

## Team Swift Race Reports January & February 2015

### Race Reports for:

1. Cal Aggie Criterium
2. Valley of the Sun Stage Race
3. Cantua Creek Road Race
4. Snelling Road Race
5. Chico Stage Race
6. NorCal MTB #1
7. Grasshoppers

### January/February Top Results:

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Cantua Creek Road Race	Juniors 10-18	Elliot Frankel
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	NorCal MTB Race #1	Sophomore D1	Ben Cook
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Cal Aggie Criterium	Senior Category 3	Ben Cook
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Chileno Valley Grasshopper	Junior 18 Under	Luke Lamperti
4 <sup>th</sup> Place	NorCal MTB Race #1	Varsity	Eli Kranefuss
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	Cal Aggie Criterium	Senior Wm. 3/4	Emily Abraham
8 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
8 <sup>th</sup> Place	NorCal MTB Race #1	Junior Varsity	Ethan Frankel
11 <sup>th</sup> Place	Snelling Road Race	Juniors 15-18	Isaiah Chass
12 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors 15-16	Isaiah Chass
13 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Senior Wm. Category 3	Emily Abraham
13 <sup>th</sup> place	Snelling Road Race	Senior Wm. Category 3	Emily Abraham
14 <sup>th</sup> Place	Cantua Creek Road Race	Senior Category 4	Ethan Frankel
13 <sup>th</sup> place	Chico Stage Race, RR	Senior Wm Category 3/4	Emily Abraham
13 <sup>th</sup> Place	Chico Stage Race, G.C.	Senior Wm Category 3/4	Emily Abraham
15 <sup>th</sup> place	Chico Stage Race, TT	Senior Wm Category 3/4	Emily Abraham
18 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Sr Wm Category 3	Emily Abraham
20 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, G.C.	Sr Wm Category 3	Emily Abraham
23 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Sr Wm Category 3	Emily Abraham
24 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 15-16	Ben Cook
25 <sup>th</sup> place	Chico Stage Race, Crit	Senior Wm Category 3/4	Emily Abraham
30 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors 17-18	Miles Daly
34 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 15-16	Isaiah Chass
38 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, G.C.	Juniors 15-16	Isaiah Chass
41 <sup>st</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 15-16	Isaiah Chass
44 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors 17-18	Tomas Mitre
50 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 17-18	Tomas Mitre
50 <sup>th</sup> Place	Chileno Valley Grasshopper Open		Gianni Lamperti
51 <sup>st</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, G.C.	Juniors 17-18	Tomas Mitre
52 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, G.C.	Juniors 17-18	Miles Daly
53 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 17-18	Miles Daly

57 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 17-18	Tomas Mitre
64 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 17-18	Miles Daly
68 <sup>th</sup> Place	Chileno Valley Grasshopper Open		Miles Daly

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## Rider Race Reports

### 1. Cal Aggie Criterium

1/31/15

Sacramento

#### Ben Cook

Age 16 Senior Cat 3

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Cal Aggie Criterium Senior Category 3

After a great season of winter training, I was finally feeling ready for my first bike race of 2015. Today, I would be fortunate enough to race with a Team Swift alumni, and a great friend of mine, Ryan Clarke. Ryan is race age 19, so he is no longer with Team Swift. Ryan and I raced together for all of last year, and would do the same this year in the category 3's.

I showed up to the race at 8 o'clock so my dad and I could prepare for his race at 9:30. This gave me lots of time to survey the course, observe the other races, and even read one of my favorite books about bike racing. Written by Chris Horner, the book gives an in depth review of all that can be explained about bike racing. Coincidentally, I just got to the chapter on criterium racing and reading the race around you. While waiting at the start line with my dad, I began to get a sense for the wind. It was tailwind to the finish, but the wind would pick up and blow at the inside of the field in the right hand curve afterwards. This would blow the field apart and open up small gaps in front of weaker riders. It was a good race to stay in the top 20, even on a flat and fairly open course.

My dad lined up for his start. I wished him good luck, and he was off with the sound of the whistle. I headed back to the car and relaxed, napped, and read my book some. My teammate Emily pulled up in a spot nearby. She would be racing the women's 3/4 and the women's p/1/2/3 race. Finally, I began to get ready about 2 and a half hours out from my race. I changed into my skinsuit for the first time in 6 months. The last time I wore it, I didn't have the best luck, but I knew today would be different.

I got on the trainer for a very long warm up. A good warm up is one of the most important parts of the race for me. It helps me feel prepared mentally and physically for the racing ahead. After an hour on the trainer, I put my gear on and headed to the course, doing one more jump along the way. I lined up at the start to meet Ryan, whom I had trained with this winter. I came up into the second row of about 60 riders,

and placed my hands in the drops. I was coming into the day looking for a good ride, and knowing that I had to have fun to do well. The official gave instructions, and uttered the famous last words before our start. "Gentlemen, your race will begin on the whistle." I picked up my hips up and got ready for a fast start. The whistle blew and we were off! I clipped in and sprinted down the road, quickly settling into a rhythm in the top 15. I remember coach telling me that the first and last five laps of the race will always be crazy. I maintained position near Ryan as the pace picked up. We came through the finishing straight to finish our first lap at a blistering pace. Riders were trying to break free of the field, but it would take more than a few jumps for anybody to get clear. Ryan and I listened to the race and held back. The corners proved a great place to move up. All you had to do was put your bars in front of the rider ahead of you before the turn, and you could take 5-10 places in a single turn. Throughout 2014, I would often go with moves or attack at times that were hard to get away from the field. This often led to a poor finish. However, over the winter I had worked on my field sprinting in some of the team's practice crits and training rides. I built up my confidence, learning that the last 5 laps of the race would have to be impossibly hard if you wanted to place. There was no saving energy for the sprint after 5 to go. With this new confidence, I waited in the field. About 30 minutes in, a promising group of 3 riders got away. Limitless Cycling, a junior team that had about 5 strong riders in the field, was not represented. Ryan told me that the break would be caught, you just had to wait. Limitless soon chased them down. It was too hot and windy to work out of the field. Any group that got away would waste their energy breaking free, and would be caught. We were only half way through the race as well.

From 30-40 minutes in, the pace had settled down. I found a time to put my hands on the hoods and stretch my back for a few seconds before a turn. I knew the field couldn't accelerate through the turn, so I had a second to be out of the drops. I placed my hands back on the drops and took the left hand hairpin. During the times when the field lolled, I found time to drink or shake out my legs. I had read that morning that you should take advantage of these times and not attack. The field will be rested and ready to chase. But the smart riders will always be on the alert for an attack. It wasn't long before we hit 8 to go, and riders started to attack. By 6 to go, there were 8 riders down the road looking promising. I figured it was worth a shot, so I jumped before the hairpins, used a rider caught in no man's land for a boost, then shot up to the selection. I looked for my dad on the side of the road at the finishing stretch. "Nice Ben." I heard. Good, I had made a good move by getting to this group.

My dad and I communicate a lot during races, as he can see where I need to be, tell me who is up the road, if they are toasted or if they look promising. However, this selection was getting weary. The field had no motivation to chase, but our group had even less motivation to work together. We had all burnt out matches escaping the field. I rolled through on my pulls to save energy, and we were soon caught. 4 laps to the finish. We were within the last 5 laps and the race had heated up. The field began to come around, but I was on the pedals before they came around. I found myself a place in the top 20 near Ryan. For the next 3 laps, we held and adjusted position. Just like we had learned, there was no room to save energy in these last laps. Ryan and I

turned ourselves inside out to maintain position. It was easy to gain up to 10 spots in a single lap, but hard to lose them. The best place was the right hand bend after the finish. The tailwind took you down the finish straight fast and then the wind blew at the right to bluster the field apart. Ryan and I snuck up on the outside each lap, as the rest of the field had to coast to keep from tipping over. This also put us in great position to cut into the field before the left hand hairpins and hold position. At 1 to go, we were in 15th position or so. We moved up on the left of the field again, taking advantage of a near crash to put us closer to the front. We were out of the right hand bend, and on the windy straight. Riders began to ride frantically, nervous about the sprint. There was no time to be nervous, Ryan and I moved up further to the front.

There, I encountered two Limitless riders setting up a lead-out. They looked to be over thinking it. I got in front of their sprinter, who had drifted from their lead-out man just enough for me to sneak in. Their sprinter took my wheel, and Ryan took his. I was in 5th wheel. The lead-out man, Jordan, began to pass riders in the hairpins. He knew he had lost his sprinter at this point. Jordan pulled a very mature move here: He drove us all to the line, even though his team lost their lead-out. If Jordan had set up, we would have all been swarmed. It was all I could do to keep yelling encouragement to Jordan to take us to the line. As we came into the final right hander before the finish, I could begin to feel riders swarming from all sides. I was sure we were done for. But nobody passed us. Jordan powered through the final turn. A huge rider from Folsom Bike launched his sprint from far out. He accelerated like nothing I had seen before. However, I had jumped on the pedals just when he did, and covered perfectly. I was spun up, so I sat in the saddle, got as low as possible, and hammered all the way to the line. I was closing fast on the Folsom rider, but it wasn't enough for the win. I threw my bike as hard as I could at the line for 3rd. It was the hardest effort I had ever done successfully.

I regained my breath and my speech before I met up with Ryan. "I got 3rd!!!" I yelled as soon as I saw him. "Nice! But who beat you?" He said with a smirk. Yes, it was him! Ryan and I got 2nd and 3rd in a very big category 3 race together. We were so happy; it was the biggest result of both of our careers.

At the end of the day, I was so happy with my first race of the season. I had really picked up a nose for the front over the winter. Coach told me that you need to have a sense of the whole race around you. You need to feel the field coming around you, and jump before they do. That way you can hold position. Ryan and I did a great job of holding position and covering moves like that. We communicated often as well. I'm so happy that I finally see the simplicity in criterium racing, which has always been my weakness. Now that I have learned to sense the field around me, I am feeling confident and ready to get some big results in the 2015 season!

-Ben

## **Emily Abraham**

6<sup>th</sup> Place

Cal Aggie Criterium

Senior Wm. 3, 4

I had been waiting all January for the Cal Aggie criterium; I couldn't wait to race my bike again. The off season went by in the blink of an eye but it felt like too long since the last race in September. Thankfully for this race, my start time wasn't at eight in the morning so I got to sleep a little longer before driving the two hours to Sacramento for the race. I felt good that morning, I ate a healthy breakfast and on the car ride there I spent time mentally preparing for the race. An issue I had last season was feeling like my head wasn't there during the race, like I couldn't focus on what was going on around me. So I decided to spend time thinking about what the race would be like, I had raced this course a number of times in previous years which I knew would benefit me.

I had plenty of time to sign in and get warmed up when we arrived at the race. After spinning on the trainer for about fifteen minutes, I did a pyramid to get my heart rate up and then headed over to the start line. There were about thirty women when we all lined up, for some of them in the category 4 women; it was their first race ever. When the whistle blew, signaling the start of the race, we all clipped in and took off. I found a position about mid-pack and stayed there for a few laps, I was thrilled to be racing again. There was a strong cross wind on the back side of the cross and I kept that in mind when I started to move up. I didn't want to be on the front pulling in that windy section. I moved up on the left side about half way through the race but I made sure to stay off the front because I wanted to conserve my energy for the final sprint. Just before two laps to go, I moved up to find the perfect position. As we passed the finish line with two to go, I was second wheel, exactly where I wanted to be. All I had to do was hold that spot for the next two laps, however that's not as easy as it sounds. On one lap to go, I was still right up there but other people were moving up as well. On the backside of the course, I found myself at fourth or fifth wheel. Not where I wanted to be. I pushed myself to stay as fourth wheel but as we went through the final corner just before the sprint finish, I couldn't quite hold that wheel. I just needed that extra push and I would have been right there, but instead I was just a few second behind the three women leading the race. With exhausted legs, I sprinted to the finish with the rest of the field. Although I wish my result could have been better, I'm happy with the way I raced and I think it was a good start to the 2015 season.

-Emily

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## 2. Valley of the Sun

2/21-23/15

Phoenix, AZ

### Valley of the Sun – Senior Women Category 3 Report

#### **Emily Abraham**

20<sup>th</sup> place    Valley of the Sun Stage Race

Senior Wm Category 3

18<sup>th</sup> Place    Stage One: Time Trial

23<sup>rd</sup> Place    Stage Two: Road Race

13<sup>th</sup> Place    Stage Three: Criterium

### Stage One: Individual Time Trial

This was my first race on my TT bike which I was very excited about. Time trialing is not one of my strong points so I was kind of just anxious to get it done and move on to the next two races. But it's also fun to put on the skinsuit and aero helmet and just go as hard as you can for fourteen miles. Except this course was simply just a flat seven miles out and seven miles back which made for a pretty boring race but during a time trial you're not supposed to spend time looking around anyways. I was feeling good when we arrived at the course an hour and a half before my start time, but once I got on the trainer my legs were in pain. I had to warm-up even though it was painful so I just kept telling myself I'll feeling better during the race. And of course, I did. When it was my turn to go, I rolled down the ramp and sprinted to get my speed up before moving into my aero position. I was amazed at how good I felt. I went hard on the way out, despite the strong cross winds, and passed two people. After the turn around, I could see the woman in front of me and I wanted to catch her. But she must have been going about the same speed I was because she stayed the same distance in front of me for the rest of the race. I really had no idea how I would place among the other women so I was just happy I felt great and was able to go hard throughout my race. I ended up placing 18<sup>th</sup> with a time that was five minutes faster than last year!

### Stage Two: Road Race

This was a big jump for me, my category was combined with the Pro1/2 women but picked separately and the race was sixty-two miles. Because of the combined fields, there would be one hundred women on the start line. Although this was nerve racking, I was also excited for this new experience. My plan for this race was to try my best to stay with the pack, but if I did get dropped then to race against whomever was around me. However, I really didn't want to get dropped at least not from the women in the category three's. I felt great on the morning of the race; my start time wasn't until noon so I had time to relax in the morning before we headed out to the course. When we arrived, I road over to sign-in near the start line where I saw Ben who had just finished his race. Then I went back to the van to start getting ready. Coach spent some time talking with Ben and Isaiah about their race while I put on my kit and started spinning on the trainer. My legs felt good while I was spinning and after doing a pyramid, I got off the trainer and rolled up to the start line with thirty minutes until my start. Once we all lined up, I found myself on the far right and near the back. I wasn't happy about starting in the back but once the race started, I found it fairly easy to move up on the right side. I found a position about mid-pack which I was content with. We were moving along and I was just sitting in, the race hadn't really started yet since the whole field was still together but I was having fun surrounded by nearly one hundred other women, all out racing our bikes, it was a good time! As we approached the second right hand turn, I remembered Coach telling me to be on the right side. I found the position I wanted and kept moving up on the right side, the race was starting to pick up and eventually three women broke away. But it only stayed for a few minutes, until we made the next right hand turn to begin the climb. I was positioned

exactly where I wanted to be, it was difficult as we went up the climb but I hung in there. I was just off the back of the peloton but when we reached the top of the climb I was right back in there. When we began our second lap, I quickly found myself near the back which wasn't where I wanted to be. The field broke up during the climb but there were still about sixty to seventy of us all together. I moved up again to find the right position but this time I was on the left side, I was able to find a decent place still about mid-pack but I was hoping to keep moving up. The race got a little confusing, we were passed by the pro-men and then we had to pass them because they slowed down. Once we got passed that situation, I was still about mid-pack and feeling really good. I was waiting for someone to attack and for the race to pick up when suddenly the girl in front of me went down. There was nowhere for me to go and I ended up crashing on top of her. After the women that were behind me went by, I got up. A little in shock but my bones were still intact and so was my bike, other than the chain falling off. The guys in the follow vehicle helped me and I got back on my bike. I went all out, hoping that maybe I could catch them again. I could see the whole field right there ahead of me so I was time trialing again in hopes that I would be able to get back in the race. My hip hurt from the crash and my front brake pads were rubbing on my wheel but I ignored both of those things and just kept going. When I turned right into the windiest section of the course, I knew there was no way I could catch back on. There were at least sixty of them and one of me. I was disappointed in not being able to finish where I wanted to but I'm proud of myself for finishing the race. The crash happened around mile twenty-four so I still had nearly forty miles to go. After doing a lap by myself, three women that had been dropped behind me, caught up to me and we worked together which made those windy sections much more bearable.

### Stage Three: Criterium

Again in this race, the category three women started with the Pro1/2 women. I knew this race was going to be crazy fast and after my crash the day before I really had no idea how I was going to feel during the race. I got on my trainer about an hour before my race, I spun out my legs for a little while then Isaiah helped me with my pyramids. They were painful but I actually felt pretty good. I got off the trainer with twenty minutes 'til start time and spun around on the road before heading over to where the other women were waiting. The officials decided to do roll out literally just minutes before our start, so I felt very rushed. All the women were let out to line up on the start line before I even finished rolling out so I had to start in the very back of the ninety women. I wasn't too happy about this because as soon as the race started, I was at the very back which is a place that can be even harder than the front of the peloton. The race took off fast and for about three laps I pushed myself to just barely hold on at the tail end of the field. Once I was officially dropped, four other women (who were also dropped) caught up to me and we were worked together to maintain a good pace. After only twenty minutes of racing, we were about to be passed by the field so the officials pulled us off the course, but luckily we were still placed as if we had finished the entire race. It was hard but I think it was great experience, having a chance to race with the pro women.

-Emily

## Valley of the Sun -- Junior Category 15-16 Reports

### **Ben Cook**

16, cat 3

8 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun Time Trial	Juniors 15-16
24 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun Road Race	Juniors 15-16

#### Stage 1: Time Trial

My dad and I rolled into the race venue to meet the rest of our team. We had a canopy set up near the Team Swift van. My teammates in the 17-18's, Miles and Tomas, were just beginning their warm-up. I chatted with Coach Laura and my younger teammate Isaiah about the upcoming race ahead. Today was windier than last year, leaving nowhere on the course to rest. It had been windy in our course recon yesterday, and today was no different. I got changed and began my warm-up. Isaiah and I were to do a long and hard warm-up to make sure we were feeling good. I rolled down my skinsuit and put my headphones in. 45 brutal minutes later, Isaiah and I had survived the first challenge of the day. We got off the trainers, put our TT helmets on, and headed out to the road to do a few more jumps. We rolled in to meet Coach Laura and her new puppy, Cash, at the start house. I had 12 minutes, Isaiah had 6. We went to the bathroom, stretched, and drank lots of water. It was almost 90 degrees today. Isaiah was called into the start house. Soon after his start, I was called in too.

I clipped in and the official began to count down from 10. With the beep of the timer, I was off! I shifted up and soon settled into my rhythm, continuing to shift up my gears.

At 3 minutes in, I was at about 180bpm already. Soon, I found myself at 183. I have had a history of going out too hard in time trials, and today I was ready to reverse that.

I settled in at about 183bpm, and around 24mph. It was windy today. I was not going to push the pace until the turnaround.

I reached the turnaround and took the corner hard, sprinting out of the other side and shifting up another gear. I was greeted with a pleasant rush of speed, and took off up the little hill after the turnaround. 185bpm. Coach always says that the best riders win in the hardest places. I pushed the pace up all the little rolling hills on the course, and in every headwind. I was holding about 27mph and 186-188 bpm with about 4 miles to the finish. Soon I saw the line of palm trees in the distance, marking that it was time to ramp up the pace for the finish. I was out of gears to shift up, so I held a nice high cadence as best I could. Above 190bpm, I passed the palm trees. Hitting the 1k sign, I looked down to see 195bpm. I sprinted in to the line as hard as I could, and crossed at 197.

I spun down on the road and met my dad and coach. My timer had me at around 34 minutes, a time I was not too happy about. Last year I did the time trial in



34:14 for 9th place. I grabbed my recovery drink and talked with coach about how it went. I told her I was happy with my last few miles, but I felt like the beginning could have been harder, how I held back in fear of blowing up. She reassured me that I set a good time on a windy day and that I had a good last few miles. We checked results and saw that I landed in 8th place, but only 45 seconds down from 2nd place! I was happy, but upset that I did not make the podium. Coach was very proud that I landed in the top 10 again, and that I was so close to the podium.

I headed back to the hotel, showered, and met the rest of the team for our team meeting. In the end, I was happy that I placed in the TT, and learned that there is a fine line between going too hard and going too easy. Last year, this event went very well for me, so I was expecting a bit more from myself. However, I learned lots, and am ok with making a few mistakes in my first TT of the year. I went to sleep early and geared up for the road race the next day.

=Ben

## Stage 2: Road Race

Yesterday's time trial put me into 8th place. I was only about 30 seconds down from 5th place, meaning that with a tactical and strong race I would be able to pull myself onto the GC podium. The plan was to get into the breakaway, making sure not everybody in the top 5 could make it, putting me on the podium. Last year there was a big break away that gained lots of time on our field. In the climb to the finish, I was confident I could take more time back as I was feeling strong after yesterday's time trial. The team and I rolled up to the race venue before the sun was up.

The race started off pretty mellow for the first couple of kilometers. About halfway through the first lap, attacks started coming from Team Specialized. Being close on GC to the Specialized riders, I stayed attentive to these moves. My younger teammate Isaiah was doing a great job of riding at the front and being attentive as well. On the other side of the climb, a Specialized rider attacked. The whole field tried to jump onto his wheel, but his teammates were already at the front and ready to let the gap open up. For the next few minutes down the descent, riders attacked hard in an attempt to chase down the rider off the front. However, his teammates were using some interesting tactics to keep us all locked in the field. A rider would attack out of our slow moving field, but the Specialized riders had the power to bring the field all back together, and then slow us all down again. I watched these moves go and come right back attentively. Finally, two other riders and I decided to launch off the front at the same time. We quickly built a gap, only to look over our shoulder and find that we were back into the field again.

Coming into the final climb to the finish, the speed was finally beginning to pick up. Expecting a field sprint, I moved myself into good position. It would be a drag race to the finish, but I was feeling strong and ready to perform well. However, as the road began to pitch upwards, I felt my legs start to cramp up badly. It had only been a short race and I drank/ate lots. Frustrated and upset that I couldn't even contest the sprint, I pedaled squares into the finish, coming in just off the back of the field.

After the race I met with Coach Laura and my dad to discuss. Coach was supportive as always, understanding how cramping can be a big and upsetting problem, yet discussing possible solutions to avoid it in the future. We talked about stretching out at the back of the field, and staying loose on the bike. When teams slow down the race it is easy to tense up and then even cramp. We also talked about the use of "negative" tactics and racing by teams and ways to beat these tactics. In conclusion we formed our plan for tomorrow's criterium. Isaiah and I were to go from the very gun, starting the race off fast and hard. This would eliminate the use of negative tactics and would also get other riders involved, making for a fast and exciting race!

Overall I had a very rough and upsetting road race, but I learned so much to take into my future races with me. Isaiah and I headed back to the hotel to prepare for the next day.

### Stage 3: Criterium

Today would be a very big day for Team Swift. After some physically and mentally challenging few days of racing for all of us, it was time for some serious redemption in the criterium. Good thing our coach was a famous sprinter! We all loved to race crits. My younger teammate Isaiah and I had an aggressive plan for today's race.

Known as "schlamming" by our coach Laura, we were to be the first ones to attack. There had been a big display of negative tactics by some of the other teams in the road race. Coach told us that to defeat this in the criterium we had to attack right from the gun and be first through the first corner. There were many other riders on board for a positive and aggressive race today too so it was going to be fun.

We rolled up to the venue, signed in, and got onto the trainers immediately. Isaiah and I did the hardest warm up we could do. Every interval I shifted into my hardest gear and jumped as hard as possible to warm me up properly. After a quick and brutal 20 minutes on the trainer, Isaiah and I put on our helmets and rolled over to the course. We did junior rollout then took a lap along the course on the sidewalk.

The road was smooth for the first half of the course then quickly switched to a rough and loose 90 degree corner on the backstretch. We rolled back to the start and lined up in the front row of staging where we met Coach Laura again. We had our last words of motivation with coach before we were called to the line.

Isaiah and I had made it to the front row for the start. That was the first step. The official stepped forward and gave the race instructions. I waited completely focused and straight faced for the start. Isaiah did the same. We were warmed up well and prepared for anything. "Gentlemen, on the whistle." We had our hands in the drops, our chains over a big gear, and our legs propped up and ready to attack. "TWEETT!!!" Bam! Isaiah was off the line before I could bat an eyelash. I clipped in and chased after him as hard as I could. He made it through the first corner in 1st place!! Yes! We knew that would make coach laugh. I came through in 4th place. A Specialized rider attacked as hard as he could around me in an attempt to solo the race like they did last year. I was right on his wheel. We came through for the first lap with

me off the front and a Specialized rider pulling me around. Just like coach had us do! I let a smile creep onto my face as he ran out of steam and we fell back into the field. "That was awesome!" said Isaiah right by my side. But the race had only just begun. Attacks flew from Hincapie and Byrds right away, but Isaiah and I made sure to make it with every move. A few laps into one of the fastest races of my life, Specialized jumped hard again. Every main rider went right with him, but this time there were no teammates to block for him and nobody to slow down OUR race. Isaiah and I did our job well; the race was hot at 15 minutes in. We continued to work hard to make the main splits and keep in the front the whole race. Isaiah snaked his way through the field, cornering sharper than any other rider in the field and pushing other riders around while doing it too! He was riding like a monster.

I used my power to move us from the middle of the field right to the front in one straight away at 4 to go. The front of the field was beginning to fade while 3 riders slipped away. I was on the very front with Isaiah on my wheel and two of the biggest baddest Specialized riders near him/on his wheel. He saw the split going and jumped as hard as he could off of my wheel. Not a soul in the field could respond to that. I used the whole width of the road in every corner to keep away attacks. I could just feel Specialized moving on my right, so I took the next corner into the right hand curb. Isaiah was about to make it to the group when finally a rider jumped out of the field taking the whole group with him. Isaiah caught the group just as the field caught his wheel. 3 to go.

We were in the top 15 but not near enough to the front. Isaiah soon found my wheel as he has proved himself excellent at doing. We slithered through the field and moved up through the corners. I had just begun to enter the top 7-8 riders when a rider made a drastic swerve two wheels ahead of me, taking down the rider just in front of me. My front wheel hit his bike flattening my front tire and sending me hurdling over the handlebars. My hands and knees took the bulk of my fall onto the tough and cracked road. My race was over at 3 to go. Well, shoot! Two Specialized riders charged off the front of the field as they came through on 2 to go. I watched from the side of the road, wishing I was there to bring them back in. There was nothing I could do so I watched for my teammate Isaiah. He was still riding well in the top 15. My dad helped me walk back to coach Laura and discuss the race. He carried my bike and held me up as I waddled over to her corner on the course. I was hurt more mentally than physically, but somehow it wasn't all so bad. Finally, Isaiah and I proved ourselves well in this race. The time trial and road race had nearly crushed us, but today we were the ones doing the crushing. Coach saw us and right away said how proud she was of both of us. We had truly ridden great today. Isaiah finished 12th and I didn't finish at all, but sometimes the results don't always show the true story. That was my big lesson of the weekend.

Isaiah and I headed to medical as we watched our 17-18 year old teammates, Miles and Tomas, race. They also had a great race, riding up in the top 5 at points and making big splits. We all headed back to the van together as we waited to meet a very important person. Billy Innes. He was the Coach of the US Junior National Team. Coach had arranged a meeting with him for after our races. It was an amazing

experience. He was totally down to Earth and shared lots of knowledge with us. That is where I learned that the results are not the entire race. This is why Mr. Innes came out to watch the races. He left us on a good note as we all packed up to head home. Coach was very happy with our meeting.

I came into Valley of the Sun hoping to place on the podium. I left without a medal around my neck, but with more knowledge and strength than I ever thought to acquire from one weekend of racing. We all shared a big hug and congratulations before packing up for the trip home. We all stayed around to watch our Captain Emily race the pro women's. Afterwards those of us flying went out for some real Mexican food and headed to the airport together. I had such a fun weekend with my team in Arizona, got to challenge myself, and came out much stronger than I entered. This weekend showed that Team Swift truly was the best program out there, and I am so lucky to get to be a part of it with my closest friends and family.

=Ben

## **Isaiah Chass**

34 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 15-16
41 <sup>st</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 15-16
12 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors 15-16
38 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, G.C.	Juniors 15-16

### Stage 1: Time Trial

I had been waiting for this day for months, so when I was at the race, starting to get ready, I couldn't believe that I was about to start my first race of the season. My day started in the morning when I got up, ate a good breakfast, and then went on a morning spin with my teammates to get our legs opened up. When we got back, I started getting my bike ready, and then put all my gear in the car. Then, I hopped in the car, and waited for what felt like hours (actually 30 minutes) to get to the time trial course. When we arrived, I saw the team van, and then set up my trainer under the tent. That shade felt good!! Then, I pinned my number on my skinsuit, ate a bite to eat, and then started getting ready to warm-up. Then I got on the trainer and started spinning. Shortly after, I started my pyramids to get my legs completely open for the time trial, which I knew I would have to get a hard warm-up in for. After my hard warm-up, I drank some Clif Shot Electrolyte Hydration, took a Clif Shot Energy Gel, and then got on my bike to do a few sprints on the road. After testing my legs out on the road, I rolled over to the starting house where I did roll out and then stretched out a little. When it was time, I walked up onto the starting ramp, checked that I was in a good gear, and then waited for the countdown. "5...4...3...2...1...GO" I started sprinting down the starting ramp and got up to speed quickly. I knew that in the past I had blown myself up in the beginning, so I decided to ease into it, and not max out my heart rate in the first 1K. I kept a steady pace, while trying to slowly catch the rider in front of me. As I came to the slight false flat, I shifted down a gear, and powered over it trying to make up some time. I knew that time was made up in the harder parts, so I

pushed over it, and then kept my pace steady. As I came into the turn around, I swung wide, and then cut far in, using the whole road so that I would be able to carry as much speed as possible. Coming out of the turnaround, I sprinted back up to speed, and slowly brought my heart rate up. I knew that at this point I could start to bring my heart rate to my max. As I got to about 3K to go I started pushing a little harder and I kept telling myself it was "almost over". When I saw 1K to go, I started going all out, and as I started getting closer to the finish, I stood up and sprinted as hard as I could to the line. I was completely shattered by the end, but I knew that I had given it all that I had. After the race, I spun my legs out, and then rode back to the team van. I was disappointed with my result, but I knew that it just meant that I need to work on time trials more.

## Stage 2: Road Race

The morning of the road race, my legs were feeling a little sore, but they still felt ready to race hard! It was an early start, so we had to get up pretty early. As I was trying to wake up, I was getting everything ready, and eating a good breakfast. After loading up the car, I got in the team van with Coach, and my teammate Ben, where we talked strategy on our way to the course. After getting our strategy down, I was ready to help Ben get GC, after his awesome effort in the TT, getting him into top ten. When we arrived at the course, I got my trainer set up, and then got on the trainer. Then, I started my warm-up with Ben. After a good warm-up, I got off my bike, and rode to the start line with Coach and Ben. When we got to the start line, we did roll out, and then rode down the course a little ways. When it was time, we rode to the start line, and waited for our race to start. When the race started, it was neutral until the first corner, about 1K away. After going through the first corner, the race started. It was pretty slow at the beginning, and no one was really making big attacks. Ben told me earlier that this course was a breakaway course, so I made sure to stay towards the front. When the attacks went, I got on a wheel, and stayed tucked in. Nothing really stayed off the front, so as we came to the finishing climb, I thought there would be a big attack. Before the climb, I started moving up on the right side, and I was top ten. I started moving up a little more, and then right as an attack was made, I followed a wheel into a big pothole and got a rear flat. I quickly jumped off my bike and took off my rear wheel. I had my wheel off but I was still waiting for the follow car to get a wheel out. Once they handed me a wheel, I put in on as fast as I could, shifted into a good gear, and then started sprinting as hard as I could to catch up to the field. The field was now out of sight, and I couldn't see them, as they had already crested the climb. I was now doing my on time trial to catch back up. As I came down the hill, I caught up with another rider, and we tried to work together to catch the field. The field was too far out at this point, but I knew that I had to complete the race, so I worked with the other rider to finish the race.

## Stage 3: Criterium

The morning of the criterium, I woke up and was super excited, because I had heard that this crit course was super fun. After getting some breakfast, I started packing up all of my stuff, because we had to leave for the airport after the race. After getting everything ready, I got in the car, and all the team members caravanned to the course. When we got there, we all walked over to registration to sign in. Then, we walked back to the team van, where Ben and I started warming up. I got in a few extra sprints because I knew that the race was going to be fast from the start, and either Ben or I would attack from the start. After a hard warm-up, I did rollout, and then did two more sprints on the road. Then, I rode over to staging, ate a Clif Shot, and then waited until we were able to be on course.

When we could roll from staging, I sprinted on the inside to get lined up first. I got in the first row, 3 people over from the left. Then, I waited until it was time to go. When the race official blew the start whistle, I got clipped in as fast as I could, and attacked from the line into the first corner. There was one rider on my wheel, and as I came out of the corner I pulled off to let him pull through. He wasn't going to pull through, so I eased up knowing that this break wasn't going to work. When the field came by, I moved my way back into the front, and stayed ready for an attack. As we came into the corners, I kept moving myself up, and tried to stay in the top 10. After a few laps, I was hurting, and was getting pushed to the back. After a few laps, I knew I had to get myself to the front because the rubber band effect at the back of the field would just make me more tired. After a lap or two, I got myself back to the front, and was saving up some energy for an attack. Then, Ben came by me and told me to get on his wheel. I got on his wheel, and he moved us up farther towards the front. There were a few riders off the front, and I was feeling pretty good. As Ben came around backside of the course, he was on the front, and I was second wheel. As we started to slow up a little, I knew it would be a good time to try to bridge up to the break, so I attacked around Ben, and started soloing up to the break. I was about halfway there, but they started to pick up the pace a little, and I wasn't able to get there. I decided to rest a little, and get ready to get back in the field. When the field came by, I got in, and moved my way up towards the front again. There were now 3 laps to go, and Ben told me to get on his wheel. I got on, and he started moving up. As he came into the second corner, I got pinched off, and wasn't able to stay on his wheel. A few seconds later, I heard brakes squeaking, and tires skidding. Then, I heard a tire deflating. I started braking and moved towards the left side with everyone. As I go by, I see Ben on the ground, and I couldn't believe it. I knew that I had to keep going, so I sprinted back up to speed with everyone else, and I keep myself near the front. For the next two laps, I rested for the final sprint, and stayed in the top 15. I keep trying to move up a little farther, but I was not able to. As we come to the backside of the course with 1/2 a lap to go, I got into position, and then moved up a few places in the second to last corner. When we come out of the last corner, I got on a rider's wheel that was going around the outside and making up a lot of places. I started to open my sprint up, but wasn't able to get past him, so I just try to stay on his wheel to the line and bike lunge to get the rider next to me. After the race, I rode over to make sure Ben was ok and we talked about how the race went. Overall, this trip was so much fun, and I can't wait to

do it again next year. Coach and all my teammates made it one of the most fun experiences that I have had at a race.

-Isaiah

## Valley of the Sun -- Junior Category 17-18 Reports

### **Miles Daly**

17 years old, Senior Category 3

64 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 17-18
53 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 17-18
30 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors 17-18
52 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, G.C.	Juniors 17-18

#### Stage 1: Time Trial

I was excited to see how I would stack up against the top riders in the country. After pre-riding the course with the team the day before I felt confident in my course knowledge and pre race preparation. I got to the time trial on race day 2 hours early and helped set up the teams van and tent. After getting my last few preparations and filling my race bottles with Clif electrolytes I began my warm up and was feeling strong. I rode to the start ramp and was not nervous and kept my cool. When I stepped onto the ramp and clipped in I just remembered to stay smooth.

I started the tt out strong and was riding fast and strong passing one rider and not being passed at all. Then after the turn around I began to feel a little cramp then it got really bad. I had to slow and try and get rid of it. I pushed hard to the line and was excited for the next day.

#### Stage 2: Road Race

After a hard time trial I was nervous for a 62 mile race with the fastest juniors in the USA. But I slept great and felt recovered so was ready to go. I started the road race in the back of the pack and wanted to just stay safe. After attacks and a few close calls I moved my way up to stay safe. When we hit the first climb I rode to the front and rode tempo. Then we went flying over the top and attacks went fast. Right before the climb a kid went off the road in front of me causing me to chase back which got me in the red. Then just as I got back on the pack attacks went right away and I cramped really badly. Then I found myself at the top of the hill in a small chase group and we went hard to catch up. We caught up but I just went to hard and bonked. I was relieved to look back and see my teammate Tomas so we rode the remainder of the race together.

#### Stage 3: Criterium

After another good night sleep I was ready to leave it all out there. I warmed up and was feeling strong. I got to the line and had a front row start and once we started

fell to mid pack. After 15 minutes of fast racing I moved to the front, I made the mistake of following a wheel and then we went off the front and I went to hard. I fell back into the pack and after another 15 minutes of fast and hard racing teams began to form at the front. I was marking attacks and was going hard. With 2 laps to go I was hurting and hung onto the lead pack until last lap and then rolled in for 30th which I was happy with. I learned a lot and I'm looking forward to the up-coming season.  
Miles

## **Tomas Saldana-Mitre**

Cat 4 Junior 17-18

57 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, TT	Juniors 17-18
50 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, RR	Juniors 17-18
44 <sup>th</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, Crit	Juniors 17-18
51 <sup>st</sup> Place	Valley of the Sun, G.C.	Juniors 17-18

### Stage 1: Time Trial

This being my first real stage race, I never had anything to base the experience off, so everything was basically new from the start. When I landed in Phoenix, I felt a rush of excitement as I realized that this was for real and that the next 3 days were going to be intense. I flew with Ben and his dad so they more experienced on how everything works and what to expect, thus making the entire experience feel more sure that I made the right decision to go ahead and race. After a quick bite to eat, we headed to the TT course to see what we were up against. As we pulled into the parking area, I noticed that the road was basically straight for as far as you could see. At first I thought, "Great" it will be simple to pace myself, but as I started riding it with the team I began to realize how brutal it was going to be. The road was lined with small bushes and rocks but nothing to block the wind, and the road, being the middle of the desert, was almost completely exposed in the sun, leaving little room for shelter from the elements. But, I wasn't discouraged because as the team began to run through the pyramids, everyone looked strong and also excited to get racing. Fast Forward to Friday and the excitement level was through the roof. Seeing all these riders from all over the country was both intimidating and exciting and the same time, and I knew it was going to be a battle for every second. After some words of wisdom from Coach, I climbed up onto the start ramp and eyed by target, the rider in front of me. Right after rolling off the platform I got underway too fast and almost blew up right away. Unfortunately, the rider in front of me started fading into the distance and I could sense someone coming near me. As I was approaching the turn, a rider came around me and I knew I needed to dig deeper. Then another rider came in front of both of us and rounded the corner in the lead. I knew that this 2nd rider was who I needed to focus on and I tried to keep him within striking distance at all times until the end. I ramped up my speed and really pushed all the way back finishing in a sprint with the rider who originally passed me. Overall, I felt good about my effort because I put in all I could for the experience I had thus far.



## Stage 2: Road Race

The road race was something I was looking forward to because I could finally race side by side with some of the best riders in the nation. Being in the 17-18 Category, I knew Miles would be riding with me so we decided to try and stick together throughout the day. Right from the gun it was a fast race. After rounding the first corner and clearing the cattle guard all the attacks started opening up. People began shooting off the front like there was a finish line just feet away, even though we had another 62 miles to go. I figured it would be more fun to get in on some of the action so I followed a few of the team Lux wheels until I found myself pulling off the front attempting to connect with the break just up the road. The legs felt good from the TT the day before so I wanted to make sure I wasn't used as a free wheel by the other riders. I let the more experienced riders duel it out at the front and I tried to stay in a competitive position while not being dropped off the back. The day wore on and I knew the climb would be important to have a good position on so I tried to hang with Miles in the middle of the pack. Luckily, we were able to hang on through the first lap and we both recovered and moved up in the back on the descent past the finish line. As the day wore on, the pack began to settle and moving up wasn't as difficult as it was in the beginning. I tried a few times to improve my position but the pack always moved with me and I ended up about mid pack as we hit the windy section before the turn preceding the climb. More attacks came and went and I tried to hang with the fast guys. As we came around the corner before the climb, the pack started stringing apart and I was caught in the back so I made sure to follow the wheels that I could. The second lap, other than that was mostly uneventful. Miles and I found each other and we rode together for the final lap, sharing pulls, and eventually meeting up other riders to finish the race in a pace line. I tried to follow the Limitless guy who was riding with us, and tried to go full gas at the line. It was a great race, and I learned a lot about tactics and how to work with other riders together, bridging and chasing strong attacks off the front.

## Stage 3: Criterium

It was the final day, the fastest day, and in my opinion, the most fun. I knew that it was going to be a sprint the whole race so I found a good spot near the front of the line and immediately jumped onto the front of the paceline, attempting to follow the flurry of attacks that went almost every other second. The course itself was quite unforgiving with chewed up corners and large ruts in the straightaways. I tried to stay in the front of the bunch so I could stay competitive, but from time to time the entire pack surged ahead so I had to follow the right wheels to get back into it. Although I didn't see Miles that much throughout the day, I saw him up in the top 20 from time to time whenever I was trying to move up on the outside of the bunch. In the end I was pretty gassed from the previous days racing so I tried to accelerate before the group sprint but caught out as the line approached. I went all in and was happy to see that Miles finished pretty high up in the final standings on the day and that I was able to stay competitive throughout the 3 days of racing.

- Tomas

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### 3. Cantua Creek Road Race

2/14/15

Cantua

#### **Ethan Frankel**

Racing Age 17, Category 4

14<sup>th</sup> Place    Cantua Creek Road Race    Senior Category 4

The four-hour drive to the race dictated a 3:30 a.m. wake up. I was excited for the race, although I was a bit bummed about not being able to go with my other teammates to Valley of the Sun in Arizona (good luck to them!). We arrived in a quite isolated area, with hardly any hills. The race started at 8, and after a good warm-up, I was ready. It was a fairly small field, only around 25 riders, so I figured that most of the field would stay together and that there would be an early attack. There were a few Tieni Duro juniors in the field with me, so I was a bit more comfortable with the field, rather than having a field full of adult riders.

The race began on a mellow descent and a couple of small, rolling hills. The pace started out slow and steady; we were rolling along at just 25 km/h. After a few rollers, the course became flat and windy. There was a steady headwind coming from the north that slowed the race a bit, but the field worked together decently and we had a good pace-line. I felt the steady rhythm of the pedaling and kept my focus on the road and to watch for any possible attacks. No one attacked for a half lap, but then two riders from separate teams broke away and gained about a minute on the field by the end of the lap. Their teammates controlled the field while they gained even more time and kept pulling back attacks. On the second lap, the pace slowed a bit and I was a bit too impatient. I attempted an attack and brought three others with me. We went out hard for a couple of minutes but we couldn't gain much time on the rest of the field and we were brought back within a few minutes.

One-quarter of the way through the lap, nearly halfway through the race, another attack was attempted. I countered and a group of six broke away and began the chase for the two leaders. Unfortunately, we had one rider whose teammate was one of the leaders. He didn't cooperate with our efforts and we were hard-pressed to keep the pace high. We kept chasing for another fifteen minutes, I conserved as much energy as I could and constantly ate. I took some hard pulls at the front, and we gained a minute on the diminished peloton.

We soon approached the turn-around and halfway point of the race. We picked up the pace for the next 13 miles to the finish/turnaround. There was a brisk tailwind at that point, but we were all working as hard as one another. We continued to work well together and continued to gain time on the main field. However, we didn't seem to be making up any time on the break/leaders. With just a kilometer to go until the turnaround (and the third hill of four), I began to lose energy and dropped off of the pace of the chase. Another rider was also dropped and we started working together. Once we passed the turnaround, we encountered a gnarly headwind. The chase group had gotten a half-minute on us, but we continued to work together for a couple of

miles. Finally, I was too tired to continue, so I relaxed a bit and soloed for a minute or two in a relaxed time trial position. Eventually, a small group began to catch up to me and was just a few meters behind. I sped up a bit as they passed and latched onto the last wheel. I was in a small chase group of just four riders, but the five of us got organized and worked well together. We caught up to the other solo rider that I had been with earlier and the six of us stayed tight and well structured. Nearly halfway through the final lap, however, most of the field caught up with our small chase group. Now we were around 13-strong with 15 miles left in the race. The larger our group got, the less organized we became. The pace-line became disconnected, but the wind cause the group to shrink a bit by the time we hit the final turnaround.

The pace immediately picked up and we dropped four or five riders. Our mini-peloton was down to only 9 or so riders. There were three juniors, and one was myself. The three of us were most cooperative and took many of the pulls at the front. The Tieni Duro juniors were intent on keeping the pace high, and I was happy to oblige. There were five of us that worked hardest at the front and our group shrunk further. We had about 7-8 left. I took a pull. "Rattle, rattle." A wheel was rattling on one of the juniors' bike. I passed him and refocused myself, not letting the surrounding noises distract me. I focused on the whirr of my wheels and pedals and felt pretty good. "Rattle, rattle." I was distracted once again as I pulled off and the other rider pulled through. I shook my head and refocused.

We had just 5 miles left. The two juniors attacked from the front. Not the smartest move, but they were trying to narrow down the field. We chased them down and they had wasted some of their energy. 4 miles to go. They attacked again and I went with them this time, hoping to get just a bit of freedom. The attempt was unsuccessful. They attacked a couple more times and I countered them. We dropped another rider and we were just 7-strong. 3 miles to go. The pace increased as the nervousness got to most of us. I forced myself to keep calm and realized that I was running low on energy and hadn't eaten in 20 minutes. I quickly ate a few Shot Bloks and drank, but we only had a mile to go. I was too late to get food into me.

With a kilometer until the finish, two riders went off the front of our group. The rest of us mainly stuck together but split up a little bit. I gave it all to the finish line, which was on an uphill slope, but came in second to last in our group and just 15 seconds behind the first in our group. I cooled down and talked with a few riders and reviewed the race. I had done decently, but I could have done more to stick with the break. A wise cyclist once told me, "Never get dropped from a break." However, this time I had and I was disappointed about that. But I knew that I gave it my all and that I had the legs to counter a handful of attacks. I also should've been more diligent about my intake of fluids and food, but that also comes with experience. This race was fun, exciting, and educational for me, and I now know how to come prepared for next time.

-Ethan F.

## Elliot Frankel

Racing Age 13, Category 5

1<sup>st</sup> Place Cantua Creek Road Race Juniors Open

The one thing I hate about racing: waking up at 4 a.m. to drive 3 ½ hours to the race. Every. Single. Time. Luckily, I got to take a 3-hour nap, but still, I hate waking up and driving. When we get to the race after what seems like hours (because it was) at 7:30, no one in the car, me, my dad, and my brother, wanted to get out. We were all very tired. After about 20 minutes, we registered, and started getting ready and warming up.

It was finally 8:35, and was time to line up at the start line. I got to the line and I look to my right. No one. I look behind me. No one. I look to my left. 1 person. It was just me and some other guy from SJBC. The race official introduced us to one another and I learned his name was Tommy. We exchange hellos, but then it was time to race. "Ready, Set, *Shreek*" The whistle blew and we were off. Tommy was a big guy (I am only 4' 6" and 65 lbs) and the first part of the race was all downhill, so he took the early lead.

After the descent, he was a good 30 seconds ahead of me. I worked hard to catch up, and after a couple miles of slow progress, I finally could hop onto his wheel. I drafted off of him for a few more miles, but it started to feel slow, so I passed him and tried to go ahead, but he hopped onto my wheel. It continued like this until we had already done most of the course (The course is a 26 mile there-and-back. Juniors had to do it twice) and had gotten to the uphill that was the downhill that Tommy had gotten ahead of me on. I am more of a climber than anything else, and he wasn't a climber at all, so I was way ahead by the time I had gotten to the top of the hill. As I was turning around to do the course again, I saw and heard my dad, which was distracting.

As I was descending, I saw the other guy almost at the bottom of the hill, just starting to ascend. As I saw this, a hint of a smile formed on my lips. I knew I would win. When I got to the bottom of the hill, the wind was picking up in a headwind and making it a lot harder to go fast. I just kept on pushing, and finally got to the turnaround point. The wind was finally on my back, and it felt good. A few groups of Cat. 4s and 3s passed me and I tried to get onto their wheel, which I later learned I wasn't allowed to do. I had gone about 5 miles back toward the finish when I saw Tommy. I knew there was no way he could catch me, but I kept on pushing.

At last, I got to the hill for the final time and started ascending. I was mentally tired and sleep deprived-tired, but I didn't care. I climbed as hard as I could and sprinted to the finish. I had won! I couldn't believe it (and even though it was only against 1 other person, I didn't care.)

-Elliot

The category three women were separated from the p1/2 women and from the women 4 for this race, which I was excited about since I hadn't done a just three's road race yet. Also my start time was at 12:30 instead of 8 am, so I didn't have to get up at the crack of dawn to drive all the way to Snelling. I arrived at the race a little over an hour and a half before which was plenty of time for me to get signed in and start getting ready. My legs were feeling great while I was spinning on my trainer and after doing a pyramid, I still felt good. We had a decent size field of about thirty women, but eleven of them were on team Metromint. This made me curious about how the race was going to play-out and I anticipated that the Metromint women would work well together to control the race. Since I don't have any teammates in my category to work with, I knew that position would be extremely important. A break could easily be made early on in the race and it could stick so I needed to make sure I was up there in case that happened.

I hardly even noticed when we were no longer neutralized and the race officially began. We maintained about the same speed we had already been doing so I moved up to a position I found comfortable for myself. I was mid-pack and I stayed there for probably about half of the first lap. Three women on Metromint stayed at the front to set the pace for the field. About half way through the first lap, a woman attacked and those on the front went after her. The pace picked up and we all stayed together. I figured someone would counter attack so I paid close attention and moved up towards the front. Almost immediately another woman on Metromint counter attacked. I went after her and so did another woman, but again the whole field stayed together. For the rest of the first lap, I rode second or third wheel and paid attention to everyone around me. I tried to watch the other women and predict what they might do. At the start of the second lap, I found myself on the front but I wasn't going too hard. I maintained the speed we had been going for the entire race which was pretty easy. A strong woman on Metromint, who had already spent a lot of the race on the front, began pulling again and I moved back to about mid-pack. I sat in for a little while during the second lap, then an attack was made and a woman on Metromint followed. The two of them got away and the women on the front, who were also on Metromint, just sat up. Which obviously they were going to do since their teammate was in the break way. No one was doing anything so I moved up to the front, but I found myself struggling to decide what to do. I didn't want to try to bridge the gap and waste all my energy but I wasn't about to just let the break go. I thought about attacking and trying to catch the two women but as I was thinking this, they were just getting farther and farther away. I decided to just stay at the front and start going harder but right away a woman on Mike's Bikes attacked and ended up catching the two other women. Everyone began to chase so I grabbed a wheel and just stayed in the pack. Another woman attacked and then they had a break of four, but we were right on them and in a short minute or two the field was right back together. Everyone kind of relaxed after this and I moved up to second wheel, however, we weren't going very hard at all. I didn't do any work at the front because I knew I couldn't waste anymore energy so I just hung out around

second or third wheel. When we began the third lap, I found myself relieved that it wasn't the last lap so I didn't have to think so hard about position, at least not yet. The third lap was similar to the first. We didn't go hard but a few small attacks were made that didn't go anywhere. I was back near mid-pack as we passed the finish line to start our last lap, immediately the pace picked up. Suddenly, I found myself at the tail end of the field and working hard to hang on. This is not where I wanted to be. After a bit, I was able to move up so I wasn't so far back but as soon as I found a comfortable position, a woman on Metromint attacked. Right after she broke away the motorist came up and neutralized the field. Everyone was so mad, but there was nothing we could do. As soon as the race started again, everyone went hard to catch that woman. I sat in and thought about where I wanted to position myself. On the back side of the course everyone was fighting hard for position and I kept finding myself too close to the back of the field. When we got to the rolling section of the course, about five miles from the finish, I was able to move up to better position but I was still about tenth place. I knew I needed to be either second or third wheel in the last km in order to have a good sprint. The finish of a race always makes me nervous, everything is happening at once and there's so much to think about. It didn't help that the last two miles of the course are incredibly bumpy. I was right up there in the field but I couldn't place myself in the proper position in the last kilometer so I was too far back when we went around the last right hand turn before the finish line. My result isn't what I had hoped for from this race, but I had so much fun being at the front during the race and experiencing some team-tactics.

-Emily

## **Isaiah Chass**

11<sup>th</sup> Place    Snelling Road Race    Juniors 15-18

When I showed up to the race, I walked over to registration, signed up, and then went back to the car to pin my number on. After pinning my number up, I got on my gear, got my bike ready, and then went out on the road to get my warm-up in. Once I completed my spin, and then zone 3 efforts, I got right into my pyramid to get my legs opened up. I knew they would be really hard, but I also knew that I would feel so much better after them. After doing a hard warm-up, I rode over to the start line, ate a Clif Shot, and then waited for the race to begin. When the race started, it was slow due to the neutral start until we got onto the course, with was about 4 miles away. I knew that there was going to be an attack right away, so I moved myself to the front, and waited for the referee to say that we could 'go'. Soon enough, it was time, and the first attack went within a few seconds. There were a lot of teams with multiple riders, so I let them pull back the first few attacks, knowing that I was a single rider and couldn't pull back every single attack. When each attack went, I made sure to get on the wheel that tried to bridge up to the attack. When we got to one of the first rollers, I tested my legs and tried to get someone to go with me. Someone started going on the left side, so I sprinted to get on his wheel, and then sat on. The field quickly sprinted up to us and we were not able to get off. On lap two, a rider made an attack that I decided to not go

with him. He got off the front and was slowing making a bigger gap and was looking strong. When he started to get too far out, I knew I had to get some other riders to help pull him back, so I talked with some other teams, and they moved to the front to pull it back. Eventually we caught him, and it was getting close to one lap to go. I knew that on the last lap there was going to be some last chance attacks made to try to get off the front, so I made sure to stay up towards the front and cover the attacks. When we came around to the finish line with one lap to go, I sat up a little, ate some Clif Shot Bloks, and then got back up to the front. With about 5k to go I made a little attack over a roller and a few riders came. There were about 5 riders and we had a little gap, but we weren't able to get enough of a gap to really get a break. At this point I knew it was going to come down to the field sprint, so I sat in, and rested for the end. With 1K to go, an attack was made, and I jumped right on his wheel, he started going all the way to the last corner which was about 500M to go. When we were coming into the last corner, he slowed down, and the field came around the left side, and I was boxed in. I knew I had to get out or else I would have no chance, but there was no way out. I was now at 200M to go and I still couldn't get around the rider in front of me. With 100M to go I got by, and sprinted to try to make up 1 or 2 places. I was really disappointed with my result, but I knew it was just one race.

-Isaiah

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## 5. Chico Stage Race

### Emily Abraham

13<sup>th</sup> place      Chico Stage Race GC      Senior Wm Category 3/4

13<sup>th</sup> place      Stage 1: Paskenta Hills Road Race

25<sup>th</sup> place      Stage 2: Steve Harrison Memorial Criterium

15<sup>th</sup> place      Stage 3: River Road Time Trial

### Stage 1: Road Race

My race didn't start until two-forty five in the afternoon but my dad and I drove up to Chico on Friday night so we had all morning to hang out. I went for an easy hour spin in the morning then relaxed at the hotel. My race was only one lap, 45 miles. I had heard about the four miles of gravel on this course but I had no idea what to expect. When we arrived at the race, someone told me that the gravel was completely torn up after the pro men's race. Hearing this made me a little nervous. After warming up on my trainer for a bit, my legs were feeling good and I was excited to go race my bike. I lined up near the back of the field when we were getting ready to start so immediately, as the race started, I was thinking about moving up. However we only had one side of the road due to the course being open to traffic so it was difficult to move up. I didn't want to be at the very front in the first few miles of the race, but I wanted to move up to get away from the sketchy riders towards the back. I was able to move up a few positions but around mile five I still wasn't happy with where I was. The women on the

front, controlling the race, we're going at a really easy pace which kept causing the back of the field to yo-yo. We would speed up, then brake, speed up, then brake. It was ridiculous. I wanted the race to string out so I could move up to a better place more easily. Well I got my wish as soon as we hit the gravel section around mile twelve. Immediately people started dropping back when we reached the gravel. I paid attention to my front wheel; I did not want to go down. On a small incline at the beginning of the gravel section, two women bumped into one another and one of them went down. Luckily I was able to avoid her and I pushed myself to stay with the lead group. The gravel was intense and the field was going along at a nice steady pace. I hung on at the back and just kept my head down, focusing on the road. Women were still dropping off and about a mile into the gravel there were only eleven of us. I was amazed at my capability to stay with them, but I thought too soon. I was off to the side of the field when the wind really picked up. I was getting blown around and I was struggling to hold my line on that loose gravel and to make matters worse, we were coming up on a roller. I slowly started dropping off. There was nothing I could do but just keep my head down and pedal through it, the wind was harsh and the gravel was brutal but I could still see the field ahead of me so all I could do was hope I would feel better once I reached the pavement. At mile sixteen, I could see the right hand turn back on the paved road and there were two women just ahead of me. This motivated me to push through that last section of gravel. That right hand turn on to the pavement leads to a gradual climb, I worked hard up it and I could still see those two women ahead of me but there wasn't much of a chance I'd be able to catch them on my own. After riding alone for a few miles, I looked down at my Garmin; it said I'd gone eighteen miles. Great, I thought. Another thirty-two miles in the wind by myself, this is going to be rough. Another mile or so goes by and suddenly a chase group of seven women catches up to me, I grab on and quickly jump into their rotating pace line. They were moving along at a nice pace and I struggled at first to work with them after just riding alone in the wind. But soon enough I got in the groove and felt great. About ten miles later, we caught up to another chase group of four women. They told us there were six up ahead so we all began working together. Unfortunately, we weren't able to catch the others ahead of us but we all worked great together to keep the race going. At mile forty, I realized I hadn't eaten anything all race and I was starting to feel it. But with less than five miles to go, I told myself I'd be fine- not a smart idea. When we saw three km to go, I was on the front of our group which had gone down to about seven or eight women. I was pulling when I knew I shouldn't have been, but I was wrecked and ready to be done with race. I could not imagine having to do another lap like the p1/2/3 women had to. At 1k to the finish, five women took off. I sped up but couldn't push myself to get on one of their wheels. I'm kind of happy I didn't because one of them ended up crashing in front of me and luckily I was just the right distance behind to avoid her crashing into me. I rolled over the finish line, happy to have stayed up right.

Stage 2: Criterium



On Sunday, my criterium was in the morning and TT in the afternoon. I'm not great at time trials so I decided I was going to give it my all in the crit and just use what energy I had left in the time trial. I was stoked when we arrived at the criterium; it was an L shaped course with great turns. I set up my trainer near the start/finish so I could watch how the other races were going. I got off my trainer with just over fifteen minutes until the start then waited at the gate to enter on to the course. I knew I had to get on the front row of that start line, I didn't want to have to stress about position right when the race started. Luckily, I got my spot right up on the line and when the race started I found myself riding second wheel for the first lap. We were going along at a really easy pace, a woman from Mike's Bikes got on the front and kept it at the same pace and I rode along as third wheel. Nothing happened in the first three laps, until we had a prime lap. I stayed near the front but made sure to hold a wheel to stay out of the wind. The race picked up a bit and I moved back but I was still at least top ten. The race was sketchy at times, going into a few of the corners some of the women didn't hold their line and there was some yelling going on. I was surprised by how good I felt about half way through the race and I decided I would go for the next prime. Just before we crossed the line for seven laps to go, I heard Dave Towle announce fifty dollar prime on the next lap! I moved up on the left side and attacked. I wasn't sure what I was thinking because it was unlikely that I would make it a whole lap by myself but I just put my head down and went. I didn't look back to see if anyone had followed me which I probably should have done. I stayed out there for that whole lap then in the last corner two women came around me and we sprinted for the prime. Obviously they hadn't just pulled for a whole lap so their legs were a tad fresher than mine. The three of us then had a small break from the rest of the field but we didn't get organized fast enough to stay away and by the next lap we were all together again. With four laps to go, I found a position as fourth wheel. I was happy with where I was and feeling great about the finish. On two laps to go, I was still fourth and then when we rolled by to start the last lap, I found myself on the front. I wasn't going hard but I looked behind me to see if anyone was going to work. Nope. Everybody was just cruising so I sat on the front going pretty easy and thinking about my sprint. Half-way through that lap, a woman moved up and let me sit on her wheel. It was like she was leading me out and I was so excited. I sat on and there was a woman on Mike's Bikes on my left side, we rode through the second to last corner nice and smooth. As we came up to the last corner, I thought, "I'm at least going to get top five right now" I braced myself for the final corner, we were taking it at a pretty fast pace. I held my line through the corner and two women from behind me came up on either side of me. Completely boxed me in and almost took me out, luckily I kept my balance but it lost me my position. I'm thankful I didn't crash like the woman who came up on my right did but I was so angry about what happened. I was ready for my sprint and a great result but what happened just shows how things can change in a split second during a bike race. I'm disappointed but my result in the crit didn't affect my GC placing. And after this race, I'm just hungrier for a great result which will help me in my future races.

### Stage 3: Time Trial

I was really upset/angry after the morning criterium so I was just ready to get the TT over with. But I was also hoping I could channel some of that anger into my race. An hour before my start time, I started spinning on my trainer. After fifteen minutes I was tired of the trainer so I got off and road around on the street before heading to the start. It was a flat ten mile course so I put my head down and hammered. I felt good at first but in the last few miles, I started to get distracted. When I saw 1k to go, I picked it up and finished strong.  
-Emily

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## 6. NorCal MTB #1

March 1, 2015

Monterey

### Eli Kranefuss

4<sup>th</sup> Place      NorCal MTB Race #1      Varsity

This was the first race of the mountain bike season. I had a call-up in the first row due to my results last year. This was very beneficial because it meant that I could warm-up for longer, and I also did not have to pass people at the start. One of the strongest riders was in the back because he didn't complete the season last year, so the top riders decided that we would try to hammer the beginning of the race, making it hard for him to catch up. Directly from the start, we took off, and four of us were alone up in the front. Then the fifth rider caught up and the five of us led together for a lap. However, I went off too hard and blew up after the first lap (of a five lap race). The rest of the race, I was alone just trying to hold my place. While I am pleased for a fourth place result in the first race of the season, I learned more about my limits and now know that I need to be careful of going off too hard at the beginning, while still going hard enough to gain a lead going into the single track. Overall, it was a great first race, and I am looking forward for the rest of the season.

Thanks,  
-Eli

### Ben Cook

16, cat 3

1st Place      NorCal MTB Race #1      Sophomore D1

We rolled up to the race venue early in the morning to cheer the girls on. My teammates and friends, Teddy and Viveka, were in the same position as I was for today's race. We were told to stay down a category, race with the sophomores (JV for Teddy), and if we did well we could move up and race with the rest of our teammates. I rolled over to the Redwood High School pit zone, dropped off my gear, and went for a little spin about 3 hours before my race to loosen up my legs some.

I returned in time to help Viveka with her start and cheer her on with the team. I love racing with the NorCal League because of the energy that each race has.

Announcers, rider interviews, and wild crowds cheering the racers on. Viveka had a second place call up. Once she and the rest of the Redwood girls were off and racing, I returned to the pit to warm up.

I kitted up, pumped up my tires, and headed out to the road to do a warm-up. I did some z3 and a hard 1 minute pyramid to prepare my body for the race ahead. It was 10am and already pretty warm out so I rolled back to the pit to drop off my arm warmers. I adjusted my tire pressure one more time before the start. 28 psi in the rear and 26 in the front. I dropped off the rest of my gear, picked up a Shot, my tube and multi tool, and headed off to the start. I also had a second place call up.

I waited patiently at call ups as my teammates lingered around to support me and the rest of the riders. Word had reached me that Viveka crushed her race! She won by minutes! She was moving up a category for sure. It was time for me to do the same. I have always been really good at stoking myself up for a high caliber race, such as a pro-1-2-3 race or Grasshopper, but I find it harder to stoke myself up when the goal is to win the race. Today I wanted to prove to myself that I could actually do it. Winning should be a feasible goal when it needs to be. I waited anxiously in the final staging area before I was called up.

"In first place, riding for Tamalpais High, Felix Slothower!" The crowd cheered as Felix rolled up into one of the 5 available starting slots. I had the one second from the left scoped out before the race. He picked one just next to it. Perfect.

"And now, in second place, riding for Redwood High School, please welcome to the front row, Ben Cook!" The crowd gave a roar as I rolled into my slot. I felt like I was famous! The rest of the riders rolled into their slots one by one. With 5 minutes to start, I got off the bike and did a few stretches to loosen up my body. Vanessa, the NorCal media director, wanted a rider to interview in the front row. I was the only one to talk! I told her about how we had already won the sophomore girls, so I would hope to do the same. She and the crowd wished me luck as we prepared for our final countdown. I got back on the bike.

"5..." I pulled my foot up, ready to launch out of the start.

"4..." The crowd joined in. I picked up my hips.

"3... 2... 1.... GO!" I clipped in quickly and sprinted up the steep starting hill.

Feeling my back wheel slipping in the sand, I shifted my weight back until finally sitting down in the saddle. I was in 4th place as the trail turned into narrow single track. The course had wide open climbs with narrow flowy descents. It suited me well. Felix led us for the first half of three 5-mile laps. As the trail opened up, he began to fade. The rider in front of me attacked him hard, leaving just three of us in contention as we came through to finish the first lap. I sat in and waited as one rider drilled the pace on the front. He was strong, but I felt confident that I could attack him when the time was right. The 3rd place rider was beginning to fade as hit the long steep fire road climb on the second lap. I attacked from the back to test their legs. Only one rider caught me as we passed over the next flat section and onto the descent. I was able to keep my ground on the descents, which is a place when I usually have trouble with. However, I felt confident today. 3rd place had caught back onto us. I sat in the middle with one

rider in front and one rider behind me. Coming in to start the final lap, I passed the front rider and drilled it around the swooping corner before the climb to end the lap.

"Race smart! Race smart!" I heard one of the coaches saying. I needed to back it off if they were still on my wheel. Thankfully I hadn't truly dropped the hammer yet. I backed off my pace to a tempo but kept my speed up in the turns. I had picked up this tactic in the Team Swift Tuesday Night Twilight Criteriums. One night at the TNT's, I was in good position from 3-1 laps to go, but in the final 500 meters, the last lead-out man for one of the teams saw me on his wheel and pulled off quickly to trap me on the front. It was a clever move as I knew I couldn't just sit up, but if I drilled it I'd be passed in the sprint. We were just entering the final set of chicanes before the finish. I took the corners hot, but only put out as much power as I had when I was on the rider's wheel. I led it out from 200 meters and won my first 3-4 TNT that day! I have noticed this in crits; the race will surge and move urgently, passing any rider too slow any time after 5 to go. However, once the last rider is on the front, he is almost designated to lead out the race, no matter his speed. This happened at Cal Aggie too, where I ended up getting 3rd under the same scenario. Both races I felt the field moving around me, but they never made it past before the sprint. I put this tactic to good use when I found myself on the front before the climb. Coming up the steep climb through the start/finish, I could feel the two riders start to move around me as I rode up the hill. I picked up the pace right away as my teammates coaches cheered me on! The hill was now steep enough to drill it, and they were at my sides and not behind me. I had a solid gap by the feed zone. I checked my heart rate. 188bpm--not bad! I picked up a bottle of Clif Bar mix to keep me fresh for the final lap. I hammered up the next climb. My competition was nowhere in sight. 192bpm. I was checking my heart rate too much. I took my computer off and put it into my pocket.

My older teammates were scattered throughout the course, yelling and cheering for me. I had built up about a 30 seconds advantage within the last 7-8 minutes of racing. It was looking good for the finish. I ate a Shot and paced myself to the finish, having some extra fun on the fast descents. I began to lap riders from the freshman field, creating a problem of passing in narrow sections. However, I just took my time, encouraged the rider in front of me, and waited until it was clear to pass. I knew my chasers would encounter the same problem. Keeping my cool really helped there.

"Thanks, have a great race!" I heard a rider say under heavy breathing as I passed him. "You too!" I panted back. I was shocked! I began to tell riders to have a great race as I passed them. I actually had great interactions with the riders I passed in this race! I was happy I could improve on that aspect of mountain bike racing from last season.

After the long descent, I was clear of riders all the way to the finish. There was a fast sweeping turn to the finish that lasted for about 200 meters. I floored it through the corner as the crowd cheered me on. I let a smile creep onto my face as I came into the last 100 meter stretch before the finish. Finally, I could see the banner over my head. I threw my hands over my head in accomplishment. With a lot of pressure to win, I was really happy that I could pull it off. I did a big victory salute as I crossed the line, something I was also looking forward too!

"Ben won a mountain bike race!?" I heard my teammate, Matt, joking as I finished and met my team. They were all right there to greet me and the rest of the riders as we finished. It was amazing. Last year I had just barely snuck onto the podium of the NorCal League, but this year I had taken the race by storm. I won by almost a full minute.

I spun around with my teammates, some of whom were warming up for their upcoming JV and Varsity races. I was so happy that I could pull off a big win and prove myself to the League and to my coaches. I will now be moved up to JV with my older teammates for the next race! At the end of the day, it may just be another bike race, but the NorCal League always makes it a special day, whether you win or not. I got changed and headed over to cheer on my friends in JV and Varsity. Teddy ended up winning the JV category was going to move up to varsity! I am so proud of him and Viveka. They are both totally committed to the sport, and I am so happy us three could pull home wins for our school. 3 winners and many more podiums, Redwood had an awesome day at the bike race. We even got 2nd in the team competition!

-Ben

## **Ethan Frankel**

Tamalpais High School, Racing Age 17, Category 4

8<sup>th</sup> Place      NorCal MTB Race #1      Junior Varsity

The first race of the season was approaching. I was nervous, but confident. The day before the race, a teammate and I drove down to the race venue and pre-rode the course. The five-mile lap was flowy and nearly all single track. There wouldn't be much space for passing. We rode two laps and got off of the course right as the rain started to come down hard. The course would be great for the next afternoon: clear, blue skies and damp, packed, and fast trails.

The JV race didn't start until 1:25, so I had plenty of time. Close to noon, we arrived at the packed parking lot and rode over to the team tent. After relaxing and cheering on my teammates for another hour, the JV riders warmed up on the road. We did a few intervals and after a half-hour, it was time to head to staging. Due to my placing in last year's sophomore races, I got the last spot in staging. However, there were a number of people not at the line, so I ended up lining up in roughly 20<sup>th</sup> position. "We will send them off in 30 seconds!" the announcer's voice boomed across the venue.

Before I knew it, "5, 4, 3, 2, 1, GO!" We were off. The cheers were deafening as the pack of 35 teenage racers charged up the starting hill. I had a teammate in front of me and stuck on his wheel, waiting to pass other racers. We were in about 25<sup>th</sup> or so position. I sat in for the rest of the two minute climb and we passed a couple of riders. The next descent was single track for a couple of minutes, but very fast and flowy. The two of us sped around the sharp turns and then down onto a flat, sandy section of the course. I was on his wheel, but decided to go ahead and see what I could do on my

first lap. I accelerated past him as soon as there was a place to pass and immediately afterwards, the climb started.

Another of my teammates was in front of me, so I stayed on his wheel halfway up the climb. However, his rear wheel hit the side of a ditch and he went down. I hopped off my bike, asked if he was alright to continue. He was already on his bike and responded, "Yep!" There was only another 70 meters to the top, and it was too steep for me to get back on my bike and ride. I grabbed my handlebars and sprinted to the top as fast as I could. None of the other riders on their bikes passed me during my sprint. I hopped back on and pedaled away from the cheering spectators. It was flat for a little while, I had a quick sip of water, but then another hill emerged just a minute from the top of the previous one. I sprinted up it and caught three riders in the process. I was sitting about 15<sup>th</sup> at that point. Another few descents and another few climbs later, I came upon a group of three riders. I locked onto the last wheel in the group and sat in to recover from my hard, four-minute effort. I stayed behind for a minute or two, but then two of the riders attacked. I went with them, but the other racer was left in our dust. We relaxed again, but I was anxious to catch a few more riders. I called out to the Redwood racer, who I had raced with before, "Get on my wheel, this is going to be fast."

I charged down the next, flowy descent, and blasted past another rider on the next climb. He was still on my wheel, but tiring quickly. We soon crossed the road and all of a sudden, there was a 150-foot hill looming above. I charged up it and nearly dropped the racer on my wheel. The next parts were more technical and there was more descending than the first two-thirds of the course. I set my center of gravity low, and let gravity take me down the descents. A couple minutes later, I was on a flat section with a strong, steady headwind. The two of us time trialed the section and a few bends later, another big hill loomed above with a tunnel of cheering onlookers. I again raced up the hill, caught another two riders, who stuck onto the Redwood racer's wheel. I took a few risks around the next turns, but kept my speed low enough up the hills as to not waste my energy, and I suddenly found myself at the finish of the first lap.

The starting hill came quickly, and I took it a little easier as we still had three laps to go. I came to the top of the hill and let the Redwood racer take a pull. We raced easier than we had the previous lap, and took it a little slower on the hills. He pulled for a good ten minutes, as I had before, and a rider passed us. Later in the lap, I took a pull and we passed that rider then came up to the intersection of the road. I decided to go for it and try to catch a few more riders. I rushed up the hill, pushing almost as hard as I could. I quickly dropped the riders on my wheel, and passed another that was up ahead. Somewhere along the way, I heard someone shout out "You're in 11<sup>th</sup>!" Well, I was now in tenth.

The third lap was harder to keep up my speed. I was alone for the whole lap, a good 30 seconds in front of the next rider behind me, but nearly a minute behind the next rider in front. I didn't see anyone besides spectators around me. I rode hard, but stayed conservative because I knew I still had more than a lap to go. I ate on a couple of the climbs and stayed hydrated, but the lap was lonely and I rode the hills hard and

fast. Not being a great technical descender, the descents were trickier, but I had certainly improved since last year.

The fourth lap was much more exciting and was the hardest lap of the race. As soon as I hit the finish of the third lap, I got out of my saddle and accelerated. After taking a bottle from the feed zone, I rode hard up the first hill and caught a racer from Drake. He led me through the descent and flat section, and up the next climb. After the second climb, however, I attacked him and he was unable to hang on. I was in 9<sup>th</sup>. I was now riding as hard as I could, fearful that another rider would come up behind me and pass me. After one mile of riding, my fear came true. A racer passed me. He called out "JV D2". I thought, *OK, that's all right. A D1 rider won't pass me.* I was wrong. Six seconds later a rider passed me. "Are you Varsity?" I asked him. "No, JV."

Now I was angry and anxious. I wasn't able to hang on his wheel, and I was disappointed. I heard cheering a long ways ahead and I figured that must be first place coming in. I sped up, wanting the race to finish soon. I charged up the next hill and bombed down the next descents. I was more than halfway through the lap when I passed the JV rider that had passed me earlier. He was slowing down and I was able to easily drop him. I climbed again, descended again, time trialed on a flat part, and hit the side of a divot and nearly went down. However, I kept myself upright and got through the next descent, with one little slip at the bottom. I didn't go down, but I did get another burst of adrenaline. I crossed the road and flew up the hill for the fourth and final time.

Then I passed a Redwood JV rider. I was suddenly in 8<sup>th</sup>. Now I rode like I was being chased by a pack of hungry, savage coyotes that needed me for food. I beat out the coyotes. I rode hard and outraced each and every one of them. I could feel that I was gaining time on 7<sup>th</sup> place also. However, they were a bit too far for me and I couldn't ride fast enough to catch them. I came in to the final stretch and sprinted to the finish, holding my 8<sup>th</sup> place. After the results came through, I learned I was only a few seconds from catching 7<sup>th</sup> place.

This was a great first race. I paced myself well and rode hard, but there are still the limits of racing that I still haven't found. But I have improved a lot, and I owe that to my coaches and my parents, and of course my training. I look forward to the rest of the road and MTB season.

-Ethan F

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## 7. Chileno Valley Grasshopper

### Luke Lamperti

3<sup>rd</sup> Place      Chileno Valley Grasshopper      Junior 18 Under

The morning of the race I was super excited. I got all my stuff ready and made sure I had it in my bag. Then I went to eat breakfast. I had potatoes and eggs. The race started at 10:00 and is close to where I live so I did not have to wake up early. Once everybody was ready to go, we left and drove to the race. When we got there, I

went to registration to get my number. I later went to warm up on the road with some of my teammates who were there. When the race started it went right up a climb (Coleman Valley), but it did not go very fast. Then it was a rolling ride out to the coast with a nice steady pace, no big attacks or surges. Once we got to the coast the pace dropped a little bit. We were only on the coast for about 10 minutes before turning left onto another climb (Bay Hill). I struggled to make it over the top with the main group of about 30 guys now. But going over the climb I knew that if I did not make it over the top with a front group I was stuck pulling another group for the rest of the ride. I was going as hard as I could to keep them in sight which I did, so I chased on the descent.

After I got back in the group I was able to rest and get something to eat. I rested for a while knowing that I only had so much time before what I thought would be a really hard climb. I ate a Clif Shot. But once we were climbing I realized it was not too hard of a pace. I made it over that climb knowing I had a long time to rest up. I sat in and did not pull at the front for a while. Most of my teammates were still there except for 1 who flatted. I was able to stay with the group, so when we later got back onto the coast before the biggest climb of the day (Wilson Hill). When we got to the climb I was ready for a hard effort. I knew this was where all the pros were going to attack (They raced everybody together). When we hit the climb I was at the front. I went super hard up the climb. But I was not in the front group I made it into the second group but on the descent there was a big truck that we got stuck behind and the whole group went around it going into a blind corner and I did not want to take that risk. So I got dropped off that group. I sat up and ate until the next group caught up and I jumped in it. From there it was pretty much flat so I rode with that group of about 8 riders all the way to the bottom of the last climb (Joy Road) where the finish was at the top. When hit the base me and one other guy went away from the group and held it to the top. I had a great race and a fun day on the bike.

-Luke

## **Miles Daly**

68<sup>th</sup> Place    Chileno Valley Grasshopper    Open

I was excited to race a fun and local race like the grasshopper, it is hard and the field was very strong. I drove my teammate Ben up to the race and we got their early and got the bikes ready. I warmed up and then we went to the start line. On the line I saw pro mountain bikers and national cyclocross champions. I was ready to go, after the start we went straight up a hill and I felt good and was at the front surrounded by fellow teammates. During the first small decent having junior gears and very bumpy roads my bottle with Clif electrolytes flew out. I realized I had 1 bottle for 35 miles. I felt great on the climbs and the descents and I made it to the coast with the lead group. But after the climb to the feed zone I blew up and then had to stop to get my bottles. After riding in limbo mostly by myself I arrived at the finishing hill. Or should I say wall. I crawled my way up "Joy Road" and then saw my teammates there for me. Over all I was happy and I felt strong and learned a lot.

-Miles



## **Gianni Lamperti**

50<sup>th</sup> Place    Chileno Valley Grasshopper    Open

The morning of the race we got there, got signed up and then went to warm up. We went up and down Coleman Valley a few times before we staged for the start. As we started we rolled slow to the right hand turn to Coleman Valley Rd and then the pace went a little bit faster. It went a lot slower than the previous year and there were no attacks. I went over the top, close to the front and stayed there until the bottom of Bay Hill Rd. At the bottom of Bay Hill the pace increased a lot and I barley hung on over the top. I then sat in the group over Hwy 1 and the Valley Ford rollers where I moved up to the front and waited for the next climb. The pace stayed at a steady tempo until the bottom of the next climb that climbs up to the top of Dillon Beach. The pace once again lifted, but I stayed towards the front to be in position for the upcoming descent. As we turned back on Hwy 1 and started heading towards Marshall-Petaluma Rd, the pace slowed to a mid zone 2. Once we got to the left turn, it went harder than it had all day and then I started to fall back a little bit until I was off all the way. I kept pushing all the way over the climb until I stopped for a quick bottle refill. I rode with my teammate Miles and a Santa Cruz X-Fusion rider until the bottom of Wilson Hill where I started cramping. I then Time Trialed Chileno Valley until about half way, when I was caught by a solo rider and worked with him until the second rest stop where we were caught by a group and rode with them until the bottom of the last climb, Joy Rd. The cramping came back and I pushed over the top to finish in 4:18:55, in 50<sup>th</sup> place. This is one of the most fun Road Races of the season and I look forward to next year.

-Gianni