

Team Swift Race Reports

April 2015

Race Reports for:

1. Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race
2. Sea Otter Classic Road Race
3. Sea Otter Classic XC MTB
4. Wente Road Race
5. Copperopolis Road Race
6. NorCal #4 - Petaluma
7. NorCal #5 - Boggs

April Top Results:

1 st Place	Sea Otter XC MTB	Juniors 13-14	Gianni Lamperti
2 nd Place	Wente Road Race	Junior Wm 15-16	Sawyer Taylor
3 rd Place	Sea Otter Classic XC	Juniors 15-18	Isaiah Chass
3 rd Place	Sea Otter Classic XC MTB	Juniors 13-14	Luke Lamperti
3 rd Place	Norcal Race #4	Sophomore D1	Ben Cook
4 th place	Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race	Junior Wm 15-16	Emily Abraham
4 th Place	Sea Otter Classic Road Race	Juniors 13-14	Luke Lamperti
4 th Place	Copperopolis Road Race	Juniors 17-18	Ethan Frankel
5 th Place	Sea Otter Classic Road Race	Junior Wm 15-16	Sawyer Taylor
5 th Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 13-14	Gianni Lamperti
6 th Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
6 th place	Sea Otter Classic Road Race	Junior Wm 15-16	Emily Abraham
6 th Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 13-14	Will Stark
6 th Place	Copperopolis Road Race	Juniors 15-16	Isaiah Chass
7 th Place	Wente Vineyards Road Race	Juniors 15-16	Will Stark
10 th place	Wente Vineyards Road Race	Sr Wm. Category 3	Emily Abraham
10 th Place	NorCal MTB Race #5	Jr Varsity Boys D1	Ethan Frankel
11 th Place	NorCal MTB Race #4	Jr Varsity Boys D1	Ethan Frankel
12 th Place	Sea Otter Circuit Race	Juniors 15-16	Gianni Lamperti
14 th Place	Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race	Juniors 15-16	Luke Lamperti
15 th Place	Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
22 nd Place	Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race	Juniors 15-16	Isaiah Chass

Rider Race Reports

1. Sea Otter Circuit Race

4/17/15

Monterey

Emily Abraham

4th place Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race Jr. Wm. 15-18

I was beyond excited for the Sea Otter Classic this year because the dates happened to be on my birthday weekend! I knew it was going to be an awesome time of racing and hanging out with my team mates. The only disappointing thing was that both of my races, circuit and road, ended up being on the same day within only a couple hours of each other. I decided to do both, however, I knew I would probably only do well in the first one.

Race day morning went really well, I did yoga with my mom and got a chance to relax before a hectic day of racing. At eleven, I started getting ready for my first race which was the circuit race. I got on my trainer about forty-five minutes before my start which was a little later than I wanted to get on but I was still able to get in a good warm-up with Luke's help. Twenty minutes until the race started, I rode over to the course with Coach and we did the climb a couple of times. I was feeling great and I had confidence in myself for this race. In previous years, they started the junior women with the category 3/4 and 35+ women but this year they decided to start us a minute after those categories. There were only about eight junior women so we ended up in a small field instead of being with the other categories like I thought we would. Once the race started, I was somewhat happy that they started us behind the others. I was nervous about going down the cork screw in a larger field but with so few juniors it made it a lot easier and I became confident going down after only a lap or two. The field got split up by the second time we went up the climb. I was in the lead group with three other girls. Two of the three girls were teammates on Byrds and the other girl was on Jet Cycling. We took turns rotating but I was surprised by how good I felt throughout the race. On our third lap, one of the girls on Byrds' really pushed herself up the climb and she got away from the other girls and me. As soon as I saw her start to make a gap on us, I put more force on the pedals to get over the climb quicker and descended the cork screw as fast as I could. I put complete trust in my bike and in that moment I felt I made progress in overcoming my fear of descending technical descents at high speeds. The girl still had a small gap on us when we got the bottom and her teammates immediately got in front to try to prevent us from bridging the gap. I quickly recognized what she was doing and jumped on the front to take a pull and close that gap. It only took about two minutes until I closed the gap and the four of us were back together again. The rest of the race was pretty low key. We continued rotating a number of times on each lap. I found myself on the front when we reached the top of the climb and leading the other girls down the descent. I was surprised by how many women we passed from the categories that started a minute before us. A lot of people got dropped on the climb which is understandable; this is not an easy race! I wasn't expecting the last lap to come so quickly, but before I knew it we crossed the finish line to signal our last lap. I then realized I needed to figure out my finish. I had a chance to win it but I had to play it right because the girl that broke away on the climb, earlier in the race, was clearly strong enough to crush all of us on the climb. When we approached the climb, I stayed right on her wheel and paid attention to make sure she wouldn't get away. The four of us were still together after the climb and descending the cork screw. I ended up on the front which isn't where I wanted to be because I knew

they were either going to have me pull all the way to the finish then sprint by me or someone was going to attack. So I sat on the front and went super easy then sure enough, as we went up a small roller, the strong girl on Byrds' attacked. I went after her but wow my legs were toast and I was just a split second behind where I couldn't catch on to her. I rotated with the other girl to try and bridge the gap. It came down to a sprint for second between three of us. I was behind by just a second and unfortunately couldn't out sprint them. Even though I'm disappointed that I missed the podium by just a one place, I'm still proud of my effort in this race and I learned a lot.
-Emily

Luke Lamperti

14th Place Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race Juniors 15-16

The morning of the race I was excited because I look forward to this race every year. My start was at 1:30 in the afternoon so I had plenty of time to get all my stuff ready. I knew I had to leave the motor home to go warm up at about 12:30. I put my Mavic race wheels on and got my bike ready early so I did not have to worry about it. I had a teammate racing so I helped her do her warm up. Then a little bit after that I started to get ready for my race. Once me and my 2 teammates were ready to go we left to go do a warm up on the road. After completing our warm up we headed toward the start where we met the rest of the team. We did a practice ride up the hill that was about ¼ of the course followed by rollout and then headed to the start. When the race started it did not go too hard. But about the third lap a Nutrend Specialized kid got on the front at the climb and made a big split happen. There was front group of about 5 and I was in the second with one other teammate (my brother). I sat on not taking too many pulls at all. I knew what I needed to do was just try to hang on over the climb and sit in on the flat. So I did just that I sat on and then struggled to stay with them over the climb. I was feeling good until with 2 laps to go I could not stay with them over the climb. I kept going hard up it though and then chased on the corkscrew and caught back on the flat. I knew the last lap was going to be really hard up the climb so I knew I just gave it what I had and got dropped but came in about 30 seconds behind the group I was in. I was happy with my result and am looking forward to next year at Sea Otter Classic.

- Luke

Ben Cook

16, cat 3

15th Place Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race Juniors 15-16

Sea Otter Classic was a big aim for me. It was one of those "lofty goals" to one day place on the podium here, in either the circuit or road race. Unfortunately, I had faced illness in the month leading up to Sea Otter. Exercise induced asthma had left me missing school and training, slowing me down in the month of March. But I was

just coming off of spring break and was fortunate enough to feel good for the weekend of Sea Otter.

My dad and I rolled in among the endless sea of cars parked above the festival. After coming back from registration, we found a nice shady tree to set the trainer up underneath. As I warmed up, my dad pinned my number and organized my gear for me. After a hard warm up that left me feeling strong, I thanked my dad, threw on my gear, and headed down to the course early. I did some spinning on the course before finally meeting coach and the team at the start.

Once we were off the line, the first time up the hill was fairly fast. Interestingly, I wasn't paying attention to my position and ended up slowing down to the back of the group by the descent, where the pack strung out. I noted this as an important place to be especially ready, and the next lap came over the hill in the top 10. But it was on the 3rd lap when the race really blew apart. We were all side by side coming into the hill.

I was riding in the front row, when the rider next to me pulled a very fast attack. I jumped on as quick as I could, but a gap had already opened up. Five riders slingshotted around me and up to the leader. This is where the race was happening; in the move just a few yards in front of me that I truly could not make. I pushed over the top of the hill trying to latch onto the group. At the top of the hill I could almost taste them, but it wasn't enough. I chased down the descent and for part of the flat, but the move had gone and I had missed it. I was upset to say the least. Other riders aided my chase until we hit the hill again, where I was beginning to fall apart.

I was totally trashed from my chase, but I looked up the road to find that the leaders were blowing apart too. Three of the six riders fell back too; all of them fell behind me, interestingly enough. I found myself in a small group in the middle of the race and held pace there for a while with my teammate Isaiah. Our two younger teammates, Luke and Gianni, were up in the group ahead. Riders were pulling out all the time, so my group and I continued on. On the second to last lap, one rider from BYRDS and I broke away from the group together and held it to the line for 14th and 15th.

At the end of the day, I was very unhappy with my performance. I talked with my dad and coach that night. They had come up with a plan of rest and steady training to bring me back into form. We also discussed the race in terms of tactics. Looking at the 3rd lap where I missed the move, we narrowed it down to two reasons. The first was my fitness. I could tell that I was doing better with the tactics, but had I been stronger I would be able to place much better. The second reason I missed the move was my jump, or lack of it. I let a gap open in front of me when the first rider attacked.

From there, the other five riders used me to shoot up to the rider down the road. For the upcoming race, coach talked to me about always being ready to jump. In these races there is not time to waste, and each second you wait is a larger gap in front of you. Coach always talks about "feeling" the race. What she means is being aware of where the riders around you are and anticipating their jump. That way I can jump at almost the same time they do and be right on their wheel. Regardless of my fitness, I knew that my jump and my attention would need improvement.

At the end of the day I was bummed with my lackluster performance in the

circuit race, but held my head high for the upcoming road race. I also got to learn a lot about how to make the lead move, and thanks to my amazing coach, got a plan together for getting me back into form! The next day my dad and I toured the festival and got to meet with all of our sponsors. I got my glasses cleaned at Smith, had a chat about new helmet technology with Chris from Lazer, and got to talk about southern Italian riding with Federico at Selle San Marco. I went back to the hotel that night and helped set up my dad for his circuit race the next morning. Now it was my turn to be the helper! I slept well and looked upwards to Sunday's road race.

-Ben

Gianni Lamperti

12th Place Sea Otter Circuit Race Juniors 15-16

This would be the first race of the weekend at Sea Otter so I was really excited. For our warm up we rode down the hill to the bottom, where the Laguna Seca entrance is then back up. We did a 1-minute pyramid then went to the start line for staging. We were aggressive at roll out and all got to start in the front row. The 17-18 race was scheduled to leave 1 minute ahead of us, hoping that neither of us would see each other out on course. As the 17-18 left I was super excited and ready to go. As the whistle blew I went to the front since it went straight into a climb. I moved close to the middle towards the top of the climb but moved back to the front again on the decent. The race did this for about two more laps before there was a big field split and luckily I made it over the top of the climb in the first group. Again, about two laps later the field split again and I did not make it with the top four guys that were off the front. In my group there were over 15 of us but on every lap one or two got dropped. Everyone was working together really good to try to catch them. I got dropped off the back of the group at two to go but caught back on down the corkscrew. Then on the last lap I pushed as hard as I could over the top and stayed on the back. When we came around the last corner there was a jump and I went as hard as I could to once again stay on the back. I finished in 12th and the person who won the field sprint in my group got 5th. It was a super fun race and I look forward to doing it again next year.

-Gianni

Isaiah Chass

22nd Place Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race Juniors 15-16

Sea Otter Classic is one of my favorite races that I have been to because of the race courses and the huge venue. We showed up Wednesday evening and camped in a motor home in the paddocks. I did a little mountain bike ride that evening to spin out my legs from the drive down. On Thursday, I rode the road race course and did some pre race sprints to open up my legs for the circuit race on Friday. When I got back, I did some stretching and ate lunch. Friday morning I had good breakfast and then I went to yoga with a few of my teammates, Emily, Gianni, and Luke. After yoga, we walked through the festival with Coach to see the sponsors. After seeing our amazing

sponsors, we went back to our campsite and I started getting my bike ready for the circuit race. I had a small lunch, and then I pinned my number on. Then I put on my kit and went to warm-up with my teammates Gianni and Luke. We did some hard sprints up the entrance road to Laguna Seca which felt like a 25% grade. Then we rode a lap of the course on the Laguna Seca Raceway. The course included a good climb and a fun descent down the corkscrew. After doing a lap, we did rollout and then lined up with our teammate Ben.

When the race started, it wasn't super fast, so I got good positioning for the steep climb. I knew the climb would be hard, so I stayed towards the front so I would be able to drift back if I needed to. Coming into the corkscrew I was towards the front, and I made sure to stay on someone's wheel so I wouldn't get dropped on the descent. I moved up before the double apex corner, and then held my position waiting for an attack. On the climb, there was an attack, and the field was splitting in two. I was able to bridge up to the main group right before the corkscrew, but I was on the back. I hung on down the descent, and tried to recover a little before doing that climb again. An attack was made on the back side of the course on a slight hill and the field surged up to him and then kept the speed up the rest of the lap. About 45 minutes into the race I got dropped with 3 other riders on the climb, and at the bottom of the corkscrew we got organized and worked well together because we all had the same goal to catch the field. We caught a few more riders after a few laps, and then we all worked even harder. We could see a good sized group right ahead of us on the climb, so I made a big pull most of the lap to catch up to them. We were now in a pretty big group, and I saw my teammate Ben in this group. Because the group was so big, riders started attacking again on the climb. We stayed together for the rest of the race and on the last lap a Specialized rider made a big attack, and my teammate Ben got on his wheel. I didn't want to chase down my teammate, so I stayed with a few other riders. I pulled down the corkscrew, and then let the others do some of the work. I was second wheel with 3 corners to go, and then a Tieni Duro rider came by me and I got on his wheel. In the last corner he started sprinting, so I got on his wheel and waited to start my sprint. When I felt like I was at a good distance from the finish, I started sprinting around him, but he ended up getting me at the line. This was one of the funnest races I have ever done and I can't wait to do it again next year!

-Isaiah

2. Sea Otter Classic Road Race

4/18/15

Monterey

Sawyer Taylor

5th Place

Sea Otter Classic Road Race

Junior Wm 15-16

"So, you're sure that this is where my race starts."

No, not really."

"Okay, who can I ask who knows? You're the fourth person I've asked. So far, I've gotten four different answers."

"No idea. Sorry. I'm just a volunteer."

For what an important race Sea Otter was supposed to be, this event was highly un-organized for the start of our race. Everyone who I asked questions of seemed really confused. Finally, I got an answer from another junior girl's mom who finally told me what I wanted to know. By the time I got to the starting line, I was already nice and warmed up from riding all over the place. Still, I did a small pyramid up and down the first hill we were supposed to start up. Then, I went over to talk to Emily and Coach Laura who told me a little about the course.

As I waited for my race to start, I thought about the events in my life in the past two weeks that might somehow affect my performance in this race. A few days before Spring break, I had pulled a hamstring doing cross-fit. Then I went on a five-day school trip to D.C. and came home late Wednesday night. On Thursday morning, I went on a 24 mile road ride. On Thursday, my parents came home from New Orleans just before midnight. Luckily, my mom and I didn't have to leave until 9:30AM for the three-hour drive Monterey to make my 3:00PM race. This would give me plenty of time to warm up and find my way around the massive Mazda Raceway.

"Alright ladies, here's the rundown," the race official said as he began his explanation of the course. He went on to describe most of the course to the 15-18 girls, many of whom had just completed the circuit race. Soon after, the whistle was blown, and we were off. It was a hot and slightly windy afternoon, so I made sure to hydrate during the neutral start. As soon as we hit the first turn, the group hit it. Within five minutes, we had broken into three different packs. I ended up in the middle pack. However, I think that if I had pushed myself a little harder in those first five minutes, I could have kept up with the lead group.

During the first lap, I pulled about the same amount as the two other girls in my group. At the feed zone, I grabbed a water bottle while riding and drank as much as I could before tossing it. Up until this point I had felt pretty crummy. A few miles after the feed zone, we had fully rotated the pull, and I was in the front again. All of a sudden, I felt a sudden surge of energy. For the next lap, I pulled up almost every hill. As it turns out, this was a huge mistake. Then, on top of this, I underestimated the distance of the last climb, and I began pushing the pace too soon. In the last 100 yards or so, I cracked and the two girls I had been riding with passed me. I collapsed after the finish line only a few seconds behind them. As it turns out, my group was only a little slower than the two girls ahead of us and had only finished a few minutes behind them. Overall, I am proud of how I did at Sea Otter. For many reasons, this was a race I will never forget.

-Sawyer

Emily Abraham

6th place Sea Otter Classic Road Race

Junior Wm 15-18

I only had about an hour and a half to relax after my circuit race then it was time to head over to the start of my road race. We were supposed to start at the Sea Otter

bridge which is on the circuit race course but they changed it at last minute and I had to rush across the venue to where they moved the start which was closer to the actual course. Turns out I didn't need to hurry over there though because we ended up having to wait another thirty minutes until we could start. In this race there were only about ten women and only three of us had done the circuit race just before, the rest of the girls were fresh for this race.

The race began in neutral for a few miles then when we reached the bottom of the descent, the race officially began. The course begins with a pretty big climb, as soon as we hit it; one of the girls took off. I knew how much climbing was on the course and with my legs already being tired, I didn't want to destroy myself in the very beginning. However, I should have gone harder to stay with the three girls that were chasing two girls that dropped the rest of us on the climb. I stayed with the three girls, who were chasing, until the top of the climb. Then they really hit it to go catch the other two girls and I didn't grab a wheel quick enough. I was close behind them for a majority of that first lap but I didn't have it in me to close the gap. Eventually the girls were out of sight and I rode the second and final lap by myself. The finish is on a climb that's about three miles long. Wow, that was painful. I pushed myself as best I could but there was no one to be seen in front of me and no one to be seen behind me so, with shattered legs, I made my way across the finish line.

-Emily

Ben Cook

16, cat 3

6th Place Sea Otter Road Race Juniors 15-16

After a poor showing in the circuit race, I was really looking forward to the road race to prove myself against the tough 15-16's field here at Sea Otter. The course suited me well, with short and steep climbs; it was a power climbers course. I did my warm-up on the trainer with my teammate Miles, and then threw my gear on. Before the race, coach gave Miles and me our new Lazer Z1 helmets, which was really nice to have for this big race. She gave us our last pre-race chat, telling us we were both strong enough to do well here but that we would have to play the race smart.

"At 200 meters, you both need to be already in your drops. When you hit the sign, it's time to jump as hard as you can and hold it all the way to the line." We thanked coach and spun over to the course. "How you feeling?" I asked him. "I can't tell if I feel terrible, or I feel really good. We'll just have to see!" He joked back. He said the same thing to me before winning the San Dimas Time Trial, so I took it that he was feeling really good. However, today was a different day for Miles. He was up against the greatest 17-18 racers in the nation, but I knew that Miles was strong and focused. He and I have grown closer since San Dimas, for whatever reason. Maybe it's because we sit next to each other in math class now, or because we ride together more often. We seem to have lots in common and that makes us good teammates, so we hang out together a lot.

I spun around a bit more at the start and ran through my checklist in my head. Food, stretch, bottles, skewers are tight, tires- shoot. I forgot to pump up my tires. Thankfully, the neutral service car was nearby, so I was able to grab a pump from them and fill up. Now I had everything. Riders began lining up, so I squeezed into a spot in the front of the race. The official separated us from the 17-18's a few minutes before their start. With the whistle they were off. I spotted Miles up in the front row. I laughed; of course he and I were both in the front row.

Today we would be facing 47 miles of racing, 15 more than last year. I was happy that this year the distance was raised. I spend a lot of hours on the bike and love doing long rides, making my endurance one of my strengths. With the whistle our race had started up the neutral hill. I spun in the front row. Down the descent the ref had us on the brakes a lot. Riders skidded and even locked up wheels when the ref surged and slowed. I was happy to have my Mavic wheels on for the day, as they brake incredibly smoothly, allowing me to hold my position in the front row. Down the descent I shook and stretched out my legs and back. I rested my hands comfortably in the drops as I waited. I was feeling as cool as a cucumber. I knew that I could perform well today.

We rounded the tight left hander onto the course but the ref still had us in neutral. A false flat going up. We had one more turn until the real climbing began.

Riders moved around me but I stayed at the front. A right turn, the rev of the referee's engine, and the race had begun. We headed up the first climb steady but quickly. I came over somewhere in the top five riders. "Bzzz!!" I heard my bike as I shifted to the big ring at the top of the climb. I loved the sound of electronic shifting.

In fact, I loved everything about electronic shifting. Hands on the drops, the straight after the climb was a crosswind. I kept my finger on the right shifter. I rider moved up as we headed over a riser, so I shifted and got out of the saddle quickly. I was right on it and held the top five down the descent. That would be good practice, my reaction time would be critical in this race. Riders moved around in the field as we headed down the fast descent.

The pace proved pretty steady over the next flat section. So far it had been an uneventful first lap. "Pretty fast race so far dude!" Said my friend next to me. It was Matteo, from BYRDS, one of the strongest climbers in the race. I laughed and we continued holding on pace near the front of the race. Up the feed hill, Matteo attacked.

He did this last year too. But by the time he jumped I already had my finger on the shifter, and jumped just as he did. I came over the hill in the top five still, but it was not easy. The next lap was much of the same, but with all the climbs, crosswinds, and risers harder than before. I kept my hands in the drops and my finger on the shifter and held position by hopping out of the saddle and reacting to every twitch in the peloton. I fell to mid-pack to chat with my teammate Isaiah. He had the cross country race in the morning and was feeling trashed. I told him the group was getting smaller and smaller, and that he needed to just hang on over the hill each lap. I moved back up to the front as we descended into the 3rd lap.

I was in the top 10 down the descent. A ball of riders sitting on their top tubes, trying to go faster, we hurled into the next climb. I shook out my legs before the

corner. I was in maybe tenth or so, when Matteo attacked from the front. I jumped but was too far back. I made up some placings, but the group was sliding away. Six or seven riders were leaving the rest. Shoot, that was the move. But I had learned from Friday's circuit race that it is not worth it to chase and blow yourself up. I looked at the riders around me. Both Specialized riders were still in my group of five or so. I knew they would have to chase. We powered over the climb as hard as we could, but we still had another 20 miles to race. I ate some Clif Bloks.

I worked with my group but remained twitchy. One of the Specialized riders, Sandor, kept attacking us. I covered each of his attacks, sometimes we would end up off the front together and really try to get away from our group, but we always came back together. Sandor was one of the strongest riders in the nation, and was known for his sprinting and his fast attacks. But I soon discovered that today he wasn't all that much stronger than I was! I attacked just as fast, climbed just as fast, and was just as twitchy. We settled into our group and worked in paceline. We caught 3 riders from the group ahead, some of them hung on to our group and one of them got dropped on the next climb.

Down the descent, the cones had been removed that would allow us to go straight to the finish. "Which way! Which way!" Riders yelled. Some went straight, but Sandor and I went left. The rest turned around and went left up the climb with us, but a rider attacked. It was a pretty cheeky move, but it narrowed our group down to just five riders. For the rest of the last lap we worked in paceline heading towards the finish line. I took a Clif Shot, headed to the very back and took my feet out of the pedals to stretched my quads and shake my legs out. We worked together nicely, having a certain sense of trust in each other than none of us would try to attack. It was a good feeling to have trust in the riders around me, but I stayed ready to jump at any moment.

Down the final descent the pace picked up. One of the riders from BYRDS led down the hill, as Sandor jumped on the left side. Spun out of gears, I chased after him. We were all together at the bottom of the climb. I took the corner fast, just behind Sandor. I shook my legs out one final time. We rode steady up the climb. The BYRDS rider kept finding himself a gap on the rest of us, and Sandor would look at me to chase. But I kept my cool and didn't react. Finally, Sandor picked up the pace to close the gap. This happened a few more times before we hit 2k to the finish. I got out of the saddle when the road pitched even further upwards and shifted to a lighter gear. At this point in time I was really struggling to hang on. I looked up the road to find that the rider in front of me was struggling as well and we had let a gap open up on Sandor and the BYRDS rider. I got back in the saddle and placed my hands on the drops. I chased hard with one other rider. 1k to the finish.

Finally, at 500 meters, we had managed to catch the two of them. I looked ahead at the 200 meter sign. There I was going to jump. Should I jump at the sign? A little after? I waited. 300 meters. I was coiled up like a spring, ready to blow this group apart. 200 meters. I jumped. I looked up just in time to see Sandor out of the saddle.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!” My chain slammed over each cog as I spammed the shifter button. Out of the saddle, nobody at my sides, but a rider just ahead of me. Sandor. I yanked on the bars and slammed the pedals like never before. The finish was straight ahead, maybe 15 seconds away. I could do anything for 15 seconds. No matter how hard my quads burning, how badly I wanted to rest, how hard those 50 miles had been before us, I could do anything. I sat down and buried myself into the finishing line.

Sandor had beat me but not by much. I strolled through the surrounding crowds past the finish line, completely spent. I shifted down to the very easiest gear and tried to spin for a bit, but the finish area was uphill. I just climbed off the bike and put my head down, trying to get more air. I had given everything, I knew that today was much better than Friday and I was satisfied. In fact, I was more than satisfied. I was ecstatic.

I met with coach and my dad. They were both very proud. My dad told me the situation and where I had finished. When I heard 5th or 6th, I nearly threw my hands in the air. I couldn't believe it! I had never finished that well in the 15-16's field.

Coach was happy too, she told me that I had a very respectable finish and she was very proud. I met with Miles and he told me he had a good race too, finishing near 20th or so in the 17-18's. I spun back with Miles, Coach, and my dad. Miles said his goodbyes and pulled off to his car. After spinning down, I got changed and talked to Coach and my dad more about getting me healthier. I gave coach and my teammates a big thank you, packed up my things and headed for home.

At the end of the day I was extremely satisfied with my result. I was so happy that I had learned so much on Friday in the circuit race and was able to apply to my race today. I raced calmly and learned more about position. Maybe had I been a few places higher on the 3rd climb I could have made it with the leaders. Maybe if I didn't wait for Sandor's jump to make my own jump I could have beaten him. I would apply this all to my next race. I checked the official results to find 6th place. A part of me was bummed that I didn't make it into the top 5, but another part of me was still so happy that I had finished higher than ever. I went home ready for a long period of rest, recovery, and finally training leading up to the national championships in June. I couldn't have done it without my dad and my coach Laura. They are both so amazingly dedicated to my success, and both know how to communicate with me so well. I am so happy to have them be a part of this journey with me.

- Ben

Isaiah Chass

Sea Otter Classic Road Race

Junior Men 15-16

DNF

I had already done a race before this one, so I didn't need to do another hard warm-up. I did a few sprints on the road, and then I rode to the start. The race started neutral down a descent, so I had time to get positioned good. At the bottom of the descent I was towards the front for when the race started. On the first climb the pace

wasn't super hard so I stayed in the field, and recovered on the descent. At the bottom of the descent we turned left, and there were a few attacks on the rollers. Everyone was quick to get on them so they didn't get off the front. When we came into the feed zone climb, the field sped up and I got dropped. I went as hard as I could to the top, and then I drilled it along the rollers to catch them. I caught them right before the descent, and then I moved back up towards the front. When we finished our first lap I thought it was going to be hard doing four more. I got dropped again on the climb, but I dug deep and I was able to catch back on right over the crest. I was hurting pretty bad now and I was just trying to stay in the field. I got dropped again on the feed zone climb and then caught back up on the rollers once again. I had used a lot of energy catching back up, so on the third lap, I wasn't able to stay with them over the climb, so I had to go as hard as I could to catch them. They kept getting farther up the road and eventually I couldn't see them, so I decided to pull out of the race on the next lap. I rode to the top where the finish was and I watched all my other teammates finish their races. I was really disappointed with how I rode, and I knew it was because I raced already earlier in the day. Next year I will have to only do this race, because it is a super important race, and a hard course.

-Isaiah

Luke Lamperti

4th Place Sea Otter Classic Road Race Juniors 13-14

I was tired from the XC MTB race this morning but ready to race my second race of the day. I had some teammates who were just doing the road race but in an older category so I helped them with their warm up. Then I got all my stuff ready. I did not do a big warm up since I had already raced. When the race started, it was neutral down the hill until we hit the climb. When we hit the climb nobody wanted to pull so we (my teammate and brother Gianni) made an attack. We had talked it over with Coach and thought that we had a good chance to attack and possibly stay away. The attack did not stick. There were two riders, one from Canada, that were strong and able to stay with us. So, we all then stayed together for a while. Nobody really wanted to work so there was a lot of disorganization. I do not always ride my best when a race goes this way. There was a lot of cat and mouse going on and really no one was racing. On the second to the last lap, Gianni and I let two kids go thinking they would get tired working in a break and we would be able to pull them back. Unfortunately, Gianni had a mechanical and had to stop and I had to chase back solo. I caught back on to them after about three minutes on a climb, but I was smashed by the time I got to them. I rode on their wheel for just a bit until they attacked again. This time, I was not able to make it. I can honestly say I don't know that I have ever felt that badly during a race. I had nothing left and it took all I had to get up the last big climb to the finish line. I learned so much during this race. First and foremost, I would not do 2 races that require that much effort on the same day. I realized I just am not there yet and next year if two of my races fall on the same day, I am only going to concentrate on one!

-Luke

Gianni Lamperti

5th Place Sea Otter Road Race

Juniors 13-14

I was super tired going into the Road Race. I had just finished doing the Cross Country race about two hours before and I had given that race about all I had. However, I was still feeling pretty good. I won the Cross Country, so I still had some adrenaline running through me! After eating, changing and getting everything ready, it was time to go. I did not warm up except to ride out to the start line. By this time I was feeling a little more tired, but knew once the race started I would be okay. The plan was for Luke (my brother and teammate) and I were to attack after the neutral start on the very first climb. We thought if we just went out and attacked right away we had a chance of staying away. The attack did not stick. There were two other riders who were strong and they were able to pull us back in. Then it was basically just a ride, not a race. Nobody wanted to pull or work. We rode like this for a while and then I made another attack and was pulled in again. I was using a lot of wasted effort playing the game of cat and mouse. Unfortunately I did not have enough in me to do anything about it. With two laps to go, Luke and I decided to let the two riders go ahead and get a gap on us of about 5 seconds. We thought if they had to work together without us, they would tire out a bit and then I was going to pull them back in and Luke was going to attack. It was then that I had a mechanical and had to stop. After fixing my chain, I started chasing. I chased as hard as I could for the whole lap and could not see them. I ended up finishing 5th. I was disappointed, but I will say I learned a lot.

-Gianni

William Stark

6th Place Sea Otter Road Race

Juniors 13-14

Coming into Sea Otter, I wasn't in my best shape of the season. I had been sick three weeks before, disturbing my training schedule. My goal for this race (knowing how competitive it is) was to try my hardest, whatever that meant. My family and I got a decent dinner and hotel for the night before the race. The day of the race, we parked near the starting line, where I did my warm up. Luke, Gianni, and I did our rollouts at the same time. I was happy to hear that the race was neutral until the bottom of the decent, because I had not ridden it before.

The official let us go after his small speech about safety, and we all followed the motorcyclist until the bottom of the hill, where he held up a green sign signaling that the race was off. At first no one sped up, leaving me a little confused. We took a quick right turn onto a small but steep hill, and suddenly Luke and Gianni attacked at an insane speed, and surprisingly, the three other kids were able to stay with them, leaving me behind. I stayed behind for a couple of minutes, and then finally caught back up, but was fairly tired from having to do it. I tried to shelter myself from the wind as much as possible, but after a while, I was too tired and they pulled away.

Although I got dropped from my group, I wasn't completely alone. As other people passed, I got on their wheels for some time, and I tried to get as much shelter as possible from the strong wind. A couple of minutes before the final climb, I started saving my energy, because I had heard how hard it was. The final climb ended up being a lot easier than I imagined, so I finished the race strong.

-Will

3. Sea Otter Classic XC MTB

4/18/15

Monterey

Gianni Lamperti

1st Place Sea Otter XC Juniors 13-14

The morning of the race it was pretty cold and there was a lot of moisture in the air due to the heavy fog. Before the start I spun around a little doing a few jumps. I then went to the start line and was ready to race. As the whistle blew I jumped off the start and sat in about three wheels back from the front. There was a kid who was going pretty hard on the front, when we were still on the pavement. At the top of the first riser that was still pavement I jumped pretty hard before heading into the dirt. Once on the dirt we immediately hit traffic and my plan was to put as many people as possible in between me and the rest of the field before the single track. Once I got to the second road section that goes somewhat down I kept my pace up high still trying to put people in between us. I kept my pace pretty hard until the top of a long fire road climb where I started to back off just enough to where I was in high zone 3. Once back on the winding single track I noticed a rider in a black kit and I thought back, not remembering passing anyone that was in a black kit. Just to be safe I immediately got back on the gas and was in high zone 4 all the way to the finish line. It so happened that I did not pass anyone in a black kit and he was in my category. I got very lucky that I saw that. I am very excited with my result and I am excited to race up an age category next year!

-Gianni

Luke Lamperti

3rd Place Sea Otter Classic XC MTB Juniors 13-14

Now it was Sunday at the Sea Otter Classic and I had 2 races today. The XC and the Road Race. I knew this was going to be a hard day and it started at 9:00 with my XC start. I got ready then left to do my warm up. After finishing my warm up I was ready to race so I rolled to the start where I lined up. When the race started we rolled on to the track with a kid at the front setting an okay pace. Then we hit dirt and my teammate who was on my wheel made a big attack and the kid on the front could not stay with him so I just sat on until we hit the descent that went to the single-track. I wanted to be first into the single track so I did not get caught up in traffic and have to chase on the fire roads. I was first for that whole single track and then it went to a

paved road and I had a gap on him so I went hard and made to the next single track first then I sat up so my teammate could get a gap just in case he got caught up in the other riders. I went easy all the way until we hit fire road again then I let him go by me and I sat on then sprinted into the single track. I did that for most of it except on the last little bit I was near the end of a single track and my chain fell off so I had to shift it back on. Then I started to chase hoping I could catch him I was going hard on the fire road. I was not able to catch him but I had a good finish and was happy with how I did.
-Luke

Isaiah Chass

3rd Place Sea Otter Classic XC Juniors 15-18

The XC race started earlier than all my other races, so I didn't have that much time in the morning. When I woke up, I ate as much as I could even though I wasn't very hungry. Then I got ready and went to the entrance climb to do some sprints. I had done this for the circuit race and I felt like I was really warmed up, so I thought that I would do it again. After doing a few sprints, I rode easy to the race track, and rode for about another 10 minutes. Then I went to the start and took off my leg and arm warmers and my jacket. I had 15 minutes until my start, so I took a Clif Shot, and then lined up. When the race started, I clipped in as fast as I could, and I sprinted to the first corner. Then a rider came around me so I got on his wheel. We were all mostly together until the dirt, and when we hit the dirt there was an attack. I worked my way up to him and I stayed on his wheel. I messed up around a corner and got passed by a rider, but I passed him back on the descent and was still in 2nd place. When we got to the pavement road, the group was down to about 15 riders. We were riding two by two and I knew the single track wasn't too far up the road. There was one more corner until the dirt, so when we came out of it I attacked as hard as I could so I would be leading on the single track and not get caught up in the traffic from the races that started ahead of us. I held a good pace up the climb so that I wouldn't be too tired but hopefully it would drop a few riders. I stayed first until the fire road and then a rider made an attack up the short climb. When it flattened out, I sprinted to get on his wheel, and then I stayed with him until the next single track. I was second wheel until the trail opened up, and then I passed him. I saw traffic up the road so I wanted to be in the front. Now there were only 2 other riders besides me, and when we got to the long fire road to the finish, they passed me. I tried to stay with them but I lost traction on one of the rollers and got dropped from them. I had to get off my bike and start sprinting up the hill. When it flattened out, I jumped back on my bike and started chasing to get back up to them. I worked as hard as I could but I wasn't able to catch them. With about 1 mile to go I got passed by a rider, so I stayed with him and recovered for a little bit. On the last climb I attacked him and got onto the racetrack with about a 15 second gap. I sprinted to the finish from there and ended up getting 3rd. After the race I went back to the campsite and started getting ready for my next race, the road race, later in the day.

-Isaiah

4. Wente Road Race

4/26/15

Livermore

Emily Abraham

10th place Wente Vineyards Road Race

Senior Wm. Category 3

The Wente Road Race is one of my favorite road race courses or at least it was....I forgot how difficult the climb to the finish is. I was excited to race it with a more competitive category and I was happy we were separated from the category 4 women and the p1/2 women. I got in a good thirty minute warm-up on my trainer then rode over to the start line to do roll-out. There weren't very many women lined up for my race, only about twelve or thirteen. When we started the race, it was very casual. We rode two by two at a very moderate pace for the first few miles. Actually, it wasn't until the climb that the finish line is on, that we really began the race. A woman on Mike's Bikes attacked at the top of the climb and broke away from the rest of the field. I was second wheel as we tried to bridge the gap and bring her back. We went hard over the rollers then began the short descent. I was descending as second wheel, which is normally something I would never do. I usually get so nervous to descend around other people that I move to the back and either end up getting dropped or having to waste all my energy to bridge the gap. But this time I put full confidence in myself and my bike and I was able to hold my position as second wheel. I didn't make any attacks to try and catch the woman who broke of the front because it was only the first lap and no doubt we would catch her. Sure enough, on one of the rollers on the back side of the course, we caught up to her. Right when we caught up to her, another woman on Mike's Bikes made an attack. Some of the women went after her, but I stayed with the other two on Mike's Bikes. I could tell they had a strategy and they were just making attacks to tire us out and set up their teammate (who is a really strong climber) to take the win. The whole field came together again by the time we passed the start and began our second lap. On the flat section before the main climb, I found myself on the front. I was just rolling along waiting for someone to attack or come around me and start pulling. I didn't want to waste all my energy. I still felt good on our second time up the climb but again at the top, one of the women on Mike's Bikes attacked. She made a pretty big gap from the rest of the field and we spent the majority of that second lap trying to close the gap. I mostly sat in but I also took a pull. At one point, during that lap, we were neutralized because we were being passed by another category and the woman ahead of us was able to make an even bigger gap. We caught her on the flat section just before heading up the climb for the third time. The third time on the climb destroyed me. The strong climber on Mike's Bikes attacked on the climb this time and she easily got away. I got dropped from the field along with two other women but as soon as we reached the top of the climb, we began working together to catch back on. In no time we were all back together and working hard to catch the two women who broke away. But then the official on the motorcycle came up beside us and told us the two in front already had a minute and a half on us. We continued working together but it was clear that we were all pretty tired and saving our

energy for the final time up the climb. When we reached the flat section once again, I found myself on the front and no one was coming around me to take a pull. So I spun easy and kept the speed fairly slow. I prepared myself for the climb and figured I would get dropped again since I did on the previous lap. When we hit the climb, the others came around me and I pushed myself as best I could but my legs were toast. It was a painful climb to the finish but overall I had a great time in this race.

-Emily

William Stark

7th Place Wente Vineyards Road Race Juniors 15-16

Coming into Wente, I knew I wasn't able to compete with the other kids, because I was the only fourteen-year-old racing up an age group, in the race. My goal for this race was the same as my goal at Sea Otter. It was to try my best, since I thought all of the kids were stronger than me. We got to Wente fairly early so I had a lot of time to prepare. It was really hot out, so I drank a lot of water until the race started. I did my pyramids with Sawyer and Emily, and was ready to race. I rode over to the starting line, did rollout, listened to the race official's tips, and suddenly, the race was off.

The race started at a slow pace, and I was able to stay with the pack until the decent, where all of the bigger, heavier fifteen and sixteen-year-olds went super fast. After I took the sharp left turn at the bottom of the decent, I saw one lone Tiene Duro rider far in the distance, and no sight of the rest of them. I started catching up to him, and after a few minutes at the rate I was going, I did. I got behind his wheel to recover from my hard effort catching up to him, and we worked together for most of the rest of the race. I could tell he wasn't quite as strong as me, but I knew I could still go faster working with him.

When the two of us got near the final climb, I could tell he was too burned out to go the pace I wanted to, so I broke away. When I got to the start of the climb, I got a burst of excitement and energy. Looking down at my Garmin only once during the climb, I was amazed by how fast I was going: it read 21 mph! I continued putting as much power down as I could bear until the finish line and ended the race with another strong finish.

I thought I came second to last, and my partner came last, but it turned out that there was another kid who was way behind us, and two kids who dropped out. I learned two things from this race. First, don't think you're going to get last because you're the youngest person in the race, and second, 50 SPF sunscreen isn't strong enough.

-Will

Sawyer Taylor

2nd Place Wente Road Race Junior W 15-16

Wente Road Race was an awesome race that I had a lot of fun at. I got to ride in a beautiful place, meet awesome new racers, and see people that I hadn't see in a while. Additionally, this was one of the longest races I had done so far so I learned quite a few new things.

The day of Wente Road Race, both of my parents were busy so I got a ride from Emily's dad. At 9:15, I loaded my stuff into their car and hit the road. We got to Livermore at around 11:00. With a 12:25 start time; this gave me just enough time to get everything ready for my race. On the way to check-in, I saw my Alan Robert's (mom's old boss) Pelo van, so I knew he was racing today. Following registration and warm up, I rode over to the podium to say hi. Alan told me a few things he had learned from his 55+ cat 1,2,3 master's race and then gave me some tips. Pretty soon after, it was time for my race to start.

For the first five or six miles of my race, all of the cat 4's and 15-16 junior girls stayed together. Then, on the second big climb, a small group of seven or eight women broke away. I jumped on and was able to keep up for the next 15-20 miles. This part of the race was a lot of fun although my hamstring was still hurting me a little bit from when I pulled it doing cross-fit a few weeks before. Unfortunately, on one of the bigger downhills, the group dropped me. For a little while, I rode alone. Then, a rider in a white jersey with blue dots caught up with me, so I jumped on her wheel. We rode alone together for a few more miles until we caught two more riders on a climb. The four of us rode together until we got to the finish. I got third out of the group of cat 4's I was riding with and second in the 15-16 junior girls. The one junior who beat me had placed second at Sea Otter. After the race, I stopped to talk to her and her parents. Then, I watched my teammate Will finish his race before riding back to the Abraham's car. On the way, I saw Emily ride by and stopped to cheer her on. After Emily finished her race, my carpool and I headed home after an amazing day of racing.
-Sawyer

5. Copperopolis Road Race

4/4/15

Copperopolis

Ethan Frankel

Racing Age 17, Category 4

4th Place Copperopolis Road Race Juniors 17-18

Coming back from a rest week, I wasn't sure how this race was going to turn out. I had raced the San Dimas Stage Race the weekend before and before that, I had sprained my ankle. I wasn't yet 100% ready physically, but I was mentally prepared to go out and have a good, yet challenging, race. There were a couple of Limitless riders who I knew were very strong, along with a couple of Tieni Duro riders in the 17-18s field. It was a chilly morning: just over 40°F, but sunny. After registration and a solid pyramid as a warm-up, I lined up for roll out and the start. There were 11 racers in the field, and I was ready to go hard for 63 miles. Just a minute after I rolled up to the line, the race official started to describe the rules and race details. "It will be bumpy. Your

arms will be vibrating after one lap of this course, just remember to keep your hands on the handlebars.”

Here we go, I thought to myself. A minute later, he blew the whistle and all 11 of us were on our way to the base of the Rock Creek Road climb, a steep and not-so-nicely-paved 4-mile climb. We passed through the feed zone and a hundred cheering parents and coaches. The road flattened out for what seemed like a fraction of a second before pitching upwards again. Two of the Limitless riders stayed in front, keeping a steady pace. I sat on their wheel (being the only rider from Team Swift), ready for an attack from Tieni Duro or Limitless. Halfway up the climb, one of the Tieni Duro riders attacked. We still had 60 miles to go and there was no way he could get away. None of us chased so he kept pushing up the hill. However, we accelerated slightly to keep him in sight. Near the top of the climb, we caught him. Bam! Another Tieni Duro rider went. We reeled him back after a few seconds. I looked behind me and saw that we had a big gap on the rest of the riders. It was just five of us, two on Limitless, two on Tieni Duro, one on Team Swift.

We crested the climb and started a pace line. Limitless had been controlling the pace from the start, and they were happy to share the work amongst the five of us. We started the descent and stuck together. On a roller, one of the Tieni Duro racers attacked. I countered and we worked for a few seconds before we were reeled back in by Limitless. We hit the flats and bam! Another attack. I countered and we worked for a minute or two before we were caught again. Any situation was going to be hard for me. If a Tieni Duro racer attacked and Limitless followed, I would have to be in the break in order to be in the mix for the finish. We kept up our pace line until the start of the second lap and the first 3 miles of it.

After we hit the feed zone, the Limitless coach told the two of them to pick up the pace. I was ready for the attack to come. At the start of the climb, Rupert (who ended up winning the race) went for it and the other four of us allowed him to go solo. We sat on Jordan's wheel (the other Limitless rider) and halfway up; I felt the two Tieni Duro racers dropping off of our pace. The Masters 1-2-3 category caught us. Jordan accelerated past them and I sat on his wheel. Once we had safely re-passed them, I started hammering on my pedals, out of my saddle, and heart rate spiking. I was gaining ground on Rupert, but there was still a mile left to climb. We hit the steepest section of the climb and Jordan accelerated past me as I decelerated.

The Masters category passed me and all of a sudden I was 15 seconds behind Jordan and I was not going to claw my way back to him. After the crest of the hill, I could see the two Limitless teammates in the distance, close to a minute ahead. And now I was alone. There were a few racers from the Masters who had been dropped that passed me as we started the rolling hills. A few minutes later, after a short descent, I noticed the Tieni Duro racer, Ashton, gaining ground on me. I slowed down up the next roller to let him catch up and we began to work together. “They're well over a minute ahead of us,” I mentioned to Ashton. He nodded in acknowledgement and we started rotating.

We stayed steady for the next lap, keeping a zone 3 effort. Rupert and Jordan were quite a bit stronger than the two of us, so we figured that it would be best to

keep steady until the last part of the third and final lap. Through the first climb of the last lap, I led Ashton up. I was still keeping a steady pace but noticed his breathing was becoming labored. I thought to myself, *I can get him on the very last climb, so long as I can hold him off on the descent and through the last kilometer.*

There was no point in attacking him now, as he would just catch me back on the descents and flats. He had at least 20 pounds on me and was much more powerful. I wasn't going to time trial away from him, but I would likely not beat him out in a sprint either. I had to get him on the last climb. At the base of the last climb, Ashton lost a bottle cage and bottle, but ignored it. He wouldn't need it for the last three miles. It was on the climb that I made a subtle move. I began to accelerate, and after noticing his breathing getting more and more labored, jumped. I slammed on the pedals. We still had fifty meters to the top, and he was on my wheel. I sat back, jumped again. I had a gap. A 3 second gap, but a gap nonetheless.

We hit the descent and I went hard. He caught me and sat on my wheel through most of it. I wasn't going to get away. He took his pull, and jumped as we hit an incline. He then got a small gap on me, but I slowly reeled him in then took my pull. I flicked my elbow, signaling him to pull through. He wouldn't. I pulled to the side completely and he reluctantly came to the front. *Come on, dude. Do some work here. We've got a mile to go.*

We hit the 1 KM to go marker. It started to slope upwards and he wasn't pulling through. It started to descend. 750 meters to go. 600. He didn't pull through. *Here goes nothing!* BAM! I attacked hard, but he was on my wheel. I moved across the road while pushing hard and finally had a gap. I had rarely been in that situation; usually I sat on a wheel and waited until the last 100 meters to jump. I waited just a second too long to jump again and he made contact with just 200 meters to go. I had lost my opportunity to gap him. I had a three second advantage, but I had lost it by waiting too long.

He came around me and I had lost my legs at that point. He simply outsprinted me and had taken advantage of my mistake. Hindsight is always 20/20, and in retrospect, I should've taken my small advantage and out rode him to the finish. I was too unfamiliar and not confident enough in my ability to outsprint him, and instead of me beating him to the line, he had dropped me as easily as taking candy from a baby. Except this time he took 3rd place from me. It was a fun and challenging race. I had much better positioning than I did at the San Dimas Road Race, and Rupert and Jordan were simply too strong. I was certainly happy with my result, and it was good for me to learn about racing all the way to the finish.

-Ethan F.

Isaiah Chass

6th Place Copperopolis Road Race Juniors 15-16

When I showed up for Copperopolis I ate half a bagel, and then I went to registration. Once I got my number, I put it on my jersey, and then I went out on the road to warm up. I did a small pyramid because it was a road race, and then I went to

the start line to do rollout. With 15 minutes until my start, I took a Clif Shot. When the race started, I stayed towards the front waiting for an attack. After the first little descent, there was an attack by Limitless and I jumped on it right away. He slowed up once I got on his wheel, so we got back into the field. We rode together until the climb, and then limitless was on the attack again. The field started to split apart a little, but I made sure to keep with the attacks. I tested my legs in a little move, but I couldn't stay off the front. Right before the top of the climb, Cole Davis from Limitless made a big attack. I tried to stay on his wheel but I just couldn't hold on. I got popped off his wheel, but then another rider bridged up to me, and we worked to try to catch Cole. After a while, we weren't able to catch him, and the field caught back up. We rode pretty easy for the next few miles, and Cole was out of sight. Then, Limitless and Tieni Duro started making attacks on the backside of the course. The field got down to a few riders, and when we got to the final climb, we saw Cole not too far up the road. Over the top of the climb, two other riders and I started drilling it to get the break. On the descent, I got dropped off a Tieni Duro rider, and I was chasing with a Limitless rider to catch him. At the bottom of the descent, I went as hard I could, and was in a mini TT to catch two riders up the road. When we got to the next climb, I wasn't able to see them, so I tried to recover enough to at least get third. I was with another Limitless rider, and the field was back with us. The rest of the lap was pretty slow because no one wanted to pull. I realized that I had messed up, and let both big teams get a rider up the road without me. Once we got to the last climb, a rider rode a little off the front, and I let him stay there. That was another mistake that I made and he got too far up the road. I went as hard as I could down the descent and when it flattened out, another rider started pulling to the finish. I tried getting around him, but I was too tired, so I slipped into 3rd wheel. When I got to 300m I started sprinting, but I wasn't able to get past them. I got to the line in 6th. I was super disappointed with how I rode this race; because I let too many riders get away and I didn't have very good tactics. I learned from this race, so things like that won't happen again.

-Isaiah

6. NorCal MTB #4

4/11/15

Adobe Ranch, Petaluma

Ben Cook

16, cat 3

3rd Place

Norcal Race #4

Sophomore boys D1

Coming into the 4th NorCal race, I wasn't feeling my best. A lingering chest cold had me feeling tired and weak. But I was well enough to race, so I would race. I showed up to the race early in the morning to pre ride the course. It was a long loop with lots of climbing. I was back at the team tent by 8:30am. I changed out of my kit and helped the girls warm up for their early morning start.

I spent some time destressing with our MTB team captain, and my personal best friend, Harrison. We talked about the course, about bikes, school, all of those things. I

ate lots of food and drank lots to make sure I was fueled for the race. At 10:30 I changed back into my kit.

The coaches wanted me to lead the freshman in our warm-up as I did last race, but there were no roads to warm-up on near the course, so we had to settle for a little fire road near the race. I only ended up getting to do three 30 second jumps, not nearly enough of a warm-up, but it would have to do.

I lined up at the start in the middle of the field. I had lost my call-up because I missed the 3rd race. Off the line I had a great start, moving up 10 places in the very first few meters. I slammed on the pedals and put myself into 10th place. Over the first climb I moved up to 5th, close to the leaders. I chased hard down the descent and a small gap opened up, but I closed it down on the next climb. I was just a few seconds off of first and second place. I made the mistake of trying to pace myself up the climb to catch them, instead of making one big jump to get to them, and so they held their gap by just a few seconds over the top of the climb. I learned that from my dad when we talked after the race.

Down the descent my placing stayed the same and I came in to finish in 3rd. At the end of the day I was bummed that I didn't catch the leaders but I learned from my mistake. Later that week I went to the doctor's to get my lungs checked out. I was happy with my fast start but not with the rest of the day. But spring break was coming up, and the Sea Otter and I would be able to get some good training in over the break.
-Ben

Ethan Frankel

Racing Age 17, Category 4

11th Place NorCal MTB Race #4 Junior Varsity Boys D1

Tamalpais High School

A week before the race, my team had pre-ridden the course but I missed it since I was racing the Copperopolis Road Race, which was a fun and challenging experience. According to many of my teammates, this was a roadie's course: one big climb and one big descent. I rode the course early in the morning on Saturday. It was one big ascent, then one big descent. I rode the course in zone 3, keeping it steady on the climb and think about places to pass and any places to accelerate or drink. The descent was less to my liking. It was switchback after switchback, and my cornering abilities were not great. I was certainly going to lose time on the descent, but I would have to make it back up on the climb.

Fours hours later, I was on my bike, in around 30th position, ready to start. "We'll send of the JV boys in 5. 4. 3. 2. 1. Go!"

I jumped on my bike and accelerated past 10 riders within the first 200 meters, one of my best starts in a mountain bike race. The fire road start quickly transitioned into a single-track climb, and I was riding in about 15th position. I passed another three riders on the climb, but then got stuck behind a slower rider. I was already 10 seconds behind the leading group of 10 riders. I found a spot to pass and jumped around him. I

then gruelingly clawed my way up the switchbacks and made contact with the rider in 10th. There were only a couple minutes until we began the descent. I moved up into 7th. We started the descent. My teammate, Stuart, led the descent very quickly. The Woodcreek racer in front of me wasn't able to maintain close contact with the 5 riders in front of him, so we were about 30 meters back halfway down. There was a sharp left-hand switchback. I unclipped and nearly slid out. But I kept my balance. Two turns later, I wasn't as lucky. I had accelerated and took the corner much too quickly. I stuck out my foot to keep my balance, but my ankle was still unstable from a sprain four weeks prior. My ankle gave out and my front wheel washed out. I hit the ground hard and my bike flipped over me. Three riders who were on my tail narrowly missed running over my head. I was angry with myself, and was dusty and cut up. I hopped back on my bike and tried pedaling to fix my dropped chain. It didn't work after two strokes, so I hopped off and quickly slipped it back on.

Another rider passed me. I had lost a good 30 seconds from the front group, and the descent until the finish wasn't going to help my chances of making contact again. I took the next turns very, very slowly, not wanting to go down another time. Whenever I hit a flat section, I jumped and accelerated to make up time. By the end of the lap, I was in 11th and was 20 seconds down. The climb was grueling. Everything hurt. I tried to power up it, but couldn't make up those 20 seconds, and I instead lost around 15 seconds on the leaders.

The descent was my killer. I took every single one of the 20+ switchbacks agonizingly slow. *Come on, just pound it*, I told myself. I did on the flats, but again the hard corners killed all of my speed. I caught up to a Drake rider and soon after, caught my teammate, Stuart. We started our third and final climb and he called to me, "Go ahead and kill it, dude."

So I accelerated past him and pounded on my pedals. I focused on the trail in front of me. I tried to ignore the throbbing pain in my hip, and took some water and food. I caught up to a Woodcreek racer and stayed on his wheel through the top of the climb. But we were then descending and I wasn't able to stick with him. Some of the Division 2 boys passed me on the descent, but I took the corners unhurriedly. We came past the feed zone and the Woodcreek racer had about 10 seconds on me. He was coming into the straightaway to the finish. I could see him just ahead. I rounded the final corner with him in my sights and sprinted hard. I gained ground on him, but he still held me off by four seconds. I ended up coming in over 7 minutes behind the leader.

This was certainly a very tough race. I had had a great first half of the first lap, where I'd made up a lot of ground and had made contact with the leaders. I had strong legs and I was feeling good at that point. I took a risk on the descent by taking that corner too fast and I had paid for it. I never made up the ground that I lost, but I was happy with how I got up and finished the race, still within a couple minutes of the leaders.

-Ethan F.

Ethan Frankel

Racing Age 17, Category 4

10th Place NorCal MTB Race #5 Junior Varsity Boys D1

Tamalpais High School

Last year, Boggs had been cold, rainy, wet, and very miserable. This year, it was starting to look that way also. The night before, it had rained hard so the course was wet and slippery. I got to the venue early in the morning to pre-ride the track. The start was on an inclined fire road and then it flattened out before a short climb on the fire road. There were puddles scattered all over the road, so I remembered to keep far to the right. As the course progressed, it merged onto a single-track trail about 500 meters in. It kept climbing, and there were thousands of loose rocks strewn on and along the trail. It soon flattened and eventually I was descending through yet more rocks. The rest of the course was technical, with many bulging roots and jutting rocks that were eager to make a racer go down. There were two steep, tough, and rocky climbs that would rip the legs off of any rider, so I made a mental note: don't go too hard on them for the first and second laps, and tear it up on the final lap. The corners, however, were tacky and soft, so it was going to be a fast race. After those climbs, it was pretty much descents and flats to the finish.

The start was early in the afternoon, so I had time to take a nap and socialize with the team before watching the sophomore and freshman boys' races. After a warm-up up and down a hill, I lined up for the start of my 8th ever mountain bike race. I sidled into the fourth or fifth row, so I was in about 20th at the start. Then it began. "3, 2, 1, GO!"

I slammed down on my pedal and had difficulty clipping in. In the midst of my footing problems, a racer next to me crashed. I swerved to the left to avoid him and another rider that was taken out, but was still unclipped. I looked up and found I was already ten seconds behind the leading group. I quickly clipped in and sprinted to catch up. I made contact before the steep incline and moved up to about 15th wheel before the descents. I maintained my position and soon, the technical single-track was upon us. But I was stuck for over a mile behind three riders that were quite a bit slower. I could see my teammate, Bennett, in front of me, just 30 seconds ahead. We hit the steep, fire road climb and I accelerated.

The climb was roughly two minutes, and in those 120 seconds I had moved up 9 places by charging up the hill. I was in 7th position going up the next giant hill. However, once we hit the descent, one person had passed me, so I was riding 8th. I could see another teammate of mine, Sean, just a half-minute in front me. The Woodcreek rider and I went through the finish and began hammering it. We pounded up the hill and through the rocky sections of the course. It was clear that he was a good technical rider—he was able to gap me on the technical and rocky descents—but I was a better climber. I took my first sip of water halfway through the second lap. Going up the hill, I passed the Woodcreek racer and began to feel very fatigued. Another Nevada Union racer passed me and all of a sudden I was 9th. The three of us stayed

together through the end of the lap, but they dropped me easily on the technical descent. I was 20 seconds down by the start of the final lap.

This lap was the most challenging, both mentally and physically. The first of my laps had been very strong, but now I was starting to feel the effects of going out too hard to maintain a good position. The first climb was a grind and I felt much, much slower than I had on the previous laps. My mental toughness was starting to decay and I was beginning to bonk. I drank a half bottle of electrolyte mix and had some Shot Bloks. I gained back a little energy, but I had realized what was happening far too late. I was losing much more energy than I should've been and I was bonking, hard. I stayed on the trail and managed to hit the climb still in 9th place. The climb was so grueling and painful that I thought about hopping off of my bike and walking. I didn't though, and muscled through it. I was alone on the trail; there were hardly any spectators and no other racers in front of me or behind me, as far as I could see. The next, rocky climb was immensely challenging. I made it halfway up, but began to feel such a burning in my legs that I was slowing down too much. I tried to get through the slippery rocks, but ended up slipping and not having enough momentum to continue. I jumped off of my bike and half ran/half walked my bike for twenty seconds to the top. I hopped back on, determined to gain some time on the others. I was passed by one more rider from my category and couldn't stick with him. I ground up the final climb that came before the final descent. Through the last corners, I held my position and tried to go fast and hard and take risks as I descended towards the finish. I had finished in 10th place, but was nearly two minutes behind 9th. It was an additional three minutes to Sean, who had finished in 6th. It was an extremely challenging, very fun, but somewhat disappointing race for me. My first lap had been strong despite a bad start and being caught behind some slower riders. However, I had certainly had a poor second half of the race. It was definitely sub-par for me, considering that I had wanted to stay with Sean and possibly get a podium. I had bonked and hadn't strategically kept my energy levels high. I do know what to do for next race, however, and I'm excited to be racing States!

-Ethan