

Team Swift Race Reports

March 2015

Race Reports for:

1. Cherry Pie Criterium
2. Land Park Criterium
3. Bariani Road Race
4. San Dimas Stage Race
5. Red Kite #2
6. Norcal MTB #2 & 3

March Top Results:

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 st Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 17-18 | Miles Daly |
| 1 st Place | Cherry Pie Criterium | Juniors 13-14, 4/5 | Gianni Lamperti |
| 1 st Place | Cherry Pie Criterium | Junior W. 15-16 | Sawyer Taylor |
| 1 st Place | Land Park Criterium | Juniors 13-14 | Gianni Lamperti |
| 1 st Place | Bariani Road Race | Juniors 15-18, 4/5 | Gianni Lamperti |
| 1 st Place | Norcal MTB Race #2 | Freshman, D2 | Isaiah Chass |
| 2 nd Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 17-18 | Miles Daly |
| 2 nd Place | Cherry Pie Criterium | Juniors 15-16, 4/5 | Isaiah Chass |
| 2 nd Place | Cherry Pie Criterium | Juniors 13-14, 4/5 | Luke Lamperti |
| 2 nd Place | Land Park Criterium | Juniors 13-14 | Luke Lamperti |
| 2 nd Place | Bariani Road Race | Jr W. 15-18, Cat 4 | Sawyer Taylor |
| 3 rd Place | Cherry Pie Criterium | Juniors 13-14, 4/5 | William Stark |
| 3 rd Place | Land Park Criterium | Senior Category 4 | Luke Lamperti |
| 3 rd Place | Bariani Road Race | Juniors 15-18, 4/5 | Isaiah Chass |
| 3 rd Place | NorCal MTB Race #2 | Sophomore boys D1 | Ben Cook |
| 4 th Place | Land Park Criterium | Juniors 13-14 | William Stark |
| 5 th Place | Bariani Road Race | Juniors 15-18, 4/5 | Luke Lamperti |
| 6 th Place | San Dimas SR, CRIT | Juniors 17-18 | Miles Daly |
| 7 th Place | Cherry Pie Criterium | Senior Category 4 | Isaiah Chass |
| 8 th Place | Cherry Pie Criterium | Senior Category 4 | Gianni Lamperti |
| 8 th Place | Cherry Pie Criterium | Juniors 13-14, 4/5 | Elliot Frankel |
| 8 th Place | San Dimas SR, Crit | Juniors 15-16 | Ben Cook |
| 9 th Place | San Dimas SR, GC | Juniors 15-16 | Ben Cook |
| 10 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 15-16 | Gianni Lamperti |
| 10 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Juniors 15-16 | Gianni Lamperti |
| 10 th Place | Land Park Criterium | Senior W. Cat 1-3 | Emily Abraham |
| 10 th Place | Land Park Criterium | Senior Category 4 | Gianni Lamperti |
| 10 th Place | Bariani Road Race | Senior Category 3 | Ben Cook |
| 11 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 15-16 | Ben Cook |
| 11 th Place | Cherry Pie Criterium | Senior Category 4 | Luke Lamperti |
| 11 th Place | Bariani Road Race | Senior Category 4 | Luke Lamperti |
| 12 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 15-16 | Gianni Lamperti |

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|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 12 th Place | Bariani Road Race | Senior W. Cat 1-3 | Emily Abraham |
| 13 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 15-16 | Ben Cook |
| 15 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Juniors 15-16 | Isaiah Chass |
| 15 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 15-16 | Gianni Lamperti |
| 15 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Sr W. Category 3/4 | Emily Abraham |
| 16 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Sr W. Category 3/4 | Emily Abraham |
| 17 th Place | Land Park Criterium | Senior Category 4 | Isaiah Chass |
| 19 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 17-18 | Miles Daly |
| 19 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 17-18 | Ethan Frankel |
| 19 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Juniors 17-18 | Ethan Frankel |
| 19 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 15-16 | Isaiah Chass |
| 20 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Sr W. Category 3/4 | Emily Abraham |
| 20 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 15-16 | Isaiah Chass |
| 21 st Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 15-16 | Isaiah Chass |
| 21 st Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 17-18 | Ethan Frankel |
| 22 nd Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Sr W. Category 3/4 | Emily Abraham |
| 25 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 17-18 | Ethan Frankel |
| 29 th Place | Bariani Road Race | Senior Category 4 | Gianni Lamperti |
| 53 rd place | Red Kite Omnium Event #2 | Sr W. Category 3/4 | Emily Abraham |

Rider Race Reports

1. Cherry Pie Criterium

3/1/15

Napa

Gianni Lamperti

1st Place Cherry Pie Criterium

Juniors 13-14, Category 4/5

When we started our warm up it was still 40 degrees, pretty cold. After a good warm up we cruised up to the top of the hill to line up for the start. Right from the gun there was an attack on the left side from Tieni Duro and I went with it. The two of us stayed away for 1 lap before we were pulled back in from the field. After we were caught there was an immediate counter attack from Team Fremont and another Tieni Duro rider, one 17-18 and one 15-16 with it and I did not chase right away, letting the break get a gap. I started chasing but it was already too late so I started focusing on getting my teammate Isaiah points to upgrade to a category three for nationals. As we came into the last lap my brother started our lead out for Isaiah and went as hard as he could into the second to last corner. I then pulled through and went as hard as I could all the way to the line and Isaiah stayed on my wheel because he was racing 15-16 so he would get first in the field sprint but 2nd in his category. Overall it was a good race and I then started to get ready for the cat 4 race.

-Gianni

Luke Lamperti

2nd Place Cherry Pie Criterium

Juniors 13-14, Category 4/5

I woke up the morning of Cherry Pie super excited because it was my first criterium of the season. I was up early because our race was at 7:45 in the morning. We left our house at 5:15 to get to the race an hour and a half before the start. When we got to the race I got all of my stuff ready for warm-up and then headed up to registration to get my number. I then got in my kit and pinned on my numbers before I got on the trainer to do my warm-up with Gianni (my brother) and Isaiah (teammate in 15-16). We started with just spinning for a little bit. Then we did the rest of our pyramids before putting on my Mavic Race wheels. I got all my stuff and then rolled up to the start. They were not ready for the juniors to get rolled out (check to make sure we have the right gearing). Once we did the roll out we went to the start line to get a talk from the ref about the course and the race. Once the race started there was an attack down the hill from SJBC. I jumped on him to keep it together. Then Gianni made an attack on the back stretch. It did not stick for long but that was ok because it was still really early in the race. Then we just rode for a couple of laps with little attacks here and there. I attacked on the backside as well and held it for just a bit then I got pulled back. We rolled for a while with a bunch of little attacks and the pace changing a lot. The next lap I looked over at the lap cards and we had 7 laps to go. My throat was really sore because it was cold and I was breathing pretty hard. I attacked on the hill with 6 to go and was off until the bottom. When the field caught me there was a counter attack by another rider and nobody on our team was able to get on them. By the time we got organized to pull it back it was too late. This is something I think Gianni, Isaiah and I learned and will take to the future races. After that we had to race our own race and go for the field sprint. With 1 lap to go we started to set up the field sprint. With a quarter of a lap to go I started to pick up the pace at the front and then Gianni pulled through to lead out Isaiah. Isaiah ended up winning his race, so did Gianni and I got Second in mine. It was a good Juniors race and I had a lot of fun. I took a lot out of the race and will use it in the future.

-Luke

Isaiah Chass

2nd Place Cherry Pie Criterium

Juniors 15-16

Cherry pie is always a fun race. When I showed up to the race it was still dark, so when we found a good parking spot, I got out and starting setting up my trainer. Then, I rolled up to registration with teammates Gianni and Luke. After getting my number, I rode back down to the team tent to put my numbers on. Then, I got on the trainer and started warming up. After getting in a good warm-up, I got off the trainer and took a Clif Shot. Then I rode up to the start line where I did roll out and then lined up. I waited at the start line for the race start and when the race referee blew the whistle there was an attack straight from the gun. I got on wheel, and caught up. We

made some good attacks and got off the front for a little bit, but eventually got caught. Right after the downhill, there was an attack, and I didn't get on his wheel. He got off the front and started opening up a gap. He got off the front with another rider in 17-18. They kept getting farther off the front and we weren't able to catch them. With 1 lap to go, Gianni started pulling me to the front, and Luke started leading Gianni out. We got cut off on the 2nd to last corner, so right before the chicane, Gianni started leading me out around the left side, we got a gap off of the field, and we started sprinting to the line.

-Isaiah

William Stark

3rd Place Cherry Pie Criterium Juniors 13-14

Coming into my second season racing, I was confident with my strength as a rider. I had trained hard during the offseason, and was hoping it would pay off in my first race of 2015. I didn't race in Cherry Pie last year because it was raining, so I wasn't familiar with the course. Since the field consisted of all juniors from 13 to 18-years-old, my goal was simply to stay somewhere in the lead pack of mostly older kids, and get a strong place for my category (13-14 Junior Men).

My family and I spent the night at the hotel across the street from the starting line, so I could wake up later, but still eat fairly early. I rode around the technical course once, and I did a good warm up before the race. I drank a lot of water as my team and I waited for rollout. As the race official explained the rules of the race, I took a deep breath and concentrated.

The race official blew his whistle sooner than I expected, and the race was off. I had some trouble clipping in to my pedals, and a couple of people went around me before I recovered myself. A few seconds after we turned the corner, I quickly looked back and noticed that I was at the back of the lead group. I slowly gained places in the pack throughout the race.

We were going a perfect pace for me, until there were two laps left in the race. Everyone sped up a little more than I could handle, but I was fine with that since I knew there weren't many 13-14-year-olds in the pack. I rode alone for those two laps with no one insight, in front or behind me. When I crossed the line, I wasn't sure exactly what place I got. I was excited to later hear that I placed third, my first podium finish, and first cherry pie.

-Willy

Sawyer Taylor

2nd Place Cherry Pie Criterium Junior W 13-18

The Cherry Pie Criterium was my most fun and probably most successful, racing experience yet! I got to the course almost an hour and a half early, so I had plenty of time to warm up and check out the course. When the race started, I was in the front right away as I had gotten a good position on the starting line. My first few laps were

awesome! I was in the front almost the entire time. Then, the pace began to pick up and I dropped back a bit. A few times when we were going around turns, I was forced into the inside line. This was a little scary, and I will try to avoid it in the future. Around our sixth lap, I heard a loud cracking noise and saw a girl go down behind me. At this point, I started panicking a little bit. It wasn't until Emily's mom, who was in the race, reassured me that I was able to get my head back in the game.

Because I got a little confused on what lap we were on (I thought that our second to last lap was our last one), I didn't start my sprint at the exact right moment. Now I know where I can see what lap my group is on! Still, I got second place in the junior 15-18 girl's category. I had an awesome time at the Cherry Pie. In addition to having a lot of fun, I learned a lot about how criteriums work.

-Sawyer

Miles Daly

22nd Place Cherry Pie Criterium Senior Category 3

Cherry Pie is that race that I remember getting dropped from the junior field in my very first races and getting lapped. And then the next year I was at the front and aggressive in the junior field. This year I was in the cat 3 men field which I was excited about. At the start line I saw a good field and knew it would be hard. When the gun went off I rode to the front and watched for attacks. And they came, I marked everyone and about every lap I or 3 other guys would attack trying to get away with each other. I wanted to race hard and I did, with 2 laps to go there was a crash right in front of me which got me off my rhythm and I dropped some places. I should have been in position for the sprint but I was fighting to make my way up which didn't happen. I am getting stronger every race and look forward to the next races.

-Miles

Isaiah Chass

7th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Senior Category 4

After racing the juniors race, I was warmed up, so I just spun around a little, did rollout again, and then lined up with the Cat 4s. The race started fast and I was 7th wheel going around the first corner. I stayed in the front, and made sure that I didn't get caught up in crash. The race seemed pretty short, so before I knew it we had 3 laps to go. I got farther up in the field and kept my position around the corners. I took a bad line in the 180-degree corner, and got pushed back. I had to fight my way back and with 1 to go I was in the front. I came out of the last corner and needed to move up more, so I decided to sprint around the left side because it worked in my juniors race earlier. I came out of the chicane 10th wheel, and then I started going as hard as I could to the finish making up a couple more spots.

-Isaiah

Luke Lamperti

11th Place Cherry Pie Criterium Senior Category 4

Going into this race I knew the course I just finished racing the junior field so I did not do a warm up because the races were back to back. We went to the line to get a pre race talk from one of the USA cycling officials. The race started and a guy took the front to get the race started at a high pace. Then nobody wanted to pull so the pace went way down until a person attacked and the whole field chased. I figured I would just sit in and not pull for a little bit because I had just done the juniors race. When we caught the break a rider went with 4 other guys. I knew after a little bit of them being off the front I would need to get there. The field started to catch them slowly. So when we got close I attacked the field and bridged up to the break. I just wanted to make sure they did not get away because they looked like a pretty good break. I got up to them then the field caught us after like two laps. I sat in again until on the last lap I got up to the front and picked my wheel. Going into the last corner I got cut off and almost hit the curb so I was not able to have a wheel but I sprinted and still got 11th. I had a great day of racing and was happy with both of my results. I am looking forward to next year at Cherry Pie.

-Luke

2. Land Park Criterium

3/14/15

Sacramento

Emily Abraham

10th Place Landpark Criterium P1/2/3 Women

The Landpark course is one that I'm very familiar with since it is also used for the Cal Aggie criterium in late January. I was stoked to race it again but it was also a little sad to realize it would be my last time racing it as a junior. I decided I needed to make it a memorable race!

I arrived at the race a little over an hour before my start with my dad and my best friend, who came to support me. After signing in and putting on my numbers, I kitted up and jumped on the trainer to begin my warm-up. My race was around eleven in the morning which was much better than eight or nine am. After thirty minutes of painful warming up, I was ready to race. I headed over to the start fifteen minutes before where I was able to watch my teammates, Luke, Gianni, and Isaiah finishing up the category 4 race. When the course was open right before my race, I did roll out. I figured I didn't need to do a preview lap since I'd raced this course at least six times before. Then I grabbed a place right on the start line. I didn't feel nervous when the whistle blew signaling for us to begin the race, instead I was excited to be racing my bike. My main goal for this race was simply to just stay with the field, at Cal Aggie I attempted the p1/2/3 women's race a couple hours after racing the women 3's and I

wasn't able to hang in with them so I was hoping for a better race this time. After a few laps in, I was feeling great. I became more confident on the tough corners on the backside of the course which helped me feel safer when I was in the pack. About fifteen minutes into the race, I was riding second wheel when a woman came up on left to make an attack. I followed and grabbed her wheel. We made a small break and I came around her to take a pull; assuming she wanted to work together to see if we could hold the break. I went hard on the stretch to the start/finish which started our next lap, I looked back and saw that I was alone but the field was quickly approaching me. I slowed up a little and dropped back in the field. Then I realized it would be better for me to just sit in rather than getting on the front, plus we began to pick up the pace. Unfortunately, I dropped too far back and I found myself at the tail end of the field where it's the hardest to hold on. I knew I was doing too much work on the back and I needed to move up to a better position. My legs were toast though and even if I did move up in position, I wasn't able to hold it. With three laps to go, a break of six got away from the rest of us. The pace got a lot faster in the last few laps as we tried to close down the break. Going into the last lap, I knew I needed to be at least third wheel but I couldn't get there. As we came through the last corner we had just barely caught the break so those six finished in front of the field. I was at the back of the field going into our sprint but I stood up and gave it all I had and surprisingly ended up placing 10th. This race was a great learning experience and a chance to race with the p1/2 women as well.

-Emily

Gianni Lamperti

10th Place Land Park Criterium

Senior Category 4

Before the race I did a nice and hard warm up before getting off the trainer and heading towards the start. After roll out I got on the line and was ready. The pace started hard but I kept myself towards the front. There was one guy who attacked and was solo for most of the race. There were many attempts to bridge to him but they all got caught by the field. Coming into the last lap I was in top ten and came around the last corner in top 15. I sprinted as hard as I could which felt like forever and passed 5 people for tenth. I missed getting into position for the sprint and it was amazing how important it is. It was ok but I hope to do better next year.

-Gianni

Luke Lamperti

3rd Place Land Park Criterium

Senior Category 4

This was my first race of the day at the Land Park crit. I was looking forward to the race because I had done it the year before and it was a super fun course and a nice race with always good weather. So when we got there I got out of the motorhome and

set up my stuff so I wasn't behind. Then I went to registration to get my numbers. After seeing how the other races were playing out and getting my number I knew what my plan was going to be. I was going to try to sit near the front and not pull too much and have good positioning going to last corner and then come around for the win in the last little bit. I then went back to the motorhome to get all my stuff on. I ate something then started spinning on the trainer. After doing my zone three and pyramids I spun for a little and then hopped off the trainer to put on my race wheels. Once I got everything ready I took my Clif Shot. Then I rolled over near the start to ride a lap after the race before us finished. I went to roll out to see if I had the right gears. Then I went to the start and was on the front line to start the race. Then a USAC official gave us our prerace speech. Then the whistle went tweeeet. There was an attack right off the start. We sat in the field but the break came back really fast. Then pretty much sitting in like I had planned. I didn't pull much until when I came to the front and another guy pulled off I took my easy pull. We only had a few laps to go and I was towards the front in the position that I really wanted to be. The front slowed so the field started to swarm. I then made a hard effort knowing if I was at the back with two to go I didn't have a chance. I came around and was in good positioning with one lap to go. I sat on a strong guy who I figured would do well in the sprint. I was third wheel going into the last corner. The guy on the front opened up a sprint really early. Then the guy who I was on started to go for first. I tried to come around him but was spun out with Junior gearing and tried and I ended up getting third. I was super tired and happy with my result from the cat 4. With one more race to come I went back to the motorhome to rest for a little bit because I had plenty of time. I had super fun in the cat 4 at Land Park and I'm looking forward to it next year.

-Luke

Isaiah Chass

17th Place Land Park Criterium Senior Men Category 4

When I got to Land Park, I set up my trainer, and got my number pinned. Then, I got on the trainer and started my warm-up. Once I felt ready to race, I got off the trainer, ate a Clif Shot, and then rolled to the line to do rollout. Once the race started, there were attacks right away. I made sure that I kept myself at the front, because I knew it would be much smoother. Halfway into the race, Luke got into a break, and they stayed off the front for a while. I moved up while the field wasn't drilling it. Then, there was a prime, so I held my position while everyone sprinted to the line. With 3 laps to go, I stayed towards the front, and waited for the bell to ring for 1 lap to go. The field started lifting the pace, and on the last corner I got pushed out a little, so I knew I would have to sprint even harder, I got on someone's wheel for a few seconds, and then I sprinted around him with 200m to go. I sprinted to the line for 15th. After doing one cool down lap, I rode to the car, and raced to the next race, the Norcal MTB Race #2.

-Isaiah

Gianni Lamperti

1st Place Land Park Criterium Juniors 13-14

At the start I was a little tired from the cat 4 race but still ready to race. At the start I got on the front and pulled at low zone three for the first lap and then looked back and it was only my brother and a limitless rider. As soon as I pulled my brother pulled through and the pace slowed. My brother went to pull off and he stopped pedaling so I went to the front and when I pulled off Limitless attacked and when he sat down I immediately countered. I stayed away for about 2 minutes before my brother bridged up to me and we worked together for the rest of the race until the finish. I needed to get more points to get my category 3 upgrade so my brother let me take the win. It was a great, hot day of racing!

-Gianni

Luke Lamperti

2nd Place Land Park Criterium Juniors 13-14

I had already raced so I just did an easy warm up on the trainer and then rolled over near the start. I did roll out and then went to line to get a pre race talk from the official. "Start on the whistle" tweet and the race was off and my teammate pulled for a minute and then pulled off and the other rider did not want to pull so I pulled and when I flicked my arm he attacked us. My teammate attacked at the same time and he was not expecting this. I jumped on the kid's wheel. I sat on as he chased. My teammate was just pulling away so I waited for a lap and then attacked and bridged up to my Teammate. From there we just rode at a steady pace until the finish. My Teammate took the win and I took second. I had a fun day of racing at Land Park.

-Luke

3. Bariani Road Race

3/15/15

Zamora

Ben Cook

16, cat 3

10th Place Bariani Road Race Senior Category 3

Bariani road race has long been a favorite of mine. Last year, in my first ever cat 3 race, I placed 4th. Today I would race with my teammate Miles to see if we could land another rider on the podium. I spun my legs for a warm-up just as I did last year. I kept the routine exactly the same. The orange and purple morning sun rose over the olive oil factory at about 7am. We were to start at 8:10. I met up with my teammate Miles and spun some with him.

After our warm-up, I waited at the start line towards the front. However after doing junior rollout, the official sent me to the back! The way back! I began to squeeze my way through riders at the start line to make up some position and get up to where Miles was. A rider in an orange kit closed down a spot I was looking at and gave me the stink eye.

"In a hurry?" He said.

"Sorry sir, just trying to move up to my teammate." I said as I looked for other ways around him.

"Well kid, you've got 70 miles to move up. So chill out." Such attitude! I kept my mouth shut, but I slide up on his right to make it one more row closer to Miles.

There were 72 starters today. Carlos, the local USAC official, gave us the race instructions. Stretched my legs some and got ready to start. It was a "neutral" start, but only for a few hundred meters.

"Gentlemen, your race will start on the whistle." The rider in the orange kit was glaring into my soul.

"Geez man." Was all I thought. The whistle tweeted and we were off! I began to gradually make my way through riders. By the time the neutral zone ended, I was in the top 20 near Miles. Last year the breakaway went from the very start. I jumped in, rotated for 70 miles, and landed on the podium! It was that simple. An attack went. I followed. I rotated with a few other riders, but soon a Limitless rider sat on the front and dragged us back with everything he had. It was Connor.

"No breakaway today?" I asked, half to him, half to myself. He told me that there wouldn't be one unless they were in it. Shoot. Limitless won this race last year by getting into the break with me. But today it was far too windy for anything to go. I tried for a few more moves before heading back to the pack. I soon found myself amidst the middle of a slowing group, where riders began to lock up brakes and swerve around. This stressed me out. This situation always stresses me out. Would a move go? Would I miss it? Or was I wasting my time? I wasn't sure. For the next lap and a half, I tried my hardest to keep my cool. I stretched, ate, drank, did everything.

Finally, one rider has a gap. Then one by one, riders were bridging up to him. I followed a move. The field was crawling behind us. I worked in rotation with one other rider, and was soon joined by one more. However we could not catch the rider out in front. He was extremely strong and smart, Zach Morvant, a friend of mine. I felt like if I attacked I could get him. He was so close, but I had to continue to work together.

I shared the work with my break mates, but one of them wasn't rotating smoothly. He would surge around me, leaving the other rider, Andrew, and I without any rest. I knew that 30 second pulls were best. That was how we did it last year. I shouted over the wind, but they wouldn't agree to longer pulls. I should have just attacked and caught Zach before the headwind. By the time we hit the headwind section, there was no chance of staying away. The field reeled us in. I headed to mid pack, but found myself stressed and not recovering well enough. Finally, I realized nothing was going to slip away and headed to the back for some much needed rest and stretching. I took a Clif Shot and slid back through the field.

There is a famous expression in cycling called "punching tickets". Imagine a train conductor who stands by the door. Every time somebody gets on the train, they have to pass by the conductor to get their ticket punched. Now you can imagine me, the train conductor. Sitting at the back of the field, and every time a rider gets dropped, they have to pass by me and get their ticket punched, but I never get dropped myself. The pace blistered on for the next two laps. I witnessed two crashed and nearly 20 riders get dropped around me, but managed to hang in there.

During the "bumpy-uphill-narrow-sandy-head/crosswind-Paris-Roubaix" section on the last lap, I looked over at one of my buddies who had been sitting at the back with me.

He nearly punched my ticket at that moment, but I hung in there. However, I saw Miles begin to lose some ground with me. He came by my left side drifting backwards.

If I was going to get dropped, I was going to get dropped with my teammate. I was determined to do everything I could to help him survive, for the good of both of us. I reached out my hand to give him a throw forwards. I was shocked at what he did next.

He reversed his handhold and slingshotted me up the field. That was the last I saw of him until I reached the parking lot. There were about 40 riders left in the field as the pace kept up for the last 10k.

There were just 5k to go. 3k to the turn, 2k to the finish. I looked over at my fellow train conductor.

"Got any last tricks up your sleeve?"

"Go hard until you see the line!" He said with a smile. I moved up through the field as we entered the final turn. However, I was on the wrong side of the field and the wind hit me from the inside, sending me straight to the last wheel. Shoot! 2k to go and I was struggling to hang onto the wheel in front of me. I was the last rider in our 40 person remaining pack. However, I remembered what my friend had told me. I began squeeze in between riders and build up my power to the front. Riders swerved around in the wind. I managed a spot near the front at 1k to go. But I was totally exposed. If I were to go back and find a wheel, I would have lost all my position. It was me on the left versus a four man Dolce Vita lead-out train on my right. At 1k to go. Into a headwind. But I didn't stop. I hammered with everything I had to the line as riders began to pass around me in the last 50 meters. I threw my bike to the line and managed 7th place in the field sprint! How I did that, I wasn't too sure.

After the race, I thanked Miles for the help as I prepared my other teammate Emmet for his cat 4 race. The following day, I was chatting with Robin Zellner at my local shop. Robin was a friend and business partner of my father, and the director of the Kodak Gallery Pro team. I told him the story of my mountain bike race on Saturday, then my road race on Sunday.

"Nice job! That's how you turn a bad day around. You placed and you went out and raced 70 miles. Congratulations."

"Thank you! But remember that I only raced for the last 2000 meters, and pulled a placing out of thin air. It was pretty spectacular actually. I would have liked to have done better, but it was my best effort."

"But you saved energy. You raced. And you placed. So again, congratulations. That's what matters."

I was humbled to be told this by such an accomplished ex-pro rider.

"Thank you."

-Ben

Emily Abraham

12th place Bariani Road Race P1/2/3 Women

Honestly, I'm not a big fan of this race. At least after last year's experience I wasn't too thrilled to be racing it again. Last year I managed to get 5th place in the women 4 category, but I felt horrible and the amount of wind on the course just destroyed me. Since I'm in a higher category this year, the race was about 100 times harder and a lot more fun. My race started at 2:30 in the afternoon so I had the whole morning to sleep a little longer and just relax. My dad and I arrived at the course early with nearly two hours to my start. It made me somewhat anxious to be there that early but it also gave me a chance to talk to Ben about his race that had just finished and say "hi" to Sawyer before her start. I began my warm-up on my trainer an hour before my start which was a long time, but I figured I'd just get off earlier then spin on the road if I needed to. About twenty-five minutes until the race, I hopped off the trainer and did all I needed to do before going to junior roll out and lining up on the start. The start line/area was kind of convoluted so I wasn't able to get a spot on the line; I ended up lining up close to the back. Our race was combined with the Master's 35+ Women so there were about fifty of us. As soon we took off, I knew I wasn't in a good position and I needed to move up. But it turned out to be extremely difficult to move up, I tried to move up on the left side and position myself better in the pack but then people would start moving up on the right and soon enough I found myself at the back again. The entire race was a struggle to find position for me so I definitely learned that I need to be more aggressive in order to be a true part in the race. On the first lap when we approached one of the right hand turns and the field slowed up, I took the opportunity to move up. I was able to claim a good spot about mid pack and I held that for a while until we got into the cross-wind and slightly downhill section of the course. A woman attacked on this section and I was struggling to keep up. I dropped to the back of the field and just held on as best as I could. I was still with the field when we turned right onto the stretch of road that leads to the finish. I figured since we were allowed the whole road on this part, it was a good time to grab a better position. I found myself a good position in the middle of the pack and managed to stay there for a few miles. Then about a mile or so into the second lap, we picked the pace up and more women kept moving up on the right side and soon enough I was at the back again. For pretty much the entire second lap I was just barely holding on at the tail end of the field. I knew I was doing more work back there then I would be if I just moved up to a position in the field but I was still struggling to get up there. As we approached that same cross-wind rolling section, a break of six got away from the field. I didn't see it happen since I was at the very back but I knew when it happened because the race got a lot harder. The women in the break were strong and the rest of us in the field had a difficult time getting organized to attempt to bridge the gap so the break just kept

getting bigger. They were only about ten seconds in front of us when we crossed the finish line to begin our third and final lap but after that they only got further and further away from us. On the third lap I was able to get better position because instead of a fight for position, like it was on the previous laps, everyone was trying to work together to close down the gap. I even took a turn pulling but after that I realized how tired my legs were and had to drop to the back of the field again. I stayed there for the rest of the race until the final section to the finish. I grabbed a good position for my sprint but started it too early so my legs were completely toast when we got the finish line. This race was by far the hardest one I've done so far this seen but I learned so much about myself as a racer and what I need to do in order to improve.

-Emily

Sawyer Taylor

2nd Place Bariani Road Race Junior W 13-18

The Bariani Road Race was a great learning experience for me. Additionally, this race was also super exciting and lots of fun. Because I didn't race until 2:40, my mom and I left the house at 11:30 for the two hour drive to Zamora. Aside from watching a Sheepdog competition alongside a Country Road for a few minutes, the drive was mostly uneventful. When we got to the Bariani warehouse, my mom and I went to registration. Although the person checking people in was very nice, he looked a little lost. He kept asking people for help, and I had to find the number assigned to me in the pile of bibs. After getting all of my stuff together, I warmed up and ate something. Pretty soon it was time to race.

After the neutral start, I immediately jumped on the wheel of the point leader for the women 4's, which the jr. girls were mixed in with. Before the race began, one of the officials announced who was leading for points, and I assumed she would be a good person to get behind. For the first half of a lap, I stayed in the front with the five women leading the pack. Then, we ran into some potholes, and I slipped back into the middle of the pack. Because it was so windy, this actually was a lot easier of a position. At the feed zone, I threw my empty water bottle to my mom and pulled my full bottle out of my jersey. Our second lap had begun.

While my second lap was pretty good, it wasn't as good as my first. When my group crossed over the first overpass, I decided to drink some more water. Suddenly, the person in front of me slowed down without saying anything. I almost rear-ended her as I yelled "slowing" while half-choking on my water. Again, I dropped back a little bit more when riding over the potholes. Still, I was able to stay with the group until the final sprint to the finish. They pulled ahead of me near the second overpass, but I finished, not far behind, in second place in my category.

After the post-race talk, I watched Emily finish her race and then went to go see the results. As it turns out, I was given the wrong bib number. When the jr. girls checked in, they were supposed to get a different number than what their registration form said. According to my number, I was supposed to be a cat 1, 2, or 3 boy when I'm really a cat 4 girl. While I would have gotten first in my category, I didn't want to mess

up my points. My mom and I got it sorted out with the race officials and registration people, and the correct results were posted. After doing podiums and then stretching and rolling, my mom and I went home. I had a lot of fun at Bariani Road Race. Additionally, I learned a lot about doing longer road races.

-Sawyer

Luke Lamperti

11th Place Bariani Road Race Senior Category 4

I was at the race a long time before because I raced Land Park the day before and stayed in the motorhome overnight so we did not have to get up early to drive because we were an earlier race. We were on the wait list because we forgot to sign up so we didn't know if we were going to get in until 20 minutes before. We were third on the wait list so there's a good chance we were going to get in but we still didn't know. I did my warm-up hoping we would get in. Ate some food and then 20 minutes before went to registration and found out I got in. Then my mom put on my number and I rolled to the start line. On my way I did one more quick jump just in case there was an attack in the beginning of the race. The USAC official gave us our pre race speech and then we rolled from the start line. The first little bit was neutral and then the motor ref put up his sign and said the race was on. We started in the headwind section so nobody wanted to pull in the first little bit. Then we came to a head cross and some people started pulling so the pace picked up. We rode pretty steady at the beginning because our race was 50 miles and 4 laps. With a few attacks here and there for the first few laps nothing went away and it stayed steady with not too many hard efforts. When we came through with two laps to go in the head wind there was a big attack. There were then 2 riders about 15 seconds up the road. This was not a threat so they did not chase too hard. We caught them on the back straight where there was a tail wind. The field rode at about zone three for little bit until we had one lap to go. Then you could feel the pace start to pick up. I knew this lap was going to be fast with a lot of people trying to get in position so I got into position. I also wanted to be at the front so I did not get in a crash. Coming into the last street I was on a good wheel but we still had 3K to go. I was about fifth wheel when I heard a huge crash that took out about half of the field. I kept sprinting with only five guys in front of me trying to get back on the wheel after getting split from the crash. I chased with another group behind me. They caught me right before the line and passed me. I was happy with in 11th place finish learned a lot and had fun. I am looking forward to this race again next year.

-Luke

Gianni Lamperti

29th Place Bariani Road Race Senior Category 4

As the race started I stayed toward the front but sat in and stayed out of the wind. By the second lap I drifted back to midfield and stayed there for the next two laps, as the pace was pretty fast, before I started to move back up to the front. People

kept dropping bottles on the rough section and I always had to keep my head up. Coming into the last lap I was slowly moving up to the front and by the last corner I was top ten. The field spread across the road and when this happened someone about 2 wheels up crossed wheels and went down. I started breaking as everyone in front of me was crashing. I was on my front wheel due to breaking so hard and was about stopped and was going to miss the crash when someone from behind me hit me square in the back and I went over the bars. That person landed on me along with his bike. I pushed off his bike and ran back to my bike and hopped on and started sprinting to the finish. When I got there I looked down and my knee only had a little road rash along with my shoulder and hip. I also had a chain ring mark under my arm but I was incredibly lucky that that is all that happened. My bike was good enough to race again with only a bent hood and a little bend in my derailleur. I am bummed with my result but also know that crashing is part of racing. I will come back and do my best next year!

-Gianni

Isaiah Chass

3rd Place Bariani Road Race Junior 15-18, Category 4/5

When I arrived at the race, I walked over to registration and got my number. Then, I walked back to the car and put my number on. After getting ready, I went out on the road and started warming up. After doing a pyramid, I felt ready to race, so I rode back to the car and saw my teammates Luke and Gianni. Then, we rode to the start and lined up. When the race started, there were a few attacks right away but we made sure to cover them. Then, there was a big attack by Robert Terra and Gianni was on his wheel. They started opening up a gap and it looked like they were going to stay away. They kept getting farther and farther up the road and eventually they were far enough off the front that Luke and I decided to try to send another rider up the road. On the backside of the course I made an attack and got off the front. I stayed off for a little bit but I knew I wasn't going to be able to catch them, so I eased up and got back in the group. Luke and I sat in for the rest of the lap. On the next lap, we decided to try to get off the front again with another rider. On the backside of the course again we made an attack but we didn't get off. With about a third of a lap to go there was an attack that split the field and there were about 5 of us up the road. We kept a gap from the rest of the group and when we got to about 2k to go there were a few riders gaining on us. We pulled hard and when we got to 500m to go, they were starting to catch us, so Luke started to lead me out. At 200m to go I started my sprint and I was going as hard as I could. There were two riders on my wheel and they were coming around me. I got on their wheel, but as they started to sprint I wasn't able to stay on. I sprinted to the line for 3rd in my category.

-Isaiah

Luke Lamperti

5th Place Bariani Road Race Juniors 15-16

I was really tired going into this race because I already raced the category 4's that morning. But I still knew I had a chance to do okay. I went to the start line got rolled out and the USAC official gave us our pre race speech. Then we rolled out in the race is on. A 17/18 kid made an attack and I jumped on his wheel. The field caught us fast and then a few minutes later he made another one that my teammates were on. They were going pretty good and pulling away fast. I knew after a little while there were two strong kids in the break. I knew they were going to stay. So I knew if we sat in the field me and my other teammate could try for the sprint. We sat and with other teams trying to get it back. This race was only two laps so with half of lap to go I made a big attack with my teammate Isaiah on my wheel. I figured if we kept going it brought the sprint down to only two other guys. With 1K to go the field was right behind us. So I got on the front and pulled hard with my teammate in on my wheel and left him with 200 meters to go when he opened up his sprint. He ended up getting third overall for the day. I was happy to have a fun day of racing and I'm looking forward to Bariani next year.

-Luke

Gianni Lamperti

1st Place Bariani Road Race Juniors 15-18

After the 4 race I decided to race the Junior Race 15-18. After checking my bike and all seemed to be ok to race I jumped on and headed to the start. It cruised out neutral and about 30 seconds after the gun there was an attack from a 15-18 rider and I followed. We worked together until we got a pretty big lead then he did the majority of the pulling. I was out of water and he was super nice and gave me some of his. Coming into the last corner when I was on the front he attacked and I did not see it for a minute then jumped and could not hang with him so I rode hard into the finish with him taking the win. The results were split in cat 4/5 and 1/2/3. He was a Cat 3 so we both won our categories. This was a good way to end a day of that started bad.

-Gianni

4. San Dimas Stage Race

3/27-29/15

San Dimas

Miles Daly

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 st Place | San Dimas Stage Race, ITT | Juniors 17-18 |
| 19 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 17-18 |
| 6 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, CRIT | Juniors 17-18 |
| 2 nd Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 17-18 |

Stage 1: Individual Time Trial

After driving down to San Dimas the previous day I felt well prepared and ready for a hard uphill time trial. We left our hotel as a team and rolled to the start where we had our trainers set up with the help of some very helpful parents. I began my warm up with my team and felt very good but was worried about the heat. I got off the trainer and rolled to the start line where I lined up with the number 777 pinned to my skin suit. I was given the minute to start and prepared myself for the hard time trial lying ahead. When I saw the officer's hand and he said, 5,4,3,2,1 go. I got into a good gear and didn't blow up before the climb. I started climbing and was out of the saddle the whole time grinding away and passing riders. I was feeling good and kept going strong. I knew when the 1k sign came into sight I needed to stay steady and keep pushing. I crossed the line and was confident that I put myself in good placing. I was very happy to see that I was able to win and take the yellow jersey.

Stage 2: Road Race

Stage 2 marked a couple of milestones for me; it was my second stage race and the first time wearing a leader's jersey in a race. We rode to the start from our hotel in good spirits to pick up the yellow jersey and get the Lucky 777 number pinned. I was supported by my teammates from everything from tire pressure to making sure that I was ready with bottles before the start.

We rolled to staging area and after rollout waited with a large field of juniors. I knew it would be tough defending yellow with a 4 second lead to second with a young team but I was confident in our ability to work together. When the race started it started fast and I saw my teammates up front marking moves. This was the same for the whole first lap. On lap 2 there was a kom, and my teammates lead me out for a perfect position coming up into the climb and I rode well up it the first time. After the group came back together we had a fast run into the finishing straight. Lap 3 came with a hot sport sprint at the end and lots of attacks which my team covered. Lap 4 was another kom where I cramped bad but managed to get over with the help of Ben and then recover and eat.

Then during the next few laps we managed to let the second place rider slip by us and get up the road. I wasn't at the front and he made a good move which I was boxed out from and couldn't respond. For the next whole lap Ben along with Gianni, Isaiah and Luke worked on the front and drilled it trying to bring it back but we didn't have the time.

Coming up the last climb I was getting boxed out and losing position but I saw Gianni and he came up and we rode back up together. Coming into the finish it was fast and in the sprint I was feeling good but a rider's rear skewer went into my front wheel and I barely saved it which cost me precious seconds. I was sad to lose the leaders jersey but was happy to be able to represent it with the help of an amazing team.

Stage 3: Criterium

After a hard and fast road race I felt very recovered and ready to defend my 2nd place podium overall. As a team we knew we could hold onto a podium finish and we knew the riders that were dangerous. We warmed up on course and I felt ready to go.

One of my teammates Emmet who was unable to race the crit was very helpful and he made sure I was ready and prepared which I was very thankful.

After lining up next to all of my teammates I felt calm and ready to race. When the race started my goal was to be first into the first corner and I accomplished that. For the first part of the race it was fast and dangerous and my team attacked and countered. 10 minutes in there was a sprint which I knew my riders near me on GC weren't going to get so I was safe. Then the next 15 minutes seemed to go by fast. Actually a little too fast. I came by the finish and I heard the bell and saw the GC leader falling back and I told my teammate Ben, "The faster it is the safer it is." He went to the front and kept the pace high. Coming into the last corner I went inside and came out in good position to sprint and game in with a 6th place finish.

Overall I was happy to get second and couldn't have done it without my teammates, my coach and all of the parents and sponsors. Also, the race promoter put on an amazing junior race and can't wait to race it next year and for years to come.
-Miles

Ben Cook

16, cat 3

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 11 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 15-16 |
| 13 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 15-16 |
| 8 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Juniors 15-16 |
| 9 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 15-16 |

Stage 1: Individual Time Trial

Today, I learned a lot about my time trial. San Dimas would be the second time this season that I placed a lower time in a time trial than last year. The first was Valley of the Sun.

I woke up in the morning at about 8:30am for breakfast with my teammates, Ethan and Emmet. We hung out in my hotel room some before all heading to our own rooms to get changed. We were to meet in the parking lot at 11:15 to put our bags in the cars heading up to the TT. 10 minutes later we would roll from the parking lot to the TT course.

On the ride over, it was already about 85 degrees. I loved the dry heat. We climbed up to the Lamperti's motor home and jumped on the trainers. I remember somebody once telling me that the only thing harder than a time trial warm-up is a time trial itself. I hid under the shade of the motor home as I suffered through my warm-up. When I was done, I ate a pack of Clif Bloks, rolled up my skinsuit, and spun around on the road some before heading over to do rollout and wait in the shade with Coach Laura and my teammate Emily, who raced earlier that morning. As I waited in the shade, I discussed the plan with coach one last time before my start. Since the course was so hot and uphill, it was very easy to blow up on the flat section before the actual climb. Last year I started off too hard and was blown by the finish, so this year I wanted to take it a bit lighter in the start so I had some for the finish.

"5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Go!" And I was off! I sprinted down the road in my drops. I started off light on the pedals, and was only at 175bpm by the time I hit the turn. Way too easy, but not something I had realized just yet. I kept on top of the gear, but was soon passed by a panting rider on my left. "Already?" I thought. However, I kept my cool and rode my own race. As the climb progressed I began to ramp up gradually, and the rider who passed me was coming closer and closer. I shifted into the big ring for the final kilometer and gave it everything, and got the rider back within just a few seconds of me. I finished, recovered for a bit, and headed back down. When I checked results, I was bummed to find I placed 11th. It's still just a bit better than I did last year, as I got 10th place out of 30 riders, rather than 11th out of 40 today. However, my time was slower by about 20 seconds. I was bummed and confused, so I talked to coach Laura for some much needed advice.

What I learned was that I was starting my time trials too easy, and losing time. By starting too easy, I was also finishing with some energy left, no matter how hard I had gone in the final kilometers. I thought about how I set my times last year. In both Valley of the Sun, San Dimas, and Nationals, I headed out hard, reached my TT heart rate quickly, and was at my best a little past halfway through the time trial. For the remainder, I still had the energy to push myself hard and maintain speed, but all the while I pushing so that I would not blow up. I remember thinking at 5k out from the finish at Valley of the Sun last year, that if I stop pedaling for even just one pedal stroke, I would be so blown that I wouldn't be able to finish. So I pedaled on and set a fantastic time for my age.

I think it comes down to a bad practice time trial I did where I had I blown up, a fear of poor results, and not really going out there and giving it everything physically. I know that I have the ability to push myself hard, as I do in MTB and road races, like the San Dimas road race the next day. However, faced with nothing but the elements and my mind, I seem to have lost my pacing and mental strength somewhat. However, I know what to work on before nationals now. I will improve my time trial by doing practice TT's, working harder on and off the bike to rebuild my ability to suffer, and spend more time training alone to improve my mental strength. The good news is that I have a lot of time to prepare before nationals!

In the end, the San Dimas time trial was a major learning experience for me. I feel that as far as preparation, I did very well in keeping myself stress free and preparing all of my equipment prior to the time trial. However, I have learned that I need to work on my time trial effort and produce a better start, and the only way to do that is lots of practice! See you next year, San Dimas!

Stage 2: Road Race

With a fantastic time trial behind us and a yellow leader's jersey on our backs, Team Swift would be heading into the San Dimas road race ready to race aggressive and defend our lead. I spun over to the course early in the morning with my teammates, where we would then meet our Coach Laura with the team van. The morning was chilly but sunny. I was feeling good after having a good night's sleep and big breakfast.

We headed to the van, dropped off our bags and extra clothes, then all headed to the bathrooms early. From there we hopped on course to do our warm-up. Coach had us doing a 5' z3 followed by half of a one minute pyramid only. That meant a 15 second, 30 second, and one minute jump. I headed out with my teammates Miles and Luke. Miles warmed up with his newly acquired yellow jersey on. Today, I would be Miles right hand man, or his super domestique. I lead the warm-up, but noticed Luke barely sticking to my wheel during the 30 second. I asked Miles if he wanted to do the one minute on my wheel, since he would be there a lot today. He said yes. I started off the interval fast but steady, and got out of the saddle making myself as big as possible for him, as I had learned from a Team Swift alumni, Ryan. After about 20 seconds I got back in the saddle, now in the 14t, and hammered as hard as I could.

Power in the saddle had become one of my strong suits; I felt that it would greatly help me in assisting Miles today. It did just that. I got out of the saddle, still in the last gear, for the final few second of the interval. "Good?" I said, panting as I looked over at Miles. "Good, you were really steady with lots of draft." Nothing ever motivates me like working for a teammate. I remember how at the Valley of the Sun criterium, my teammate Isaiah and I buried ourselves for each other. It was a beautiful race and we were both so motivated for each other. That was the first of many hard efforts for my awesome teammate Miles.

We spun around a bit more before heading to the bathrooms one last time, then over to junior rollout. Once we were all in staging, I found myself surrounded by my teammates in the second row of riders behind barrier holding us back from the road.

However, riders advanced on the sides around the barrier. As coach would say, we got "flicked". But that's how racing works, especially in a high energy junior field. We lined up in the 3rd and 4th rows now. Coach gave us our last pre race talk; we marked the rider in second place, and set out with the goal to hold onto the yellow jersey. She also reminded me that I was the leader on the road. Since our captain, Emily, doesn't race with us, I would be leading the team today.

The rider who was 2nd to Miles was just a mere 4 seconds down. I was to keep the closest eye on Miles, always know where he was, how he was doing, and how I could help him. The others, Isaiah, Ethan, Emmet, Luke, and Gianni, were to support him by keeping their eye on him and keeping him safe in the field. I would cover attacks, work on the front, escort Miles through the field, direct my teammates around the race, monitor each rider, and even get Miles bottles when he needed them. I however, only had one bottle cage on my bike. The rivets for the rear cage had been torn out in a crash in a recent race. Therefore, a cage could not be mounted. Coach told the others that they would need to bring me food and water when I needed it.

Miles was to stay out of the feed zone, but the rest of us were to grab bottles whenever we could. If nobody needed it, we could throw it out. As we started off the race neutral, I found all my teammates and gathered them around near the front with Miles right next to me. Fortunately, the pace was already pretty high, so by the time the neutral ended, we didn't go much faster. I gained a feel for having my teammates around me, moving them around like chess pieces, and keeping Miles safe from crashes

and helping him save as much energy as possible. I would also soon gather a feel for having my face in the wind, as there would be a lot of that today.

Through the first few corners, I found myself following the early attacks to stop an early break from going. Together was better. The strong riders always won this race, and they usually went on the hill. A rider sat on the front and pulled, asking me to pull around him. But I didn't mind, so I just shook my head no and sat on his wheel.

A few more riders, including the 15-16's yellow jersey, pulled through in front of me as well. Over the feed hill, the pace lifted. Miles and I were both in the top 10 still, with the others a bit farther back in the 75 deep field. For the rest of the first lap I did some work to get Miles to the front of the race before the climb, as coach had talked about.

It was the rollers after the feed hill that would be important. I pulled to the front over the top of the feed hill and down the fast descent. I stayed near the front for Miles, spending time riding tempo for him. When we came down into the two tight corners before the climb, the field rushed around me. However, I saw the yellow jersey right in 4th wheel. Perfect. I had done my job for the lap, so I worked my way over the climb in the middle of the group before moving myself back up on the flats. Miles was in about 10th wheel with Luke at his side! Perfect.

We were going to have to be cautious of the hot spot sprints, as Christian, who was in 2nd place, could grab 3 seconds if he won a sprint. I met up with Miles and asked him how the first lap went. He said it was good, and he liked it when I was on the front from the feed hill to the base of the climb. He said it made him comfortable when I set the pace fast, as he knew it would keep the race nice and steady and nobody was going to argue if I was doing their pulling for them. He said it also helped him move up, as I intentionally didn't sprint out of the turns to save his legs.

For the next 3 laps or so, I spent similar time on the front. When it came time for the hotspot sprints, I went for them. Miles and Christian were not going to separate, so I powered into the sprint to drag the field around Christian who was trying to get the time bonuses. I was unable to claim the time bonuses since I was in the 15-16 age group, but by out sprinting Christian, other 17-18's would sprint as well and take the bonus away from Christian, thus keeping Miles safe.

I saw and survived lots during my time working for Miles. On the 3rd lap, Miles motioned from the other side of the field for me to grab him a bottle in the feed zone.

I grabbed a bottle from Mr. Frankel, Ethan's dad, just like coach had taught him in the team meeting the night prior. We were running out of road before the top of the feed climb, but Miles and I desperately tried get across to each other to hand off the bottle, as I only had one cage. Suddenly, towards the top of the climb, a gap opened in the field right in between Miles and me! Perfect for the handoff, I moved left to give him the bottle. However, the field swerved and when I looked forwards again, I was confronted with a park kiosk not even a meter in front of me. Still with my hand extended, I felt Miles grab the bottle just as I retracted my arm. Swerving left, I grabbed the drops and held on tight. I escaped with just hitting a pedal that caused me to unclip. I heard a few riders go down behind me, so I did a quick roll call as we entered the descent. Team Swift was all safe. I had my teammate Isaiah inspect my cleat from behind on the descent. Everything was fine! "Now that's a testament to how

strong Shimano pedals are!" I told Miles. We both smiled, relieved that the team was ok. The next lap, I asked Miles if he needed another bottle. He said no with a laugh. I grabbed myself a bottle from one of the parents and headed to the front to position Miles for the climb.

Finally, it was the 5th lap. I was resting in the upper field, feeling the effects of my work for Miles. I took another Shot and ate some Bloks, shook out and stretched my legs, and tried to rest as best I could. I found Miles.

"How you feeling?" His answer had changed from "good" to "Eh" over the course of the race.

"How? You hurting? Need anything? Let me know what I can do." I said.

"I'm good on food and water. If I can make it over this climb I'll be good. Set me in position and watch me, make sure I don't go behind you." He said. Got it. I headed to the near front to control the race for him. Leading the field on the descent, I could feel a rider coming around my inside before the turns. It was none other than Christian. I accelerated to try to keep him in, but he was in the power position to push me out. His bars in front of mine, I drifted back in the turn. It was really hard for me to hold my own on the run in to the climb. The best place was to be where Miles was, near the front, then pass riders in the turn. In my case, I was kicked back down the line of riders entering the turns. However, I saw the gleaming yellow jersey fly through the turns in 4th wheel. I knew I had done my job, but I really wanted to be at the front with Miles. Just to keep an eye on Christian. At that point in time, I prayed that Miles would be able to hang on. But it was at the top of the climb that I found him slipping backwards, and very quickly too. He just didn't have the power to punch it over a steep and short climb like that. I had to decide, go after Christian, or hope that he didn't get a gap and protect Miles.

I weighed my options, at this point Miles was at my side, and I had lost too much time to chase Christian. I stayed with Miles. Fans cheered wildly over the climb.

The early morning sun hit our eyes over the top of the hill. Miles slid back again, his skinny legs hammering everything into the pedals. I had to go forward. I kept Miles nearby, didn't let my engine rip just yet, and paced us through the turns. After some chasing, we were finally towards the front of the strung out group. Through all the drama of keeping Miles intact, I forgot one major thing. Christian. At this point, he had a gap on us, but not that I had known. It was a hotspot sprint lap; I thought he was still in the field at this point in time. I led the field from about 300 meters down the long drag race to the finish line, nearly blowing myself to protect the sprint. 3 riders were just in sight ahead of us, but I was starting to really hurt. I heard Tony Lamperti, Luke and Gianni's dad, yelling from the side of the road.

"Come on orange guys! Catch them!" In true Tony style, the whole field heard him.

Those "orange guys" were team Rokform, a large track team that seemed somewhat motivate to chase, but not enough. At this point I had no idea that Christian was up the road, or that he was so close to us.

Miles came up my side. If he was passing me, I needed to be farther up.

Rokform was doing some work on the front, but I needed to be at the front of the field with Miles before the turns. Hiding behind the strung out field in the cross winds, I

muscled my way up the side of the field, dropping Miles off at about 5th wheel, then heading to the front to keep it steady through the turns. The break probably had about 5 seconds on us. Until the feed climb, the pace was very similar to the first lap, oddly enough. Me at the front, riders happily pulling in front of me. I chatted with a rider and friend from B.Y.R.D.S, Trent, about the break. He wanted to block with me because he had a rider down the road. I should have asked who else was in the group. However, a Monster Media rider answered my question for me as I took to the front to lead Miles up the feed zone climb. I knew this would be another crucial lap of getting Miles over heckler hill.

"Nobody's going to work with you!" The rider said teasingly, yet under heavy breathing as he tried to get to my side. I didn't say anything. Nobody had worked with me the whole race, I was just setting tempo for our leader. That simple.

"Nobody's going to pull through! You guys lost!" I wasn't asking anybody to pull through, buddy! But he caught me at "you lost".

"What? Why? Who's up the road?" I said, panting, as we shared the tempo side by side.

"Christian's up the road!! Ha! You guys lost!" He panted harder. Really? I didn't say anything to him, but immediately called Team Swift to the front. Everybody was in the top 20 already. I waved my hand and yelled for them to get up front to help me chase.

It was only a minute or two before I was surrounded by three other teammates, with Miles in tow. We paelined hard, just like coach taught us during team rides. At about 15 second pulls, we worked hard to catch Christian. There wasn't much time left and he was too far up the road but we worked anyways. At the bottom of the climb, Miles was only mid field this time, Rokform attacked hard. They were trying to take advantage of us. However, they all slid back on the steeper part of the climb. Miles dug harder than I had ever seen him dig before and we made it over together. On the run in to the finish, Rokform took up the chase. 2k to go and the race was over, we had lost the yellow jersey. But there was nothing to do but contest the sprint, and that was my job. At 500 meters to go, which I thought was less than 300 meters to go; my tired legs ramped up hard in the saddle. Just like I had done to win the hotspot sprint, I powered through the field.

"Right! Right! Right!" I heard Rokform calling as I accelerated past. I had the gap, but looked up to find myself out way too early. Shoot. I kicked it into suffer mode and went my hardest to the line, but was passed as the real sprint started. I finished mid pack near Miles and Gianni, the others finished a bit off the back of the pack, having been dropped on the final climb. I met up with Miles and Gianni as we spun down. We knew we had lost the jersey, but we had all had such a good race and were so happy to wear yellow for a day.

We met up with coach at the van and grabbed our recovery drinks and sat in the shade to discuss the race. We realized that in the end, Christian was just too strong.

There was nothing we could have done to have kept him in sight. He had the gap by the top of that climb, and there would be no getting him back unless Miles was there with him. We were all so happy in the end to have raced aggressively and proven ourselves as one of the stronger teams here at San Dimas. The one thing I could have

done better was to protect Miles in the finish, as we found out he was nearly involved in a crash. I was supposed to lead him to the front for the finish, but it was hard to get him towards the front of the field sprint without riding him off my wheel. That was a topic for another day, and coach said she was so happy with how we all raced together as a team.

At the end of the day, I was extremely proud of all of my teammates on Team Swift. We won the first stage, defended completely selflessly on the second stage, and were already gearing up for tomorrow's criterium. It was such a fantastic race, and I was happy to know that I had the power to help Miles and win a prime sprint. This experience really brought us all closer, especially me to Miles. He is a bright and appreciative teammate that I will always be happy to work for. I am so happy to have been the leader of Team Swift on the road for this amazing day.

Stage 3: Criterium

After a fantastic weekend of racing, the last day of the criterium was finally upon us. I spun over to the course early in the morning with the rest of my teammates. We had lost the yellow jersey in the road race, but had one more plan for today's criterium. Hold second place on GC for Miles and if it ended in a sprint then I would be set up for the win.

We did our warm-up on the course and rolled to staging to meet our coach Laura. At yesterday's team meeting, we had discussed how to win the race. It is a stage that Team Swift had won three times in the past and likes that kind of fast racing. We lined up at the start, every single one of us was in the front row. We were also supposed to "shlam" today, as coach calls it. To jump as hard as possible from the gun and be first through the first corner. I got in my drops and got ready to race. When the official blew the whistle, we all jumped for the corner. Miles was the fastest and made it through first! I was a bit farther back. However, the pace slowed down and the yellow jerseys took to the front. As the bunch spread out, I made my way around the right side, putting me in good position at the top of the hill. I repeated this for a few laps, at one point when it got very slow, I rode tempo on the front for Miles, putting me still in 5th at the top of the hill.

"Prime lap! Prime lap! Prime lap!" I heard the announcer yelling. Coach said I could go for primes to test out my sprint position. I made my way to the front on the top of the hill, then second wheel as we neared the corner. Finally, I jumped hard and won the prime! I was happy to hear my number called over the loudspeaker. I drifted back into the pack for the next few laps to get ready for the finish.

At two to go, I had made my way up front. 4th wheel at the top of the hill! There was a big merchandise prime waiting at the bottom. I weighed my options, prime? Or finish? I decided to go for the finish. However, when I tried to follow wheels through the prime and up the hill on the last lap, I was swarmed. Shoot. I tried to make it up on the final climb, but only ended somewhere in 15th or so, near the back of the lead split. I chased on, made up some position, and took the final turn with Miles at my side. We sprinted in for 6th and 8th in our categories.

I talked with Coach afterwards, and she said we rode an aggressive race, but I should have been even more aggressive on the final lap. Going for the prime would have been best, as the other top finishers probably did too. I would have held position and I would have used my power to keep my at the front on the hill, not trying to get to the front. In the end, I had a great day at the criterium. I loved racing with my teammates, learning about the course for next year, and even getting to test my sprint and take home a prime. I spun back to the hotel with my teammate Miles.

San Dimas had been amazing this year, claiming a yellow jersey in the time trial, and finally placing a rider on the podium, I could not be more proud of everybody on Team Swift. We all worked selflessly for a common goal. Thank you to all of my teammates, Miles, Ethan, Luke, Gianni, Ethan, Emmet, Isaiah, and our fantastic team captain Emily, for working their tails off for each other and realizing the team aspect of this sport and sharing this adventure with me. Another thank you to all of the parents who helped make this trip possible and so much fun. And as always, thank you to our amazing Coach Laura, for teaching us how to work as a team and making this trip happen. See you next year, San Dimas!

-Ben

Ethan Frankel

Racing Age 17, Category 4

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 19 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 17-18 |
| 25 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 17-18 |
| 19 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Juniors 17-18 |
| 21 st Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 17-18 |

Stage 1: Individual Time Trial

Being my first stage race, San Dimas was a scary, new experience for me. This year, we had a seven-teammate contingent to race for three days, a good-sized team with which we could all work together. After previewing the Time Trial course the day before, I felt like I had a good sense of how to race it. However, the course was hard and was going to be hot. The day before the race (Thursday) was 85°F, and the day of the race was going to be even warmer and windier. My teammate, Ben, had told the team to be sure not to go out too hard, and not to blow up at the beginning. I would be sure to take his advice.

The course started on a flat road for a half of a mile then pitched up for another 3.75 miles to the finish. The average gradient was 6.7%, a tough grade to race for 20 minutes. After the preview and spin to get our legs shaken out after two days of driving, we went back to the hotel and got registered for the race. The start times were announced: I would race at 1:36:00 p.m. on Friday. Our first junior starter, Isaiah, was set to race at 1:04, which gave me an extra 30 minutes to warm up.

The next morning, the juniors team (all seven of us, including the four 15-16's) spun up to the course start. We had a motor home and tents to warm up under and ice bags to cool off with, which was awesome and great of the parents to arrange. Emily

had finished her race and was giving out advice while we warmed up: "Don't go out too hard. I made that mistake and had nothing left for the finish." I listened to her diligently and made sure to remember that. "Keep your heart rate at around 170 for the start." I took note of that as well.

After a hard, one-hour warm up in 90° weather, I rode over to the start for rollout and some final fuel for the race. Before I knew it, I was at the line, on my bike in front of the race official. I stared ahead, nervous and excited. I saw the rider in front of me getting smaller and smaller until he eventually rounded the first corner. Then, "5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Go." I was off. I started in my drops, standing out of my saddle, keeping a relatively quick cadence at 90 rpm. I felt good and relaxed. I looked at my heart rate reading. Shoot. 185 bpm and climbing. I was still riding on the flats, just 15 seconds in. I sat back in my saddle and tucked to reduce any drag. I looked at my heart rate: 188. *Slow down and stay calm*, I told myself. I tried to slow a bit, but I was already setting my rhythm and it was hard to get out of it. Great! Emily and Ben's advice had gone out the door.

The road pitched upwards and I shifted into my easier gearing. I kept my cadence at 90 rpm and stayed in the saddle. 190, 191, my heart rate was still climbing. I tried relaxing a bit, but that was never going to happen. Instead, I kept up my rhythm and pounded on the pedals. The next turns were the most painful. The rider behind me was rapidly catching me, but my heart rate was 194 and I was riding as hard as I could. I tried speeding up, but my legs wouldn't have any of it. I was mentally prepared to go harder, but physically I wasn't. I rounded the next corner and the rider behind me caught up with, and then passed, me. Soon, the wind hit. I was burning from the heat, and now a headwind! The next minute was pure suffering. I stayed tucked and went as hard as possible into the wind. Finally, I hit a hairpin corner and the wind was behind me.

The rest of the race was tough and unforgiving. I passed one rider, and then quickly got passed by another that had started one minute behind me. I only had another mile to go. *Go faster!* I thought to myself. My heart rate read 195 bpm. I couldn't go any faster. With just under a mile to go, I passed another racer. I was exhausted, burning up, and my legs were getting heavier and heavier. I hit the 1 KM to go sign and ramped up my cadence and speed. I barely noticed any difference, but I jumped out of my saddle and accelerated toward the finish. I rounded the final turn and saw the tent and finish line. I churned my legs as hard as I could and came into the finish hot, tired, and feeling like I was about to pass out. I peeked at the time on my computer and saw 20:50. My goal was 19 minutes. I saw my teammate, Emmet, at the finish and we got some water before descending down to the finish and the rest of the team.

The first day of San Dimas turned out to be great for the team. Our teammate, Miles, had taken the overall lead and yellow jersey in the 17-18s! For me, however, I had gone out way too hard, which was the opposite of what I had planned. There was nothing left in my tank for a sprint or big acceleration at the end of my race. In the end, I knew what I had done wrong, but I learned from it, and next year I will be prepared to race the time trial well.

Stage 2: Road Race

The second stage of the San Dimas Stage Race was going to be very exciting and nerve-racking indeed. The day before, in the time trial, Miles had taken the lead in the 17-18's category. Now, the other 6 juniors were going to work for him to ensure that he stayed in yellow for the road race. We had discussed our strategy the night before the road race and the team was prepared to go out and chase down attacks and protect Miles. This meant that we had to stay alert and be near-front pretty much the whole race. We were all very excited to be in this position, considering that we had never had this opportunity before.

Our race was early in the morning, so we woke up at 5:15, ate breakfast and rode to the start. After a solid warm-up and registration, we lined up at the staging area. It was still a little chilly as we lined up at the start, and we were going to miss the hottest part of the day. We rolled out at 8:00 and it was quick even during the neutral start as everyone tried to move up to the front. The bulk of the Team Swift members were up near the front by the start. It was a fast sprint as soon as we hit the line. There was a right-hand corner just past the start and then the road narrowed down to two lanes of road. We were all pretty much near the front, which was good. But we still had 40 miles to race.

After a long straightaway, we turned a sharp left-hander then soon after a right hand turn. The next few miles were rolling hills. The team stayed together and we stayed near front through the feed zone and next climbs. After the feed zone there was a descent. For this, I had to stay with the field, either in the middle or front in order to keep up because I was smaller than most of the other racers. We got past the descent without any mishaps, and climbed up towards a dam. After the climb was another long descent where I stayed safe in the middle of the pack. We hit a 180° turn (two sharp right-hand bends) and the racers in front of me braked hard. All of a sudden, there was a gap between the rider in front of me and the rest of the field. We had the second half of the field behind us and I stayed on his wheel as he sprinted to catch up.

I was still near the middle as we climbed the steep hill known as Heckler Hill. The field was pretty much together as we descended onto the dam and came into the last two miles before the finish of our first of six laps. I slowly moved towards the front, catching sight of a few teammates and other riders to watch out for. We came into the straightaway before the finish and there was an attack. Ben was right in front of me and jumped. I jumped with him, as there were at least 10 riders who had started the initial acceleration. We had caught them quickly, but it was clear that the attack wasn't going to last and stopped once we hit the finish of the first lap.

I sat back and settled into the middle of the field. Another attack happened on the next long straightaway and the whole field accelerated. Bad timing and not thinking ahead caused me to lose my positioning. I had reached down to grab my bottle before the acceleration had happened and as I was drinking, the whole field surged. I quickly replaced my bottle but I was now closer to the back than I would have liked to be. And it was nearly impossible to move up while the field was moving so quickly and as we hit the 90° corner.

The next rollers were the toughest the whole race. I was near the back and was riding hard just to gain a few spots. We hit a divide in the road after the feed zone and the rider in front of me swerved, causing me to brake and lose momentum over the hill. Then it was the long descent before another hill. *Shoot. Get to the front!* I was screaming to myself. With the position that I was in, it was going to be very tough getting through the descent without being shielded by 10 other riders. I was nearly off the back, and there were only three or four other racers with me. We were doing all that we could to hang on, but it was apparent that we were on the verge of getting dropped. I got into aero position and managed to stick with the field as we charged up the hill before we descended towards the base of Heckler Hill.

I moved up one or two riders, but I was still barely hanging on. I knew that taking the 180° turn correctly was going to be essential in order to not get split. We rounded the corner and the rider in front of me braked just a little too hard and rounded the corner just a little bit wide. Six of us were off the back of the group, trying to sprint to catch back up. However, the first half was already charging up the hill and we were not even to the base of it yet. I sprinted past the rider in front of me and managed to make contact with the back, but I had no more energy to keep up with them over the hill. That was the most disappointing part of the race. That moment when there is nothing I could do to catch back up, where I watched the field round the corner and go out of sight. I was dropped and wouldn't be able to do any work for Miles or the team.

I sprinted hard to try to catch up, but the field was moving just as fast as I was and I wasn't able to make contact. I dropped back and a few other riders and I formed a grupetto of six. We were a bit disorganized at first: one of the riders was much bigger and kept on taking long pulls where he accelerated. He nearly dropped one of us in the straightaway toward the finish. However, we got used to each other and started taking shorter pulls and rotating nicely by the middle of the second lap. We arrived at Heckler Hill and I decided to test the field by accelerating. I knew I was one of the strongest climbers: I was the last to be dropped on the climb the previous lap. I tested it out and jumped. I quickly got away and kept up a zone 4 effort to the top of the KOM, with a ten second gap on the others.

I decided that we should up the pace in case there were attacks from the field and the time cut was going to be close. I kept up a hard effort over the dam and towards the hairpin bend that led into a two-mile section of flat road before the finish. The others from the group caught up, but we had a slightly quickened pace. We kept rotating as we finished our third lap and we stuck together for the next lap. We went through the feed zone and I heard, "Three minutes from the break, two from the chase!" from somebody in the feed.

We weren't that far behind! But we still had two and a half laps to go. We hit Heckler Hill together, but we had slowed down a bit. We were all pretty much in zone 2-3, when we should have been going harder to stay within the time cut. Again, I accelerated up the hill and caught another junior rider who had been dropped a little later in the race than I had been. He dropped back to the group while I attempted to keep the pace in the group high. We descended towards the dam and they caught up

just before the sharp turn a couple miles before the finish. We reformed our rotating pace line and stayed in zone 3. "Two laps to go," the announcement boomed as we rode by the finish line. We heard it and then heard a shout from the crowd, "Four minutes back, four minutes back!"

We kept on working and I talked with a couple other racers as we rolled through the feed zone. "Five minutes back!" came a voice from the feed zone. I was a little nervous that we wouldn't make the time cut. I did the math in my head: *If the winner finishes in 2 hours, we have a 12-minute time cut. If he does it in an hour, 45 minutes, we have 10 minutes, 30 seconds. They average 21 miles an hour, we have to average about 19.*

I was beginning to think that we would be fine. We were moving along at a decent pace, but there were still factors that couldn't be predicted that might cause accelerations by the leaders or the field. After the feed zone and last few rollers, we came to the hill. I accelerated but not as hard. I didn't get away from them this time, but I had quickened the pace and urgency of the group.

"Last lap!" We came through for the final time and I was being vigilant and watching for any possible attacks. Nothing happened. We passed through the feed: "Seven minutes from the field!" I was beginning to think that we were in the clear and that we were going to make the time cut. Now I was thinking about how I could race well all the way to the finish.

I decided to make my move early. We were still four miles from the finish. After the long descent after the feed zone was a short roller before we descended towards Heckler. I upped my pace, not by much, but enough to drop the rest of the riders. I kept going hard, pounding on my pedals as I powered up the hill. I looked back and saw that I only had a 10-second gap. The descent was going to be my undoing. I hit the descent and sprinted down it, knowing that I couldn't get far soloing and not pedaling. However, the group caught me before the bottom and I relaxed a bit as I prepared to jump on Heckler.

We hit the hill and I pounced upon it. I came to the KOM with a 15 second gap, but I had another rider with me this time. We worked together to keep the gap, but we were reeled in well before the finish. It was going to be a bunch sprint between the seven of us, three of which were 17-18s. We approached the finish line straight and no one wanted to pull. We were seeking each other's wheels. I remembered what Coach Laura had told us earlier: "The straightaway is longer than it looks. Keep waiting and riding their wheel until the last second, then jump!"

I was hoping that would work for me now. 400 meters to go. The other two 17-18s started accelerating. There was another racer on their wheel. I stuck on his. I waited and waited. Another two came up next to me on my right. 200 meters to go. There were now 5 ahead of me. 150 meters to go. I jumped hard and came around my "lead-out" rider. I rapidly gained ground on the two 17-18s, but they were much bigger and more powerful than me. I came in third in the gruppetto sprint, after attacking a long ways out and waiting to jump. I sprinted as well as I could have in the situation, and that alone was certainly a good learning experience.

This race was certainly a challenge! I felt pretty good for the first laps, but my positioning was something that needed to be good at a critical point, and it simply wasn't. In the end, I was disappointed that I wasn't able to help out the team or Miles, but it was a great learning experience to be in that position and I came in 9:56 behind the leader. We had made the time cut and we were going to race the Criterium!

Stage 3: Criterium

After two hard days of racing, I was ready for the last day of the stage race. I had made the time cut for the road race, but was disappointed that I didn't help the team much. For the criterium, I was ready to protect Miles and help him defend his second place overall. We rolled to the crit course together, early in the morning, and rode around to get a feel for it. After a solid warm up on-course, we lined up for rollout and staging. The six of us were together at the front of staging and were prepared to get to the very front of the start line.

At 7:25, the officials let us line up at the start. The six of us had already begun racing and sprinted to the start. We were all together at the very front and ready to "shlam" to the first corner. "You're 25-minute race will be fast. There will be a number of primes and there is a hot spot sprint 15 minutes before the finish. Good luck!" The whistle blew and Team Swift sprinted to the first corner. There were three of us, myself included, who initially had trouble clipping in. It took a few seconds for that to happen, but then we were once again sprinting.

By the first corner, I was in about 15th position, along with most of my teammates. I stayed toward the front, maintaining position, watching for attacks, and looking to protect Miles. The race was very fast, and I found myself glimpsing my teammates ahead of me. I slowly moved up to stay with them. We were all near the front and pretty much together.

On the third or fourth lap, I found myself besides my teammate, Ben. We were closer to the middle of the group, where there had been a small split. There were a bunch of racers who had increased their pace to go for the hot spot sprint that was coming up. We were slightly gapped, but Ben being strong and big had no trouble regrouping. I let him pull; I wouldn't be any benefit to him by taking a pull and trying to get back to the bulk of the group.

The next lap, a rider got in between Ben and me. The second corner of this lap was tough for that rider. He took the corner on the inside, and I was riding his wheel. He started pedaling a split second too early and clipped a pedal going around the right-hander. He and his bike flipped and he crashed hard. I swerved as soon as I saw his pedal touch the ground and was past him before he had time to shout. I looked back and saw him on the ground before I made contact with Ben and we got back onto the back of the field.

The next few laps were less exciting. The cornering and hard efforts happened the same time each lap: take the corner inside then sprint hard to stay with the field. I stayed in the middle and saw Miles just in front of me. I locked onto his wheel and stayed beside him for a lap. Braking is always a big error, and sometimes you can get away with it. The following lap, with only 5 minutes to go, I braked once on the long

straightaway and immediately found myself 10 riders down. This time, braking was simply a strategic error.

The next turn, the rider whose wheel I was locked onto overlapped with the rider in front. They both went down hard. Luckily for me and anyone else behind me, they were on the outside and slid out so I avoided any harm. That was another very close call for me. I was still close to the back of the main field now, and there was just one lap to go. I needed to move up. But the pace was picking up and I was sprinting both on straightaways and through corners. I wasn't going to move up very much. I was now just hanging on. We came down the second-last-straight and there was a gap between the main field and a few riders that were slightly behind. We rounded the final corner and I started sprinting hard. The group came in together six seconds behind the main field.

My first stage race was quite an experience! The preparation required for the race was a new experience on its own, but the actual race was very different than what I am used to. Miles came in second overall, and working for him gave me a goal and focus. Not only had I raced hard, but I had also raced smarter than I've previously raced. I was certainly more aware. It was very fun and extremely challenging, and I learned so much from just one weekend.

Coming back from my injury was a physical limitation, but I had one of my best sets of races mentally. I had sprained my ankle just a few weeks before and it was my first week back. Considering I'd been off the bike for two weeks and just gotten back, I was happy with how I'd raced. I am excited for next year!

-Ethan F.

Isaiah Chass

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|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 19 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 15-16 |
| 21 st Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 15-16 |
| 15 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Juniors 15-16 |
| 20 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 15-16 |

Stage 1: Individual Time Trial

I had been waiting for San Dimas for weeks, and I couldn't wait to race! We left on Wednesday in the team van at 4 pm and then got to the Grapevine at around 10pm. We stayed in a hotel over night and then in the morning we finished our drive to San Dimas, which was another 2 hours. When we got to San Dimas, we checked into our hotel rooms and then got ready to pre-ride the uphill TT course. Once everyone was ready we rode to the TT course and then pre rode it for the first time. After seeing the course, we rode it once more and did our pre race sprints. Then we rode back to the hotel and I took a shower and then went to get some food. Then I got my bike ready for the TT the next day. Once all my stuff was together I met up the rest of my teammates and we went across the street to the bike shop where I got my race packet, which included my number. After having some dinner and stretching a little I went to bed early so that I could get up early and have a good breakfast.

In the morning I woke up, had a good breakfast and then stretched for a while. After hanging out a little I had another bite to eat and I got ready to ride to the course with my teammates. When we got to the team tent, I set my bike up on the trainer and started warming up. I knew that I'd have to get a hard warm-up in if I wanted to do well, so after getting my legs opened up, I cooled off with some ice, and then got ready to race! Then, I rolled up to the starting house and I did rollout. After waiting for my start for a few minutes, it was time for me to go. When the official started counting down from 5, I took a few deep breaths, and when he said, "go", I started sprinting up to speed. I tried to ease into it so that I wouldn't blow up, but when I got to the first corner I knew I was going a little too hard. I still kept pushing and kept my speed up. I got into a rhythm and was able to get settled in. I took good lines in the corners and gained some speed. With 2k to go was hurting but I knew I was almost there. I shifted a gear down and went a little harder. Coming up to 1k to go I brought my heart rate up and started going as hard as I could. When I came around the last corner, I took the fastest line that I could and started sprinting to the line. When I got to the finish I spun at the top a little and then rode back down to the team tent. I saw my teammates there, and we talked with coach about how it went. Then, we rode back to the hotel, got some water, and then went out to ride a lap of the road race course. When we got back, I saw the results and found out that Miles had won! Later that day, I started getting my stuff together for the road race, and then we all met with coach for a team meeting.

Stage 2: Road Race

The morning of the road race I woke up had a good breakfast and put on my kit. Then, I met up with my teammates in the hotel parking lot and we rode to the registration where we signed in and then warmed up on the road. After warming up, we rode to staging and did rollout. Then, we all lined up and waited for the start. The plan for this race was to protect Miles who had an awesome TT effort, which put him in the yellow jersey. When the race started, it was 'neutral' to the start line, but everyone was still fighting for position. An attack was made right away, but everyone was on it.

We stayed up front and made sure Miles was there too. Miles was riding great and was in perfect position. When we got to the KOM climb everyone went super hard. I was dropping back but was still making up some positioning. I sprinted over the top of the climb, and got back onto the main group. The next lap was a KOM, so I moved up before the climb so I wouldn't get dropped. On the climb everyone sprinted for the KOM points, and I saw my teammate Miles leading it out. I drifted back on the climb again, but caught back on over the top of the climb. I ate some Clif Bloks and stayed hydrated as the field slowed down a little. On the next lap there was a hot spot at the finish, so I made sure that I was in the group over the climb, because it would be fast to the finish. When we got closer to the line, I tried moving up to get the time bonus, but I wasn't able to. We were one our 4th lap now, and I needed a feed, since I accidentally missed it last lap, so in the feed zone, I got a bottle. Then, I sprinted to get back into the group, so that I would be on someone's wheel going down the descent. Over the top of the KOM, I was off the back a little, so I had to sprint to get back on the field. The next

lap was pretty hard, so I was trying to stay near the front with my teammates. A break got off with a 17-18 rider, so on the last lap we all got to the front to try to pull it back. I got dropped on the next climb, but I saw that Miles was in the group, so I just rode back to the finish knowing that I wasn't going to get time cut.

Stage 3: Criterium

The morning of the criterium, I got up early to eat breakfast, and then I met with my teammates in the parking lot to ride to the course. It was barely light out, but we were ready to race. When we got to the course, we rode a few laps to warm-up, and then we did a pyramid. After warming up, we rode to staging to do rollout and then line up. When the official said we could line up, everybody raced to the line, and all of us were on the front. The race started, and Miles attacked straight from the line, a rider jumped on his wheel, so I got on. Miles led through the first corner. Right before the last corner, I attacked, and got through the corner first. There was a counter attack on the final straight, so I started sprinting to get on his wheel. On the next corner, I drifted back a little and was about 10th wheel. The rest of the race I didn't ride good positioning, and I just drifted back. When we came around with 2 laps to go, I tried to move my way up as much as possible. With 1/2 a lap to go, the field swarmed the front, so I moved up to mid-pack. When we came into the 2nd to last corner, everyone started drilling it, so I just tried to stay on. I sprinted as hard as I could out of the last corner to the line.

-Isaiah

Gianni Lamperti

Jr. 15-16 Age: 14

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 15 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 15-16 |
| 10 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 15-16 |
| 10 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Juniors 15-16 |
| 12 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 15-16 |

Stage 1: Individual Time Trial

The morning of the TT I got a little bit of time to sleep in since my race was not until 1 in the afternoon. My teammate Emily raced at 9 o'clock so I helped her with her warm up and then she went and raced. A graduate of our team, Ryan Clarke came and he was racing about two hours before me so I helped him with his warm up then started to get my things together and ready to race. Once I was ready I jumped on the trainer for a good and hard warm up. I rolled to the line about ten minutes before my start, got rolled out and went to stretch in the shade I went up to the line easy to race and put out the best effort I could. When the official said "5,4,3,2,1" I sprinted to get up to speed but sat down and did not go super hard I waited until I came around the left hand corner at the bottom of the climb and went as hard as I could while still being able to pace myself all the way to the finish. I tried to stand as little as I could and tried

to keep a good cadence. I had passed two people before I got passed by someone about halfway up. I then tried to stay with him and passed three more people and pushed really hard into the line. I ended up finishing with a time of 00:19:21. I was happy with my time and was excited to race the road race on the next day of the stage

Stage 2: Road Race

Coming off of the Time Trial the day before I felt good and ready to race. On the morning of the Road Race I woke up at 5:15 in order to eat and get ready before our 7:55 start time. I ate breakfast, took a shower and got ready to go and we rode to the course, leaving our hotel at 6:45. We spun to the course as a team, signed in and pinned numbers on our teammates yellow jersey. We then went and got in a good warm up before doing roll out and staging for the start. Once the race was off it was neutral to the start/finish line. On the first lap I was about midfield, still getting comfortable. By the second lap I was feeling good and moved up towards the front and was ready to help. I knew I needed to be up there because it was a KOM lap and if I were at midfield I would have a better chance of getting dropped. I was very lucky that I moved up because the back half of the field got dropped on the climb. I barely made it over the top of the climb, hanging on the back of the field. I got back in the field and moved back up to the front. Once again I was lucky because right when I got there, there was an attack that I had to cover so I jumped on it and we only stayed away for about 30 seconds before we were caught again by the field. I then moved to the right side of the field so I could easily get my feed. I grabbed the first bottle from one of the team parents then thought I might as well grab another just in case; because I can always throw it and it ever so happened that my brother missed his feed so I handed it to him. On that lap it went easier over the hill, but lined up for the sprint because it was a hotspot sprint. I came in top 10 for the sprint and there was a counter that I covered but it did not go anywhere. On the fifth lap there was an attack from Richard Holeck and it stuck. Coming out of the feed zone on the last lap no other teams would pull back the break so we had to go to the front and try to pull it back so Miles did not lose time on the rider that was 4 seconds behind him that was in the breakaway. I pulled for about thirty seconds before I let my brother pull through but then realized it was a downhill and he does not weigh that much compared to the rest of the field so went back to the front and pulled as hard as I could into the base of the climb. Right when we hit the base Team Rockform attacked and I was off the back. I thought that I could possibly make it over the climb if I kept drilling it, so I did and thankfully I did because Miles was cramping and I caught him at the top and went as hard as I could trying to pull him back into the field. I got him there about 1 minute before it started to line up for the sprint and I took advantage of that moment and tried to recover and move up as well. I was in the top 15 of the group before the person in front of me moved up around the left side and we passed about 5 people and I ended up finishing 10th overall and 7th in the field sprint. After the finish we cruised back to the team van and talked about the race. We then spun back to the hotel as our cool down. It was a really fun course and was a good course for me too. I knew that I could do well now and was excited for the crit the next day.

Stage 3: Criterium

On the morning of the crit I was tired from the Time trial and the Road Race but I was still really excited to race because I knew that this was a good course for me. I also knew that I would be able to help our GC leader for the race, Miles Daly, stay in the front and away from anything dangerous near the back. When we got there in the morning we rode around the course and did our warm up on course. I did not feel good at all in the warm up but knew that I would once the racing started. About 15 minutes before the race I did roll out and then started staging. I was on the outside but I sprinted got to line up on the front row. When the official blew the whistle I could not get clipped in to my pedal until the first corner and was about in mid-field. I stayed there until the slight downhill where I moved up on the outside of the field into the top 10. I stayed in the top 10 and realized that I had to stay out of the middle of the field otherwise if I was 2nd row I could stay on the same wheel and I would find myself at the back of the field instantly. Since the crit was only 25 minutes long there was one hotspot sprint at 15 minutes to go and it felt like it was 30 seconds into the race. I drifted back a little bit on that lap but once again the downhill saved me and I moved right back up to the front of the field. At two laps to go I was right at the front, almost too far up because I found myself in the middle again with someone in front of me and people moving up on both sides of the field. By that time the pace was too fast to move up so I just had to say in where I was. As I came out of the last corner there was a rider two people ahead of me who dropped his chain and almost caused a big crash but luckily did not. I then jumped and sprinted all the way to the line and finished 10th. That helped my GC standing and I ended up finishing 12th overall. My teammate Miles stayed safe and ended up finishing 2nd overall. This was an amazing weekend of racing for the team and I learned more than any race I have ever done on and off the bike. It is amazing how much you can learn from only 3 days of racing. I am super excited to come back next year!

-Gianni

Luke Lamperti

Juniors 15-16, Age 13

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 24 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Juniors 15-16 |
| 20 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Juniors 15-16 |
| 19 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Juniors 15-16 |
| 21 st Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Juniors 15-16 |

Stage 1: Individual Time Trial

The morning of the TT I was super excited. This was going to be my first stage race of the year. I woke up got all my clothes. Ate breakfast and started putting some of my stuff together so I didn't have to worry about it for the rest of the day because my start was not until 1:16:30 seconds. I was already at the TT course because our motorhome

was there to get a spot. I had a teammate who was already there and doing her warm-up. So I helped her get ready for her start earlier than ours. After helping her get ready I started to get my stuff ready. I made sure that my bike was ready and put it on the trainer. Once the rest of my team rode from the hotel up to where we were parked I got on the trainer and started to spin. Then I did my pyramid. When I was done I rolled to the start after getting all my stuff on. Ate my Clif Shot. When I went off I knew that I did not want to go too hard before the start of the climb and then blow up. So I rode at tempo. Then about halfway I started ramping up the pace. I knew if I put myself to a max I could definitely hold it the whole way. So going hard I was able to do it. When I got to the top my throat was dry and I was super tired. I knew that I gave it a good effort. I was happy with my results and had a good fun day.

Stage 2: Road Race

This was an early morning start unlike the TT that was at 1:16 in the afternoon so I was happy that we could get the race over with so that we could do what we need to do to get ready for the Crit. My teammate who is in 17/18 won the TT the day before so we were working for him to keep him in the yellow jersey and be safe. The day prior we had a meeting talking about the stuff we needed to do. From there on out we took the information and used it during the race to help us do good in the overall standings. We rode with him in the race and helped him out as we got in the wind to pull back breaks. We kept him safe and in the field for the whole race. For the first half it was steady and not too fast. Then we got to the hotspots and KOM points. I was hurting over all the KOM's. I rode until on the last lap there was a break with a guy who was 4 seconds behind my teammate in the GC standings. No other teams wanted to pull so we all went to the front and started pulling hard. The rider was still off the front when we hit the last climb. I got dropped on the climb after taking a hard pull as well as my teammate did. From there we both rode to the finish at a decent pace. I had a hard day on the bike but learned a lot. I'm looking forward to this road race next year.

Stage 3: Criterium

We no longer had the yellow jersey in the 17/18 race. We still had second and our goal was to hold that and not let the third place guy take 2nd from us so we just had to stay at the front and not get caught in crashes. That morning we had to wake up at 5:00 because our race was at 7:30 and we would leave the hotel at 6:25 to ride to the race. I got up and ate some breakfast. Then I got all my stuff ready to go that I needed because we were leaving right from the crit to go home. After getting all of that done I got on my kit and met the team outside so we could ride to the crit. On the way to the crit it was a little bit dark so we had a car following with their headlights on.

When we got to the race some of the guys put on their race wheels and then we went to warm up on course. After ridding one lap we went to sign in, use the restroom and then do our pyramid. When we got back on the course we rode one lap then started our warm up. I knew the race was going to be hard because it was only 25 minutes. Knowing this I did a really hard warm up because it was going to go from the start. Once we were done with our warm up we did a little tempo before going to

rollout. I went to the bathroom one more time then went to rollout where I waited for a minute until an official came. Then I went to staging to get our pre race talk and all the jersey wearers got their call up. Then they said to roll to the line but everybody sprinted anyway. I was happy because our whole team was on the front line. "go on the whistle" the Official said. Tweeeeeet and we were off. I could not get my pedal clipped in something was wrong so by the time I got it in I was near the back. I knew I needed to move up or I had no chance of staying on. The pace was super fast and I was getting yoyoed at the back. I was chasing pretty much all of it and had no time to sit up or do anything I was barely hanging on. I was able to hang on and get 19th and my teammate got 2nd overall and that was good. I am happy and took a lot away from San Dimas this year it being my first time here.

-Luke

Emily Abraham

Senior Women Category 3, Age: 18

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|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| 15 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, TT | Sr W. Category 3 |
| 22 nd Place | San Dimas Stage Race, RR | Sr W. Category 3 |
| 16 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, Crit | Sr W. Category 3 |
| 20 th Place | San Dimas Stage Race, GC | Sr W. Category 3 |

Stage 1: Individual Time Trial

We pre-rode the TT course on Thursday after we arrived in San Dimas, it was a long drive and it felt good to get the legs moving again. After riding the 4.25 mile and 2,000 ft course twice, I felt I was ready to race it. I was lucky that my start time was around nine am rather than sometime in the afternoon, the weather forecast for that day was ninety degrees and there was absolutely no shade on the climb so I was pretty thankful. As a pre-warm up, Coach and I spun from the hotel over to the race about an hour and a half before my start. When we got there, the Lampertis' were already there with their motor home so I set up my trainer near them and the boys helped me do my pyramids before my race. I felt great during my warm-up and having Luke, Gianni, and Ryan there to entertain me helped to get through the boring time on the trainer. I couldn't believe how hot it was at only eight-thirty in the morning, it was at least 70 already! I jumped off the trainer about twenty minutes before my start then my awesome teammates put on my race wheels and I rolled to the start house to meet up with Coach. My goal for the race was simply just to give it my all and have fun! This climb is tricky, you have to know when to shift and when it's the right time to stand or stay in the saddle. I was in too hard of a gear when the official did the countdown that signaled my start, I had to really step on the pedals to get going. Then I started going too hard, I blew myself up in the first mile of the race which was not a good thing. I was feeling great in the beginning but towards the end of the climb I was toast. The last half mile or so of the course flattens out a bit and it's possible to be in the big ring to the finish, I could have been in the big ring and gone a lot faster to the finish line but

I didn't shift soon enough and I ended up spinning too much. But overall I felt great when I finish, I was bummed because there were a few small things I could have done in order to get a much better time but I was happy with my mid-field result.

Stage 2: Road Race

My road race was an extremely early start- 7:50 am! But luckily the boy's race started just five minutes after mine so we were able to all ride to the course and warm-up together. I was excited for my road race but also a bit uneasy about the course. It was only a seven mile loop except it was very technical with a climb, a couple of fast descents, and some sharp left and right hand turns. Thankfully we pre-rode the course after the time trial on Friday so I knew what the course was going to be like going into the race but I still didn't feel confident about the course. That was to be expected though since I had never raced this one before. When we rode the course the day before, Coach pointed out specific points where it was crucial to be top five so that was helpful and I kept her advice in mind throughout my race. Ten minutes before the start of my race I did roll out then found a spot right on the line of where the race would begin. I knew I wanted to be in front for the start of the race so I wouldn't be fighting for position the whole time. Once the race finally began I found myself in perfect position for the first half of the first lap. I was feeling good then we got to the descent that comes before a sharp right hand turn and another quick right hand turn that leads to the climb. It wasn't a scary descent at all other than its fast then there's an immediate right hand turn. I dropped to the back on the first lap because I was nervous about this section but the whole field slowed up and we took the corners beautifully. I had absolutely nothing to worry about. I was mid-pack when we went up the climb on the first lap and stayed in that position for the rest of the first lap up until we began the second lap. At the start of the second lap I moved up towards the front again since that positioning worked well for me on the first lap. I knew this time we would be taking that descent just before the climb even faster because of the KOM that was on the second lap. I let that get into my head and once again I dropped to the back before the climb, this was a horrible idea. When I got to the climb I was at the tail end of the field and my legs were beginning to feel tired. Once I reached the top I had been dropped, if I had just been in better position going into the climb I would have had no problem. I went hard to try to catch back on to the field; they weren't too far ahead of me. Then the motorcycle passed me saying we were about to be neutralized and he sped up to tell the whole field. Our race was neutralized so the junior boys could pass us which allowed me to hop back into the race. When we began the third lap, I moved up toward the front again. I knew the climb was probably going to be an issue again on this lap so I focused on my positioning. Unfortunately the same thing happened on the third lap that happened on the second, I was dropped on the climb and we were neutralized again as soon as I started chasing to catch back on. On our fourth and final lap there was another KOM, I had to get over my fear of being in a better position going into that right hand turn or else I was just going to get dropped on the climb again. There's a smaller climb that comes after the feed zone and I was riding near the front for that part on the last lap so I knew I was capable of staying with the field on the climb. But I

once again dropped back for the descent and got completely dropped on the climb. This time we weren't neutralized and I was on my own to attempt to catch back on to the field. For the last half mile of the race I was with another woman who had been dropped so we finished in the race together. Afterward I was able to talk to Coach and watched the boys finish up their race. Although I'm disappointed in this race because I know I could have done better, I also learned a lot about myself and what I need to do in the future.

Stage 3: Criterium

Of the three races, I felt the criterium was the one I could place the best in and have the most fun. I was hoping to have a much better race than the road race from the day before. I woke up early on the morning of the crit which gave me plenty of time to get ready before spinning over to the course. It was only about a two minute ride from our hotel to the race which was nice. After signing in when I arrived, I set up my trainer by the course so I could watch some of the other races during my warm-up. I still had a little over an hour until start time so I did some stretching before getting on the trainer. I felt really good during my warm-up; I listened to my music and got focused. I did my pyramids then spun for another five minutes before heading over to do roll-out and line up in the staging area. I got a place in front in the staging area then once we were all allowed to roll up to the line I was a row back from being right on the line. A woman in front of me struggled to clip in when the race officially started which caused me to also have a hard time clipping in because I was focusing on not running into her instead. So I was completely shot to the back once I did eventually get clipped in and I struggled for position on the entire first lap. On the back side of the course, on our second lap, I moved up during the incline and got in the front. I wanted to be on the front to build up my confidence in taking the corners; I sat on the front leading the pack for the rest of the second lap and discovered I had no problem with taking the corners. But when I dropped back from the front, I quickly found myself at the back of the field again. This happened numerous times throughout the race, I would be fourth wheel then I'd be at the very back. I knew I wasn't fighting hard enough for position and I should have been more aggressive. There was a prime lap towards the end of our race and I found myself about mid-pack but then when we came around again the announcer yelled "ONE LAP TO GO!" I was so surprised I thought we had at least two or three more laps until the finish. I wasn't prepared for the final lap so my position wasn't good enough to truly contest the sprint. But I stayed in the field and sprinted to the finish. When the race was over, I still felt great, like I could of continued racing for another thirty minutes which shows that I could of gone a lot harder in that race. Although my result in this crit wasn't what I had hoped it would be, I still had so much fun in the race and the entire weekend. I learned a lot about myself as a racer and the things I need to improve on during a race.

-Emily

Emily Abraham

53rd place

Red Kite Omnium Event #2

Category 3/4 Women

I was frustrated after the criterium at Chico Stage Race, I knew I was strong enough to place top five but I wasn't able to prove that to myself because I got boxed in on the final corner. I decided to do the Red Kite criterium, the following weekend, in hopes of channeling that frustration into the race. It turned out not to be the brightest idea to do this race but at least I gained more experience. My category was the first race of the day, at eight am and it was daylight savings time so it actually felt like we were starting at seven am. I didn't arrive at the course until thirty minutes before so I was in a hurry to sign in and begin warming up. After spinning on my trainer and getting my heart rate up, I rode over to the start. Over sixty women showed up to the race which is a huge category for the women 3,4 field. I lined up right on the start line that way I could begin the race out in a good position. When the whistle blew, signaling the start of the race, I was feeling good, tired, but good. I went out hard and made sure to stay top ten. I wanted to be near the front since there were so many women in the race and I knew it would be sketchy anywhere near the back. In the first fifteen minutes of the race, I was feeling good. I rode on the front a few times and I went after attacks. But then on a lap about twenty minutes in, I found myself on the front pulling the field and suddenly my legs were toast. I rolled towards the back and told myself I needed to sit in for a few laps. The position I moved to made me nervous, people weren't taking the corners properly and I was worried a crash was going to happen. As we got down to five laps to go, I knew I needed to move up. But I was struggling to focus on the race and my legs were in a lot of pain- I may have gone a bit too hard on my training ride the day before. At three laps to go, I found myself at the back of the field and I decided the best thing for me to do, based on how I felt, was finish the race up right. Then there was a crash near the front of the field on the far left side, luckily I was on the far right and near the back so I didn't have anything to do with the crash. But it was a pretty bad one and the officials had to neutralize the field for two laps. Obviously, many women were upset by this since we only had two laps to go. I moved up during the neutral laps that way when the race began again, maybe I would feel good enough to contest the sprint. That didn't happen though, when the race started up again, my legs were shot and my mind wasn't there so I hung on at the back and rolled into the finish, happy that I didn't crash.

-Emily

6. NorCal MTB #2

March 15, 2015

Granite Bay, Folsom

Ben Cook

16, cat 3

3rd Place NorCal MTB Race #2 Sophomore boys D1

"Where are we? There's no gate here."

"I'm not sure..."

"I think we have to be on the other side of the lake."

"The other side!?!?"

"Well shoot."

This was common dialogue on my drive up to Granite Bay. The rider who was supposed to take me ended up getting to my house about 30 minutes late to pick me up. Then we ended up lost on the wrong side of Folsom Lake! That's about an hour away from where we needed to be. We tackled the rest of the drive as fast as we could. Carsickness and anger for my driving partner did not merge well. However, I somehow survived a near four-hour drive to a location two hours away. I stepped out of the car an hour before my start and way late for my scheduled course pre-ride with the team. I nearly kissed the ground when I got out of the car.

I ran into the bathrooms, got changed as quickly as I could and headed over to the pitzone with my bag on my shoulders.

"You made it!"

"Barely!" I said as I gave my friend Harrison a much needed hug. I set my bag on the team shelves with everybody else's. I greeted my coach, Doug Ott, in the pitzone. Our head coach, John Vipiana or Coach Vip, had hurt his back in a crash recently, so Doug had stepped in to lead the team. I then filled up my bottles with my favorite flavor of Clif bar mix, lemon-limaide, grabbed a few Shots and headed out to road to warm-up with some friends. The nice part about the NorCal races was that they always had a long rolling road nearby the course that was perfect for warming up.

I led a few of my teammates in a 5 minute z3 followed by a hard 1' pyramid. They had never done a warm-up like that before, but I told them how it works so they could do it on their own in following races.

We rolled into the pitzone as warmed up as could be. It was about 11am and already 85 degrees. I went to grab my number plate from my friend, Jordan, who had picked it up for me after the last race. 11:10. No number plate yet. I asked him again. He made another trip to the car. 11:20. No number plate yet. How hard could it be? My friend Harrison left his number plate at his HOUSE and I went to go get it for him. Gave it to him at 10am when I rolled up. I started at 11:40. I finally got my number plate from Jordan, gave him a thank you, and rushed down to the start.

"Ben Cook? That you?" I heard the official say. I had the first place call up.

Redwood riders and coaches cheered like punk rock fans on the side of the course. I took my place in the first row of riders. From there, our names would be called over the loudspeaker and we would enter one of the five starting slots. I did some stretches and let myself daydream as I waited. There were about 40 starters today. During this year's NorCal season, I was really hoping to race with the JV boys. However, I had just missed the points cutoff and would have to race sophomore for the first race. I won that race by over a minute, most of the time in zone 3. However, the NorCal directors

still would not upgrade me. Apparently my times only put me into 26th in JV, and I did a shorter distance. In my mind and the Redwood coaches mind, I had still won my race. But today, I was still in the sophomore category. The plan was to go from the gun and win by a massive margin. I wore the leader's jersey on my shoulders, and felt confident that I could take home another big win. The booming of the announcer over the loudspeaker brought my mind back to the start line. I was now totally focused.

"In first place, from Redwood high school, please welcome Ben Cook!!" I gave a wave as I rolled to the start line. I heard my competition called up around me.

Particularly Ethan Wolfe. He was the only rider in the last race to hang onto my wheel. He started right next to me. The announcer began to count down.

"5..." I propped my foot up, ready to start.

"4..." Hands on the bars, shoulders wide.

"3... 2... 1... GO!" I slammed my left foot down and clipped in faster than I ever had before. I was the first rider off the line! However, two riders, one of which was Ethan, soon passed me. He hammered on the front as I struggled to find traction in the sand.

The race started off with two sandy turns. Without a pre-ride I struggled to find the right line, but came out of the turns still in third. There was a thick sandpit that slowed us to walking speed. I hammered through it as hard as possible and passed Ethan.

The sandpit would prove my strength today. We came out of the sandpit and Ethan passed me back. I ended up having to take the longer line, but I mashed on the pedals and passed him back, soon gapping him off. In the midst of all this confusion, Keegan found himself about 5 seconds off the front. I kept him in sight through the sandy and flowy turns. However, I was using lots of extra power to sprint out of the turns. I didn't pick up on this until the second of three long laps. We were doing the same distance as JV boys were, 18 miles. This would allow me to compare my times to the JV boys accurately.

I worked as hard as I could to pull myself over each rocky climb. Halfway through the first lap, Keegan was beginning to form a gap on me. Yet still I continued on. I heard the moving of sand under wheels behind me. Ethan. Coming up one of the climbs, he passed me. Just like that. I had always known myself as the strongest rider in my NorCal category since freshman year, with the technical bits being my challenge. However, I just got passed on a climb. I was upset to say the least.

Over the next two laps, I slid down all the way to 6th. However, I was not in that position for very long. Coming into the final stretch of each lap was a flat, yet sandy and bumpy section before a punchy uphill to end the lap. I was right on the wheel of the 5th place rider when we came in to the end of the lap. I took a drink and threw my bottle right next to one of the coaches. I attacked as hard as I could through the final stretch. By the time I passed the Tam rider in front of me, I was moving at least five miles per hour faster than him. I remember learning that from my dad. Back when we used to train together, he would always race me for town line sprints, just like Coach Laura does now. By the time he passed me, he was moving so fast that I would never catch him by the line. Coach always uses the same trick. But this time it was my turn. I imagined myself sprinting for a town line, and put myself in my dad's shoes for once. I twisted and yanked on the handlebars, mashed on the pedals, railed through the

sandy corners, and gapped off the Tam rider by as much as possible. It was the final lap.

"This is your lap Ben! Let it all out!" I heard a supportive Coach Doug yelling from the side of the course. By the time I hit the feedzone, not even a minute after my attack, I had almost caught 5th place. I grabbed my bottle and began to take a drink but soon felt my front wheel slipping. I forgot about the sandpit! Holding my bottle between my teeth, I hammered as hard as I could through the sandpit and closed the final few seconds between me and 4th place. I latched onto his wheel, and a few hundred meters later we caught one of his teammates.

"Faster if you can, Sage!" said the rider in front of me. It was perfect. For the next half a lap, I sat on as the two Nevada City riders hammered away on the front. I focused on saving as much energy as possible and stretching out all the time. I may have had the draft but the pace was not easy at all. I focused on my "smoothidity", a word our Coach Vip always uses. It means being as smooth and as efficient as possible. I took the best lines and excited all the corners at max speed. The final steep uphill was nearing.

We hammered up each rocky pitch, and then flew down the descent on the other side. The course was riddled with 100m stretches of 15% rocky, rooty, sandy uphill that were designed to rip the legs off weaker riders. With each uphill I lost a bit of ground on my rival. I wanted this 3rd place more than anything. I was just a few seconds behind as we hit the final climb. Throwing my wheels over massive rocks, slipping through sand, all while smashing the pedals as hard as possible. I hit a rock in front of me wrong, and slipped off my bike on the 25% incline. However, I landed right with both feet on the ground, picked up my bike, and began running. I ran harder than I ever had in my life. The bike bounced over every rock next to me and my feet slipped in the sand. I jumped onto the bike, shifted into a large gear, and flew down the descent after my rival.

Interestingly enough, the descents proved my strength today. I moved the bike beneath me as I blasted through the corners. Finally, I hit the flat road section. The rider was just in sight. We only had a mile of flat trails to the finish. It was now or never. I jumped on the pedals again and continued to chase. All throughout the singletrack I gained time on my rival. Finally, I had caught his wheel at just 200 yards to go. "Come on Cahsee! Let's go!" Cahsee was his name. At that moment, I really hoped that Cahsee was ready to be beat. The trail opened up into a bumpy, hot, downhill finish straight before making two sandy left handers for an uphill finish. I attacked Cahsee as quickly as I had caught his wheel. I wouldn't give up the fight for the podium. I shifted into a big gear and smashed myself to pieces as I attacked one last time. The earth shook, my bike wobbled beneath me. I had nearly broken the sound barrier by the time I came around Cahsee. I had a solid gap, but he was nearing my wheel through the turns. I could just feel him moving up on me. It was just like Coach Laura always says, "you just have to sense where the riders are around you".

There is no explanation for it. I moved left and stopped Cahsee from sneaking up on me in the turn. I unleashed one final sprint for the line as he began to move up my

side. But I pushed harder than ever before, threw my bike, and snagged 3rd place by just a hair.

I came into the finishing pit and gave Coach Doug a big hug as I struggled to stay on my feet. He couldn't tell whether I was upset or not, and truthfully, I was mixed inside. However, after a talk from Doug, I realized that I actually had reason to be happy. I laid out a monstrous final lap, moving all the way from 6th to 3rd place.

And I had truly given it everything for 3rd place. Even when I crashed, even when I had to get off my bike and run, even when Cahsee still held a gap on me at 300 meters, I fought on and got 3rd place. In a sort of way, it was better than winning. It was harder, it was more rewarding, and it was beautiful. My dad always tells me that a true leader isn't just strong when he is winning, but a true leader is strong even when he was losing. It was a losing day as I sat at the start line, but it was a winning day as I crossed the finish line. And I had no excuses. I know what to work on for next time.

I will improve my core work, I will stretch better, I will pre-ride the course, and I will enter the race in a stress free environment. I told all of this to my Coach Vip. He told me that I represented true maturity and responsibility. He told my story in front of the whole team that evening. I stayed with my teammates throughout the podium celebration, honored and humbled to stand on 3rd place box that I had fought so hard for. I shook all of my competitor's hands on the podium, but when I shook Cahsee's in 4th place, I was surprised to see him smiling.

"Congratulations." He said.

"You really earned it."

-Ben

Isaiah Chass

1st Place Norcal MTB Race #2 Freshman, D2

I got to the race with only a few minutes until my start, so I sprinted to the start, but I had to line up in the very back. When the race started, I moved up as much as possible, and started sprinting to catch the leader. When I got to the single track, it was harder to pass, but when I had the opportunity, I tried to pass as many riders as possible. I didn't know who was in my category, so I kept going hard until the next lap when I heard that I was in first. When I came around for the next lap, I was hurting pretty bad, so I just tried to stay in the front. I got a bottle at the feed, and took a sip before throwing my bottle. I ran through the sand section because I didn't have enough speed, and then I started sprinting once I got back on my bike. I held my pace for the next half lap, and then I looked behind and saw a rider in my category was catching me. I kept my speed up and waited for the last climb to go all out. I made a little gap on the climb, but he caught back up on the flat section. When I came into the single track to the finish, I started sprinting to the finishing stretch. When the trail got wider, I went as hard as I could to the line.

-Isaiah