I could win the stage race. Later I had found out that Norris had crashed but was okay and finished. After we had a team meeting and Coach Danny reminded us that only six guys where really ahead of us and that we could definitely finish in the top ten because of the time trial stage to come. Stage one wasn't the best for the US but we learned a lot and had hope after the little pep talk with Danny.

Stage 2: Stage 2 was a 7.5k individual time trial on a rolling course. Since I am fairly good at time trials I was very excited to get this stage under way. After doing not so great in stage one I knew I had the fire to win the time trial. The squad suited up in our all aero equipment and made sure to make our start times. I ate one last Clif Shot and rolled to the staging ramp. We were sent off in one minute intervals and my goal was to catch the rider in front of me. The TT was only 7.5k so I hammered all out the whole way. I came across the line with the best time of 10:27 with my first European victory. I was so stoked to have finely delivered and I felt strong. The rest of the squad finished with very respectable times with Alan Eriksson, from Team Swift, had the second best time on the team coming in 18th with a time of 11:06. Chris our seigneur told me of the good news and we headed over to the podium to claim my trophy. I was all smiles as the French Cheered for me and the other two top three finishers. What an experience and I know there are more to come. After Stage two I moved into 9th place overall. Jesse Anthony was in 4th overall.

Stage 3: The last stage of the race was 100k long and consisted of rolling terrain. I new that if I wanted to move up in the GC I had to make an attack and break away. I rested the whole first half of the race saving it for my planed attack. The other US riders worked hard getting in breaks and covering. Our team goal for the day was to win the stage if it came down to a field sprint by

leading Norris out for the sprint. It rained the entire race and I new if I attacked with 18k to go it could stay away. I attacked on a wet twisty descent and opened up a gap when 9 or so other riders bridge up to me. We gained over 1:10 over the main peleton. Anthony and I drove the break hard trying to gain time over the chasing peleton behind us. I was told to rest up the last lap so that I could go for the stage win but I was beat by the time we came to the line and I finished in 6th place. After the race I found out that I had moved into 4th place overall and was very pleased with that result. Fellow American Jesse Anthony finished an outstanding 2nd place overall. What an awesome weekend two US riders finishing in the top five of a stage race in Europe. Our moral is riding high and we are all getting ready for the stage race to come in Holland known as Three Days in Axle. This is a Super Cup Race and there will be many strong teams to competing.

Until next time, Peace in the Middle East, Steven Cozza

Race Report #3

By Steven Cozza

22nd Int. Junioren Driedaagse van Axel - SC

Netherlands, May 23-25, 2003

[2002 results](#) [Stage List](#) [Start List](#) [Past winners](#)

The Stages

[Stage 1](#) - May 23: Terneuzen - Philippine, 102.5 km

[Stage 2](#) - May 24: Zuiddorpe ITT, 10.5 km

[Stage 3](#) - May 24: Axel - Axel, 108 km

[Stage 4](#) - May 25: Strijpen - Strijpen, 111.1 km

See the following website for more information:

<http://www.cyclingnews.com/road.php?id=road/2003/may03/axel03/axel034>

I just got back from the Super Cup race known as The Three Days in Axle This race was much harder then the previous stage race in France but I rode and felt very strong. The first stage I crashed pretty hard but managed to chase back on after 20k... my other teammates unfortunately did not. Therefore, I became the General Classification (GC) rider for the rest of the race. The following day was a Time Trial followed by a road race in the afternoon. I placed 7th in the tt which moved me up to 10th overall in GC. The last stage (stage 4) I finished in the bunch, but moved down a couple places into I think 13th overall.

The USA National Team departs Wednesday for the Tour of Loraine (which is another Super cup race in France). This race suits me more with 5 stages of hilly terrain and a hilly time trial the last day. Well, I got to go now. I just wanted to inform you on what was up over here. I hope all is going well at home and please say hi to the boys for me. Peace and I will cya soon. Steven C.

Race Report #4 by Steven Cozza

Final European race for Steven Cozza before returning home.

Tour de Lorraine Juniors – SC

France, May 29-June 1, 2003

[2002 results](#) [Stage List](#) [Past winners](#)

The Stages

- [Stage 1](#) - May 29: Nancy - Audun le Tiche, 109 km
- [Stage 2](#) - May 30: Piennes - Commercy, 107.2 km
- [Stage 3](#) - May 31: Audun le Roman - Nilvange, 105.3 km
- [Stage 4](#) - June 1: Contre la montre de Séréfange-Erzange ITT, 15.45 km
- [Stage 5](#) - June 1: Joeuf - Tucquegnieux, 91.3 km

<http://www.cyclingnews.com/road.php?id=road/2003/may03/lorraine03/default>

Team Swift Rider Placings for Tour de Lorraine

6th Overall GC

3rd in the Individual Time Trial

Tour de Lorraine Juniors - SC France, May 29-June 1, 2003

After a hard three weeks of racing it was time to leave for our last race. The race we had ahead of us was not just any race but the hardest stage race in Europe. The four day five stage Super Cup race is known as the Tour de Lorraine in France. We set off into the sunset with high hopes and a lot more experience than we had when we first arrived here. When we finally arrived we were stoked about how nice our Hotel was. This hotel in the little town of Briey was located by a lake and river. We all unpacked and were all very happy as we fell asleep to the sound of a nearby river.

The race was at our feet before we knew it and it was super hot as we raced through little French towns and over rolling hills covered with wheat. The first three stages were road races of around 110 kilometers. Since I started to come down with a little cold a day before we left I did not feel as sharp as I had in the previous races over here. After stage one I did not even think I would finish the next day but I told myself to suck it up and give my legs another chance for the next day. I felt a lot better by the time day three rolled around and I decided to attack with 20 kilometers to go. I gained forty seconds over the main peloton but with less than a kilometer to go I was caught. I was pretty disappointed because it was a big chance for me to strike gold but even though I didn't I was pleased because I had good legs. The next day was going to be a double day meaning two stages in one day. The fourth stage was a 15.498 kilometer time trial and I was really confident going into it. I ended up coming in third with a time of 18:55. After the TT I moved up to sixth place in the overall general classification. I could not believe it. With only one stage left that same day my goal was to either stay in sixth overall or try and move up. As the last stage started I knew right away that I would need to race at the front to make sure no one got away that was a threat to my place. Many attacks went but none stuck. As we came to the finish our sprinter Norris came to the front and sprinted himself into a 7th place in the last stage. The week was a great success and all the riders including Alan Eriksson, Craig Lewis, Clayton Peters, Keith Norris and Steven Cozza rode very well for the last stage race in Europe.

I new going into this trip that it would be very important for me to do well to set my standards for the rest of the season. After this trip I now understand why it is worth it to train hard. If you train hard and smart it will pay off eventually and that it has. When I arrive home June 3rd I will recover for a week and then continue my training for the big stuff to come like Fitchburg in Boston June 26 to the 29, Nationals in Texas July 3rd-6 and an eight day stage race up in Canada July 15th-22nd. I want to give off a big thanks for all those who have supported me and have read my race reports.

You can find results on the race at the link below.

<http://www.cyclingnews.com/road.php?id=road/2003/may03/lorraine03/lorraine035>

Until next time,

All is good as they would say in Belgium

Steven Cozza