



Race Report #20

San Rafael Cycling Classic Criterium

September 13, 2003

4th Place Duke Schimmer Team Swift Sr. Cat. 2
5th Place Nathan Miller Team Swift Sr. Cat 2

Nathan and Duke's Race Report:

San Rafael marked the end of the season for Duke and me. Actually, it was an extension to the end of my season. I wanted the Giro di San Francisco to be the last one, but who can pass up a \$1,500 prize list? So, it was one more week of racing.

We showed up to the race, got our numbers, and looked at the starting list. It was basically the same people that we were used to racing against (and beating). The field was full though, which meant that it would be a little faster than usual. Duke was absolutely ecstatic, just like I am about having to type for him, that the race started really early in the morning before it got hot. So, anyway, we did a few warm up laps and practiced what the enormous one man lead out train would be like. We decided that I would take the lead at the apex of the hill on the back side and shoot down the inside of the road. Just before the last two corners I would swing to the outside and then apex through the corner. I knew that it would be really fast through the final corner, and I wanted to take it so fast that nobody else could make it through without taking the same perfect line. With it all being single file through the corner like that, I would still be able to hang on for a good place and make some money. That was the plan, and the result ended up being pretty darn close. Here's what happened...

Duke and I both got good starts from the line and we were in the top twenty. They rang the prime bell a few times early on and I went for it once. I thought that I got it with a solo break attempt, but I guess some guy was off the front. I passed a rider a half a lap later that wore the number the announcers were saying, but he was just sitting up and it looked more like he was being dropped than going off the front. I guess that he must have taken off quite a bit earlier without me noticing though. I was bummed, but Duke ended up having a little bit better luck with the prime breakaway. He can finally take his turn to type and tell you what happened.

About a quarter of the way into the race I decided to test my legs out and take a flier. Well I guess that they felt pretty good because ended up getting a formidable gap over the field. I decided to go with it and try to take a few primes in the process. Apparently they decided to wait a few laps before they rang the bell. So after about five laps I hear the bell but the field was breathing down my neck. But I was determined to get the \$50. I dug deep and was able to fend off the pack and got the prime.

Once Duke got caught, I tried to go again. I got of the front with two other local Santa Rosa riders; Todd Weitzenberg (Rocknasium), and Brian Wright (NorCal). I thought that the three of us would be able to fly, and we did for a little while. I guess that the field realized how dangerous the break would be though and we were chased right away. I was really surprised when we were caught, because the catch took place on the finishing straight (slightly uphill) when I was flying on the front in my 52x13. I didn't expect such a hard chase for the three of us. A lap after we got caught, Todd launched another attack and I tried to go with him. I got boxed in though, and ended up missing the break of four that would end up staying away to the finish. I was upset that we wouldn't be sprinting for first, but I was still going to stick to the plan we had set up before the race.

THE LEAD OUT (FROM NATHAN'S PERSPECTIVE): With five to go, I moved to the front of the field, picking up Duke on my way. I tried to stay within the top 6 or 7 so that Duke would have the best draft possible. For the first couple of laps this worked fine and I was able to sit just on the inside of the field with Duke tucked in out of the wind. With about two to go though, we got swarmed and had to fight our way back to the front. I figured Duke would either hang on my wheel or find another way to get to the front, because I had to start really gunning for the front if I wanted to make it back up in time. I cut through every gap and corner I could and found myself on the front of the field again with one to go. I was on the outside part of the course now though, and there was no sign of Duke on my wheel. I was starting to think that he wasn't going to make it with $\frac{3}{4}$ to go, but then I realized Duke always likes to make it even more dramatic with his super-suave Mario Cipollini style fashionably late entrances. Sure enough, with one half a lap to go, right at the apex of the hill, I hear, "I'M ON!" I thought at that point that I wasn't going to be able to make it off the front, but I dove hard through the gap in front of me and just barely squeezed in between the field and the curb on the left side. We passed the lead rider in the field with about 15 feet left before we entered the corner. This was perfect, because we entered the corner with about a 3-5 mph advantage over the field and really began to pull away. Since we were in the middle of a really tight corner though, nobody could attack and get on our wheels. We had done a dirty little trick and come through the final corner clean. We flew through the final corner without ever placing our fingertips on the shiny aluminum brake levers. I didn't realize at that point that we had such a big gap over everyone else. We took the corner from outside, to inside, and all the way back up to the very outside. It was pretty tight with the perfect line and I knew that anybody on us wouldn't be able to take it, because they wouldn't have the angles right. I swerved to the right just a little to let Duke shoot through between me and the banners. He didn't come around me very quickly (at least not like his usual space shuttle launch). It was a perfectly executed move, and it worked even better because I was absolutely flying. I am absolutely certain that I have never done a lead out that was that fast. It was really cool. As Duke was next to me on the finishing straight, I heard a big pile up behind us (I told you they couldn't take it that fast!!!) The corner was at least 20-25 meters behind us at that point though, so I knew then that we were alone. Duke obviously came across fifth and I was able to soft pedal to the line and still take sixth by a couple of meters. It went perfectly except for the four riders that were six seconds in front of us. Too bad we didn't have a bigger team to help chase them back. With just the two of us though, it was good enough to be in a lot of the breaks, even though not the right one, and still blow all of those older riders away who couldn't even get a good enough lead out train going to get on our wheels.

AND NOW!!! THE FINISH FROM DUKE'S PERSPECTIVE: So we had the plan for the ultimate lead out and with 3 laps to go it was looking perfect. I was on Nathan's wheel and we were positioned comfortably in the top 10. All of a sudden the pack totally swarmed and I was pinched off of Nathan's wheel and found myself deep within the pack, exactly where I didn't want to be. So I regrouped and began making my way back to Nathan, who was still at the front. I really wasn't so successful and almost thought that I wouldn't make it. But I was determined to get up there and to not let Nathan down for all the hard work that he had been doing at the front. So with one to go I got the bit between my teeth, dove a few corners and latched myself onto Nathan's wheel. From there on in it was pure bliss. Nathan accelerated into the last two corners with speed that I had never seem come out of those skinny legs. We took a perfect line and

came out of the last corner in first and second with a bit of a gap over the field. I came by to take the fields print while Nathan was able to easily hang on for second in the field. Unfortunately there was that four man break that stayed clear so it was a fifth and sixth for Team Swift. Not a bad way to end our stint with the team. On that note I would like to say that riding for Team Swift has been the greatest honor and a privilege to have one of the greatest coaches. Thank you to all of the sponsors who have helped me get to where I am but most of all thank you to Laura Charameda, without whom, my success on the bike would never have been possible.

The Finish from Laura's Perspective:

Nathan and Duke have raced together all season throughout the California schedule and all the National travels of Team Swift for 2003. Their dedication to working as teammates really shows. They rode the course together in warm-up to figure out their lines and discuss the possible race tactics. What I like about these two is that they use their strengths to really work well together (I have noticed an increase in coercion as the price list increases.....hummm). They had planned to do well at this event for quite a while. They rode an aggressive race and my only disappointment was that they were not able to sprint for first place. I was standing between the final corner and the finish line. They came around the last corner so fast, just as planned, that I was really impressed. I think they did a great job and have a strong individual and team result to wrap up a very long season. They raced from January 1st San Bruno Hill Climb through this San Rafael Classic. Good job guys.