

Team Swift Race Reports January & February 2014

Race Reports for:

1. Cherry Pie Criterium
2. Valley of the Sun Stage Race
3. Snelling Road Race
4. Norcal MTB Race #1
5. Cal Aggie Criterium
6. Early Bird Road Race

January/February Top Results:

1 st Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 13-18, 4/5	Ben Cook
1 st Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 9-12	Luke Lamperti
1 st Place	Snelling Road Race	Juniors 13-14	Isaiah Chass
1 st Place	Cal Aggie Criterium	Junior Girls 9-12	Isabella Brunner
2 nd Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Junior Girls 9-12	Isabella Brunner
3 rd Place	Snelling Road Race	Juniors 15-18, 4/5	Jonathan Gunning
3 rd Place	Snelling Road Race	Juniors 13-14	Luke Lamperti
3 rd Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Junior W. 9-12	Isabella Brunner
3 rd Place	Valley of the Sun, GC	Junior W. 9-12	Isabella Brunner
5 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 9-12	Isabella Brunner
5 th Place	Snelling Road Race	Juniors 13-14	Gianni Lamperti
5 th Place	NorCal Race #1: Fort Ord	Varsity Boys	Eli Kranefuss
6 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Senior W. Cat 4	Emily Abraham
7 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 15-18, 1-3	Ryan Clarke
7 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 13-18, 4/5	Miles Daly
7 th Place	Cal Aggie Criterium	Juniors 13-18	Jonathan Gunning
8 th Place	Cal Aggie Criterium	Juniors 13-18	Miles Daly
9 th Place	Valley of the Sun, GC	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
9 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 9-12	Elliot Frankel
9 th Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
10 th Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Senior W. Cat 4	Emily Abraham
10 th Place	Snelling Road Race	Juniors 15-18, 4/5	Ethan Frankel
11 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Senior Cat 3	Ryan Clarke
11 th Place	Cal Aggie Criterium	Women Cat 4	Emily Abraham
11 th Place	Snelling Road Race	Juniors 13-14	Elliot Frankel
12 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 13-18, 4/5	Jonathan Gunning
12 th Place	NorCal Race #1: Fort Ord	Sophomore Boys	Ethan Frankel
13 th Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 17-18	Ryan Clarke
15 th Place	Valley of the Sun, GC	Senior W. Cat 4	Emily Abraham
15 th Place	Snelling Road Race	Juniors 15-18, 4/5	Miles Daly
16 th Place	Original Merced Criterium	Senior Cat 4	Jonathan Gunning

17 th Place	Early Bird Road Race	Senior Cat 4	Ethan Frankel
18 th Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Senior W. Cat 4	Emily Abraham
18 th Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
18 th Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Senior W. Cat 4	Emily Abraham
18 th Place	Cal Aggie Criterium	Juniors 13-18	Ethan Frankel
18 th Place	NorCal Race #1: Fort Ord	Varsity Boys	Griffin Wigert
19 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Senior Cat 5	Emmet Pfau
19 th Place	Early Bird Road Race	Senior Cat 5	Weston Drechsel
21 st Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
21 st Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 13-18, 4/5	Tomás Saldaña-Mitre
21 st Place	Cal Aggie Criterium	Juniors 13-18	Weston Drechsel
22 nd Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Senior Cat 4	Jonathan Gunning
26 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 13-18, 4/5	Cassidy Mountjoy
29 th Place	Valley of the Sun, GC	Juniors 17-18	Ryan Clarke
30 th Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors 17-18	Ryan Clarke
37 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 13-18, 4/5	Emmet Pfau
39 th Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 13-18, 4/5	Gianni Lamperti
41 st Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 17-18	Ryan Clarke
42 nd Place	Cherry Pie Criterium	Juniors 13-18, 4/5	Ethan Frankel

Rider Race Reports

1. Cherry Pie Criterium

2/9/14

Napa

Ryan Clarke

Age 18 Senior Cat 3

7th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 16-18 Senior Category 1-3

This year I had the pleasure of racing cherry pie in the rain. This was my third time at this race and I was somewhat nervous about racing in the rain. Cherry pie is usually the first big race of the year and that means people aren't used to racing in a field. I raced a little later in the morning with the juniors starting somewhere around 9:00am. I was a bit nervous but I knew it would go away once the race started. I was a behind schedule getting on the trainer and rushed to warm up. One of the race coordinators said they were about 20 minutes behind schedule so I planned to be at the start 15 min before the new start time. I did some efforts and went straight to the line. I got there only to find out they had started the race already and I was a lap behind. Someone said I could have a free lap so I jumped in when the field came back around. The "field" was really just four guys in the same team. I stayed at the back and waited until one of them attacked which I jumped on. Coming up the hill, I attacked them and split them in two and continued. The two that got dropped caught back on and their

whole team left me at the front. I rode tempo looking behind me often to watch for attacks. They attacked in the most predictable spots on the course so I was prepared to cover the moves. Toward the end I got tired and cold (I don't perform at top level in the cold) and two of them got away. On the last lap I was going to sprint the remaining two for third and the moto ref told me that I couldn't sprint against them because I was a lap down. Even though we lapped the three other dropped riders they placed me 7th when I should have been put 5th. I was somewhat disappointed by this, but there were only 8 people in the field and the race also served as a solid warm-up for the upcoming cat 3 race.

11th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Senior Category 3

The 3's race was after the juniors race and I brought a spare kit so I would have a dry set of clothes to change into. The race starts with a downhill that goes into a right hand turn. I was extremely surprised at how poorly many people took the corner and I was able to pass some people through it. The first attack came from a prime hunter and drew little response from the field. Another guy bridged but they didn't work well together and were almost brought back when two more guys jumped across. The original two dropped back not wanting to work and the two new guys started hammering. I noticed they were looking strong and had a decent gap so I jumped and started to bridge solo. I had almost caught them a lap later but the field was right behind me so I sat up so someone else would bring back the last 10 or so seconds. Unfortunately that never happened and I was too gassed to have another go so I just sat in and watched them ride away into the top two spots. I think when I attacked the field split so there was a small group remaining for the field sprint. With three to go, I worked my way toward the front and stayed there until half a lap to go when the guy on the front sort of gave up and I was swarmed. Within the next 500m I was almost crashed out three times and when I went to sprint I was caught out in the wind. I made up a little ground and passed a few guys but it didn't do much. I was disappointed at this race more because of how poorly and unsafe the race was than my placing. Sketchy field and placing aside, the race was exactly what I needed before I headed off to Valley of the Sun.
-Ryan

Ben Cook

15, category 4

1st Place Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 13-18 Category 4/5

I showed up to cherry pie thrilled for the new season and ready to have some fun at the races. I woke up that morning to find it raining pretty hard; I knew this would make an interesting race from the start. I got warmed up, and rolled to the start, and the field took a neutral lap. I dropped my chain coming up the hill, so I had to rush to the start. I fixed my chain, and rolled up just as the referee blew the whistle to

start. I rolled off and moved up quickly. I raced cherry pie with my teammates Miles Daly & Jonathan Gunning. Miles and I decided that I would work for him in the juniors, if he worked for me in the senior 4's.

There were 47 riders in the field, which was pretty good for a junior crit. Once I moved up, Limitless Cycling and Bear Development started making attacks. I countered one coming up the hill, and ended up in a break with about 6 other riders. Miles didn't make the break, so I had no way to help him out from up the road. At this point I was racing for myself, unless we got caught.

We rotated in pace line for some time and two of the riders dropped off. All of the main riders were in the break with me, so it wasn't too hard to stay away. As we came up the hill with three to go, I made a move, and only one rider chased me. He and I worked hard together for the remaining laps. Two riders were about to catch us at the bottom of the hill coming in for the final sprint, so my break mate pulled hard and gave me a lead out so that we didn't both get caught. It was a very selfless move on his part, and I'm very happy that he read the race situation and helped me out. I came across the line with nobody at my sides, with my break mate in second place behind me. I was very happy that I had won my first race of the season, and went back to the car to change and get ready for the senior cat 4 race. All in all I had a lot of fun, and was glad that I could race with a teammate and have such a great race.

-Ben

Ben Cook

15, cat 4

DNP, Cherry Pie Criterium, Senior Category 4's

I had been waiting quite a while for Cherry Pie, as I was feeling ready and anxious to race. The juniors race prior the cat 4's that day had gone well for me, so coming into the 4's I was pretty excited.

The race went right from the gun, and I found myself a nice spot near the front.

I have had issues in the past with not knowing how to move around a field, and not being able to hold a wheel. I came right around the first corner moving fluidly through the field, and I was very happy that I could move throughout a field of riders better than previously. On the 2nd lap or so, a rider attacked, so I decided to chase. He and I stayed off the front for a lap or two, but we were soon drawn back in. Right as we got caught, another attack came up the hill. It wasn't super fast paced, so I could jump right with it. This time two new riders joined me, and the same situation happened.

We were caught after a few laps. I then realized that I was working too hard, and these moves weren't going to stay.

I sat in for the next 5 laps or so, and the race just moved along at a nice tempo pace. So with 5 to go, a rider made a fast move up the hill, and I came around the corner on his wheel with a small gap between us and the field. He began to sit up as we came around the corner, so I sprinted out of the corner around him. I stayed off the front for some time waiting for riders to bridge up, but the field just stayed some

15-20 seconds behind me for the whole time. I had to dig deep out there on my own, but nobody would join me. I was eventually caught with 2 to go, so I sat in the field and got a nice rest in. I was feeling good coming in with one to go, when I flatted coming down the hill. At this point there was no way to get back in, so I got off my bike, and began my walk back to the finish. My teammates Miles, Gianni, and Luke came down the hill to take my bike and shoes. Although it was a ways back to the finish and our team car, and walking in socks was not the best it was better than ruining my cleats! This is where I was really happy with my team. The entire day they had been so helpful with getting me off to the start, and Coach Laura made sure I was all set and gave me some tips for racing in the rain. Also, they had some great cheering while I was out on the course. As we were walking back, I mentioned that my feet hurt, and this is when Miles looked at me with a smile and said "I'll carry you!" I just laughed, but he was serious! So Gianni carried my bike, Luke carried my shoes, and Miles carried me!

I was so thankful that everybody was so helpful, and even though I flatted out, I had an amazing day and a great season opener. I came back to the team tent and talked with my coach about the race, and gave her and the team a huge thank you. In the end I'm really happy with the way that Cherry Pie turned out, and am hoping to compete in it again next year.

-Ben

Jonathan Gunning

12th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 13-18 Cat 4/5

I was felling okay the morning of the race. I was still starting to get back into shape after taking a late off-season and had only started my training one month before. Even so I was keen to give it my best shot and see what happened. The race started out okay, apart from the weather, and I was staying with the main group for the first half of the race. Ben and some other guys were keeping a steady pace and started to shell riders off the back into smaller groups. At one point I noticed that Miles had started to fall back a little and I decided to go back and pull him up. I thought that if I did this we would have a better chance at placing well. I was able to help him back in the group but once I had done that it seemed like the group sped up, and I couldn't keep up. I left the group and ended up working with some other riders to finish 12th.

Jonathan

Jonathan Gunning

22nd Place Cherry Pie Criterium Senior Category 4

This was my second race of the morning and I started out totally soaking wet and tired from the juniors race. I had intended to just "stay with the pack" and get another race under my belt, but the race started out fast and I was "winded." It was a similar story as the peloton split into many small groups. I ended up working with one other rider and fighting it out to the end. Also, I am normally not one to

make excuses, but my bottom bracket was making some noise on race day and I had to tighten it a little. Long story short I had my coworker (a mechanic) take a look at it at the bike shop. He said it was so tight that I probably lost at least a hundred watts! This was the best news I had heard all day! It probably had nothing to do with it, but may have...

-Jonathan

Miles Daly

7th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 13-18 Category 4/5

Cherry pie was the first big race of the season so I was super excited about it. Until I saw the weather... Rain and wind! Good Cyclocross weather but Crits? I guess I would find out. I woke up earlier than usual and had my normal pre race ritual, some of which is top secret. Due to the rain the days before this race I had to ride indoors, I can never do good rides on the trainer so coming into Cherry Pie I wasn't feeling very strong. On top of that I fell during PE the week leading up to this race on my neck, which hurt badly. But I knew I had to race and do well for my team and myself. We warmed up and went to the start line. After a neutral lap we came back to the line and started. Right away I went to the front and hammered it the whole lap to split it up. Coming up the hill first lap an attack went and we all got on it, but when we started going down the hill kids decided to sit up and gap me off. This happened to me about 9 times, every time I had to jump to get to the wheel. Then a split happened, I was in a group of about 5 guys, which about 3 of which were limitless, and the other was my teammate Jonathan, luckily Jonathan is strong but is modest enough to help me. I was super thankful for the pulls and help he did. At this point in the race I was hurting badly, but every time I looked up I saw Jonathan looking back for me and helping me. I look forward to racing with him and also helping him when I can! Cherry Pie wasn't a good race for me personally but I was very happy that Ben got the win!

-Miles

Emily Abraham

6th place Cherry Pie Criterium Senior Women Category 4

I always look forward to a beautiful sunny yet chilly February day at the first race of the season: The Cherry Pie Criterium. However the weather this year wasn't exactly in favor of hosting a bike race. When I left my house on the morning of the race, I kept hoping that as we got closer to Napa the rain would let up and maybe, just maybe, the streets would be dry by the time my race started. Well my hopes didn't become a reality. Actually the rain not only continued on my way to the race, it began raining harder and it didn't stop. I arrived at the course early to watch my teammates race and so I would have plenty of time to get ready. The continuous down pour of rain and the

extremely wet streets made me beyond nervous. I watched the Junior 13-18 Category 4 boys do their race, luckily none of them crashed so after observing them I felt better for my own race.

About an hour or so before my race I put on my kit and hopped on the trainer to begin my warm-up. I felt excited and anxious as my start time drew closer. I took a minute to reflect upon my training over the winter as I was starting to warm up, I couldn't believe the first race of the season was already here. It seems like time went by so fast! After a painful 1-minute pyramid, I got off the trainer and rolled over to the start line for rollout. I was fortunate that Coach Laura decided to mentor the Category 4 women, having her out there with me during the race gives me a sense of comfort.

After doing a quick run through of the course, all the women lined up at the start line. The whistle blew and we all took off. I made sure to position myself well as soon as the whistle blew and I stayed near the front for the first lap. Then at the start of the second I took my turn pulling, I stayed on the front for the entire second lap which was a big mistake. When we began the third lap a woman came around me, I was exhausted from just taking so long of a pull and I should have moved back in the pack to catch my breath. Instead I stayed on the wheel of the woman, who was now taking a pull, but she was strong and she began making a small gap. I couldn't hold her wheel any longer so I dropped back and let someone else take a turn pulling. By the start of the fourth lap, the woman broke away from the pack so now we were all trying to bridge the gap. We started a rotating pace line to try and catch her but I think we were all taking too long of pulls so the gap just seemed to get bigger.

By the final lap it was a race for second place, it was an uphill sprint for the finish and unfortunately I was in too big of a gear so I couldn't turn the pedals over enough to sprint well. I ended up in sixth place. Overall this race ended up being tons of fun! I was nervous about the rain but it wasn't a problem at all and I think I learned a lot. I'm extremely excited for the rest of the 2014 season.

-Emily

Emmet Pfau

16 years old, Cat 5

19th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Senior Category 5

The cherry pie crit was my first race of the season so I was really excited to race it. I did not race it last year and I wish I had because it was dry unlike this year where it was raining like crazy. I didn't mind the rain; it made the race more fun and challenging. The race started with a neutral lap and I was at the front behind the mentor guy who showed us how to go around the wet corners. After the first lap we were off, I was in a good spot I was a little off the front for the first and second, then I tried to get back into the pack to have someone to draft off. I was unable to get back into the front of the pack because the other racers wouldn't let me in. I fell to the back and stayed there. My legs were hurting a lot and I couldn't find a comfortable spinning gear. I fell off the back a little. I was trying to catch another racer on the climb but put too much weight on the left side of my handle bars and fell over; I got back up and

continued the race. The race official told me I had one lap, I finished the lap and was not in the best of modes, I was hoping for a better placing. But I learned a lot from this race such as, don't go all out in the beginning unless you are prepared to and I was not. I had a lot of fun in this race and can't wait until next year and hopefully racing it in the sun and not the rain.

Emmet Pfau

16 old, elite cat 5

37th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 13-18 Cat 4/5

I wasn't sure if I would do this race. I was mad at myself because of my poor previous race, but I decided to do it. I was already soaking wet from the previous race so the rain wasn't a big problem. I didn't know how this race would go so I decided to just stay at the back of the pack. I stayed there for two laps then fell off and then caught two other guys who had fallen off. I stayed with them for two laps then the race official told us we had one lap left, we were all confused as to why but we continued. We finished the lap with a little sprint on the climb and then left the course. I stayed to watch the finish and then went and got out of my soaking wet kit. It was a pretty uneventful race for me but I was happy with my performance and it also helped me forget about my previous race.

-Emmet

Ethan Frankel

Racing Age 16, Category 4

42nd Place Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 13-18 Cat 4/5

It was early and cold and rainy. My legs were not yet in shape, and I wasn't very confident or focused for the race. I warmed up and did two pyramids under the dryness of the team tent. We rolled up to the start and did one neutral lap. It was only the second time in months that I had ridden in the rain and I took it very carefully. Then the race started. The pace was fast from the start and I quickly dropped back to about 30th. I took the corners very carefully and was not willing to take any risks. Before the end of the first lap, I bonked. A few other riders and I started a small pace line. We didn't gain any ground, but lost a lot.

At the end of the third lap, we were pretty split up and I finished near the end of the group. We were pulled from the race after only three laps. This race was good learning experience for me. I wasn't prepared to go the race after little training the week before, and I was mentally out of it. The next races, I will prepare correctly and stay focused in order to do well.

-Ethan F

Cassidy Mountjoy

16 yrs old, Cat 5

26th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 13-18 Category 4-5

This was my first criterium race and it was absolutely pouring! The race went super well and I had a blast. If I were to race again, I would spend more time warming up and cooling down. Also, I would try harder to stay up in the pack which would make drafting easier. I had lots of fun at cherry pie and look forward to my next race!!

-Cassidy

Tomás Saldaña-Mitre

15yrs old Category 5

21st Placer Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 13-18 Category 4-5

It was my first race and the whole race was a learning experience. Also the rain and cold was an exciting aspect especially for my first race. As for racing with the team, it was fun seeing that many racing together, but at the start of the race, many of us were split up so I will have to wait to directly race with my team mates.

-Tomas

Luke Lamperti

1st Place Cherry Pie Criterium Junior 9-12 boys

Waking up to a very exciting morning I jumped out of bed and ate something, then left for Napa's cherry pie crit. After some hard warming up, the race was about to start. As the whistle went off I was super happy to get moving after sitting in the rain for a little while, although luckily I have such great teammates they held an umbrella over me at the start line. After going down the hill we went around the corner and as the mentor pulled off there was an attack I jumped on it and then I made a counter into a solo break. Going into the last lap I still felt good. I ended up staying off the front and going on to win. Thank you very much team swift for getting me to this point and always supporting me.

-Luke

Isabella Brunner

5th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 10-12 boys/girls (1st girls only)

It was a cold and rainy day. Not as cold as last year, but a steady downpour of rain. I was the only girl at the front amongst the boys. I was a little nervous because it was my first time riding a race in the rain. I was adjusting to the rainfall in my face and made sure I wasn't directly behind other racers' roostertails. Eye protection (Thank

you Smith eyewear) was essential. My race was only two laps and I had only one other female competitor in my age category. I was concentrating on not crashing, yet I passed a few boys that were being cautious on the downhill. On my way up the hill on the final lap, I could hear every one cheering for me. I finished fifth overall, but I placed in my category to take home a cherry pie, yum!

-Isabella

2. Valley of the Sun

2/21-23/14

Phoenix, AZ

Valley of the Sun -- Junior Category 17-18 Reports by Ryan Clarke

Ryan Clarke

18 years old, Senior Category 3

13 th Place	Valley of the Sun, Time Trial	Juniors 17-18
41 st Place	Valley of the Sun, Road Race	Juniors 17-18
30 th Place	Valley of the Sun, Criterium	Juniors 17-18
29 th Place	Valley of the Sun, Overall G.C.	Juniors 17-18

Stage 1: Time Trial

I was looking forward to the warm, sunny Arizona weather after racing in the rain at cherry pie. I drove down again the year and met everyone at the time trial course a day early to get ready for the next day. I felt really good and did a little less than I usually would do so I didn't tire myself out before my race. I got a good night sleep and arrived at the TT two hours early. I had all of my stuff set up quickly and had time to relax before my warm up. I felt really good warming up and after my intervals I rode around before I got in line. I started explosively and got into a good rhythm really fast. There were no TT bikes allowed this year which was to my advantage since I'm able to ride well in my road position. I had one little moment where I lost focus for three seconds and accidentally backed off, but I got right back on track. My turn around was pretty good and with around 5km to go I ramped it up and ended up completely empty at the line. This was definitely my best TT yet and I placed close to some of the top juniors on the country which really made me happy. I'd like to say thank you to my dad who drove me all the way to Arizona and back from Petaluma and to Andrew Christensen for loaning me super aero wheels for the time trial. Overall I listened to my body well and things sort of came together all on their own to give me a good time.

Stage 2: Road Race

I got another really good night's sleep (which I usually don't get in hotels) and recovered well from the TT which gave me decent legs for the road race. I had plenty of time to warm-up and rollout and got a nice place right on the front of the start line. The race started fast with lots of attacks on the first lap. A break of a few guys went but I didn't chase knowing I would come back. On the top of the hill at the end of the

first lap we caught them. The next two laps were hard. People were attacking like crazy and the major teams just wouldn't let anyone go. I spent most of my time riding wheels and I did a good job of staying out of the wind and not chasing anything by myself. The pace was high going up the hill to the start finish the next two times and same as last year, I fell off the back and managed to chase back on both times. On the start of the last lap, while I was chasing back, a break of three went and the field was neutralized before they were brought back so they ended up gaining three minutes on us. I got back in the field and with 4km to go, I attacked and got away cleanly by myself. I knew I would have trouble once the pace got high so I tried to give myself a head start or maybe stay away altogether. I should have just sat in until the line because the pace in the field was slow enough until they started chasing me, but I was trying to get a stage result instead of focusing on my GC placing. I ended up getting caught and dropped and I lost a minute on the field.

Stage 3: Criterium

I recovered well again from the road race and had another good warm-up before the race. I broke a pedal on the first lap and luckily I brought a spare and was able to put a new one on and jump back into the field. The race was a flurry of attacks and nobody ever got a gap. It was extremely fast and I don't think I really ever left my 52/14 gear combo which is the hardest gear juniors can use. I had to constantly fight my way to the front of the race and with one lap to go I was inside the first 15 or so. I got bumped off a wheel into the wind and was passed a lot before I could find shelter again. By that time it was too late and I had to settle for a pack finish. I felt I had a pretty good race and while I didn't place super well in the road race or crit I had a lot of practice racing by myself against teams with four to six guys. I'm satisfied with my tactics (minus my attack in the road race) and how well I stayed hydrated throughout the whole event. Thanks to Coach Laura, Ben and Emily who gave me their support while I was racing and again to my dad, without whom I would have the opportunity to race bikes.

=Ryan

Valley of the Sun -- Junior Category 15-16 Reports by Ben Cook

Ben Cook

15, cat 3

9 th Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 15-16
18 th Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 15-15
21 st Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors 15-15
9 th Place	Valley of the Sun, Overall G.C.	Juniors 15-15

Stage 1: Time Trial

I was coming to Valley of the Sun in my first ever stage race, ready to learn and have a good first experience. I was very excited going into the time trial, and wanted to make the best of my time in Arizona.

I got warmed up on the trainer, put my race wheels on, and made my last set of jumps on the road. I rode over to the start house, and was soon called up. Coach Laura gave me a quick good luck, and told me to really go for it. So I walked into the start house, got clipped in, and before I knew it, the official had her hand up with all 5 fingers extended. Then 4, 3, 2, 1, and she finally put her hand into a fist and pointed it off towards the road right as I flew off the start ramp. I quickly shifted up gears, and within 3 minutes, I was at TT heartrate pace.

I found a good position in the drops, which was important as the section going out was slightly uphill. However, there was a tailwind out, and headwind back, so the speeds going up and down the hill were pretty much the same. I passed the rider who started 30 seconds ahead of me relatively soon, and then I passed the rider who started one minute ahead of me. I saw a rider way down the road, but who was putting in a real fight. I focused in on him, and kept up a steady TT pace, but 7 miles in, at the turnaround, he was still just about 50 meters ahead of me.

I was about 100 meters from the turnaround point when I was passed by a rider from Team Specialized. He came into the corner, but not as wide or as fast as I was planning too, so I took it wide, and we came around the corner side by side. Just ahead was the hill that Coach Laura was telling me about. It was a slight rise with a tough headwind; this was the time to power through it. So I dug deep up the hill, and passed the Specialized rider back. Once over the hill and on a slight downhill, I resumed my TT pace. Still very painful, but I didn't want to blow too early, since I was just over halfway there. One thing that is extremely important that I ended up forgetting is to put the distance on my Garmin, so I always knew how long I had to go.

I knew that the course was exactly 14.4 miles, and if I had put the distance on my computer, I could have seen this and judged my timing a lot better.

So the Specialized rider passed me again, and I continued on with my own race. I soon passed that rider that I had seen way down the road, and tried to free myself of distractions and get back to the race. I was starting to hurt a lot more now, but I kept up the pace, as I knew that there couldn't be much longer. There was one time, about 4 miles out, when I caught myself starting to lose focus and ease up. I remember coach telling me that whenever I began to sit up, I needed to click up a gear and keep it moving. I did just so, and was in lots of pain, but for some reason my heartrate wouldn't get over 187 bpm. At this point I had just seen the tree line marking 2 miles to go, so I was probably 3 miles out, and was in serious pain. I just focused on the road directly ahead, and went full gas. I had my hands over the tops in a mock-aero bar position, as at this point there was a tough headwind and I needed to keep a low profile. I was feeling strong and was still putting out lots of power in this position, but I would still switch to the drops whenever I needed to really lay it down, as I am very comfortable in the drops and they are a much more powerful position. But for now the aero trumped the power, and I could feel when I needed to switch, and when the drops were slowing me down.

I continued to ride free of distractions, just softly focusing on the road around me, giving it my all. I passed the tree line and could only really catch a glimpse of them on my sides, as I was completely zoned in. At this point if I were to ease up even one bit, I would blow. So I just kept laying it down and wanted to leave nothing on the road.

The wind picked up and I came down the hill for the final 500 meters. I was spinning out, and put my hands over the tops and instantly felt myself accelerate. I put out everything I had, and when I saw the 200 meter sign I was practically toast. I was now in my drops, gave it one last push, and then got out of the saddle for my sprint.

The second I started sprinting I flew forward, and gave it all that I had left. Finally, I threw my bike over the line and just coasted for a while. I had given it everything. So I got off my bike on the side of the road and sat there for a while in the parking lot.

"Nice job! Want some water?" I heard from my right, as my dad came to greet me. I could barely murmur a "Sure." so he handed me a bottle. I thanked him and headed out to go for a spin, when I met my friend Garrett from Northern California out on the road. We had finished within a minute of each other, so we both went on a cool down spin, before heading over to results.

"Hey Ben! You're in 9th!" I heard from my right, as Rupert, another friend from my area came to talk with Garrett and me.

"Yes!" I said back instantly. I went over to congratulate Garrett, as he was in 4th, and Rupert was in 10th, just behind me. I was very happy with my placing, as this is only my first year in 15-16's, and I already had a top ten in a large race.

In the end, I was very happy with how the day turned out. I got off to the start at a great time and had no issues warming up. Coach Laura and my dad were very helpful throughout the day, and I gave it my all and ended up with a 9th place.

-Ben

Stage2: Road Race

After having a great time trial the previous day, I was very happy and felt good coming into the road race. This was my first ever road race in a stage race, and I had a long talk with Coach Laura the night before on how to play the chess game of stage racing. I was in 9th place, but that wasn't high enough to only concern myself with general classification, so we planned for me to go for the stage win.

We got to the race early in the morning, and found a good parking spot to set up at. I got my kit on, and spun over to registration with coach. We talked some more on my plan for the day about how to try to go for the winning move. I was to do as less work overall, but keep an eye on opportunities to go with moves as the GC contenders battled for time. As my goal was to go for a stage win instead of solely focusing on time then I wouldn't need to do as much work to keep my legs fresher for the finish. In the end if I did stay away and finish well it would be a win-win situation for me. Also, by not doing too much work in any single break and if that group got caught, then fine by me, I reshuffle the cards and try again later. Or so this was my plan going into the day.

I lined up at the start, gave my spare clothes to my dad, and he gave me a "Good luck, remember your plan." before the start. So I lined up at the start, and we were

soon called to staging, where I ended up starting in the second row back. The official gave us the course profile and rules, and said the ever famous words "The race will start on the whistle" and we all got in our drops, and prepared to take off.

The race went right out of the start. Specialized immediately moved to the front, and I found myself a spot 10-15 riders back, where I could try to save some energy in the early stages of the race. Specialized and Monster Media soon started going at it, pulling attacks left and right, and I was caught right in the middle of the field, getting pushed all around. I knew I had to get up there, so I followed a Monster Media rider's wheel up the right side of the main line. His teammate was the GC leader, and this guy was going to kill himself for his teammate. As we were still 6-7 riders back, an attack flew from a Limitless Cycling rider, and one other from Landis Trek. So the Monster rider went to the front and set a fast pace, taking an unusually long pull. Both of the riders off the front were less than 2 minutes from the race leader, one of them within 30 seconds. If those riders stayed away, one of them would have easily taken the GC lead from Monster Media. So when the Monster rider flicked for me to come around, I just stuck on his wheel. His teammate was still with us, and the Limitless Cycling rider was just going for the stage, he came in 20 seconds behind me in the time trial. So I figured that if Monster wanted those riders back, then they could go ahead and get them back, but that was not my job. I knew that 2 riders couldn't stay out alone in the wind for the whole race, and even if I didn't chase they would have to be pulled back. And sure enough, as soon as I denied a pull, a Specialized rider pulled through to the front.

We came around the corner to come onto the back stretch, and the break was still away. Those riders clearly were strong, but we never lost sight of them. They had 1:30 on us at most, and specialized and Monster were keeping them right there. We came over the "climb" at a pretty fast pace. Coming over, I talked to a friend from Northern California who I often race with. He was sitting in 4th place GC, so we agreed that he wanted GC, and I wanted the stage, so we would work together if we got off.

It was there on the downhill, in all of the places, that Specialized made a big move. I was too far towards the front at the time, and couldn't quite cover it in time. Another move came from my friend, who also rode for Limitless Cycling. Both the Specialized rider and my friend were high in GC, but I didn't know enough at the time that this was the move to chase. Then, another move came from the race leader from Monster Media. This was an all GC move, but the whole field was strung out, and by the time these moves came around me I was chasing a bullet. This was one thing I learned during the day was to stay a bit back. If you are in the first 5 spots, and a rider 5 spots behind you attacks, he is going to have way too much speed to chase at that point in time. So stay at least 10 riders back during critical moments of a race, so you don't end up missing a move, bridging on your own, or getting strung out and wasting energy.

A few other riders went with Monster Medias move, but they were all GC riders. At this point I didn't know how important this move was, and Specialized and Monster set up a block, that a lot of riders didn't realize the effect of. At that point the break was gone. Throughout the rest of the race a few other riders and I tried to chase, but couldn't get anything going. I stayed in a group of about 20 riders, with the break of

six (the moves from Specialized, Monster, and Limitless came together, and joined the two riders that had been away since the start) up the road, and the rest were somewhere behind us.

There were a few times when some of the other 15 year olds in the race, who were also going for the stage, tried to make a move and get off the front. I countered one of these moves, and ended up about 100 meters off the front of our group. But I looked ahead and saw absolutely nothing. The break was way too far ahead at this point, so I waited up the road to see if any riders would bridge up to me, and maybe we could finally get something going to have a chance of chasing the break. We still had about 10 miles of racing left, so there was a shot of making the catch. But nobody bridged up to me, and when I was caught, Specialized continued to fool the rest of the group into thinking they were chasing, when in reality they were letting their rider get away with the break. A 15 year old rider from B.Y.R.D.S. and I kept trying to make something go, and maybe we could still catch the break as we came around the corner onto the back stretch. But nothing was working, and Specialized continued to keep us slowed down.

But I guess they decided the break was staying, because they then began to pull some moves on us. With one of their riders up the road, and 4 of them in my group of 20, there was almost no chance. But everybody gave it their best effort to chase their moves, and we kept it together. We turned for the final climb, and I saw two riders, one of them being Specialized's main rider, who must have missed the break (or so I thought at the time. Turns out he lost a cleat, and was only clipped into one foot, so Specialized sent their next best rider into the break) and another rider from Mt. Bora junior team, lining up next to each other. They began to ramp up the pace all the way until the end. I dug as deep as I could, and ended up finishing right in the middle of my group of 20 and getting the same time as them.

In the end, I had a great race and learned a lot. For a first ever stage race and being at the young end of my category, I am very happy with how I raced, and even though I didn't know too much when I came to the start, I finished knowing much more when I came across the line, which is the whole point of this experience, so I'd consider it a successful day! Coach Laura and my teammate Emily were still out racing, so I went over to give feedback to my teammate Ryan, who would be racing the 17-18's later that day.

Once coach and Emily got back we talked over our races, and I got to absorb all of the information I gathered from the race. From sitting a few spots back as to not miss a move, to going with the big GC move, I feel like I learned a lot and know how and why to use these new tactics. I went home and relaxed, and began to prepare for tomorrow's criterium.

-Ben

Stage 3: Criterium

It was the final day of the Valley of the Sun stage race, my first ever stage race. Today was the criterium, and after a successful time trial and mid-pack road race, I

was ready for the crit. I'm much more of a climber than anything else, but I do love a good crit. So I was feeling pretty pumped and ready to tear it up today.

I warmed up on the trainer, did my sprints, and got everything set for the race. I talked to Coach Laura before the race as well. Today, I was just racing my bike. GC was settled, and it was time to go out and have a good race, and of course, go for the stage. After our talk I headed over to staging. The staging gate was opened, and I headed right up to the front row of riders.

We lined up, and I chatted a bit with a few friends from days previous.

Everybody was here for fun, today was the day to go tear it up, and we all had the same feelings about it. So as the official said his famous words, I cracked a smile and got ready to take off.

"The race will begin on the whistle." And everything drew silent. The whistle blew, and we took off down the road. Well... the field did. I struggled to get my foot clipped in, and finally got going and ended up mid-pack. We were off. The pace was high, and attacks came from left and right. I found myself a good spot not too far forward, as I had learned from yesterday, and was in great position to cover and never miss a move. We came through a few laps in, and an official yelled "32 seconds!" I questioned this. 32 seconds to what? We came around the back stretch and I saw a lone red jersey screaming down the road ahead. It was Gage Hecht. He was supposed to be Team Specialized main GC rider, until he broke his pedal yesterday, and had to suffice with a mid-pack finish, while Specialized sent another card up the road. But today Gage was booking it. He wanted nothing more than to win this stage.

The rest of us kept it at a good pace, and I followed one move coming from Limitless Cycling, sitting in 3rd in GC. We came together up the road, but he was gassed, so I took it upon myself to go for it. Little did I know that the field was just on my tail, and had me wrapped by the next corner. So a counter came from Specialized on the backside, but was drawn back soon. I was still not on the right wheels. Not only do I have to be farther back in the field, which I did well within the crit, but I need to be following the right riders. Who wants to win this stage? Who is a strong wheel? Who is going to make a move? Ride these riders wheels, the small moves at the start of the race aren't going to stick, but the main riders will show towards the end.

We took another lap, and I was in about 8th-9th place. A big move from Lux came, then a chaser from Specialized went, and one more from El Gruppo Junior Development. These 3 riders were the ones to chase, this was the winning move. I was already on it, just hanging in behind the last rider's wheel. I made a poor mistake right here. I should have just dug deep and bridged up on my own, but instead I took a hard, long pull to chase, then pulled off, expecting to catch the group, not to join them. I found only another Specialized rider on my wheel, setting up a block. I took one look forward, knowing I had been played, and the break was gone.

I won't be letting that slide again. Next time, I just have to go for it. Good news was I had improved over yesterday, and I was RIGHT THERE! I was the very first rider to miss the break. During the road race, I was way too far up to cover any attacks, but today, I covered, and drew a few back. Now it's just time to join them.

So we finished the race at a pretty decent pace, and things picked up on the last lap. The field sprint is always my weakness. 30 riders or so in our group, and we were coming in pretty fast. At this point in time, I didn't quite have the position, and was sitting in the last 10 riders coming around the back stretch. So I moved up along the side in the final corners, and came in for my sprint, finishing mid-pack. Next time I have to follow the sprinters wheels, because once they go, I can head with them. Also, I've noticed that the real players are in the back of the race for the majority of the race, and then come out to the front only at the very end. Even with 2 to go they are still in the field. I need to get out of the front, and tell myself that hanging out farther back is acceptable, because once you look around, you'll realize that all the major riders are in the field with you, while the rest sort themselves out in the front. Once 2 to go comes up, these riders begin to move themselves up gradually to the top 10, and gun it in the sprint to move themselves up to the front. I'm almost there, and I learned much more today than in any race before.

All in all, I had a good day, and learned tons. I held onto 9th place GC, and I'd consider it a pretty successful Valley of the Sun! I talked with Coach Laura after the race, and she instantly noticed that I had improved over yesterday's road race. I went back to the car, and got changed. I went over to watch my teammate Ryan's race with coach and my dad, and that way she could give me tips and show me how a race plays out from a different perspective. In the end I was very happy with the way my first stage race turned out, and am excited for the upcoming season.

-Ben

Valley of the Sun – Senior Women Category 4 Reports by Emily Abraham

Emily Abraham

18 th Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Senior Wm Category 4
10 th Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Senior Wm Category 4
18 th Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Senior Wm Category 4
15 th Place	Valley of the Sun, Overall G.C.	Senior Wm Category 4

Stage 1: Valley of the Sun Time Trial

I was surprised how quickly the Valley of the Sun Stage Race came, it seems like just a few days ago it was November and I was only hoping that this race would be part of my schedule. So as the months turned into weeks leading up to our departure for Phoenix, I grew more and more excited. However the days preceding the first stage were quite a struggle. On Saturday I was out on a training ride, exactly five days before leaving for Arizona, and I slipped out on (yes another) cattle guard. Amazingly I ended up with only a few bumps and bruises. Although I did hit my head it wasn't hurt--Thank you Lazer for providing me with a helmet that potential saved my life! So crashing was a bit of a letdown before Valley of the Sun, but I was back and training again the next day.

A few days later Wednesday evening came and my parents and I packed up the car then headed to Phoenix that night. Well, since crashing didn't seem to stop me from

heading to the race, another huge dilemma decided to get in my way. At five thirty AM on Thursday morning, only one day before the time trial, the insane winds of the I-10 freeway bent the front fork of my bike which was on the roof rack of our car. My outstanding mother made a few phone calls to try and find a bike I would be able to ride for the time trial while I grew stressed and frustrated. Lucky for me, Coach Laura had a brilliant idea to have my teammate Stanley (who I cannot thank enough) ship out his front fork which he was not using. Although his front fork would get to Arizona in time for the road race on Saturday, I still needed something to ride for the time trial on Friday. After a tremendously long and stressful day, I was able to borrow a bike from the race director at Landis Cyclery. I'm so thankful that he was able to lend me a bike on such short notice.

So I woke up early Friday morning and we headed over to the TT course. The bike I rode passed junior roll out just fine and the next thing I knew, I was being held up just seconds before rolling down the ramp. The clock beeped, I pushed off and a huge amount of relief washed over me. My first thought was "Okay I made it, let's do this." And so I tried my best on a bike that barely fit me.

Stage 2: Valley of the Sun Road Race

Friday afternoon, after the TT, my TIME bike was ready to be picked up from the Landis Cyclery. I couldn't wait to get back to racing on my own bike. Saturday morning was another early start for the road race so Coach Laura, Ben, and I headed over to the course, while Ryan got to sleep in! I was very excited for the road race, Coach Laura raced in the Women's' Master 35+ category, which raced with the Cat 4 women. So she was out there on the course with me during the race which is always fun. After I did a pre-race warm up, my legs were feeling good. My muscles felt somewhat sore and tight from the TT but overall I was ready to race. The race was neutral from the start down past the first right hand turn. When the whistle blew to signal the start of the race, I was in a bad place at the back of the pack. I immediately knew that wasn't where I wanted to be, but I struggled for a bit until I could finally find my way up towards the front. Although it took some time, we eventually started to formulate a rotating pace line. I felt great for the first lap, the finish is on the only uphill of the entire course so we crossed the finish line a total of three times. I was shocked by how hard some of the women went at the end of the first lap. The pack didn't start to string out until the climb came up. I was dropped by a small group of leaders just as we reached the crest of the climb, but with the help of a few other women that also started to get dropped, we quickly caught back up.

The second lap was a lot like the first until the climb came up again. This was the "Queen of the Mountain" lap so everyone went much harder on the climb. I was dropped from the leaders again on the tough climb. Right after I passed the finish line which started the third lap, two women came around me and told me to grab their wheel. It took us longer this time but we did manage to catch the main pack again, except for Coach Laura who was off the front along with the overall leader of her category. I was hurting a lot on the third lap, my legs felt dead and I couldn't bear the thought of having to sprint up that climb for the finish. All the women in the pack

seemed to be conserving their energy because we all stayed together until just under a mile from the finish line where I was dropped yet again. Although I gave it my all, I knew there was no way my legs could out sprint those other women. I ended up in tenth for the road race which I was really happy with, I knew I worked as hard as I possibly could and had a great time.

Stage 3: Valley of the Sun Criterium

When I woke up on Sunday morning before the criterium, my legs were screaming. I did some stretching to try and get rid of the cramping, this helped a little but I knew I would have to do a great warm-up to make my legs feel okay. After watching Ben's criterium and part of Ryan's, they both did awesome, I began getting ready for my race. The great warm-up, I was planning on, got cut short when my bike was having trouble shifting. It all worked out but I ended up not getting to do as long of a warm-up as I would have liked to. When ten-minutes before my start came, I went over and did junior roll out. Then I lined up at the start line with Coach Laura. Just two minutes before the race, the officials decided to tell us that they switched the course back to the figure eight instead of the four corner course that they had been using all morning. This frightened me a little until Coach assured me that the changed course would be better. I went out hard in the first five or so laps. I stayed as second or third wheel and even took a short pull, but soon enough my exhausted legs couldn't go any harder. I dropped back in the pack but found myself struggling to even hold a wheel, I pushed but my legs physically would not go. I was dropped from the pack on the last two laps but still managed to finish the race in a lot of pain. At first I felt really discouraged after the criterium; I felt that I could have preformed much better in all three races. But after talking with Coach Laura, Ryan, and Ben, I recognized how much I had been through in the week preceding the races. I'm proud of my accomplishment of making it through this stage race even with quite a few bumps along the way.

-Emily

Isabella Brunner

3 rd Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors Girls 10-12
2 nd Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors Girls 10-12
3 rd Place	Valley of the Sun, Overall G.C.	Juniors Girls 10-12

Stage1: Time Trial

The weather in Phoenix was pleasant; appx. 80 degrees and slightly overcast, slightly breezy. I warmed up for the Time Trial on the trainer and on the roadway adjacent the course. I was the last person in my category and the last TT rider of the day. The course began with a gradual uphill for appx. 3.75 miles. I felt very confident at the turnaround because I had passed the two riders who had started before me. What I did not realize until the race was over was that those two were 9year old newbies. I felt strong at the finish, but was dismayed that first place girl was a full minute ahead and second place was only ten seconds ahead of me.

Stage 2: Criterium

In the Criterium on the city streets around the Capital, the race was 10-12 boys/girls combined. The turns were tight and I could not hang with the lead pack after the second lap. I was solo for the remainder of the race until I was engulfed in the lead pack (lapped) a few yards from the finish. The person who was second in TT was behind me by 6 seconds. Even though I was the second place girl, the combined effort TT and Crit, placed me third overall. This venue was well run and is worth travelling to in the future.

-Isabella

3. Snelling Road Race

2/22/14

Snelling

Jonathan Gunning

18 yrs old, Cat 4

3rd Place Snelling Road Race Juniors 15-18 Cat 4/5

I started out feeling great the morning of the race, as I had been riding a lot in the weeks prior. I worked together a little with Miles and Ethan during the race. Our plan was to control most breakaways if they seemed threatening enough and to try to stay at the front end of the pack. As we rolled out, a few small attacks happened and were soon brought in, and then another attacked. I guess that we assumed he wouldn't make it and so we didn't chase him. After a minute while the pace was still kind of mellow, we noticed that he was out of sight! This was a shock and a little worrying. A few miles later and about halfway into the race, we received news that he was minutes ahead and gaining. At this point us Swifties and the Limitless guys formed a little alliance of six and we tried to pull him back in. We started pacying and taking pulls, but no one else in the group wanted to do any work! So it was up to the six of us to attempt and catch him. We never caught him, but I believe that we got the gap down to under a minute. The pack came in for a sprint and we had planned that I would lead Miles/Ethan out as we went through the last turn and up the hill to the finish. But as it turned out, Miles and Ethan got caught up in the commotion going through the turn and I came out in the front of the group as we left the turn. Then a Davis kid took off and as soon as I noticed this I jumped to chase him. I got up behind him and then darted alongside and started to pass, but the finish line came a bit too soon and I didn't quite get him. I ended up with third place and was happy with that, but I think if that happens again I will try to chase down the guy who breaks away.

-Jonathan

Ethan Frankel

Racing Age 16, Category 4

10th Place Snelling Road Race Juniors 15-18 Cat 4/5

The afternoon before, I had crashed and my face, shoulders, and knees were banged up. But we woke up anyway with my eye swollen shut and drove three hours to Snelling. I warmed up on the trainer and was ready to go at the line. At the start, there were a few attacks and counter-attacks but none made it too far. I sat comfortably in the middle of the peloton. A Limitless rider got away and then one from LeadOut. We caught the Limitless rider, but the LeadOut rider got away and he stayed away for good. The field pretty much stayed together with very little action for the remainder of the first lap.

On the second lap, the three of us (Miles, Jonathan, and I) along with three Limitless rider started a great pace line. We kept it up for a few miles but none of the other teams would pull and/or would go way out of order. So after fifteen minutes of solid teamwork, the hope of catching the breakaway rider was lost. There were few attacks, but we kept up a quick 22 mph. On the last lap, everyone became more organized because we knew the finish was coming. The pace picked up and attacks were more frequent. On the last straight away, with about a mile to go, a Tieni Duro rider attacked. Eight of us counter-attacked, and soon, most of the field was back together again. However, there were a few that dropped off the pace, so the field size was down to about 17 for the final sprint. We came around the final bend and I was on Jonathan's wheel with Miles somewhere nearby. I was sitting in about 14th place, and decided to stick with Jonathan for as long as I could. I passed four riders, and finished in front of a Tieni Duro rider by a tire width.

-Ethan F

Isaiah Chass

1st Place Snelling Road Race Juniors 13-14

I was very excited for Snelling Road Race because it would be my first race of the season and road races are very fun. My day started at 3 a.m. when I woke up and got ready to leave. I ate a bagel with cream cheese and then got in the car for a 3+ hour drive. When we arrived at the race I got out of the car and went to registration to get my number. Once I got my number, I got ready, pinned up my number, and went for a little warm-up with Miles, Gianni, and Luke. Knowing that we had a 5-mile neutral start, we decided just to spin and do a few sprints. When we were done warming up, I ate a Razz Clif Shot, and then rode to the start line. After a couple minutes of the race referee talking to us, he sent us off, and we rode to the 'real' start/finish line. Once we got to the start/finish line, Jack Hargrove attacked, and then everyone started sprinting to get on his wheel. Everyone then got back together, and Gianni went to the front and starting pulling. He tried to pull off, but no one else would pull through, so I attacked to try to get them to do something. I started pulling but when I went to pull off, once again, no other teams would pull through. The race played like this over and over again until 1km left in the first lap. At about 1 km to go in the first lap, I rode to the front of the group, and then rode about 20 feet ahead to see if anyone would do anything. At that moment, Leonard Schummer made a big attack, and I jumped right on his wheel. We rode off the front for about 30 seconds and then I looked back; no one had tried to pull us back, so we kept

going hard. As we kept riding, the gap kept getting bigger and bigger. After about a couple miles of steady, smooth pulls between us, Leonard said, "we can do this!" We were working well together and the gap was staying open. Eventually, we couldn't see the group so we sat up for a few seconds. I ate another Razz Clif Shot, and then we resumed to pulling hard. When we got to about 4 miles to go, we could start to see the group again. I said to Leonard, "Come on! We only have a couple miles to go!" Then we started pulling as hard as we could. We rode well and when we got to 1 km to go, I looked back and saw the group not far back, sprinting to try to catch us. I then pulled through and had my head down pedaling as hard as I could. I pulled off a couple hundred feet from the last corner to get in good position for the sprint. As we came around the last corner, the group was only a few seconds behind us, and was gaining. I rode past Leonard and he said, "Go for it!" At that moment I pedaled as hard as I could sitting down. I could see the finish, and Leonard was half a bike's length behind me and gaining. With only about 50 feet to go, I knew I could win, so I stood up and sprinted to the line for first. At the finish, I said good job to Leonard, Gianni, and Luke and told my teammates thanks for helping me stay off the front. I was very happy with my result and can't wait for the next race!

-Isaiah

Luke Lamperti

3rd Place Snelling Road Race Juniors 13-14

As I woke up I realized I was in the car on the way to the Snelling Road Race. When we got there I put on my gear and went to warm up with some other teammates. After our warm up the race was about ready to start. We started with a neutral 6 mile start and then the real race was underway. The first attack was set by Jack from the Davis club. After the first attack everybody just sat in and made little attacks. But then there was a little fake attack by my teammate Isaiah and then another kid from Tieno Duro made a real attack and then they were both in a break of 2 riders. From there nobody wanted to pull which was fine since my brother Gianni and I had a teammate in the break. From there everybody just sat back. Then it came time to sprint so I came off Gianni's wheel to start of the sprint for third and we all went. I got third with my teammate getting the win.

-Luke

4. NorCal MTB Race #1

2/23/14

Monterey

Eli Kranefuss

5th Place NorCal Race #1: Fort Ord Varsity Boys

This was the first race of the mountain bike season. I had a call-up in the first row due to my results last year. This was very beneficial because it meant that I could warm-up longer, and I also did not have to pass people at the start. The race started fast, and I

tried to stick with the lead group so that I could make the first few breaks. I stuck with the lead group for the first lap, but then got dropped. After that, I worked with a racer from Drake for the remaining laps. On the final lap, I asked him to pull so that we could share the effort. However, he pulled away from me on the descent and was able to stay away through the finish. While it was a great race, and I thought that I performed well, I learned a lot about how to use my strengths (hills) and not let others take advantage of my weaknesses (descending and technical skills).

-Eli

Ethan Frankel,

12th Place NorCal Race #1: Fort Ord Sophomore Boys D1

My first MTB race: nerve-racking. As they called us up to staging, I got in early and was placed in about 7th place. My positioning was good and I was ready to go. However, the A's, B's, and C's were called up so I was moved to dead last in the 7th or so row. The whistle blew and the race was off. The start was fast in the front, but in the back it was fairly slow. As we crested the first hill, I jumped and passed a whole mass of people. By the descent, I was sitting in the middle of the pack. I took a sip of water and prepared to pass more people. I found a Folsom rider's wheel to sit on and stuck with him. He and I passed ten or so riders and we competed for position. On every incline, I took a sip of water to stay hydrated. By the start of the second lap, he and I were in 8th and 9th position. We passed another two riders and I stayed hydrated throughout, and by the middle of the lap I still had over a half bottle of water left. Then my front tire slid out on one of the descents in the middle of the lap. I had had a high center of gravity and the turn was too sharp for me to be going as fast as I was. I flew into the dusty ground and slid for another ten feet on the bumpy ground. It ignited pain in my shoulder and face that I had from a crash that Friday. I hopped up as a Drake rider passed me and had lost around twenty seconds. On the next bend, I hit a rock and again my front tire slid out. I flew into the bushes and was scratched but otherwise unharmed. I lost another twenty seconds there. I heard a couple of riders on the bend above me so I jumped onto the bike and pedaled hard down to salvage any time. I was in the front and the other two riders were on my tail. We made it through the finish of the second lap and I was hurting. I sipped water but decided not to take from the feed zone to save time and energy. I took a bite from a Clif Bar as I normally do in road races. My morale was down from the crashes and I felt discouraged. The two riders passed me, and Travis was one. We encouraged each other to keep going. I tried to stick with them but dropped off the pace after the second climb. On the climbs, I sipped some water and tried to keep up a steady pace, but I was slowing down with every ten pedal strokes. Three more riders passed me and I again tried to stick. The problem with my race was not only the crashes, but also keeping my energy higher. I believe I could have kept up a good pace, but the energy in my fuel tank was lower. My last lap was two minutes slower than my first. But for my first race, and after a big crash (and two more during the race) and a race the day before, I was happy with my performance.

-Ethan F

Griffin Wigert

18th Place Norcal #1: Fort Ord Varsity Boys

I drove down to the race with my parents on Saturday. I met up with the Casa Grande Bike Team at a campground, and then we went and pre-rode the course. The course was very flat, with a gradual climb in the middle with a few steep sections. For the most part, it was sandy and fast. The course was 5 miles long, and I would be doing 5 laps.

Because my race start wasn't until 1:05, I sat in the pit zone and did homework until 12. Then I warmed up on the road, doing 1 minute pyramids with Stanley. Then I lined up at the race start. I got an OK start, and was around mid pack going into the first climb. I stayed in that position and I took a feed coming around the first lap in about 20th place. I then got in a group with two other racers, and we gradually became a bigger group, stretching from 9th to 14th place. I stayed in that group, taking a Clif Shot the next lap, and then a water bottle on the 3rd lap, and a Clif Shot the 4th lap. On the 4th lap, I began to feel the bonk. I fell off of the big group, was passed by three more riders, and then finished in 18th. I learned from this race that I need to eat more in the days leading up to the race.

-Griffin

5. Cal Aggie Criterium

1/25/14

Sacramento

Emily Abraham

11th place Cal Aggie Criterium Senior Women 4

Generally the Cherry Pie Criterium, which happens the second weekend in February, is our first race of the season. However, I decided I wanted to do at least one race before in order to be prepared for Cherry Pie. The Cal Aggie Crit was perfect since it came two weeks before. I arrived at the race exactly an hour and a half before my start so I had plenty of time to get ready. I was feeling good before the race, I was bit nervous since I hadn't officially raced since back in September, but I felt that I've been training hard and I was prepared. Once I got my kit on and was just about to get on the trainer, I realized I was a bit behind schedule so I had to cut my warm-up short. I did my pyramids and rode over to the start for junior roll out. Another girl was waiting to also do junior roll out when I got there, this surprised me because I didn't think any other juniors would be there.

All the ladies lined up on the start line; there were probably about 35 of us, so it was a decent sized field. First we rode a neutral lap; I wasn't at all worried about the course since I raced on it a few times last season. When the race officially began I took

off and grabbed second wheel, half way through the first lap I took a pull. I stayed on the front for too long, when two women came around me I didn't have enough energy to grab their wheels and hang on. A small gap began to form and next thing I know I'm pulling the rest of the group to catch the two in front. Now I'm getting really tired and spending way too much time in front, finally the other junior girl comes around me and begins to pull. Not long after, a woman from behind makes an attack, the other junior goes after her. I stand up to sprint with them but I was too tired to stay with them. Now four women are out in front and I'm with the main group of about six women. I'm exhausted but I'm at the front of the group, trying to pull them to catch the others. None of the women I'm pulling are taking turns pulling, so finally I say "We're not going to catch them like this, we need to rotate." The six of us begin a rotating pace line and start to close the gap, but on the back side of the course there's a sharp right turn and then an immediate left followed by another right turn. The women were taking the corners way too wide and spreading out, so we lost all of our time that we had just made up every time we went around those corners. We continued the rotating pace line for the rest of the race; on the final lap my legs were beyond done. I stood up to start sprinting just before the finish, but there's no way I could push my legs anymore.

At first I was disappointed with how this race turned out, but then I realized it was a great learning experience. I need to work on taking shorter pulls and not always being in front.

-Emily

Ethan Frankel

Racing Age 16, Category 4

18th Place Cal Aggie Criterium Juniors 13-18

It was cold and it was early. Not my favorite conditions. After a long hour-and-a-half drive to Sacramento, I was exhausted. My carpool had been Weston (a new Team Swift member) along with Miles. We got to Land Park just 40 minutes before the race. We quickly changed and set up trainers in a parking lot. Miles went ahead to registration while Weston and I kept spinning. We got five minutes before a car drove up to us and said that it was "golf course parking only". Weston and I left to registration. We watched the Juniors 9-12 and saw Isabella take 3rd. Then most of the riders in the field of 36 rolled out and came to the line. I was positioned next to Jonathan and behind Miles. Limitless Cycling dominated the field, spanning close to three-fourths of the front line. Miles, Jonathan and I knew that made trouble.

The 30 minute race started off at a moderate speed of 23 mph. Limitless was all over the front, with Miles and a couple of others trying to break their rhythm. I landed in the middle of the field with Jonathan and Weston. Limitless dominated the race the first few laps, chasing down any of Miles' attacks and getting three riders off the front. With 6 laps to go, a two-man break with a Limitless rider and a Davis rider escaped. I was in roughly seventh at that point and decided to counter. I quickly bridged and we attempted a pace-line. However, the Limitless rider was trying to slow the Davis rider

down and not taking a pull. The Davis rider was trying to lose him and I thought it would be a little dangerous to hang so I dropped back to tenth in the pack. With 4 to go, attacks were not making it much further than to the next chicane and Limitless dominated. The pace picked up slightly and Miles, Jonathan, and I stayed relatively close together near the front. With one to go, I tried moving up to lead out Miles for him to beat the field. I got a few places up, but he was still three riders in front. I was sitting in 10th place by the start of the hairpin turns, but dropped back to about 12th. As we rounded the final corner, the sprint started and I tried to stay close to the rider in front. The pack finished mostly together and I finished in 18th place, 10 places behind Miles and Jonathan.

Overall, my cornering in this race was better than previous races and being fairly conservative was helpful to keep my legs fresher. I now know that my speed and fast-twitch muscles need the most work.

-Ethan

Miles Daly

8th Place Cal Aggie Criterium Juniors 13-18

Cal Aggie was about two weeks after Cyclocross Nationals in Boulder. I wanted to see how I would do in a early season criterium with my legs still feeling great, when I heard Cal Aggie was the same course as Land Park I was really happy since I loved that course. I got up early as always and ate 2 eggs, toast with Nutella and one with Almond butter. Weston who is new to Team Swift offered me a ride up there with Ethan. After driving to the race we arrived later than usual but I made do, I opted out of the trainer since I had to get my number and get it on with about 30 minutes to go. I got to the start line without being warmed up.... But I went for it from the gun. Right away limitless threw out an attack, I bridged up but then they let the pack grab us. After trying to make attack after attack I realized 3 guys were covering me at least from limitless. Right after one of my attacks one guy went off the front, followed by another and another. I was recovering at this point from my attack so I couldn't go. I was looking for Jonathan to go with them but he wasn't there. We rode the rest of the race in the pack. On last lap I pulled Jonathan aside and told him that I wanted the sprint, he said he would lead me out. Coming around the last turn I was boxed off his wheel and managed 5th in the field sprint and 8th over all. I felt strong and am looking forward to this season!

-Miles

Weston Drechsel

21st Place Cal Aggie Criterium Juniors 13-18

The Criterium was a very different experience for me in biking terms. The race started and stayed very fast paced the whole time. It started by and talking on the car ride up to Sacramento until we got to the race. There I warmed up on my trainer for around 10 minutes until Ethan Frankel and I were kicked from our spot by an angry

driver who had to park in that one particular space out of the 20 spaces open. From there the two of us biked to registration and got our numbers and signed in. We had a few minutes before the race where we talked with some of the other riders and then went to get a rollout. After the rollout we got to the starting line and waited for the race to begin. When it started I was put towards the back because I had forgotten to shift down from the rollout. Although my start wasn't perfect I was able to move into the middle of the pack and quickly got the feel for the course after the first two laps and its turns. Near the end of the 8th lap around the last turn my right foot became unclipped when I started to pedal hard to stay with the currently attacking pack. Instead of being able to catch up right away, I was dropped because some other riders in front of me blocked my way from immediately catching up. The rest of the race I was fairly close to the end of the pack but could not fully catch up because I was alone riding behind and had no one to take turns pulling with. For the next race I will make sure to tighten my clips and have even keener focus on the race and think of strategies to work out with my teammates there.

-Weston

Isabella Brunner

1st Place Cal Aggie Junior Girls 10-12

After winning the 2013 10-12 girls NCNA Junior Championship, I was determined to make 2014 an even better year for racing. This race was held at Land Park in Sacramento and for the 10-12 combined boys/girls it was a two lap only race. From the start, one of the boys immediately put the hammer down and left the rest of the field behind. I was in second for the first one and half laps, and was passed by a boy who was all on my wheel from the start. The remainder of the pack was far back, lead by a boy on a fixed gear bike. This was a good race to prepare for the Land Park Race in March.

-Isabella

6. Early Bird Road Race

1/18/14

Patterson

Ethan Frankel

Racing Age 16, Category 4

17th Place Early Bird Road Race

Senior Category 4

It was cold and it was early. Not my favorite conditions. After a long two-hour drive to Patterson, I was tired. My dad and I had taken Weston (a new Team Swift member) to the race, and we registered in the 40-degree weather. I tried to warm up by riding on a lengthy, straight road. However, within minutes my hands were frozen and my legs stiff. I did a pyramid on the way back that started to warm up my muscles.

The race started at 8:10AM with a field of 18 riders. The centerline rule would be in effect the whole time, sadly. The whistle blew and we made the sweeping left hand turn for the start of the neutral 2 miles. When the real race started, it was on a road with rolling hills and not much ascending. A pace-line started quickly, two abreast. But we were only going 19 mph on average. I started in the middle of the pack and slowly moved up to the front. At mile 12, a Mike's Bikes rider flatted and pulled away. The field was down to 17.

Many riders passed on the right because we could not pass on the left. I was slotted in the front-middle, but more riders passed and slotted themselves in the line. I was jostled many times by riders nearly double my size and was forced to move over. The referee saw me cross over the centerline a few times and pulled up to give me a warning. I didn't argue and decided to let riders in if they were trying to force their way through. I lost a few places in the process and dropped back to about 12th place.

The pace was still fairly slow going into the start of a 1,000-foot climb. Then an attack came by a Dayka-Hackett rider. Less than half of the pack made it to the first group of about 8 riders. I was in the back of it, and the pace was fast as we started the ascent up the mountain. My heart rate was at a high 190 bpm and I was working hard just to keep up. I passed a rider and then another. The second bumped me slightly and I lost focus for a moment. I realized that I couldn't hang on to the pace and my legs were burning for oxygen. I dropped back to the rest of the riders in back.

The start of the climb was brutal. It immediately got steep and I was barely hanging on to the second group of riders. As we neared the middle of the climb, I dropped off along with a couple of others and we were fighting the rest of the way up the climb. Three of us rounded the turnaround and started the descent. I quickly passed them both and blasted down it trying to make up time. Near the bottom, I caught another Mike's Bikes rider and we started pulling. We pulled evenly for a few miles then a group of Cat 5 riders caught us. With them was two of the Cat 4's and the Mike's Bikes rider who'd flatted.

I wasn't sure if we'd be disqualified for riding with the Cat 5's so I kept slightly behind and tried starting a pace-line with just the Cat 4's. However, they did not want to, so I attacked. It lasted a minute, tops. They caught me with no sign of breaking off of their group. There, my legs were burnt out and I again couldn't hang. The last Cat 4 and I pulled each other for most of the way, and then he finally dropped back with 5 miles to go. The rolling hills started up again at 4 miles to go and I was working alone. I steadily kept my cadence high and focused on the road ahead for 3 miles. With 1 km to the finish, another group of Cat 5's caught up. I again wasn't sure if I should stick with them, so again I attacked and again I burnt out. I hung slightly behind that group and my sprint was done. I finished seconds behind them.

From this race (which was thankfully a pre-season race), I learned to be more conservative and less aggressive with riders bigger and more mature than I, especially on flatter courses where they put out much more wattage. However, I was happy that I was more aggressive and had pushed myself well out of my comfort zone.

-Ethan

Weston Drechsel

19th Place Early Bird Road Race Senior Category 5

I warmed up before the race for around 5-10 minute since it took a while to get set up and I had forgotten my trainer. Also I had to turn around half way through the warm up because I got too cold because I didn't put on enough layers to start off with. The first 20 miles of the road race I was able to keep up with the pack fairly easy and there were very few attacks. Then the course began going up to a hill on the end of the way out which is where I got dropped. Once I completed the first half and I was on my way back I rode with another person and we took turns pulling until around 1-2 miles from the finish. A mile out I pushed ahead and finished before him and ended my race. During the race my main goals were the completion of my first race without injuries and getting to 5th place in our pack of around 17. Both I accomplished and felt fairly confident about my race. I could have improved on staying keeping a constant pace when we reached the steep uphill because if I had I could have been a lot farther forwards in the pack. Also I should have gone to bed a lot earlier than 11 the night before the race to feel better rested.

-Weston