

Team Swift Race Reports

July 2014

Race Reports for:

1. U.S.A Junior National Championships
2. Davis 4th of July Criterium
3. Foothill College Circuit Race
4. Colavita Gran Prix
5. Cascade Cycling Classic
6. San Rafael Twilight Criterium
7. Berkeley Criterium
8. Death Ride Report

July Top Results:

1 st Place	USA Junior National TT Champs	Juniors 11-12	Luke Lamperti
1 st Place	USA Junior National RR Champs	Juniors 11-12	Luke Lamperti
1 st Place	USA Junior National Crit Champs	Juniors 11-12	Luke Lamperti
1 st Place	Berkeley Crit, Most aggressive	Senior Category 4	Tomas Mitre
1 st Place	Foothill College Circuit Race	Juniors 13-14	Isaiah Chass
2 nd Place	Davis 4 th of July Criterium	Juniors 15-16	Esteban Ramirez
2 nd Place	Foothill College Circuit Race	Senior Category 5	Tomas Mitre
3 rd Place	USA Junior National TT Champs	Junior W. 11-12	Isabella Brunner
3 rd Place	Foothill College Circuit Race	Juniors 13-14	Esteban Ramirez
5 th Place	USA Junior National RR Champs	Juniors 13-14	Gianni Lamperti
5 th Place	USA Junior National Crit Champs	Juniors 13-14	Gianni Lamperti
5 th Place	Colavita Grand Prix	Senior Category 5	Isaiah Chass
6 th Place	Foothill College Circuit Race	Juniors 15-18, 4/5	Tomas Mitre
6 th Place	USA Junior National Crit Champs	Junior W. 11-12	Isabella Brunner
7 th Place	Colavita Grand Prix	Senior W. Cat 3	Emily Abraham
9 th Place	USA Junior National RR Champs	Junior W. 11-12	Isabella Brunner
12 th Place	USA Junior National RR Champs	Junior W. 17-18	Emily Abraham
12 th Place	USA Junior National RR Champs	Juniors 13-14	Isaiah Chass
14 th Place	Berkeley Bike Club Criterium	Senior Category 4	Isaiah Chass
15 th Place	USA Junior National TT Champs	Juniors 13-14	Gianni Lamperti
17 th Place	USA Junior National TT Champs	Junior W. 17-18	Emily Abraham
20 th Place	Colavita Grand Prix	P1/2/3 Women	Emily Abraham
20 th Place	Colavita Grand Prix	Senior Category 3	Ben Cook
22 nd Place	USA Junior National Crit Champs	Junior W. 17-18	Emily Abraham
24 th Place	Berkeley Bike Club Criterium	Senior Cat 3/4	Tomas Mitre
26 th Place	USA Junior National RR Champs	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
26 th Place	USA Junior National Crit Champs	Juniors 13-14	Isaiah Chass
27 th Place	Cascade Cycling Classic, Stage 3	Senior Category 3	Ryan Clarke
27 th Place	San Rafael Twilight Criterium	Senior Category 3	Ben Cook

30 th Place	USA Junior National Crit Champs	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
33 rd Place	Berkeley Bike Club Criterium	Senior Category 3	Tomas Mitre
34 th Place	USA Junior National TT Champs	Juniors 13-14	Isaiah Chass
33 rd Place	Cascade Cycling Classic, Stage 2	Senior Category 3	Ryan Clarke
33 rd Place	San Rafael Twilight Criterium	Senior Category 3	Miles Daly
37 th Place	Cascade Cycling Classic, Stage 1	Senior Category 3	Ryan Clarke
39 th Place	USA Junior National TT Champs	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
43 rd Place	Foothill College Circuit Race	Category 4	Isaiah Chass
49 th Place	San Rafael Twilight Criterium	Senior Category 4	Tomas Mitre
86 th Place	USA Junior National RR Champs	Juniors 17-18	Ryan Clarke

Rider Race Reports

1. USA Junior National Championships 7/2-6/14 Madison, WI

Time Trial Reports

Luke Lamperti

1st Place USA Junior National Championship Time Trial Juniors 11-12

One of my favorite events of the year is Nationals. Every year I wait for the month of July and now it is here. We have been in Madison for four days riding and waiting for the races to start. Now it is Friday [race day] but my start time is 5:18 at night. So when I woke up and went to breakfast at our hotel. I got a plate and silverware and some eggs. Then got a bowl and some oatmeal and put some yogurt in it. Then went and ate with the team. Then we all went back to our room and got ready to go on a spin for 45 minutes. When we left the hotel we went out and ended up finding some roads that everybody said would make a great crit course. So we did some laps and then headed back to the hotel. Then I took a 1 hour nap. When I woke up I put my legs up and started watching previews of the Tour de France. Then I started getting ready to leave and ate some lunch. I left really early because my brother's start time was an hour before mine so I had leave in time for him to warm up too. It felt like a long drive to the race but it was only 45 minutes. When we got there we parked and then unloaded the car. Then it was time for my warm up. So I got on the trainer and did my warm-up. When I was done I got off and headed to the line. When I got there I did roll-out and went toward the start gate and up on the ramp. When I started I went decent and then started ramping up my pace. When I hit the turnaround I had really hit a rev limiter all way back until I crossed the line. When I hit the line I was happy to hear that I was National Champion in 11-12 year old time trial.

-Luke

Emily Abraham

17th Place USA Junior National Championship Time Trial Jr. W.17-18

Since I'm not much of a time trialist, I decided to do the time trial just for fun, gain experience and to get in a great work out. I did the same thing last year and I had an awesome time so I was hoping that would happen again this year. My start time wasn't until 1:40 in the afternoon so I went for a short spin in the morning to wake up my legs. I was feeling good when we arrived at the time trial course, it was a beautiful day and since we got there a bit early I had plenty of time to get ready and warm up without rushing. When I had about an hour and twenty minutes until my start, I got on the trainer. I got my heart rate up and my legs working so I could feel my best during my race. Then with about thirty minutes to spare, I jumped off the trainer, put on my super aero Lazer helmet and rode over to the start. On my way I saw the other girls in my race with their extremely aero TT bikes and disc wheels. This intimidated me a little since I was on my road bike with clip on aero bars, but I didn't let it bother me. I was doing this race simply for my own enjoyment. I was early arriving to the start area so I spun around on my bike a little before heading to do roll out and have my bike measured. At exactly 1:40 I rolled out for my start, but I had trouble pushing off. I was in too big of a gear and couldn't turn the pedals enough at first to go down the ramp so that lost me a few seconds but after that I was good to go. The race was awesome, I went hard on the way out but I paid attention to my heart rate and to what my body was telling me. I didn't want to waste all my energy in the first five miles, but I didn't want to let my mind wander causing me to not be focused the whole race. On the back side of the course where the rollers start, there was a bit of a traffic jam between me and the other girls. The thirty second girl behind me was trying to pass me and I was trying to pass the thirty second girl in front of me, it got confusing but we worked it out. I tried to stay as close as I could to the girl that passed me, without drafting obviously. She would slow enough on the rollers to the point where I could almost pass her but I didn't. After I made the final left hand turn to the straight away for the finish, I sprinted with all I had left and crossed the finish line with a smile on my face. I improved my time by three minutes from last year!

-Emily

Gianni Lamperti

15th Place USA Junior National Championship Time Trial Juniors 13-14

Nationals is always a great event and I look forward to it every year. The morning of the Time Trial I went to the lobby of the hotel and ate two bowls of oatmeal and some yogurt with a bagel and peanut butter. I then went back to my room and put my legs up for about 15 minutes before I went for a 45 minute spin around town. We found a good lap that all of us thought would be an awesome place for a Crit because it was extremely wide and smooth. We just spun very easy to make it to where not just sitting in our rooms all day waiting to race, because I race at 4:38 in the afternoon. We

then came back to the parking lot and got a cone and practiced turnarounds for about 15 minutes. I then went back inside and took about an hour nap before I had to start getting ready to leave. After loading my stuff in the car we drove to the Time Trial in Waterloo. When we got there our team already had the tent set up because they were already racing. I went to get my timing chip then came back and put my bike in the trainer. I then sat in the shade and helped warm up my teammates for about 30 min before I got on my kit and started spinning. I spun for 15 minutes then I did a zone 3 for five minutes. I then spun for two minutes then I started another five minute zone three. After that I started a two minute pyramid where you sprint for 30 seconds, rest for 1 minute, sprint for 1 minute, rest for 2 minutes, sprint for 2 minutes, rest for 2 minutes, sprint for 1 minute, rest for 1 minute and then you sprint for 30 seconds. When I was done I spun for a minute then I did a few 30 second jumps then I got off the trainer to go sit in line for my start which was at 4:38. When I got in the start house my heart rate was already 140 bpm. 5,4,3,2,1,go! I was off and sprinting. Since the TT was only 10k or 6.2 miles I knew that I could sprint for most of it...but I was wrong. I went way too hard over the first roller and sort of blew up. I then kept my heart rate as high as I could until the turnaround. When I was turning around there was a man screaming go around the person in the orange vest. So I went to go around him and he then screamed, around the cone. I went a little bit passed the cone and then started to turn. It worked out perfectly because after going a little bit past the cone I could just shoot back up the inside of the cone. I came out of the turnaround in the perfect gear and quickly sprinted back up to speed. As I tried to find the perfect position of being as aero as possible and at the same time being able to produce as much power as possible, I still was within 7 beats of my max heart rate. I powered, in my saddle as hard as I could over the last roller which went into the last left hand corner. I decided not to take the risk by ripping through the corner and probably lost about three seconds. Looking back on it now I wish that I would have taken the risk because it would have made it to where I was inside the top ten. As I came out of the corner I stood up and sprinted as hard as I could across the finish line. I finished with a time of 13 minutes and 9 seconds. I spun back to the car and I got my Clif recovery drink. I went for about a 10 minute spin before coming back and changing back into my regular clothes and going to my brother's start and wishing him good luck. I then went to the first corner and watched him go through it. He ended up taking first. Overall it was a fun day and I look forward to the Road Race and Crit.

-Gianni

Isaiah Chass

34th Place USA Junior National Championships Time Trial Juniors 13-14

The morning I woke up for my first race at nationals, I was super excited, so I got right up and started getting everything ready. Then, I went to breakfast, where I saw my teammates and coach. After breakfast, I went back to my room where I pinned my number onto my jersey. Then, I started loading up the car with everything I would need. After getting all my things into the car, I went back to my room to eat my last

real meal before racing. Shortly after, I got into the car and drove to the race. After 40 minutes of thinking about my race, we were there. We drove over to the team tent and then set up my trainer. After that, I got on my bike and rode with Luke over to the start of Ben's race. After watching Ben go off, I rode back to the tent where I had a small bite to eat. Shortly after, I hopped on the trainer and started warming up. My warm-up started with a 15-minute spin followed by two- 5-minute zone 3 efforts. Then, I started a 2-minute pyramid, which was really starting to hurt by the last interval. But as my teammates said, "The more it hurts in warm-up, the less it will hurt during your race". After a 2-minute pyramid, I did two more 30 second intervals. After completing those, I spun for a minute or two and hopped off the trainer. I was now about 25 minutes out, so I went to the bathroom and then got ready. Then, I put on my helmet, and rode over to the starting house, where I would go through rollout. After rollout, I got in line and waited to get onto the starting ramp. When it was my turn, I walked up the steps, got on my bike, and took a few deep breaths while I waited for the countdown. The official started counting down "5"...."4"....."3"....."2"....."1"....."GO"... I started sprinting off the starting ramp. I got up to speed quickly and then sat down and pedaled hard to the first corner. I came into the corner, braked a little, and as soon as I came out, I stood up and got back up to speed. Then, I sat down again, got aero, and got into my zone. After about 7 hard minutes I was at the turn around point. Coming into the turn around, I swung wide, and then cut in, trying to keep as much speed as possible. As I came out of the turn around, I sprinted back up to speed and then got back into my zone. The next few minutes I was going as hard as I could, know that it would be over shortly. When I got to the rollers, I sprinted over them and got right back up to speed on the downhill. When I saw the 1km sign, I started pushing a little harder. I was now sprinting down the last hill into the last corner. As I came through the corner, I started sprinting to the finish as hard as I could. As I crossed the line I was a little disappointed with my time, but I was still really happy. I then rode back to the tent, and shortly after checked the results. I then learned that I got 34th place. This was just my first race, and I couldn't wait for the next two!

-Isaiah

Ben Cook

39th Place USA Junior National Championships Time Trial Juniors 15-16

Coming into the national's time trial, you could say I was a little under equipped compared to my competition. Unfortunately, a good time trial requires one key item: a time trial bike. And I was missing that key item. But the good news was that I had been practicing every other important aspect to a good time trial. It may sound strange, but I've become an excellent time trialist on my aero bars! So I was in for nationals to have fun and give it a good go.

My dad and I showed up to the course with just over 2 hours to start. I hung out for a while and talked with coach about the course. We talked about the wind for today. It was headwind out, tailwind back. This means I was to be giving it my all for the entire course, no saving anything. It would be a hard day for sure. With an hour

and a half to start, I hopped on the trainer to begin my warm-up.

After an hour of painful intervals and repeats to prepare for the race, I finally got off the trainer, put all my gear on, and headed off to the start line. I arrived at the start house about 15 minutes prior to my start, leaving me just enough time to meet with coach and my teammates one last time. My teammate, Emily, had just finished her time trial, and told me some about the course. "It's headwind on the way out, so you have to go hard from the very start. It's also super easy to lose focus and find yourself taking it too easy on some of the downhill sections, so keep the pace up the whole way! It's tough, but super fun!" She told me. Sweet! I was for sure excited for the day. Rolling hills, a strong wind, what's not to like about it?

"Cook! Ben Cook!" Said the official, calling me to the start house. I handed my bottle to coach, and walked over to the start house. Once on the ramp, I clipped in and waited for the countdown. "5!" The official held out a fully extended hand in front of me. "Oh boy..." I thought to myself. "4!" "This is it Ben!" I thought with excitement as I let a smile creep onto my face. I focused at the road straight ahead of me. "3! 2! 1! GO!!" I launched down the start ramp at full speed, and soon settled into my rhythm. After taking the first tight right hand corner, I got tucked into the bars and began to set out a good time trial pace.

I may not have had a time trial bike here at nationals, but I've stacked up pretty well in road bike time trials, such as Valley of the Sun, and San Dimas stage races, placing in the top 10 at both. I know the riders who usually come in just ahead of me, and the riders who usually come in just behind me. One of them was a friend of mine racing for Team Specialized. He was starting just 30 seconds behind me. He would normally come in a few seconds ahead of me, but due to our equipment differences, I was aiming to not get passed. Now out on course, it was really a test of focus, like Emily had said. It was fairly open and quiet. It was Ben vs. downhills. Not being able to shift while tucked would be my biggest enemy of the day. In that case, I'll be doing some serious spinning today, something I've done to stay tucked longer in prior time trials. I kept up a good hard pace, despite my heart rate reading low, and made it to the backside of the course. The rollers picked up here, and I knew I would have to really lay the hammer down on the uphill, as the downhills were nearly fast enough to spin out on. So I carried out an oddly paced "rhythm", and managed my way along the more downhill portion of the backstretch of the course. I took one good look ahead of me, and the road finally began to lead up. During the course recon, coach had talked about how this would be the most important part of the course. "The strongest riders win on the hardest parts of the course." She always says. This meant it was time to really bring up the pace. I settled into a painful gear, and pushed my way up the false flats for the next 3 or so kilometers. I knew once I was at the top, I'd round the right hand turn onto the main road of the course. Then I was on the home stretch. Once I made it to the right hand turn, I didn't even stop pedaling or get out of my aerobars to take the turn. Ok. So it was a little tight. But I did make it and I did save a good few seconds. Once around the corner I found myself back into my rhythm, and increased the pace with every pedal stroke, all the way to the top of the final hill. At that point, I shifted into my 14t and spun down the final descent to the finish line. I

got in my drops, and took the final left hand turn as tight as safely possible. I will admit, I may have lost a bit of time in that turn, but I was having too much fun to care. I came through a wall of screams and cheers as I gave it everything I had to get to the line. I came across and nearly fell off the bike.

"Nice job Ben!!" I heard coach say. At this point I was still trying to keep the bike upright, so I couldn't quite respond to coach at the moment. I rolled over to a nice, cool patch of grass, laid down my bike, and then laid down myself. You know it's a good time trial when you can't stand afterwards! After gathering myself, I rolled over to the team tent. "How'd it go Ben?! What was your time?" Asked coach. "29:27." I said, half confidently, half unsure of my result. "Right on! Yay Ben!" Ok, we're good! It had been a great run for sure. Without anything near the equipment that my competitors were using, I still put in a good time! I spun over to check results. "Ben Cook: 39th place..." I read aloud. I will admit, I was first disappointed in myself for this finish, but then I looked at my competitor's times. "38th place: 29:25.6" It was my friend from Specialized! I knew that he would do better than me, but I can't believe I came so close on nothing but aero bars. I looked around some more. In 27th was another Specialized rider. He came in just 14 seconds ahead of me at Valley of the Sun, when we had the same equipment. But today? He was only 30 seconds ahead! And he had a full TT setup just like his teammate did.

In the end, I was very happy with my result in the time trial. I rode smart, and really put in a good run to stack up to my competitors, and prove to myself that it's not the equipment that will make the difference, but it is the rider.

-Ben Cook

Road Race Reports

Luke Lamperti

1st Place USA National Championship Road Race Juniors 11-12

The morning of the road race was not bad do to a start time of 1:00 in the afternoon. So we arrived at around 11:30. Right when we got there I figured out they changed the course that morning. At first I was pretty disappointed but then I thought and figured the strong person is going to win no matter which way the course goes. Then I put on my kit and go the trainer around 12:00. Did my warm-up which was 5 minutes of zone 3 and then 2 minutes rest. Then a 1 minute pyramid. Then after a few jumps I was off the trainer. With it being a hot and humid day I put ice in my bottle. I had my Clif Shot and did roll out. Bang and the race was under way. When we started I got clipped in and made a little jump to get down the hill first. Then we made a right hand turn and there was an attack that I jumped on as well as three others. So then we had a break of 5 rides we rotated through taking pulls and then we headed into the second lap of 3 so we had two to go. We worked together until we had one lap to go and then I made an attack from the back and went off the front but everybody jumped on my wheel. But a little while later with 2 corners to go I knew we would hit the tailwind section. So knowing that I made another attack where everybody went the

same speed. I was now solo so I had to set a good pace so I did not get caught but also stayed off the front. For me that is about 193bpm. So making sure I was at that heart rate I would look down to check every 2 minutes or so. I looked back once and noticed I was pulling away. I kept it there until the line. After having a hard race I quickly got my Clif Recovery drink because I had the criterium the next day. Then I went to podium and then watched my older teammates do fantastic in their race. I had an awesome day at road race nationals.

-Luke

Gianni Lamperti

5th Place USA National Championships Road Race Juniors 13-14

The day before the Road Race we went and did a pre-race ride on the course. When we got there before my race the next day we saw that the Para athletes were going backwards on the course. We asked around and soon figured out that USA cycling had changed the course at last minute to make it go the opposite way because of a permitting problem. I did my warm up then went to the line and saw that the whole field had already lined up I went straight down the front and then the officials said I had to go to the back for roll out. I did, and then moved up about three rows when I got to roll out. When I got past I was about 3rd row, but I saw a tiny gap on the right and I slipped up to the frontline. I was right next to the barrier so I did not have to worry about getting pinched off from anybody on the right but I did have to worry about getting either boxed in or pushed into the barrier. When the whistle blew I jumped hard to get ahead of the guy on my left hand side in order not to get boxed in. I got in front of him and then was about 15th wheel. I then knew that I had to move up and there was a descent coming so I went to the front of the field on the descent to move up for one thing and secondly to get out of the way of any crashes through the first two corners. When I came around the second corner there was an immediate attack from somewhere in the field. He got about 5 feet in front of me then the referee came up and said that he had to go to the back of the field because he attacked over the center line. I was second wheel when the kid who won the TT attacked, and everybody was on it so I just sat in and decided to get on the kids wheel that got second at the TT. I stayed in really good position until the last lap and I slipped back to about 15th wheel. The kid who won the TT came around me on the left so I hopped on him thinking he was going to sprint pretty hard and try to get all three but it was only 200m out and he had not started anything so I came around on the right side and started sprinting and passed about 5 guys and then got passed in the last 5m for fourth and finished in fifth. I went and spun down the hill and was very happy with my result. I came back and did podium then we left to go back to the hotel. It was a great day of racing and I hoped to have as much fun in the crit.

-Gianni

Isaiah Chass

12th Place USA National Championships Road Race Juniors 13-14

When I woke up for my second race at nationals, I was super excited again, so I immediately got up ready to get the day started. I went to have some breakfast. After breakfast, I came back to my room to get all of my stuff together and pin my numbers on my jersey. After loading up the car, I hung out for a little bit and then had lunch. After lunch, we got in the car and drove to the start of the road race. When we arrived, we drove over to the tent, and I set up my bike on the trainer. Shortly after, I walked over to watch the start of Luke's race with Gianni. When we came back I had something to eat and then started getting ready. When it was time to jump on the trainer, I hopped on and started spinning. After zone 3, I started my pyramid. With Ben helping me dig deep, I finished my pyramid with about 30 minutes until my start, so I got off the trainer and got ready. Then, I rode over to the start with Gianni, rolled out, and got in position. When the race official blew the whistle, everyone starting sprinting hard, so I made sure to get up towards the front. As I came out of the first corner I started sprinting and then passed some riders on the downhill. After the second corner, it started to slow up, so I tried to get farther up. Shortly after, an attack was made, but brought right back. Towards the top of the hill, the pace started to lift. Then, coming around the last corner, a big attack was made and I was now slowly coming off the wheel in front of me. At the end of the finishing straight away, I got back onto the group. Now we had 2 laps to go. On the little descent I made up a few places and was now in the middle of the group. A few attacks were made on the backside of the course, but no one was able to get off the front. I started to make my way farther up towards the front, but when we came around the last corner, another move was made, causing me to drop back a little. Once again, at the end of the final straight away, the group slowed up, so I was able to move back up. On the backside of the course I made my way farther up again. We were now about 1/2 a lap to the finish, and a little move was made. I got on someone's wheel and stayed in the group. Coming into the final corner I was about 10th wheel. As I came out of the corner I jumped on someone else's wheel and was moving up even more. I was about 5th wheel now. As the riders in front of me started to sprint, I just couldn't hold on any longer. We were still pretty far out from the finish, so I sat down and tried to not let very many people pass me. I kept pushing to the line and ended up with 12th place. After my race, I went for a little cool down and then rode back up to the rest of the team, where my teammate Gianni would be on the podium.

-Isaiah

Emily Abraham

12th place USA National Championship Road Race Junior W. 17-18

Finally, the day I had been preparing for all season. It came and went in the blink of an eye but it was definitely one memorable race. Due to my crash last year right before nationals, I was unable to race this road race course, so this was my first time unlike the other girls who had raced it the year before. On Tuesday (the day before my race), we went to pre-ride the course. I had been nervous about the descent

but after we pre-rode it I found out it was nice and gradual. I made sure to get to bed early on Tuesday night since my race started at 7 am the next morning! We woke up at 4 am and ate breakfast before heading to the race. There was dense fog on our drive to Blue Mounds State Park (where the race was held) and by the time we arrived it was so foggy it felt like we were in a cloud. After getting changed I jumped on the trainer to spin out my legs and warm-up before my start. Coach came over and talked about my plan for the race with me during my warm-up. She wanted me to focus on position to stay up with the main group, obviously since there's a rather big climb on this course we knew the field would get strung out. As I was preparing to hop off the trainer and roll over to the start, a heavy mist began. Then once the officials had all the girls line up at the start, it actually began raining. The streets were all wet but since it rains in Wisconsin a lot, the roads would not be slippery. Before our start the officials told us that we would be neutralized for the entire descent, three miles! I was thrilled to hear this, this meant no one would be able to bomb the descent and cause a break. It was cold and wet when the whistle blew and we began rolling down the hill. I stayed towards the back, although it was a wonderful descent, the rain definitely made me nervous. Thankfully since we were neutralized I couldn't get dropped. It felt like a long time until we reached the flat section and the moto waved us to begin racing. Once the race did officially start, nothing really changed. One girl got on the front to begin pulling and we increased our speed a bit but nothing I couldn't keep up with. I maneuvered my way into the middle of the pack before we made our first left hand turn; it was a short flat section before we made another left to the rolling section of the course. I managed to get up towards the front of the pack as we went over the first two rollers, I was surprised by how slow the other girls were going but I figured since it was only the first lap everyone was saving their energy. Also, everyone had water dripping from their helmets and our bikes were wet, but it was fun! I was amazed by how much fun I was having in the rain, normally I can't stand the rain! On the final flat section before the climb, I went towards the front to take a few pulls. Only one other girl was working on the front so after I helped her out a bit, I moved back in the pack to save energy. That girl ended up breaking away from the peloton and it took us a minute to get organized before we finally began to chase her. We caught her at the base of the climb. I was at the very back of the peloton as we approached the climb; I was having trouble shifting into my big gear on the front which concerned me because I needed to be able to shift into that for the descent. Once I saw the pack moving away from me, I forgot about the shifting and pushed myself to grab on. I was still at the back as we made our way up the steep climb, but at this point the field became very strung out. I started passing girls in order to stay on the very tail end of the peloton. By the time we were almost to the top, they had a small gap on me. I passed a girl on the Exergy team and encouraged her to grab my wheel. She was unable to as we crested the top of the climb, I had to keep pushing myself to try to close that gap between me and the peloton. I saw them make the left turn to begin the descent and I had just enough of a gap that I couldn't quite bridge. I pedaled as hard as I could on the descent until I started spinning out then tried to get as aero as possible to catch them but there was eight of them and only one of me so obviously they were able to go faster. The same

Exergy girl from earlier came bombing down the descent and told me to jump on her wheel. I tried but I was spinning out too much and I couldn't quite catch on. Pretty soon she was out of sight along with the main pack. I looked behind me, no one in sight. I was on my own, so I began time trialing it to try and catch the field. I would see them for a second as they turned a corner then they would be gone. I was on my own for a solid five minutes or more until I made it to the roller section then five girls caught me. I was happy they caught me; finally I had someone to work with! We immediately started a fast rotating pace line, on the flat section we were going hard and fast. At some point I was struggling to keep up our pace but that hard work paid off because we caught that Exergy girl from earlier. Then the motorist came up beside us and told us there was a two and a half minute gap between us and the leaders. Wow they made good time. I was confident when we five other girls and I approached the climb for the second time. I had passed them all the first time we climbed it so I figured I was one of the strongest climbers among us. I didn't attack them on the climb though; I knew I needed to work with them for the final lap so we stayed together on the second time up the climb. On the final lap we all stayed together as well, the gap between us and the leaders only got larger so we got to a point where we realized it wasn't worth it to waste all of our energy but of course we continued to work hard. My legs were screaming when we reached the base of the final climb. Two girls from my group went hard and I wasn't able to hang with them although I pushed myself as hard as I could. I reached the final major climb which lead us to the finish, one other girl passed me on our way up. I stayed behind her as long as I could but just as we crested the top she was far enough in front of me to beat me to the line. I was ecstatic when I crossed that finish line, I was soaking wet and my entire body was in pain but I had so much fun and actually placed better than I expected to in this race.

-Emily

Ben Cook

26th Place USA National Championships Road Race Juniors 15-16

It was a cold and rainy morning on the day of the Junior Nationals road race. The road race was the first race of 3 throughout the next week, with a one day rest in between each race for my age category. I came into the road race excited. I am a good climber, and the course suited me well. I also had an awesome team to cheer me on, so I was excited about that too. I hopped on the trainer right at the entrance to staging and got a good, yet painful warm-up in. Today wasn't going to be easy, but I was feeling ready for the day ahead. I pulled out a top 10 placing at Sea Otter Classic earlier this year, which features a similar course, so I was hoping I could repeat that today.

I lined up at the start line, and Coach Laura gave me one final talk about the race. We discussed how I may be a good strong climber regionally, but the competition at the national level means a different race strategy. The plan for today was to hang in over the first lap, as the majority of the field would be shelled up the first long climb.

From there, the pace would be high, so I needed to sit in and survive the climbs and hope for the best possible finish.

The field sprinted from staging to the start line. The race began with a "neutral" descent. I moved myself into the second row of riders, just to get a head start on the scramble for position down this hill. The official came to the front to give us the race info. "Gentlemen! You will be racing for three laps today. The race begins with a neutral descent. You are to stay behind the moto-ref until cleared to race. Good luck and race safe. The race will begin on the whistle." I got in the drops and got ready to start off my first race here at nationals. And with the sound of the whistle, we were off! I found myself still in the second row of riders as we exited the park, and began the long descent. The roads were wet and slick. Water sprayed up from all around, and I struggled to hold my position. Moving up a few places, I squeezed into the front row, but only for a brief moment. Looking to my right, I was lined up exactly with the moto. A few centimeters farther forward, and anybody in our row would be out of the race. Shaking in the cold, we were all trying not to lock up a wheel, and keep upright on this descent. "BANG!" Skidding and the crunching of bicycles sounded from behind me. I reminded myself to just look forward, but it was no easy task to hold position on this descent. Trying to push my way around riders, I ended up getting squeezed out to the middle of the pack. By the bottom of the descent, I was sitting 40 riders back.

Ugh. Fighting as much as I could, there simply weren't enough corners on this course to move up. Flat straight roads never were my specialty. Coming into the first climb, I was too far back. With a crunch and a skid, the rider in front of me dropped and jammed his chain, and I hit his rear wheel at full speed. Now unclipped with the field sliding away up the hill, I refocused and jumped back into the group. I really had to move up now. Eventually I had pushed into the top 30.

Onto the first climb, the pace soon lifted. I shifted into the little ring, and settled into my own rhythm. Or so I tried to. Dodging riders ahead of me, I made my way onto the back of the core group of riders. There were about 40 of us left of the 100 some odd starters. I pushed all the way through the feed zone, and made my way over the top of the hill with the leaders. Using the few curves of the descent, I was soon into the top 15 riders.

The next lap carried out at a steady tempo, as I kept myself in a safe position. The pace lifted once again as we hit the base of the climb. I feel like there was more I could have done to prepare for this race. Mentally and physically. Due to illness the week prior, I stopped doing core work. I feel like this weakened me just a little bit, and it was that little bit that made this race so much harder, and put me out of contention. I was not relaxed enough going into the road race, and at this point it was all I could do to survive. I pushed myself over the top of the climb, slightly distanced from the lead 20 riders. I was passed by a Specialized rider coming over the top of the climb and I jumped on. Drilling as hard as we could, it wasn't enough to hang in. But our race wasn't over yet. He and I had been slightly gapped at this point, so we were both prepared to work together to rejoin the group. After a very fast descent, we found a rotation together. Catching another group of 8 or so riders on the flats, we slowly

made our way back to the lead group. We caught back on at the base of the two punchy climbs of the last lap.

Back in the field, we discovered that a group of 8 had gotten off the front. Coming over the climbs, I found myself in the "Break, catch. Break, catch." scenario. A bunch of small moves were going, but none of them sticking. I was unable to read the race at this point in time, and got myself mixed up with the wrong moves entirely, and wasted some energy in the process. I ended up pulling a move on the flats that had me off the front solo with about a 20 second lead for a good few minutes, but nobody was in the mood to join. I was soon pulled back in by the field. With about 5k until the base of the climb, the race slowed down. I found myself in the field again, but moved myself up to the front. We were almost at an easy spin, and I found myself in the front row, with a tailwind at my back. Sitting at the front effortlessly spinning, I chatted with my friend Garrett Marking. Garrett and I race together almost every weekend back in California. We both wanted to get away from this group before the base of the climb, so we decided to work together to try to get away. It just so turned out that, not a moment later, an attack flew around our left side. Garrett somehow made his way in with the move, but I just missed it. The group of 3 left us in the dust, but Garrett was the only main contender in the group.

Hitting the base of the final long climb to the finish, my efforts finally caught up to me. I was moving up along the field quickly, and feeling strong. It was right then, that I cramped in spectacular fashion, almost coming to a standstill. Annoyed and angry, I had to ride my own pace at the back of the group all the way until the top of the climb. I passed a few riders on the way, but there was nothing I could do to go hard without my legs locking up until about 1k to go. I came in across the line as hard as I could, yet frustrated and angry with my failure on the last climb.

I went back to the car and talked to my dad about the race, and why I cramped. We figure that I need to drink and eat more than I am. I only went through 2 bottles the whole race, when in reality I could have drunk 3 or even 4 if I needed too. In the end, I had a really fun day, despite my ending frustration. I learned about nutrition, and also about which moves are the "real" moves. The difference between senseless attacks, and a move that could really split the field, or get a rider off the front. I also learned that sometimes, when you are at the mercy of other riders, it may just be best to sit in and wait for the climb in the field, even if you feel like you can attack the flats. I went back to the hotel and met up with Coach Laura, and chatted about the race. It wasn't a bad way to start off my week at nationals, but I was determined to make the time trial and criterium better than today's road race.

-Ben C

Ryan Clarke

86th Place USA National Championships Road Race Juniors 17-18

I flew into Chicago this year instead of Milwaukee and it was quite the trip from the airport to the hotel. I had heard about the weather in the Midwest but we were blessed with awesome weather last year so I still wasn't sure what it was like. This time

I got the full experience. My dad and I had full on thunderstorms for an hour in the car and the rain got so bad that everyone on the highway slowed down to 55mph because we could barely see the car in front of us.

As cool as the weather was, I really hoped it cleared up before the road race. After last year, I knew the descent would be really sketchy and the rain would only make things worse. Once we got to the hotel, I settled into the rhythm of things quickly. We were at the same hotel, so I knew where everything was and where the good restaurants were. My road race was a little later than last year, so I had time to sleep in a little and relax as I got ready. I got to the course early and found it was very overcast and humid out. I did a decent warm-up to get everything going and got to the start line early to get a good position for the neutral start. Right before the race started the sky cleared up and then we were off. I took advantage of the downhill to move up to the top 30 or so guys. I stayed there until I caught bars with someone and almost went down which caused me to slide back in the field. After the early break got away things settled down and I had a chance to slowly work my way through the field. It was nice riding with such capable riders who know how to handle their bikes and don't freak out when they touch other people. I really felt safe in the field which gave me more confidence. I went into the climb almost at the front and made it over the top near the back of the field. The next lap was almost the same with me moving up on the flats and hitting the climb near the front. This time someone lit it up at the front and I struggled to keep contact but I ended up chasing back with a large group without too much effort. At this time my lower back started bothering me as it had been giving me some trouble before nationals. I hit the climb again and I couldn't find any power in my legs whatsoever. I tried chasing but knew that was it for me. I worked with the group I was in as well as I could, but the guy after me would surge through after I took my pull so he ended up dropping me from the group. I found another guy in the road and we worked together until I rode away from him on the climb up to the finish. I thought I had a pretty good race up until my back hurt which was a bummer, but I saw improvement over last year which was nice to see.

-Ryan

Criterion Race Reports

Luke Lamperti

1st Place USA National Championship Criterium Juniors 11-12

The morning of the criterium I got up early because my start time was at 8:30AM. I had some breakfast and loaded up the car and left the Hotel. When we got to the crit at 7:00 it was already hot. I threw on my kit and went to ride a few laps before they started earlier races. After checking out the course and thinking about it I put my bike on the trainer. I had quick bite to eat and started my warm up with 1 hour to my start time. When I was done with my warm up I headed to the start line. When I got to staging they called us up right away. Then we did roll out and bang and the race was under way. There was an attack at the front of the field I jumped on. Then the

whole field sat up. Nobody wanted to pull so I pulled through. After pulling a few people pulled through and just after they pulled through I made a big attack. I was clear but only about 7 seconds. Then I came around past the start/finish and they announced 10 seconds. From there I was thinking about how many laps I had to go and conserving so I was not blown up later in the race. I said to myself, "Keep it, keep it." As I continued saying that I pushed on. 3 laps to go (3k), "I can do it," I thought. As they rang the bell for 1 lap to go I had 45 seconds on the field. I had almost done it. I came around and was super excited to win the junior national criterium. It was also awesome watching my teammates later in the day who did awesome. I had a great week in Madison, Wisconsin with my teammates.

Gianni Lamperti

5th Place USA National Championship Criterium Juniors 13-14

The morning of the criterium we woke up around 5:30AM to go and eat breakfast in the lobby, we were lucky that the hotel did this for us. We loaded everything up then drove to the race, and found a good parking spot right on the hill that went to the finish line. I helped to unload and set up the tent then went a rode about ten laps on the course. I came backed and helped warm up my brother then ate a sandwich. After that I went and helped warm up my teammate Isabella. I then went and got on my bike to start my warm up. After that I did a one-minute pyramid followed by a few 30-second jumps. Following that up, I rolled up to staging and again found myself at the back. I knew one kid was going to get a call up so I then got behind him. When he got called up everybody moved to the side, making it where he could come through and I followed him up to the second row. The race started off fast for the first five laps then slowed down for about a lap before the attacks started happening. I was about tenth wheel when the two kids that got top two at the Road Race attacked. I just sat in and there was hesitation in the field so we slowed down a little bit letting the two off the front get a small gap. People kept rotating on the front, so I took my pull with about five to go then jumped back in around fifth wheel. The kid who won the TT made a really good move and went to the front and pulled us all back within a half a lap to go. I dropped back to about 15th wheel. When we turned left with only a little hill, corner then slight downhill to the finish I started my sprint because I was so far back. I came into the last corner and got pinched off by the guys who went wide and started to cut in. I had to sit down for a second then jump again. I sprinted hard to the line and was once again super happy with my result considering I'm at the bottom of the age category. I had a lot of fun at Nationals this year and I hope to have even more fun in Tahoe next year!

-Gianni

Isaiah Chass

26th Place USA National Championship Criterium Juniors 13-14

As I woke up for my third race at nationals, I got right up, and had some breakfast. After breakfast, I packed everything I would need, and then loaded up the car. Then, I got in the car and drove to the Criterium course, which was in front of the State Capitol Building. When we found the team, we unloaded everything and then watched the other races until it was time to get ready. When it was time, I put on my kit, and started warming up. First I spun for 15 minutes, and then did two, 5 minutes of zone 3. After opening up my legs in a hard pyramid, I got off the trainer and then rode to the staging area. When the gates opened, I fought my way through the gates to get rollout done. After rollout, I quickly got to the line, where I was able to get into the second row. There I waited for a few minutes for the official to blow the whistle. When he blew the whistle, I quickly got clipped in and sprinted to stay up front. After going around the first corner, I sprinted to move up. Then, I got on a wheel and rode there for the rest of the lap. Over the next few laps, little attacks were made but no one got off the front. I kept moving around in the field as I would drop back, and then have to fight my way back up. The next laps, the speed was staying pretty consistent, and it was getting harder to move up. Eventually an attack was made, and a few riders got off the front. With a few laps to go, they were still off the front, and I had a good opportunity, so I made an attack, attempting to bridge the gap to the break. I was not able to get to the break, and the peloton caught me. We now had about 3 laps to go. As the group caught me, I jumped in, but was now towards the back, and I had to make my way back towards the front. On the last lap, I was in the middle of the field. I sat in, and as we came around the last corner, I started sprinting trying to get a little better of a placing. Later, I found out that I got 26th place. After the race I changed clothes, and went over to watch my teammates Gianni and Luke on the podium. And later, I watched my other teammate's races. This trip to nationals was so much fun, and I learned a bunch. Thanks for all the help coach!

-Isaiah

Emily Abraham

22nd place Junior National Championship Criterium Jr. 17-18 Women

Out of the three races at Nationals, the criterium was the one I felt the most ready for. The course is 1 km around the Capitol in downtown Madison. This year my race was in the afternoon around 2 pm. It was a weird day, the sky was gray and gloomy but it was hot and humid out. I arrived at the course early, just over two hours before my start. Ben immediately started his warm up since his race was an hour before mine. I walked the course once while I waited to get on the trainer and begin my warm-up. Once Ben got off the trainer, I changed into my kit and began spinning my legs. Earlier that morning Ben, Ryan, and I had gone on a short ride since we didn't race until the afternoon. When I got on the trainer, I felt strange. My stomach was turning and I couldn't tell if I was hungry or nervous. It was too close to my start for me to eat any real food but I had a few bits of a Clif bar before I got on the trainer so I decided it was just nerves. After just spinning on the trainer for fifteen minutes, I started to get my heart rate up by doing a five minute zone three effort. I did two of

those before doing a pyramid. Luckily I had my teammates there to cheer me on and encourage me during my pyramid because my whole body was hurting but I knew if I went hard I would feel better during the race. With thirty minutes left until my start, I hopped off the trainer. I needed to get to the staging area early so I would have a better spot on the start line. I didn't feel right on my way to the staging area, I was nervous, really nervous. I hardly ever get nervous until right when the whistle is about to blow to signal the start of the race. I found myself repeating things to try and calm myself down. I wasn't myself at all. So once all the other girls were in the staging area we were told we roll over to do roll out then line up away from the start line so they could do call ups. I did exactly what Coach had told me earlier; get to roll out quickly then line up on the left side. It wasn't as hard for me to line up since there were only about thirty girls in my race, in the boys races there was at least double or triple that! I took some deep breaths while the officials did the call ups, trying to calm myself down and focus on the race. The whistle blew and we all rolled out to begin the thirty minute race. My mind was gone; I was so far away during this race. Moves were happening, people were attacking and I couldn't think. I knew I needed to be up in the front, I would move to fifth wheel but then suddenly everyone would bunch up and I would be at the back again. And my mind for some insanely strange reason would not process what was going on. I'd tell myself to focus but everything was moving so fast and my brain was moving so slowly. Wow. Not what I wanted to happen during the Nationals criterium. I was relieved when the race ended, it was only thirty minutes but it felt so much longer. I'm disappointed with how this day turned out but I've learned from it. Sometimes bad days happen and you can't control that. But I could have felt this way due to something I could control. Maybe I could have eaten better the night before or slept more or thought more positively about the race. Any of these things could of affect the way I felt that day but it's in the past now and all I can do learn from this experience for next time.

-Emily

Ben Cook

15, cat 3

30th Place Junior National Championships Criterium Juniors 15-16

It was the very last important race of the year. The Nationals criterium would be the close to my first full season on the junior national circuit. This race went very well for me last year as a 13-14, but now I was with the 15-16's. I had had a harsh road race, a truly amazing time trial, and I was set to close out the week of racing in style. Yes, coach set me up to win.

Criterium style racing is different than every other event. The winner is never truly decided by strength or numbers like a road race or time trial is. Of course, a fair amount of both must be implied to win a criterium. However, the champion today would be the smartest, best positioned rider on course. The competition had legs the size of my torso, lungs made to breathe at 9000 feet, and bodies strong enough to give a horse a heart attack. But today, I was determined to make the win my own. Coach

came to me as I warmed up on the trainer, and gave me the race plan. It was here where she confirmed it; I was going for the win today.

We talked a good amount before the start of the race. I learned about my various "finish lines" about the course. These finish lines were the position I was supposed to be in during certain laps. After covering all of the finish lines, we discussed the final. I was to be in 5th or 6th wheel in turn 1 of 1 lap to go. From there, I would continue to fight for my position, which I should be safe to hold due to the tailwind/downhill section of the course, and then jump 3/4th's of the way up the hill, take the final corner tight to the inside, and sprint for the finish. After the plan was in my head, and got off the trainer and headed off to staging early. I still ended up about 30 riders back in the cluttered staging zone. "You see where your bars are?"

Coach said. I looked over and saw my bars stuck behind another rider's. "When you want to move up, both in the race and here in staging, put your bars in front of another rider's before the corner. They can't move around you then." Luckily our friend to my left was distracted, and I picked up my bars and pushed them over his. Before I knew it I had moved up about 2 rows. "Ok Ben, good luck! You know what to do, remember the plan!" Said coach as we were called to the line. I found myself a place right in the front row. Perfect.

"Gentlemen! You will be racing for 45 minutes! Free laps end at 8 to go. The counter on the right will show how many laps you have remaining. Good luck gentlemen. Your race will begin on the whistle." I got in the drops as I started to become nervous, but I beat my nerves by letting a smile slip over my face. "TWEET!!"

And we're off! I clipped in and sprinted down the road ahead. Finding myself a position in the top 10, I did my best to hold on. The course had 4 corners in 1 kilometer. That's about a 65-70 second lap, and a turn every 15-20 seconds. And it was FAST! We ended up with an average speed of over 27 miles per hour! I soon found myself slipping back in the tight corners, and struggling to hang in. I kept in the top 50, but it was not ideal. For the next few laps, I was giving it everything just to stay in the quickly diminishing group. Soon enough, only 80 of 100 starters remained.

I knew I had to make it to the front, but I just didn't know how. The race was riding 3 to 4 across. It was an utter mess.

The roads were made from cement slabs, and there were deep cracks that followed the path of the turns. Coming around turn one, I got my wheel caught in a crack, skidded the front tire, and nearly went down. I somehow made my way upright and jumped back in the field, but it cost me some position. About 15 minutes in, I began to feel sprinkles of rain coming down. Coach talked about the rain. If it even started to drizzle, I had to move to the front. The race would shatter in a few laps.

Passing by the Team Swift cheering section (yes, we do indeed have the best cheer section at nationals) I heard some familiar voices yelling some familiar words. But this time I listened. "MOVE UP BEN!! GO! GO! GO! IT'S RAINING!" Yelled coach and the team. I had soon found the trick. No brakes. I had to go completely off the brakes for the rest of the race if I wanted to get to the front and stay there. I passed within the field, rather than on the inside of the outside of the corners. I remembered the cracks in the road, and began to lose confidence again. But I realized something very

important: the cracks split the field into half in the corners. You didn't have to be on the inside of the race, but you had to be on the inside of the middle crack to move up. Using the cracks, and not using the brakes, I was in the top 15 within a single lap. Now to hold it. I would have to keep moving up aggressively if I wanted to stay here. And so I did. For the final 15 minutes, I remained in perfect position. I began to become more aggressive with five to go. With two laps remaining, I was nearing the top 5. And then, coming in for one lap to go, I was right in 6th wheel. I held it perfectly for the straightaway. I had made it this far. It was a victory in itself. The crowd roared and screamed as we flew down the straight for the last lap. But it was here, coming into my final finish line, that I made the worst possible mistake. I was right in the perfect sprinters wheel; the whole field wished they had my spot. But it was in that turn that I just followed the wheel in front of me. I didn't move up, I didn't pass, I didn't charge, I just considered myself safe. I got passed by 20 riders in the blink of an eye. 6th wheel at the entrance of the turn, 26th at the exit. I didn't shut down, however. I pushed and fought all the way to the finish for 30th place. I came in bummed out, but in awe that I could race like I did. I talked to coach afterwards, and she was not at all upset with my finish. She reminded me that I was just a 15 year old and that I should be proud that I rode so well out there in this aggressive. I always have next year. And besides, I made it very very far before getting passed! With that, I set a goal for the rest of the crits in the season. I just had to make it one turn farther than I did the race before. And one turn after that. Eventually, I would make it to the finish line.

At the end of the day, I was so extremely happy with my race. Talking to friends who were watching on the sidelines, they thought I would take the win! I had the perfect wheel, and I could follow the plan flawlessly. I also got to learn a lot about criterium racing. I got to both learn and test out not using your brakes. Even a light tap can cause you to slide backwards a few positions in the field. I also learned to be observant of the race around me, and that every race is different. The cracks and sharp turns in today's race ended up playing to my advantage in the end. Finally, I learned the most important lesson the hard way. "Safe" does not mean safe. Being in a safe position only means that you are in the position to continue advancing through the field, not that you can quit moving up. I just recently visualized it. I had the inside of that corner to take. Had I darted to the front beforehand, I would have ended up in the top 3. Just outside of the swarm of riders behind. But chances are I would be back in the top 5 or 6 by the next turn. Even if I had charged to the very front, I would have had a better shot than quitting my advancement. This ties into my goal for the rest of the season: Make it one turn farther. Once I get there, I will probably get swamped again. And then again. But each time I will learn about how to make it to the next turn, and finally the finish. The criterium was an excellent way for me and the team to end the week of racing at nationals. I am extremely happy that I am able to race at such an astounding event each year with my team. I am also happy that we could pull out some medals along the way!

The season ended off a success on my part, and I'm extremely happy that I had such an amazing group of riders, coaches, and sponsors to support me along the way.

I'm so proud of the rest of the riders on the team as well. They really worked hard, and gave this sport everything they could. It has been an outstanding year for Team Swift.

-Ben

Ryan Clarke

USA National Championships Criterium Juniors 17-18

I've been growing more and fonder of criteriums lately so I was excited to finally race. I had three days between the crit and the road race so I had time to rest and explore the country a little during rides. I found that Wisconsin is actually a very beautiful place in the summer and as Mrs. Lamperti pointed out, there is no trash on the road so everything is completely unspoiled and the lawns are so green. I arrived a little bit early to watch Ben and Emily race before I had to warm-up. I knew people would line up very early to get a good spot so I planned to get off my trainer a half hour before the start. I got to the start gate thinking I would be the first one there and there were almost thirty guys there before me. I waited the thirty minutes until they lined us up where I got a good spot in the second row. We started the race and the strong guys wasted no time setting a brutal pace at the front. I was braking into the corners a little bit so I fell to the back of the field because I couldn't hold my position in the field. After a half hour of dangling near the back the race eased up and I worked my way to the front of the race. I started cornering without brakes and I actually ended up on the very front of the race a couple times. I almost went with a break but I decided against it so I could save energy for the sprint finish. With 20 min left my back hurt again and all my power disappeared and I went straight to the back of the field again. I fought to stay in the race but the pain was too much and forced me to stop. I was extremely disappointed because I was doing so well and felt super good, but I looked at the bright side and realized that I was not only strong enough to stay with a field of the best riders in the country, but I could ride at the front of the race and be competitive as well so I knew that I'm headed in the right direction.

Unfortunately it wasn't the ideal way to end a big trip but I'm still glad that I was able to have the opportunity that some kids don't have. I'd like to thank my parents for making it possible for me to make the trip to Wisconsin as well as Coach Laura for believing in me and helping me through some of the rough spots this year. I'd also like to thank all of the riders from Team Swift who supported me as well as their parents who also helped prepare for my races as well as make it a fun trip. Obviously I wouldn't have been able to race without my bike, so I'd like to give a huge thank you to TIME, Mavic, Sidi, Lazer, Squadra, Smith Optics and Selle San Marco along with all the other companies and supporters for providing me with the best equipment and opportunities to perform at this event. It is truly an honor to represent you and I can't express my gratitude toward all of you enough. It's wonderful to have some many people see value in junior cycling and want to help out. I look forward to the next couple of months of racing and hopefully I can get back to 100% and show everyone what Team Swift does best which is win some bike races!

-Ryan

2. Davis 4th of July Criterium 7/4/14 Davis

Esteban Ramirez

2nd Place Davis 4th of July Criterium Juniors

At first I didn't really have high hopes for the Davis Bike Club 4th of July criterium but in the end I surprised myself in getting second place. The one part I could've improved in was right at the start line I should have been further up because that's what the Limited cycling kid did and because of that he got around 20 seconds ahead of me. Also, I need to keep on practicing saving up my energy for the final lap/sprint because by the end I'm all tired and I have to muster up the last few ounces of power I have left. If I work on those couple things I might have a greater chance of getting first! But we'll see...

- Esteban

3. Foothill College Circuit Race 7/13/14 Los Altos

Tomas Mitre

15, Cat 5
6th Place Foothill College Circuit Race Juniors Cat 4/5 15-18

It was my first race of the day and my first race back from injury so I was mainly focused on finishing and getting the experience instead of placing competitively. I had a short warm up and was still nervous on how I was going to handle the pack again, but when the race started I felt increasingly more comfortable in the race environment. As soon as the pack left the start line the pace was high. A Bear team rider jumped ahead and dragged a few riders with him in a small break. I was able to bridge the gap and join him but was unfortunately tricked into pulling for most of the duration I was with or around that group. On the 3rd lap the bear rider attacked again and I again followed but was caught in the open and was dropped on the first climb. I then slowly dropped back to the chasing group which I stayed with for the majority of the race until the final laps where I tried to make up some ground. Little did I know I actually was able to consolidate sixth place and familiarize myself with the course for the men's race which was 30 min later. All in all it was a good race, I finished in one piece which considering the current climate in the Tour right now, is a really good thing.

-Tomas

Tomas Mitre

2nd Place Foothill College Circuit Race Senior Category 5

The men's race was the second of the day and I was excited to try my luck again on a course that I was now somewhat familiar with. I slapped on my Mavic wheels and lined up at the start. Being the senior men's race, the pace of the group was significantly slower during the early laps compared to the Juniors race, but that was not going to stop me. After a few laps I tried a solo attack just to test the waters regarding the effort and passion the group had on trying to counterattack. Well they were very adamant about containing any attack and that proved true throughout the race as others tried as well and their attacks proved just as futile as mine. Fortunately, I was able to use this group power to help facilitate my efforts during the climbing portion of the race which preceded the finish line. During the final lap a one man breakaway fled the pack and was able to sustain it for a solo win, luckily the pack was yet to finish and the final climb lay ahead. I was stuck about 5th wheel and had 2 riders blocking my left but when the pack rounded the last corner leading up to the climb I attacked on the left hand side of the road and slipped past everyone in the final sprint for a nice second place. It was my first podium ever and my best day of racing so far as well. My riding skills also improved because of my experiences as now my cornering and descending have improved greatly since my last race.

-Tomas

Esteban Ramirez

3rd Place Foothill College Circuit Race Juniors 13-14

I was surprised to be actually more prepared for this race than I thought, even though I had only got six hours of sleep the night before. I brought along a stationary bike trainer and got all warmed up the race. Before the race started, my number was on the wrong way and ended up delaying the race even more than it already was. Immediately I jumped up to Isaiah and the Limited cycling kid we/ I were going a good pace for the first lap but the next lap we slowed down quite a bit and I got confused what was happening so I stayed with Isaiah and the other kid throughout the race even though I figured out we were just conserving energy.

I should've gotten farther ahead throughout those times but by the time I was thinking of doing that, I was already getting tired and would've fallen behind. Towards the end of the race in the last two laps one kid from Davis was sprinting past me up the hills but I pasted him on the flats and downhill. By now, Isaiah and the rival from Limited were long gone from sprinting but the Davis kid was attacking non-stop so on the last hill where the finish was the Davis kid caught up and we were side by side and he started inching ahead of me. I couldn't even think about losing so I mustered up the last of my energy and sprinted past the finish beating the Davis kid winning third.

-Esteban

Isaiah Chass

1st Place Foothill College Circuit Race Juniors 13-14

When I arrived at the race, I set my bike up on the trainer and then got ready to warm up. Then, when it was time, I got on the trainer, and started warming up. After a pyramid, I was ready to race, so I got off the trainer, pinned my number on, and rode over to rollout. Shortly after, I lined up and waited for the whistle. When the race started I sprinted off the line, but couldn't go too far because it was a neutral start behind the lead moto. After the first little downhill, the referee announced that the race was "on", so I immediately made an attack. I got off the front, and no one was following me, so I got comfortable and rode off the front for the first lap. Then, I decided to slow up a bit, because I knew that I was racing another race after this one. When the group caught me, I got on and waited for an attack. When an attack was made, I jumped right on. The attack didn't go off the front, and no one would pull, so I stayed at the front riding comfortably. The next few laps, little attacks were made, but I got on their wheel and they didn't stay off. I also made a few little attacks the next couple laps on the hill, to try to pop some riders off. The group was mostly together going into the last lap, and I was third wheel going into the short hill. Then, an attack was made, and I got on his wheel. Towards the top, he started to slow up a bit, and I knew he was hurting, so I knew it would be a perfect time to attack him, so I attacked. I got a gap, and was now about 1/2 a lap to the finish, so I started going all out. Right before the downhill, I looked through my elbow and saw that I had a pretty good gap, but I kept pushing down the downhill. As I came up to the finish, I stood up and started sprinting to the finish line for the win. After the race, I rode back to the car and got ready for the 4's race.

-Isaiah

Isaiah Chass

43rd Place Foothill College Circuit Race Category 4

Since I was already warmed up from my junior's race, all I had to do for the 4's race was eat a little, and change my number on my jersey. 15 minutes before my race, I rode to the start because I had to do rollout again. Then, I rode a lap, and lined up. When the race started I got up towards the front and held my position. Right away an attack was made, but everyone knew it was too early to go, so they just let him get off the front. We slowly caught him and then I started moving up a little. On the hill there would be attacks, so I would move up there. When prime laps were announced I would drop back a few places in the sprint, but move back up on after the line. With about 4 to go I started moving myself back up, and with 2 to go I was third wheel. Then, coming into the last lap, I got onto the front and ended up blowing up when an attack was made on the hill. I got dropped with about 1/2 a lap to go, so I just spun back to the finish. I was pretty bummed with my result in the 4's, but I was happy with the win and 3rd place for Esteban in the juniors.

-Isaiah

4. Colavita Gran Prix

7/20/14

Novato

Emily Abraham

7th place

Colavita Grand Prix

Women Category 3

It had been exactly two weeks since my last race, so I was excited to get back out there! The category three women raced with the category four women but we were picked separately. I was happy about this because we had completely different numbers so you could tell who was in which category. It was cold when I went over to register and got my number. Finally once I got on the trainer I was able to warm up. After doing a five minute zone three, I started a pyramid. It was painful but I was still feeling good when I got ready to roll over to my start. There were only about 12 women in the category three's but there were 30 of us including the category four's. So we had a decent sized field. There were quite a few women from team Metromint in our race so I figured they would try to make a break, they did some work on the front throughout the race but that was really all they did. The course was awesome with a small incline on the back side then a left turn and small descent to the finish. For the first few laps I just sat in, watching to see how the race would play out. I felt good so I wanted to work hard. I stayed in the top ten for the first five laps, and then when we started the next lap someone jumped and everyone came around me. This was at the base on the small incline and I was pushed to the back. For a second I was just watching the race happen in front of me. In the front was the woman who just attacked and behind her were two women going after her then the rest of the field and me at the back. I snapped out of it immediately, I couldn't just watch the race unfold in front of me! I was supposed to be in it! So I moved over to the left side and started passing some of the women. I worked my way up to fifth wheel and made sure to stay in at least top ten for the rest of the race, if not top five. When we went by the finish line with two laps to go, I held my position in top three. I knew I had to be at least third wheel but preferably second wheel if I wanted to place in this race. We slowed down a lot on the small incline with two laps to go. As we crossed the finish for the last lap, I was placed perfectly at second wheel. But as we came towards the first left turn, everyone strung across the road and I was again pushed toward the middle of the pack. I reacted immediately and worked my way back to the front. I pushed over that incline and unfortunately wasted a lot of energy. At the top of the hill I was still second wheel but my legs were tired. People began passing me and I lost my positioning. I made the mistake of losing hope at this point; however I continued to work hard and push my way to the finish line. Although my result wasn't what I would have liked it to be, I felt really strong throughout this entire race.

-Emily

Emily Abraham

20th Place Colavita Grand Prix P1/2/3 Women

This was my first race with the pro women! I was eager to do my first race with them, the only down side was that the 3/4 women's race was at 10 am and the pro race wasn't until 3 pm! So I had quite a wait, but it went by quicker than I had expected it to. I was able to watch Ben and Miles race in the 2/3 race while I waited so that was fun. Then an hour before the start of my next race, I started to get ready. Instead of warming up on the trainer again, I went with Kelli (races for Red Peloton) on a thirty minute spin. The wind was brutal at this hour so we were able to get nice and warmed up after pushing through that head wind. We had twenty minutes to spare when we returned from our spin so I used the restroom and then waited with my parents. My plan was just to sit in and stay in for as long as I could. When I saw the other women coming over to the start line, I began to get nervous and I told myself it was okay if I was unable to stay in during the whole race. From the gun the race took off pretty quick. I was able to sit in on the first lap and we slowed down a lot on the second. I was even able to move up to top five as we came around to start the third lap. The race was kind of all over the place, one woman would attack and another would chase. Then the rest of the field would just ride along until someone else attacked then we would chase. I was having tons of fun, even though towards the end I got tired I was still able to hang in there. But on the last lap the pace really picked up and once we hit that small incline I just couldn't keep up, plus it's harder to hang on from the back. I did much better than I expected to in this race! I thought for sure they would drop me in the first twenty minutes but I felt great and worked hard.

-Emily

Isaiah Chass

5th Place Colavita Grand Prix Senior Category 4

When I showed up at the race, I had a little extra time, so I had a little bite to eat, and then pinned my number onto my jersey. Then, when it was time for my warm-up, I hopped on my trainer and started warming up. After, finishing my warm-up, I rode over to the start line, did roll out, and ate a Clif Shot. When the race started, I quickly got clipped in, and made a little attack. Another rider jumped on my wheel and we took turns pulling for about 1/4 of a lap when the peloton caught us. I then moved into the peloton about 5 riders back. Then, another attack was made and I made sure to stay towards the front. After a few laps, they called the first of six primes. When we came around the last corner for this prime, I started sprinting with everyone else, knowing that I had to stay up towards the front in the field. The next few laps riders kept attacking until a few riders got off the front. They slowly got away, and as we came around the next lap, the announcer said they were 14 seconds ahead. Eventually, 2 riders bridged the gap, and now the breakaway had 4 riders. Riders kept attacking, attempting to bridge the gap to the break, until we caught them with 2 laps to go. At this point, I was about 5 riders back in good position. Then, with 1/2 a lap to go, I was

in 4th position, when the field swarmed. I was in the middle of the field now and I was trying to find a way out, when a space opened up when someone attacked on the right side. I quickly moved my way through the gap and started moving my way back up to the front. When a rider started sprinting by me, I got on his wheel and moved up about 5 positions. I was now about 8th wheel coming into the last corner. When I came around the final corner, I started going all-out, and got past 2 riders. I was now in 6th place and 5th was only half a bikes length ahead. I dug a little deeper, and was able to get past him right before the line for 5th place. I was really happy to get 5th because it meant that I got points toward my upgrade.

-Isaiah

Ben Cook

15, category 3

20th Place Colavita Gran Prix Senior Category 2/3

Coming into Colavita, it would be my first 2/3's race, as well as my first race in a category higher than the 3s. I knew some about the course already, but it turned out to be more complicated than I thought. Even though the loop was fairly flat and open, there were a few tricks that I didn't pick up until after my race.

I lined up at the start line with my teammate, Miles. It would be Miles' first race in the 3's, and we were both excited for the day ahead. We had a full 60 minutes of racing in us today. I got in the drops to be ready for a fast start. I had Miles lined up right behind me. The whistle blew, and we were off. I clipped in quickly and jumped on the pedals. I was just about ready to take off down the road, when I looked to my sides. Riders were still chatting and slowly starting off the race. "Well, that's a pleasant change from the 3's!" I thought to myself. But within 500 meters the race had taken off at full speed. I found myself a position comfortably within the top 10. In the first chicane, the race bottlenecked ahead of me, causing me to tap the brakes a bit. I knew that I had to be in the front if I didn't want to lose position here. Three laps later there was already a prime lap coming up! I was sitting in the top 5, when two riders nearby me jumped far out for the prime. They took off on the backstretch of the course, and flew around the left hander onto the downhill. About 2 rows back, the field had spread across the road with a lot of open gaps to slip through. The plan was to get either Miles or I into the break today. Seeing the opportunity, I jumped hard and flew past the now toasted prime contenders. I drilled off the front waiting for a few other riders to join. Looking back I saw that Mike's Bikes was already on the front yanking me back into the field. Surprised at their power and urgency to get me back, I took some time in the field to recover.

Miles found his way along side me. Riding to the front of the field, Miles made an attack up the hill from about 15 places back. It was looking promising, with two motivated riders along his side, but three Mike's Bikes moved to the front to take him back. It was obvious they wanted a field sprint today. I sat in the field and moved around some to read the race. It was way too slow at this point in time, with the field

riding from curb to curb. I knew this was dangerous. Not from a tactical standpoint, but this is when crashes can possibly happen.

We came over the top of the hill, and two riders launched for a prime. I decided to go with them, as I knew the field would let them go until they sprinted for the prime.

But I had no intention of going for a prime today. As soon as the riders threw their bikes across the line, I jumped on the pedals again, and attacked. I already had a good 6-7 seconds when I jumped, and now I was off the front with a solid gap. Soon enough I was out of visibility. I knew it was far out in the race, but I wanted to be in the break today. I figured I had much better chances in a break than a field sprint.

This is where my eagerness got the best of me. In reality, I know how to position for a sprint pretty well at this point in time, and I really should have stayed in the field this race. As slow as it was, I know how to move up in the field, where to launch my sprint, and how to win this bike race from the field. But I wasn't thinking at the time being, and held myself off the front solo for the next two and a half laps. Nobody made any attempt to join this whole time.

I got caught with 15 minutes left in the race. At this point in time, Mike's decided that they would keep the pace up, and get ready to lead out their sprinter.

This pace nearly spit me out the back at first, as I was expecting the field to just sit up again after I had been caught. Miles continued to move up. There was nothing I could do to get to the front at this point. I wasted all of my matches on a pointless attack.

The pace stayed high for the last 5 laps as Mike's got ready to lead out their sprinter. To sum up the day, I had thrown my race out the window because I thought I could take on a whole field on my own. I finished somewhere in the pack. I was fairly upset at myself for my mistake, but now I know that I have to be patient in these types of races. As for the pro/1/2/3's race later in the afternoon, it would be a much faster race, and I would have to stay in the field for sure. In the end, I learned my lesson on respecting the field, and playing to my strengths instead of getting eager and making mistakes.

-Ben C

Ben Cook

Unknown, Colavita Gran Prix, Pro/1/2/3

After a disappointing first race of the day in the 2/3's, it was time for a little comeback in my first Pro/1/2 race. Of course, this was the fastest race of the day, and a comeback may just mean finishing, but it also meant having some fun. About 70 of us lined up at the start line. "Gentlemen! One of you requested we shorten today's race to 75 minutes, instead of the scheduled 90." Said the official at the start line. We all looked around in confusion. "All it takes is one of you to say you want to race 90 minutes, and we will race for 90 minutes. Who wants the full race? Raise your hands."

I think that maybe one rider left his hand down. I wanted the full 90 minutes, but this just confirmed my assumptions: Today's race would be a serious test. "Alright gentlemen, your 90 minute race will be starting on the whistle!" said the official. He waved his hand in the shape of a cross in front of us for a little good luck, and blew the

whistle. Unlike the 2/3's, we took off right from the gun. I found myself in the top 30.

The race was at a fast tempo for the first few laps. Coming into the chicane, I tapped my brakes some as the race narrowed down. Wrong move! I ended up getting slightly gapped exiting the corner, and had to chase back on to the group of 50 remaining riders slowly pulling away from me. I made it back up safely, but having dug deep to keep in. "Ok Ben, it's just like nationals. If you want to move up, then it's no brakes!"

I thought to myself. After a few brakeless laps I found myself in the top 15. 30 minutes of racing down, and I was constantly moving up to hold my place in the top 15 of the field. A ten man split went up the road at one point, and I even managed to make it in! We were caught fairly soon, however. I was shot back into the field feeling the effects of my efforts. Even though I haven't been in the wind but one time in this race, I was starting to hurt. I had a new plan in mind. I was going to respect this race.

No breakaways, no attacks, nothing silly that will leave me dangling off the back of the pack. I was still going to race extremely competitively, but I was also going to respect the fact that this race would blow me out of the water in 15 seconds flat. Taking this in mind, I found my motivation, and pushed back into the top 30, then finally back into the top 15. I ate a Clif shot 50 minutes in.

The race was absolutely wild. Team Clif Bar was controlling the race, trying to get their rider into the break. There were about half a dozen Clif Bar riders in the field.

I decided to mark a friend of mine who is also on Clif Bar, Michael Jaques. Following his wheel through the field, I was able to hold my position in the top 20 until about 65 minutes in. It was then that I was really hurting. I had been in the saddle for almost 4 hours today. Between riding to the course, warm-ups, racing earlier in the day and all of the other time riding at the race, it had been a long day. My back was numb, my hands were numb, and my feet were numb. The only thing that wasn't numb was my legs. Fantastic! Keeping out of the wind, I held my position as best I could. But as fatigue set in, I began to lose focus. This means I began to brake in the corners. I never really did get the hang of that chicane, and it ended up almost being the end of my race. I was in and out of the top 30 for the last 20 minutes of racing. With 5 to go, I knew I needed to end off well. I refocused as best I could, stopped using the brakes, and pulled myself back into the top 30 for the final lap. I'm not sure where I ended up, but I gave it my all to get to the line. I do know that I didn't lose much position in the final lap. Coming around the final corner, I passed as many riders as possible, shifted into the 14 for the final time, and sprinted my heart out for the line. I looked behind me a few moments after crossing the line to see, to my pleasant surprise, at least 20 riders behind me! And with information from a friend that the race had split in half, and there was still a large group to come in, I knew I had made the top half.

"Yeah!!" I said to myself when I realized where I had finished. In the end, it had been a truly amazing day of fighting with the pro/1/2's. I was extremely happy with how I raced, how I felt, and the result of the day. I honestly didn't think I could finish where I did, and I'm happy that I got to test my patients and wait in the field. If I had gone and wasted any energy, I would have been shot out the back in an instant. At the end of the day, even though the 2/3's didn't go the way I wanted it to, the Pro's race could not have been any better. I learned a lot over the course of the day, and got to put it

all to the test that same day. I went home that day with a big smile on my face, knowing that I had done it. I competed at the highest level of racers, and showed them what I was really made of.

-Ben C

Tomas Mitre

15, Cat 4

2nd Place Colavita GP Men's Cat 5

This was my only race of the weekend and the last race I needed to upgrade to Cat 4. After pre riding the course and lining up with my group, I felt ready mentally and physically to race hard for the whole duration of the race. The Mentor took the group around for a lap and I was able to feel out the energy of the group and realized I had a legitimate chance at winning or at least being competitive. After the first lap I got into third position in the group and stayed attentive to any attacks or movement in the group. The pace was good, not crazy, but not slow by any means. I decided to make a move on the small uphill section of the course that was really just a large bump. After I went on the 2nd or 3rd lap I was joined by two other races and we shared the work on the front and were able to hold off the main group for the majority of the race. Then about 3 laps to go the third member of our breakaway dropped off and it was just the two of us at the front. I continued to take my turn at the front until the last lap when I let him stay on the front so I could rest a little. He then made a small attack and I quickly got his wheel and countered thus making my own attack for the win. At this point I had a small gap coming into the last corner and the finishing straight which was slightly downhill. I was about 100 feet from the line when I looked back to see where he was and didn't realize he was only a few feet away and I unfortunately lost by less than a wheel length on the line. But now I know not to look back and won't be doing that again anytime soon.

-Tomas

Miles Daly

Colavita Grand Prix Senior Category 2/3

CGP was my first cat 3 race and it happened to be a 2,3 field. After a long week of riding at the USAC Development camp in Davis I felt fried. I was just happy to be racing close to home with Ben. I woke up and had a good breakfast and drove to the race. It was only 15 minutes away and I was leaving when it was light out so I was in good spirits. The race started and it was fast, in the first corner a couple guys got squirrely and one brake checked me, I barely saved it so I didn't crash. After that happened I was a little bit timid, After riding most the race at the back I saw a guy moving up the right; I jumped on his wheel and he attacked, when he looked back to see me I felt so bad since I was dead and we got swept up. I was in contact with the

group until the last corner when a bunch of guys decided to start cyclocross season early and go off roading. I backed off and finished safely.
-Miles

5. Cascade Cycling Classic

7/18-20/14

Bend, OR

Ryan Clarke

Cascade Cycling Classic
Senior Category 3

Stage 1: Road Race-48th Place

Cascade was two weekends after Nationals so I had some rest time before I had to race again. I've never been to Oregon so I was excited to have the opportunity to see the state a little bit as well as race my bike there. I arrived in Bend on Thursday afternoon and pre-rode the TT course to do my pre race ride for the next day which was a road race. My race started in the afternoon so I slept in and relaxed. I warmed up on a hill with a one minute pyramid and lined up near the front of the field. I felt great for the majority of the race. I might have been a bit too close to the front because whenever the road tipped down I would be spun out and if anyone attacked I couldn't go with it. I probably lost a bit of energy there and with 14 miles left I felt my legs start to feel a little weak. We hit the 20km sign and the road started to go up. We were still in the big ring hauling butt up this hill and I played yo-yo with the field trying to hang on, but I had to ride the next 15km pretty much by myself. I crossed the line quite a bit down on the leaders and for the first time in a long time my legs were super sore from riding. I started recovering once I got to the car and ate a good dinner to prepare for the TT and crit the next day.

Stage 2: Time Trial-33rd Place

I got to the TT really early so I didn't have to rush. My friend and Team Swift graduate Drew lent me his disc wheel to use which was awesome. My warm-up hurt more than the TT itself because I had to get going after the road race. I couldn't get my heartrate up past 175 so I settled on that number for the TT instead of my usual 183 bpm. I started fast but not too fast so that I blew up. The first section was so fast that I was spun out until I turned around into the headwind. I was slowly catching my 30 sec man and I really had a good pace going. I turned around again and had another tail wind and was spun out again so he started pulling away a little bit. Coming into the last corner I entered it a little too fast because the course guy wasn't being too clear on where to go. The disc must not have been centered in the dropouts because it didn't brake consistently and almost slid out twice before I could control it and slow down to make the turn. I probably lost 15 seconds just from that, but I still managed just over 30th place which all things considered was not a bad time.

Stage 3: Criterium—27th Place

The TT helped as a warm-up for the criterium which was the same day and got me going again. I did a good hard warm-up before the crit and it started out fast. I stayed near the front and even attacked but I was caught after only one lap. I had been trying pretty hard so I knew that wind and uphill parts would prevent a break from getting away. I rode the race conservatively and had good position in the final laps. I was sixth wheel with one to go when the guy in front of me slid out. Luckily his bike slid away from me and I was able to bunny hop over him and onto the sidewalk (which by some miracle there weren't any spectators) to stay upright. I lost all of my speed but went hard to the line and managed a mid pack finish.

Stage 4: Circuit Race

Since I was so far down in GC I focused in stage wins. I wanted to make the break so I rolled with moves at the start. The downhills were steep as usual and I kept getting spun out. Finally the road leveled out and I saw an opportunity to attack so I took it. What I didn't know is that I attacked at the base of the major climb and I gassed myself before I even hit the climb. I stayed strong until just before the top where I was with a few guys 5 sec off the back. I chased hard but ended up getting dropped when the guy after me attacked a descent leaving me in the wind and spun out. It was mostly downhill from there (both literally and figuratively), but I kept trying nonetheless. I made it into another group of guys who didn't make it and I was working with them to finish the two remaining laps when my stomach didn't feel too good, I started cramping in my groin and started chafing under my saddle. Eventually the combination was too much for me to handle and I called it a day after two laps. I wasn't too happy with that but I realized that on a decent day, that course suited me and I really want to go back and race it again. Overall I got in some super hard training and I'm finally getting close to a win in the crits so I was happy. It was awesome to race in Bend and I'm definitely going back again.

-Ryan

6. San Rafael Twilight

7/26/14

San Rafael

Emily Abraham

DNP

San Rafael Twilight Criterium

Pro Women 1/2/3

I needed to make my day as normal as possible that way my mind wouldn't explode from over thinking or stressing out about the race. I woke up early and did my normal routine: yoga, get something to eat, then a bike ride. I only rode for an hour just to wake up my legs and spin them out so I would be fresh for my race in the evening. Then I went to work for a few hours before my parents and I headed to San Rafael. We left for the race early to watch Ryan, Ben, and Myles race in the Cat 3's, so I had some time to relax before I had to start warming-up. It was one of those randomly really hot days that occur in the bay area. At four o'clock, when the category 3's race

started, it was at least 90 degrees out. I became very thankful that my race was at six thirty. Around when the boy's race was starting, I went to registration so I wouldn't have to worry about sign in later. The lady at registration handed me my two numbers, I was number twenty-one and at the top it said "San Rafael Twilight Criterium Pro Women" I looked around at the other racers who were about to start, they all only had one number. Only the pro's got two numbers....I was considered a pro! That was pretty exciting!

I walked around the course with my mom during the category 3's race, it looked difficult. After only about ten to fifteen minutes in, some of the men were getting dropped and then completely dropping out of the race or getting pulled by the official. Watching this scared me, I knew my race would be extremely fast and the women in my race were at the pro level so there was a good chance I wouldn't be able to hang on. I made a goal to myself to try my absolute hardest to stay in the race as long as possible. The course reminded me a lot of the national's criterium; only 1 km, four corners, a small incline, and small downhill. After I watched my teammates go all out for the fifty minute category 3's race, I started to worry that I physically wouldn't be able to keep up with the pro women for seventy minutes. But I pushed aside the doubt and told myself to have fun, if I couldn't keep up then I couldn't keep up.

Around an hour and twenty minutes before my start, I began spinning on the trainer. It was killer hot out even at five p.m.! As I was starting my warm-up, I thought about what I wanted to have right before my race. I had a strawberry Clif SHOT and razz Clif bloks to choose between. This is going to sound weird, but I remember eating a strawberry SHOT right before the criterium at nationals and the course at nationals was very similar to this one, and I arrived early to walk the course just like I did at nationals, and I was about to race against women who race at the pro level just like the girls at nationals..... so I guess I got a little superstitious and clearly I was over thinking things. But regardless, I decided to go with the shot Bloks. This didn't affect my race at all but I just really wanted this criterium to go better than the crit at nationals. Once I began my pyramids I was able to refocus. I felt good when I jumped off the trainer and headed over to use the restroom before going to the start line. I was filled with so much excitement and anxiety that I did the most rookie move in the books: set my bike up against an unstable gate with the drive side facing out. Of course I didn't even think and quickly went to use the bathroom. I came out to see my bike lying on the ground, I picked it up and my right hood on my handlebars was completely curved in. I quickly went to find my dad (who I'm incredibly grateful to for always fixing my bike) who was able to bend it back and make sure my bike was shifting okay. Well that whole situation kind of put a damper on things but once I was on the start line I was feeling pretty good. I wasn't very nervous, more excited, but also worried. First the announcer did call ups; Robin Farina, Alison Tetrick, Mary Maroon, Lex Albrecht were just some of the women. PRO'S! I was about to race against these women!! Wow I couldn't believe it. Luckily, once the race actually started that amazement was quickly out of my head.

The race went from the gun. As we went around the first two corners I held a good position about mid-way through the pack of over sixty women. But then everyone squeezed their brakes as we went through the next two turns, I was surprised by how

slow we went through those turns. I then found myself closer to the back of the field. On the second lap the peloton started to string out instead of being bunched up like how we were on the first lap. I was glad we were strung out however it made it difficult for me to move up. After a few laps in, I realized I was working way more than I would be if I was mid-pack. We were going fast and I was hurting, my lungs were screaming and I could taste blood in my mouth for a good fifteen minutes. I'm sure a lot was going on in terms of attacks up near the front, but I was at the back just trying to hang on for dear life. To me it felt like we just kept going around and around and around, which obviously we were. One lap would go by then suddenly we were headed up the incline again, then I'd quickly grab a wheel for the straight away, we'd slowly go through the two turns on the tiny decent, then I'd quickly grab a wheel for the next straight away. Again and again that happened. At first, I was hurting a lot and even when we were only twenty minutes in I was thinking there's no way I can get through this. However, then I got in to a rhythm and I was able to move up a few places to a much better position. At this point I started to feel good, my legs were screaming but I was hanging in there. I then realized the most painful part of the race was not the small incline, but at the very top of the incline where I had to really turn the pedals to grab a wheel. For the rest of the race I started to dread that specific part of the course. After a few more laps, I began wondering when they would tell us how many laps we had left. Two more laps went by and I saw 10 laps to go as we crossed the finish line, we turned right to start the small incline. I was hanging on at the back (there had been women behind me before but they had all dropped off) and as soon as we got to that extremely painful point at the top of the incline, I couldn't hold on anymore. I saw the peloton slowly start to move away from me. But I didn't give up; I pushed myself to get back on. I did a lap on my own; my legs were hurting so badly. I began yelling as I pedaled as hard as I could to catch up, after the hardest lap of the entire race, I caught up to two women that had also been dropped. We did a lap or two together, working hard to try to reach the peloton, but we were clearly all exhausted. The next time we crossed the finish the official pulled us off the course because the peloton was coming up to lap us. I was disappointed I didn't get to finish the full seventy minutes of racing. But I made it all the way until three laps to go so I'm still proud of my result. This was by far the hardest, longest, and most fun race I've had all season. I felt rewarded at the end, although I didn't even get placed.

-Emily

Ryan Clarke

San Rafael Twilights

Cat 3

San Rafael is not too far away from me and since it started at 4PM, I had all day to get ready for the race. I warmed up and got a front spot on the line. I was super happy to race with my teammates Ben and Miles since we aren't in the same age group, but could now all race together as Category 3's. The race started unbelievably fast and I wasn't having a great time, but I knew it would slow down later in the race.

My legs didn't feel good at all and I was struggling to keep up with the same guys I raced with at Cascade. I eventually lost the wheel in front of me and was off the back two thirds through the race. I got off the course and felt awful so I sat down to rest and drink some water. I still didn't feel well until quite some time later, but I eventually felt good enough to watch Ben and Miles finish their race as well as watch Emily in her race (she did awesome and almost raced a whole 70min with the pro women) and say "hi" to Team Swift grads Tyler Brandt and Sam Bassetti who were racing the Pro,1,2 race. It was a great atmosphere and an awesome course and I'm definitely looking forward to doing it again next year.

-Ryan

Ben Cook

15, cat 3

27th Place San Rafael Twilight Criterium Senior Category 3

I spent the day leading up to San Rafael Twilight with my teammate and good friend, Miles Daly. We would be racing together in the 3's that afternoon. After heading to registration and pinning our numbers on, we headed back to my house, which was right near the course, to warm up. We set up the trainers in the garage with the fans blasting, and got started on a brutal warm up.

Earlier that week, I had talked with coach about the race plan. We discussed how I would need to be in the second to last corner and then into the final corner before launching my sprint. She also wanted Miles to attack hard on the last lap. He would either stay away, or set me up in good position to win. I told Miles the plan, and we spun down to the race course.

I found a spot up in the front row, and listened for the race instructions. It was brutally hot out as we waited in the sun. "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WELCOME TO THE SAN RAFAEL TWILIGHT CRITERIUM!!!" Boomed a familiar voice over the loudspeaker.

David Towle, the greatest US cycling announcer, would be announcing for us today! "What a strong field we have here today! My goodness, this must be the cat 3 world championships because I have NEVER seen a tougher field than this!" This would for sure be an interesting race... The competition was definitely fierce. "Let's give them one final countdown to the start. 10! 9!" The crowd started cheering and yelling down the numbers as I smiled and focused on the road ahead of me. "3! 2! 1! GOOOO!!!!"

And with that, we were off! I found myself right at the front as I had planned. I held my position for the first few laps, but it wasn't long before the heat really kicked in, and I began to struggle as the field pushed on. I felt a push on my hip to keep me in position up the hill. I didn't know who it was, but it helped! I looked to my right in the next corner to find Miles right at my side, as we stayed within the top 30. We still had a solid 30 minutes of racing left, so I took my time easy. But I knew I would need to be up at the front. I pulled myself alongside the field up the hill, passed a few riders in the corner, and found myself in the top 5. I held this for a few laps, but it wasn't long before I found myself on the front. The group still had lots of speed, and coming into

the downhill corner, the rider behind me put on his brakes. Finding myself with a bike lengths gap, my inner showman got the best of me, and I attacked.

"Ladies and gentlemen THE HEAT IS ON as Ben Cook from Team Swift shows the field what he's made of!! These juniors really put on a great show!" Hearing David Towle scream my name over the loudspeaker in front of a huge crowd has always been my dream, and I got my wish! I held a solid gap until the backside of the course hoping riders would join, but riders from MuscleMilk/Specialized dragged me back in.

Ok, so my attack was useless. I have this issue a lot when it comes to wanting showtime and not thinking of the race. I remember talking with my younger teammate, Isaiah Chass, about going for primes. "Primes are great and all, but they don't show up on your resume!" He always says. On that note, I found myself back in the field. At this point, the race was almost over. Only 9 laps to go and the field was picking up the pace. I tried to mark a few riders I knew and move up with them, but the course was unforgiving, and I just couldn't get off my brakes in the corners. I found myself in the top 15 for the last 5 or so laps, but with 2 to go, I began to slide back. It was on the final lap when I found myself barely hanging on to the back of the remaining group for the finish. The good news was that about 40 riders out of over 80 starters didn't finish, and I still did. Miles came in right behind me.

"Ok, so you had great TV time! But that's about it." Joked my dad as I came onto the sidelines. We sat down and recapped the race, and talked about what happened, and how I could have improved. "For starters, that hill is NOT for you. Besides Miles, you were the skinniest kid in this race! There are guys out there that have 40 pounds on you! Think about it, when you come back to this race next year, you'll be putting out an extra 50 watts. That's huge! You also should have put your energy into holding the front instead of attacking." This made me feel better, and I learned more about being patient in a race. If I could throw myself to the front so quickly mid race, why not save that energy and use it when I needed to, with 1.5 to go? My dad also talked about how David Towle complimented the team! He talked about how Team Swift is a place where anybody who rides a bike can join, whether they are an elite rider or not, and how Laura is always in for the best success of all of the riders on her team.

Miles and I rode home and got changed and showered at my house, and returned to watch our teammate Emily race the pro women's. We also stayed to watch the pro men's race. My mom came down to watch the race as well, and talked about "that awesome announcer" that kept talking about me and the team. "Do you want to meet him?!" She asked. Knowing my mother, she could get me to meet the president if she wanted to. She is almost overly friendly! And with that, I met David Towle that night! "How old are you buddy?" "15." "Wow!! Nice nice job! You really know how to put on a show, you did great out there. I expect great things from you in the future!

Congrats, Ben." WOW! I was amazed! I may not have had the best race, but that just made my day! I couldn't believe what I was hearing. At the end of the day, I may not have raced the smartest, but I did get to put my name out to the crowd, and meet the greatest announcer in the US, David Towle.

-Ben C

Miles Daly

33rd Place San Rafael Criterium Senior Category 3

This was my second Cat 3 race so I was going in with the intentions of helping my teammate win. My race started at 4pm so I slept in and went for a spin and then came home to rest. I was invited to warm up with Ben Cook at his house and ride to the race. I arrived at his house at 1PM and Ben, his Dad and I went to pick up our numbers. Once back at his house we began to get ready, after a short warm up we rode to the race course. 15 minutes later we rolled up to the course, it was so hot but I wasn't bothered. At the start line I heard the announcers saying "This is like a Cat 2 field anywhere else." "This should be Cat 3 world championships, etc" I thought he was just trying to get the crowd excited. To my unpleasant surprise when we set off, it was full gas. I was in the back and I didn't want to be but I was hurting bad. At some point I was moving my way through the field and I saw Ben Cook towards the back, I went by him and told him to get on. He did and I brought him up then I cramped. I went back to the back where it was worse. With 2 laps to go there was a touch of wheels and one guy went down, then last lap there was another crash. As I told Ben after the race, "You can have a plan but this sport is predictably unpredictable.

-Miles

Tomas Mitre

15, Cat 4
49th Place San Rafael Twilight Crit Senior Category 4

In hindsight, San Rafael might not have been the best race to begin my Cat 4 journey, but I figured I would be a good test of my racing skills against people who are better than me. Isaiah and I were in the same race and I found him at the start line. I was already nervous seeing how huge the race was, not to mention the weather was in the 90's (being from SF, it was SUPER hot). When the whistle blew I launched from the line and fought for a good starting position. Luckily I was able to find Isaiah's wheel and follow him for the first 2 laps. Right from the start the pace was high, and I was still warming up to the super fast course that included a really sharp and tight final turn to the line. I had never been in a race where you had to be on your toes literally every second of the race and on the 3rd or 4th lap I took a drink from my bottle and then 2 seconds later the entire pack surrounded me and the other leaders. I was caught in between 4 or 5 people at my sides going into the downhill turn and I quickly learned to be defensive but also mindful of the other racers who were diving full speed into sharp corners. A few laps later I was tired from the heat and the fast pace and was moved to the back of the peloton where I was forced to chase most of the race. I tried moving up a few times but was always blocked just before the corners and was forced to concede my better position and drift back to the back. I eventually finished the race, and was never lapped, just dropped on the 2 to last lap where I scrambled to finish before the charging peloton. It was a good lesson for me on how I need to stay alert, aggressive, and unrelenting in a race.

-Tomas

Isaiah Chass

DNP San Rafael Twilight Criterium Category 4

When I arrived at the race, we found a great parking spot in the shade, and then set up everything there. Then, I got my number at registration, and got ready. After warming-up, I put on my jersey, and rode a few laps of the course. Then, I rode to the start to line up. I waited for about 10 minutes, until the announcer, Dave Towle, started counting down to out start. When the race whistle blew, I got off the line quickly, and pulled the first straight away, before pulling off. Then I got into second wheel, and rode the first lap there. After, the first 2 laps I was top 5, but I could feel that my legs were not feeling good today. The next 3 laps I was slowly moving back and I eventually got popped off the back. I then rode 2 laps by myself before getting pulled. I was really bummed that I wasn't feeling good, because this was such a big race, but that's racing.

-Isaiah

7. Berkeley Criterium

7/27/14

Berkeley

Tomas Mitre

15, Cat 4
33rd Place

Berkeley Bike Club Criterium

Senior Category 4

This was definitely my best race of the weekend and I was able to control what happened in the race up until the last 2 laps where all the wheel suckers decided to move for once. From the start I stayed in front and either chased any attacks or attacked myself to try and make something happen. On the 3rd lap I moved up with Isaiah and a few other riders and together we pushed the pace enough to create a gap. That attack only lasted for a lap or so when the group tried to catch. Then one rider went off the front and I got his wheel and together we rode away from the group for 3 laps until a few other riders bridged and worked with us. That was also around the same time when I went solo and won a prime and stayed off the front for about half a lap. Then the group joined me and I tried to recover a little as the pace increased because there were only a few laps to go. It was at this point where all the people who were sitting and drafting in the back of peloton decided to move up at attack for a win. I was already pretty spent and had another race later that day so I decided to recover a little on the last lap. It was definitely a fun and exciting race that helped me gauge what I need to improve on in the future.

-Tomas

Tomas Mitre

15, Cat 4
24th Place

Berkeley Bike Club Criterium

Senior Category 3/4

Being the second race of the day I was tired, but I knew the course and was ready to go all out so I tried to stay at the front and roll with the punches throughout the race. I actually found the Cat 3 riders to be more under control thus through the corners I didn't have to worry about crazy moves as much. It was a tough race overall but I'm glad I finished both and was able stay somewhat competitive throughout the day. I actually won the most aggressive rider in the Cat 4's race, but didn't find out until later in the day.

-Tomas

Isaiah Chass

14th Place Berkeley Bike Club Criterium Senior Category 4

When I got to the race, I walked over to registration where I signed up for the 4's race. Then, I went back to the car, ate a little, and waited until it was time to start warming up. Shortly after, I started getting ready, and then started warming up. After finishing my warm-up, I took my bike off the trainer, and then rode over to the start line. Then, I did rollout, ate a Clif Shot, and then lined up. When the race started, I got to the front and pulled through the first corner. Then, I pulled off and got onto the group. When an attack was made, I sat in and waited for someone else to bridge the gap. The next few laps, my teammate, Tomas, was off the front with a few riders, so I stayed towards the front waiting for someone to attack up to them. The next few primes, Tomas sprinted for them, so I stayed in the field. I stayed top 10 the next few laps, and as we came up to 2 to go, I moved up, and was 4th wheel. I stayed right there until 1 to go and then I was 3rd wheel. When we were 1/2 a lap to go, the front got swarmed, so I got moved back a bunch of places. I sprinted to move back up, but I was too late to get back into the same position. I moved up a few places right before the last corner, and as I came into the final straight, I sprinted to the line to hold my position. After the race I checked the results and found out that I got 14th.

-Isaiah

8. Death Ride Report

7/12/14

Markleeville

Ethan Frankel

Age 16

Death Ride 2014 (July 12, 2014)

Thursday, July 10th

7:30 a.m.: I reluctantly rolled out of my luxurious bed and onto the floor. My last night in my bed before a few days in a car came too quickly. I trundled upstairs to eat a filling and delicious waffle breakfast. I showered and finished packing for the four-day

trip. My dad and I left around 9 a.m. for Markleeville, California. The futon mattress (which we were to sleep on in the car), bikes, bags, and gear all managed to fit in our Honda Pilot, with plenty of space to lean the front seats back, slightly. The four-hour drive was too long for me to bear without taking a nap, so I slept for a few hours until we were an hour from Markleeville and nearing Tahoe. The views were spectacular and we were excited to ride. After a great lunch in the town, we drove to our campsite as it started to rain. A quick hour-and-a-half nap passed the time as the rain slowed to a halt.

My Heart Rate Monitor is Nonfunctional

We then went on a quick ride up the first pass, Monitor, to acclimate. I did some one-minute intervals to push my heart rate and did some one-footed pedaling for half of the pass, trying to stick on the wheel of my dad. As I was doing the intervals, I discovered that my monitor wasn't working. I had just replaced the batteries. Not good. I got to the top and tried restarting the computer, adjusting the positioning of my monitor, anything. Guess what? It didn't work. "I suppose it's time for a new one," I told my dad.

The fun descent finished off the 20-mile ride. I paid attention to gravelly sections and hard corners, and focused on perfecting my line around each corner, so that I could replicate it on the real ride. After we rode back to camp, we drove into town. A poorly serviced, but tasty dinner topped off the Thursday.

Friday, July 11th

7:30 a.m.: My eyes snapped open to the sound of my alarm playing "Bohemian Rhapsody". It was a good pump-up song, but I put on my headphones and changed it to something more invigorating as I threw on cycling clothes. I quickly had a bar to fuel my solo ride up Ebbetts Pass. At 8, I eagerly began the 12-mile trek up Ebbetts. I went easy, for the Death Ride was only a day away, and I only pushed a 140 heart rate; instead taking in the gorgeous views and occasionally stopping to smell (actually, look at) the wild flowers. I was the only rider on the road at this early time and it was a great ride. I made it to the top after an hour, ate a Clif Shot and turned around to start the 15-minute descent. I took it easy down as well, and made it back to our campsite at the bottom at around 9:30. I relaxed in the tent for a little while, and got my clothes for the next day ready. Then I rode over to Markleeville for breakfast, at Ali's Café, with my dad. We then went to register at the venue and waited in line for a half-hour before receiving our numbers and bottles. We grabbed a few bars and some other goodies. I was glad to get a ride back to camp in the car. We put on our bib and bike numbers and polished up our components for the next day. I fell asleep for an hour, and then we went to take a shower and have dinner. It was a lasagna dinner. It was so good! I carbo-loaded and felt full enough to be ready for the morning. We drove back to camp and went to bed as early as we could, which sadly ended up being just before 11.

Saturday, July 12th

4:00 a.m.: "Thunder! Thunder! Thunder! Thunder! I was caught in the middle of a railroad track..." The alarm went off, and I was glad it wasn't real thunder. My dad and I changed, placed the bikes in the car, and drove to the start at Turtle Rock. I had a small breakfast on the way, and I was ready to go. We parked and prepared the bikes. With lights turned on, and the Garmin's started, we left just before 5. It was not as chilly as it had been the previous two years, so I didn't shiver or feel cold as we descended/climbed a few miles to the base of Monitor. My dad had been sick (and was still sick) for a couple of weeks and wasn't sure how he could do. I had also had a virus, but was pretty much over that and I was positive I could survive. My dad and I wished each other luck and I went ahead.

Pass One: Monitor

I started the steady, early slopes of Monitor (which topped out at 7%) in my 50-27 gear, pushing for more power in the beginning. After a couple of miles, the easier slopes became harder and steeper. I shifted into my easiest gear. I kept a steady 80-rpm cadence (translating to 8.0 mph [I know, easy!]) for most of the way up Monitor. A couple of riders passed me on the ascent up, but I was mainly passing others. A mile from the peak, a group of three riders passed me. I latched on to the last wheel and rode it to the top. I received my first sticker on my bib and continued across the top of the pass to start the descent.

The road was very well paved and pretty straight, and it was therefore easy to get lots of speed very quickly. As I took the corners riskily, I constantly thought, "I have to climb back up this monster. But that was for a later time. I focused on getting low and taking good lines around corners. I had passed another ten or so riders by the time I was at the bottom. I slowed to a stop as I got my second sticker and went to grab some fuel for the climb. I hopped on my bike a few minutes after stopping at the rest stop and started pass two.

Pass Two: Monitor

Again, I began at a quick pace, trying to gain some momentum and get into the rhythm of climbing. After a mile out of the saddle, I sat and kept a slower pace, steadily going at a roundabout 90-rpm/9 mph. The climb steepened slowly, and I was slowing down. I got onto the wheel of a rider who passed me and struggled to hang on for a mile. A woman caught up with me about half way up the 3,000' climb, and I knew that she was as strong, if not stronger than I was. I accelerated and got away, up to 10 seconds ahead. However, she slowly reeled me back in after a minute. Again, I attacked. I flew through the water station, pushing my upper limits. I was now 15 seconds ahead. However, as I tired, she again reeled me in after a couple of minutes. I attacked. She reeled me in. I attacked. She reeled me in. After the fourth time, I decided that I was better off keeping a steadier pace. So I hung in on her wheel until we were just a couple of miles from the top. I attacked, but this time it was to get enough of a gap to take a picture. I snapped a photo of the valley below, the sun was bright and it was stunning. By the time my camera was in the back pocket of my jersey,

she had a twenty-second gap. My legs, burning from my attacks, carried far enough to close the gap. I latched onto her wheel, this time with just a mile to go. However, she accelerated. Slightly. Just enough for me to unlatch and drop back. I couldn't hang and I instead decided to relax, enjoy the view, and smile for the camera near the top of the pass. I steadily rode to the top of the pass, glad that I was finished with that climb.

I stretched out, filled my bottles, and had some food at the rest stop, eager to start the descent and ascent to pass three.

The descent was just as fun as the first, even more so. It was fast from the top, and there were not many riders descending at 8 in the morning. Again, I focused on getting maximum speed around the corners, and I tried to replicate what I had done two days earlier. My descent was slightly faster and after that 15-minute adrenaline rush, I was ready to climb Ebbetts.

Pass Three: Ebbetts

The first slopes of Ebbetts are always the worst for me. They max out at 5%, but it goes on for 5 miles. From the bottom of Monitor to Centerville (the lunch stop and also my campsite) is three miles of flat and slight ascent. My legs were still a bit tired from the pass two climb, so I took it easy. I stopped at Centerville and put my bike on the rack. I took off my lights and sauntered in my cleats to the last tent site in the camp (also known as ours). I deposited the lights, my arm warmers, jacket, and knee warmers in the tent to get rid of the excess weight. Then I click-clacked back to my bike, hopped on, and started the climb. The next three or four miles, I slowly climbed the shallow gradient. It was killing my legs, although it wasn't steep at all.

Finally, I hit the real climb, and it pitched up to 18%. I attacked that short section hard, and as it gentled out, I got back into my saddle. The next parts of the pass are the easiest, and are steadiest. I stayed in my saddle for much of the climb, but whenever my legs felt a fatigued, I would either keep the pace steady and yell at them, "Shut up legs," or get out of my saddle and go harder to give them something that they could actually complain about. Mentally, I was feeling strong. Physically, however, my body was shouting back at my brain, telling me to stop pedaling. So I shouted back aloud, "Shut up legs."

I checked my time and compared it to my placement on the ascent. I was too slow, my mind told me. "You're too fast," argued my legs. So I accelerated, while enjoying the views of Ebbetts pass. A stronger rider passed me with only a mile or two to go. I latched onto his wheel and focused on my pedal strokes. To keep me occupied, I read his whole Castle Crags Century jersey, back to back, and we chatted a bit (I learned he was a teacher). I paid attention to the road as well (despairingly). There was a mile of hard, steep mini-hills. Each mini-climb was a couple hundred meters long, but totally killer. Again my legs were punished. At the top of each mini-climb, there was a very short flat/slight descent where I stretched out by legs and back. Then, five seconds later, the road pitched again and a climb started. This was the case three or four times, but before I knew it we passed a gorgeous lake, marking the "only 5 minutes of suffering to go" point. The road kept doing the weird mini-climb thing that I hated, rather than my legs hated, and then there was a false peak. A false peak! Why

would anyone do that to us??? That was the worst part, as I had reminded myself the previous day. So today I went up prepared. I attacked the false peak with nearly everything. The Castle Crags Century teacher countered and accelerated past me for the final 200 meters to the top. I cracked and recited "Humpty-Dumpty" to myself (I have no clue why, I was probably delirious). I pushed up the final pitch and was grateful to the great volunteers that took my bike and gave me a sticker. I ate a mountain of food, refilled my bottles, and, with doubts, got back onto my bike.

I was descending! What? My legs were hugging my mind, if that's possible. The descent was smooth, although there were some imperfections in the road and a few bumps. I passed a handful of riders on the descent and was almost down before I thought about it. As the road slowly flattened out going into Hermit Valley, I reached down to grab my bottle. At that exact moment, I hit a bump in the road. Although it hadn't happened yet to him, I immediately thought: Contador, Contador. Thankfully, I regained my balance and, unlike Contador, I didn't crash out of the Death Ride.

Pass Four: Ebbetts

At the bottom of Hermit Valley, I received my sticker and immediately made a U-turn. It was another climb, and my legs, with their weird emotions, were suddenly bawling. The temperature had risen over 80, and it was only 10:30. Climbing out of the valley, I felt pretty tired. I was riding solo, and there weren't a ton of riders on the road in front. This time, I powered up. I felt like I was flying, and I knew that this climb would be the shortest of the day. I was hitting speeds much faster than I had on the previous passes, but I was burning up in the hot sun. I dumped water over my head and kept going, pursuing the riders in front. I hit the steep 200 meters in the middle of the climb and felt like I was going backwards. "SHUT UP LEGS," I screamed. And my legs caved. They were quiet. Yes! I hit the flatter section of the climb and got out of my saddle to rediscover my rhythm. I found it and I made it up to the top of Ebbetts at 11 o'clock. I didn't want to waste a lot of time, so I descended immediately after hitting the peak. Again my legs were smiling. I descended quickly and I passed numerous riders. There were a handful of hairpin turns, which I took carefully, but otherwise I tried to take risks and keep up my speed. It paid off. Not only was I happy and pumped full of reinvigorated energy, but I got down quickly and I was hungry enough to power a time trial on the flatter parts to arrive at lunch at 11:20. I found my dad waving at me from the side of the road at the lunch stop. I pulled over and he asked how I was doing. "Tired," I responded. I then learned that he had become very dehydrated on the second pass and wasn't able to continue. I was disappointed in hearing that, as we had both finished in the years past. However, I knew he was sick and I understood completely.

I had a big lunch (turkey sandwich, around 10 pickles, chips, carrots, and more) that restored my energy for the next 30 miles to the top of Carson pass. I was finished with lunch at 11:45 and on the road. My body was out of whack after the stop, so I took it easy to the intersection of Ebbetts (4) and Monitor (89).

Pass Five: Carson

As I was physically preparing for Carson Pass, I played mental math games. That didn't work out. So instead I focused on cutting the apex of the corners and keeping an even pace/rhythm. As I got closer and closer to Markleeville, a couple of small groups passed me. I wasn't mentally ready to hop into the pace line, so I stayed back. However, just a few miles out of Markleeville, a group of SFCC (San Francisco Cycling Club) riders passed me. I hopped onto the back of the organized group. It had about 15 riders including me, so we were moving quickly. We eventually passed the groups of riders that had passed me earlier, while taking short pulls. We rode into Markleeville with people cheering all around us. But that didn't make me happy, not a bit. From my previous experiences, I knew that this 500-foot hill that led to the start was a killer. It loomed above us, and I knew that I should conserve my energy for the harder Carson climb and take it easier here. I pulled for a bit, then peeled off and let the group go. A couple of other riders from the group had a similar idea and broke off as well. We rode together up the monstrous 10-minute climb, moving quickly but not overly fast. My heart rate was fast, so I knew I needed to slow down slightly. Now would be a good time for my HR monitor, please. "Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there!" It didn't work, to my surprise. I backed off a bit and slowed down my breathing.

I hit the top of the climb and started the three miles of rolling hills. I worked hard descending and relaxed more on the climbs, using the speed and momentum to propel me up the hills. Finally, a stop sign appeared and the Woodford's rest stop approached. It was nearing 90°F and my body was starting to burn. In the past years, there have been cold showers and ice water at the rest stop. This year was different. I saw that I couldn't soak myself, so I bypassed the stop entirely. Now began the long, 18-mile climb to the top.

I started out at a steady 8 mph; the grade was not overly steep. At times it flattened out a bit then at times it steepened a bit. I pushed through these sections to resume the steady rhythm I had acquired. Halfway to the next rest stop, my legs were again full of lactic acid. They started to complain loudly. "Shut up legs." That will always be my response. I painfully made it to the next stop, passing a bunch of riders, but also being passed by some. I ate a few pickles and slices of watermelon and refilled my bottles. It was then only 10 miles to the top.

From the rest stop, it was flat with a few rollers for three miles. It was also painful. I tried time trialing, but my legs were pretty dead. I slowly climbed and eventually, there were only 7 miles left. I climbed. 6, 5, 4. I burned. 3. Ding. My odometer hit 100 miles. I clenched my fist in that small victory, but I did still have 3 miles of climbing. I got out of the saddle, did what felt like the hardest interval of my life for a few seconds, and then sat back down, exhausted. Another rider then passed me. I got on his wheel and rode it for a few hundred meters. I glimpsed a peak above me. I looked up the road, and sure enough I saw the last turn, just a half-mile away. I guess it was only 8 miles from the last rest stop. Again, I mentally celebrated this tiny victory. Rejuvenated, I attacked and he couldn't counter. I passed another few riders up the road and turned the second to last corner. Just a ¼ mile left to go. I was out of my saddle and hitting my max HR, willing my bike and body to take me to the top with speed. I grimaced, I shouted my favorite phrase, and finally, I saw the light at the top.

It was actually just a flash of the photographer's camera, but still, it was glorious. I came to the top powerfully and hero-like. I was done. I descended the last hundred meters to the rest stop and recorded my time: 2:05 p.m. The ice cream was amazing, so I had to have a second one. I got my pin, signed my name on the sizable Death Ride board, and ate/sat. I chatted with a few people and after a half-hour I got back on my bike for the final descent to the start/finish. I tucked in behind a couple of much taller riders and took the free ride. Then another fellow teenager passed me, so we worked together for a few miles. The SFCC riders then passed us. We latched on to the rear. We flew, and although I was hitting 170 rpm, I was sticking with the group of much bigger riders. The group of 12 and us two came in together. We had a pulled pork sandwich dinner and then I left.

Pass Six: Finished

My dad drove to the camp while I rode the extra ten miles as a cool-down. I then gratefully napped in the car from 5 until I had regained energy. I listened to music while my dad also napped, with his feet sticking out of the trunk. Around 7, I saw a furry figure approach the rear of the car. Its head poked into my sight and I went down to pet what I thought was a cute dog. I reached out my hand and peered over a little more. The fluffy animal was actually a 300-pound bear cub. It was about to sniff my dad's foot before I shouted and acted all big and tough. My dad woke up as I kept saying "Bear!" My heart was racing faster than it had on the ride. That was one of the most exciting experiences of the day, one that would be hard to forget.

We went into town and had an amazing trout/pizza/salad dinner #2 at the Stonefly restaurant and I took a long and enjoyable shower. Day done and I was asleep before my head hit the pillow.

Sunday, July 13th

9:27 a.m.: I woke up, on my own! It was sunny and hot already, and my dad and I went over the plan for the day after packing up. We went into town to have breakfast and then I decided I wanted to ride a different pass. The plan was for me to climb Ebbetts again, and then descend past Hermit Valley to Pacific Grade, and infamously steep climb. I was ready to go. I started near the campsite and climbed up Ebbetts slowly, enjoying the views and snapping photos when I had good opportunities. It took me a little over an hour to get to the top, not too much slower than the day before. It was fun having a SAG wagon, and I stopped frequently to majestically pose for photos. Then I descended past Hermit Valley and towards Pacific Grade. I had heard that this was a super short pass, only a few hundred meters long. However the person who told me this (cough, cough, my dad) had done this long ago and his memory had failed me. I expected it to be very short, so I slowly started the first climb that I thought was a precursor. It kept going, and going. It was hot out, and I was not happy. I pushed harder, eager to stop climbing. There were a handful of steep hairpins, and halfway up my legs were screaming. On this one climb alone, I must have shouted at them more times than the previous day. After half an hour, I was mad, but done. I was

less mad after I had gotten to relax a bit, and I was eventually glad to have been done. That was, in reality, one of the most painful, brilliant, and spectacular rides that I have ever done.

I descended a thousand feet to Lake Alpine, and finished there. My dad parked, I threw my bike in the car and went to the bathroom at the restaurant. We decided not to eat there and instead drove to the Bear Valley resort to have lunch. An amazing cheeseburger finished off an amazing weekend.

I learned a lot about myself during the ride (like that I should use chamois cream), but also a lot about how to focus. My mentality changed during the tough, long ride and I was more focused than I usually am on shorter rides. Cycling is much more mental than many people may think, and that is why it is such a great sport. I wasn't physically as prepared this year, as I hadn't ridden a ride longer than 70 miles since November. However, throughout the ride my mental strength was stronger than my physical one, and that is what enabled me to push hard and make it through. I'm looking forward to next year's Death Ride and the physical as well as mental preparation that it will bring.

-Ethan Frankel