

## Team Swift Race Reports

### April 2016

#### Race Reports for:

1. Sea Otter Classic Criterium
2. Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race
3. Sea Otter Classic Road Race
4. Sea Otter Classic MTB XC Race
5. Wente Vineyards Road Race
6. NorCal MTB Race #3
7. NorCal MTB Race #4

#### April Top Results:

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Sea Otter Criterium	Senior W. 3-4	Sawyer Taylor
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Sea Otter Circuit Race	Jr. 15-18 Girls	Sawyer Taylor
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Wente Road Race	Senior Category 3-4	Ben Cook
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Sea Otter Classic MTB XC	Juniors 13-14	Luke Lamperti
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	NorCal MTB Race #4	JV Boys D2	Gianni Lamperti
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	NorCal MTB Race #4	Freshmen Girls	Sawyer Taylor
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 15-16	Gianni Lamperti
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Jr. 15-18 Girls	Sawyer Taylor
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Wente Road Race	Senior Category 4	Ethan Frankel
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Wente Road Race	Senior W. 3	Sawyer Taylor
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Norcal MTB Race #3	JV Boys D2	Isaiah Chass
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	NorCal MTB Race #3	Freshman Girls	Sawyer Taylor
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Sea Otter MTB XC	Cat. 3 15-18	Ryan Yust
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Sea Otter Circuit Race	Juniors 15-16	Gianni Lamperti
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Senior W. 3-4	Sawyer Taylor
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 15-16	Isaiah Chass
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 13-14	Andrew Mathiesen
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Sea Otter Classic MTB XC	Cat 3, Jr. 15-18	Ethan Frankel
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	Wente Road Race	Senior Category 3-4	Gianni Lamperti
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Circuit Race	Juniors 15-16	Isaiah Chass
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	Norcal MTB Race #4	JV Boys D2	Ryan Yust
7 <sup>th</sup> Place	Norcal MTB Race #3	JV Boys D2	Gianni Lamperti
7 <sup>th</sup> Place	NorCal MTB Race #3	Junior Varsity D1	Ethan Frankel
7 <sup>th</sup> Place	Norcal MTB Race #4	JV boys	Ben Cook
11 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Circuit Race	Juniors 17-18	Ben Cook
11 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 17-18	Ben Cook
13 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Circuit Race	Senior Category 4	Ryan Yust
14 <sup>th</sup> Place	Norcal MTB Race #4	JV Boys D2	Isaiah Chass
14 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Circuit Race	Juniors 15-16	Luke Lamperti
14 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter MTB XC	Cat. 2, Jr. 15-18	Gianni Lamperti

17 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Senior Category 5	Chase King
19 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 17-18	Parker Rous
19 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 15-16	Esteban Ramirez
24 <sup>th</sup> Place	Wente Road Race	Senior Category 3-4	Luke Lamperti
26 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Circuit Race	Juniors 17-18	Ethan Frankel
26 <sup>th</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 17-18	Ethan Frankel
32 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Sea Otter Road Race	Juniors 17-18	Chase King

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## Rider Race Reports

### 1. Sea Otter Classic Criterium

4/14/16

Monterey

#### Sea Otter Classic Criterium – Senior Women Category 3-4

#### **Sawyer Taylor**

1<sup>st</sup> Place

Sea Otter Classic Criterium

Senior W. 3-4

I had been excited about Sea Otter for a long time. Last year, this was my first junior girl's road race and the biggest, most important race I had ever done. All I did was the 15-18 girls road race and I had gotten fifth. This year, I was so much stronger and faster and I had been interested to see how I would do at this race since the very beginning of the season. Also, Sea Otter is more than just a few days of racing but rather a four-day convergence of all kinds of bike addicts from around the country. What isn't exciting about that? In addition, one of my friends was in Monterey on vacation at the time I was racing so she was going to be able to see the finish of my criterium. My friends never see me race, so I was really happy about this. And now, it was finally here.

My criterium didn't start until 1:15, so my mom and I didn't leave our hotel in Monterey until 10:45. I did half of my warm up on my trainer before heading to the circuit race course to do my jumps. I grabbed a Clif Bar from my car parked by the team's RVs before heading to the course to do rollout. It turned out that the juniors were actually doing rollout after the race was over, so I had a couple minutes to spin before heading to the line. I said hi so some of the racers I knew including Gabriel and Katie Clouse and then lined up. I was in the front row and had a very smooth start and moved to third wheel coming up the first hill.

Around the fifth lap, I looked at the rider next to me and said, "Dude, this crit is asleep." Almost no one was attacking. And if they were, it was short and didn't stick. Part of this was due to the course's odd, long and skinny shape with a small hill in the middle and two very sharp corners. Additionally, there were not

prime laps or hotspot sprints. Our pace wasn't that fast either. I was in zone two and three for the majority of the race.

Coming into the last lap, our pace picked up a bit. After the second corner, I was fourth wheel coming up the hill. We descended, and no one went, so I did. With half a lap to go, I moved to the front and picked up the pace. Coming into the final stretch, no one was sprinting, so I went for it. Katie passed me just before reaching the line, putting me first in the fours and second overall.

In this race, I learned that I really just need to go for it if the pace is too slow. I did a good job leading out the final sprint, but I think that I could have broken earlier on in the race and held it. Also, I did not sprint as hard as I could have in the final sprint partially because I was so shocked that I had led out the sprint. This was not a problem in this race but will be in more competitive category three and ever junior races.

-Sawyer

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## 2. Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race      4/15/16      Monterey

### Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race – Junior Boys 17-18

#### **Ben Cook**

11<sup>th</sup> Place      Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race      Juniors 17-18

Sea Otter Classic had long been my favorite series of racing, and this time I would be racing in the challenging 17-18 field. The circuit race is a 2 mile racetrack loop with a 300ft wall in the middle of it, infamously known as the cork screw for its challenging pitch and dropping descent immediately afterwards. The loop is hot and exposed, and is always sure to be a hard and fast race.

The first few laps I kept near my teammates Parker and Ethan over the climb. Each lap riders continued to get dropped. About 5 laps in Galen from Hot Tubes attacked just after the roller on the back side of the course. He was soon joined by Cameron Beard from Specialized and another Hot Tubes rider. I saw the two jump on the right side but was too gassed and too close to the front to try to bridge.

The next 5 laps were a decent pace as we kept the three close in touch but couldn't bring them back. The field dwindled quickly and soon enough Ethan and Parker were dropped, but I was proud of them for hanging on in such a tough race. Ethan did a great job covering a few attacks in the beginning, and Parker was back in the field again for the first time since his crash at San Dimas, so understood that he wasn't feeling his best. I stayed in the field, with no way to get away and nothing to do but hang on. As the laps counted down we were left with only about 10-12 riders in our group. For the final three laps I knew I

had to hang in and take a chance in the sprint for 4th, so I pushed myself harder than ever to get over the hill. I remember Luke saying that in the San Dimas road race, where he was in the break for most of the day that "I was going so hard my eyes were crossed". This wasn't anything I had really heard of before, but I certainly gained that experience while hanging on for the last three laps of the circuit race today in Sea Otter.

Once I had finally made it over the last hill I focused on the sprint, as tired and smashed as I was. It was a really wide open course and would be a tough sprint to the line. Cole Davis from Specialized attacked on the right after the roller, and I tried to jump on but hardly had anything to chase. From there I underestimated that distance to the finish and the fact that we would be spun out, and wasn't able to gain any position from the middle of the field to the line, and came in for 11th place. I think I had made my biggest mistake by not giving everything I had to jump onto Cole's attack, and from there maybe take a top 10 or even 5 in the finish.

Overall it was the best circuit race I had had yet at Sea Otter Classic, but it wasn't the best race here by a long shot. I was happy to survive the brutal one minute climb each lap and finish with the leaders, but was even more excited for tomorrow's road race, one of my favorite events of the year.

-Ben

## **Ethan Frankel**

Racing Age 18, Senior Category 4

26<sup>th</sup> Place    Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race    Juniors 17-18

Wow. Sea Otter. I arrived at the venue the day before my first race and was awed by the size of the festival and number of people, cars, and motor homes. I was in for a fun weekend! On Friday, the juniors circuit race started in the afternoon, so the team had the morning to relax and visit some of our awesome sponsors at the festival, including SockGuy and Sidi. And then we got down to business. We all warmed up on the road, and lined up for what was going to be a fast 75 minutes.

Lap 1: No problem. Ben was the designated 17-18 leader (with Parker and me helping him out), so we were at the front keeping him safe and covering a few attacks.

Lap 2: A little harder. The climb felt steeper than it did the first lap, but again, I was at the front and felt pretty strong. Halfway through the lap, there is a gnarly, wicked fast descent called the "Corkscrew". It has several sharp turns and follows a fierce false-flat, but it was one of the most unique and fun aspects of the course.

Laps 3-4: A lot harder. Nearly fell off the back. At this point, the lead pack size had been halved, but I was still dangling off the back. I was to hold on for another lap.

Lap 5: Death. The climb felt like a wall. My legs didn't have the power to sustain a hard effort for a long period and I cracked. I was now off the back with several other riders.

Laps 6-11: The four of us were about 3 minutes behind the leaders, and we were determined to finish. We worked well together and kept the pace high enough that we weren't lapped. Oh, and the wind going down the "Corkscrew" threatened to blow me off my bike. I kept my calm each lap, and held on for a fun, albeit bumpy, ride.

Lap 12: We were lapped. At the finish, by the two leaders. Now it was just me and one other rider. We had no clue if we were done or had one more lap. Naturally we did one more lap.

Lap 13: Finished. I was happy not to have been lapped until the end, although I was disappointed that I wasn't able to hang on for longer. It was a great experience to race on such a fun, fast course, and I'm eager to race the circuit race again when I race in college!

And Ben had finished 11<sup>th</sup>! He had rode well and survived with the chase group behind the two leaders, and we were stoked to see him place so well!  
-Ethan

## **Parker Rous**

DNF                      Sea Otter Circuit Race      Juniors 17-18

I got a good start in the front row but found the pace of the race to be shocking after coming back from a crash at San Dimas. I started cramping early on and it led to me getting dropped. Coach pulled me so I could start preparing for the road race that was on the next day. Fortunately it went better.

-Parker

## Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race – Juniors 15-16

## **Gianni Lamperti**

3<sup>rd</sup> Place              Sea Otter Circuit Race      Juniors 15-16

The race started off the line and on the first lap was tempo. On the second lap LUX attacked going over the top of the corkscrew and was caught by the bottom. The next lap he attacked again and once again he got caught by the bottom of the corkscrew. Coming into the climb on the next lap his teammate kept it fast on the bottom half of the climb then he attacked yet again and I could not make it over with him and one other guy. They were off for one lap and I attacked on the starting grid on the backside of the course and tried to bridge the gap and made it within five seconds of them but they pulled the gap back as they went over the top of the climb. The next group caught me and it was down to about ten guys and I sat on for the rest of the race all the way back

to the starting grid on the backside. I jumped hard up the left side and pulled a gap and got to the line in third.

-Gianni

### **Isaiah Chass**

6<sup>th</sup> Place      Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race      Juniors 15-16

The race started off slow over the first climb, but I stayed towards the front knowing that gaps could go really quickly over the top. The rest of the lap the group was together, and then people started to pick up the pace on the climb. I kept at the front, over the climb, and attacks started going at the top of the climb and over the top. The first few laps of attacks, I stayed on them, but on the 4th lap, I couldn't hang on, and two riders got off the front. I got with a group, and tried to catch them, but they were opening up a gap. They kept getting farther out of sight, and my group was trying to catch them. We kept pulling hard but we couldn't bring them back. We were now racing for 3rd place, and my teammates Gianni and Luke were both in my group. We decided that Gianni would attack on the last lap, so we didn't pull super hard. Over the top of the last climb people tried to break it up, so I rode 2nd wheel and got over the top with the group. I recovered down the descent, and then we rode slowly on the back side of the course. Gianni made a big attack when everyone slowed up and got a gap. I followed wheels getting ready for the field sprint, as Gianni was off the front and gone. Coming into the last corner, everyone started swarming the front, and I got pushed back in the field. I was now too far back, and I needed to get to the outside to try to sprint for the finish. Inside 100 meters, I got to the outside, and made one last big sprint to move up as much as I could. I moved up a few wheels and lunged for the line at the finish for 6<sup>th</sup>.

-Isaiah

### **Luke Lamperti**

14<sup>th</sup> Place      Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race      Juniors 15-16

Bang! The race was under way as we started off fast. Then we hit the climb and the pace slowed. Nothing was happening. There were a few little attacks but nothing much. Then when we hit the climb the second time a Lux rider attacked. Everybody got on his wheel so he stopped going hard. Then everybody just rode around with very few attacks. Nobody wanted to pull so the pace was slow. Then the third time we hit the climb Lux attacked over the top again everybody got on his wheel and it came back together on the descent. We rolled around with a rider attacking and getting a little gap. Then we rolled into the climb and again Lux attacked at the bottom and did not get away. Then over the top Lux attacked again with one kid on his wheel. They got a gap. Everybody tried to chase but no one could get there. Now there was about a group of eight chasing with two being my teammates. We chased hard for a couple more laps

and then they had gotten a large gap. At that point with not much more to go we knew we were racing for third. Our plan was to have a rider attack with about 1k to go and if he got caught have the other two sprint for it. So we rode at a good pace with two riders pulling. With one to go we rode up the climb together. I faded to the back and did not make it on a wheel over the top. I rode in with 14<sup>th</sup> place. We were able to get 3<sup>rd</sup> and all had a fun day.

-Luke

## Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race – Junior Girls 15-18

### **Sawyer Taylor**

1<sup>st</sup> Place      Sea Otter Classic Circuit Race      Jr. 15-18 Girls

After a slightly boring crit the day before, I was ready to race hard in the circuit race. But as I lined up for my start after a warm up on the course, I couldn't help but feel a little disappointed. There were only about ten girls lined up on the start while there was a good sized group on cat 3-4 and Masters Women right in front of us who we weren't even allowed to work with. Still, I knew that that this race would not be easy. There were two 17-18 years olds in my group who I had raced with before and knew were fast.

Our first time up the hill wasn't slow. I stayed second or third wheel for the most part and watched my heart rate climb into zone four. Then, as soon as we started to descend the corkscrew, I moved to the front because I know that I am a good, aggressive descender and I wanted to see if anyone else was. Sure enough, the Twenty-16 girl was right on my wheel right until the flat section where we had done the crit. The rest of the group followed and I was re-absorbed into the group. As we were on the flat stretch before the finish, my heartrate dropped into zone one. The next three laps followed the same pattern: we worked hard going up the hill, I moved to the front for the descent, and the pace eased up a lot on the flat section.

With three laps to go, I was feeling super antsy. I did not want this circuit race to go over the same as the crit had before. So, when we got to the top of the hill for the fifth time, I went for it. I dropped the group with the one Twenty-16 rider coming down the corkscrew, and we were able to work together until we crossed the finish line. Then, as I hit the climb for what I thought was the second to last lap, I checked over my shoulder, and to my surprise, I saw that I had dropped her too. Thinking that we had two laps to go, I rode by myself but did not sprint for the finish. I crossed the finish line with the leaders of the master men group. Then, thinking that I still had another lap, I started sprinting up the hill. Then, a race official told me that our last lap had been cut and that I was done.

I headed back to the finish, grabbed my recovery, and headed back to the car to change before my podium and the boy's race.

-Sawyer

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### 3. Sea Otter Classic Road Race

4/16 - 17/16

Monterey

#### Sea Otter Classic Road Race – Juniors 17-18

##### **Ben Cook**

11<sup>th</sup> Place    Sea Otter Road Race    Juniors 17-18

After a challenging circuit race, I was feeling excited but nervous for today's road race. I had seen firsthand just how good of climbers there were in the 17-18 field yesterday, and today's course would feature even longer and more plentiful climbs to face. The field was about 50 riders strong, and I lined up right at the front with my teammates Parker and Ethan. The long climbs would for sure suit Parker and I well, while Ethan would help cover early attacks. "Everything understood gentlemen?" said the official before starting us off. "Yes sir!" the field chanted back.

On the first neutral promenade, I found myself in the first row up the climb, then drifted gradually back to the third or so row with Ethan and Parker ahead of me. Soon enough we were taking the tight left turn heading towards the bottom of the first climb. After a sweeping right hander we were heading straight upwards on the Hennessey Ranch Rd climb through the feed zone. I held good position in the top 10 or so as the pace rolled on tamely up the courses first climb. The shifting of gears and swooshing of tires flew by me as Specialized's Cole Davis made the race's first attack. Riders jumped after him one by one, and soon enough I found myself in the single file line as well. But before I knew it I was out of the draft and in no man's land, about 20 yards from Cole and 3 other riders, and the field another 20 yards behind me. I wasn't sure how to best play out the situation, so I decided to push it and try to bridge up to Cole's group. Right as I was about to make the catch I looked back to see the remainder of the field about to catch me. Soon realizing that I had been caught out, I hopped back in the draft and told myself to pay more attention to big moves like that.

The remainder of the first lap was much of the same, but I stayed in the draft better and saved more energy. Coming into the next lap I positioned myself in the top 10 before heading into the left hander to head up the Hennessey Ranch climb again. Right out of the left turn the leaders were sprinting up the climb and I found myself clinging to wheels again. Once we bunched back together, Cameron Beard, also from Specialized, pulled a big attack and broke off the front on the climb. He was joined by two Hot Tubes riders, making an almost identical group to the leaders of yesterday's circuit race. I knew that I didn't have the ability to chase that move, so I waited in the field again. Suddenly, Specialized's Jules Gilliam attacked from our group to bridge to the move. I flinched and got ready to jump, but spent too much time



thinking, and somehow made the poor choice of staying with the group, and talking myself out of my own strength. I'd have to say that this is where I made my biggest mistake of the race, by deciding not to take the chance and go with Jules to the winning break away.

I remember my dad telling me that to be successful in racing, and in life, you have to take risks. Before every good race he always tells me to attack, and that that is what will make the difference between a good day and a bad day. I realized all too late that I just didn't have the mentality to go for it and be aggressive today, and while our group was already working hard, I think if I really went for it I could've made it up to Jules and the break.

The rest of the race, even though 5th place was still up for grabs, had much of the same dilly dally riding seen in junior races. Talking, jokes about being on a Sunday ride, then brutally fast attacks and climbs. Finally, about 2 laps from the finish, I found Lux's Camden Vodika as a likely companion. We knew that we wouldn't be able to stick it out in the uphill finish, so it might be a good idea to try to go for it on the flats or rollers. It was a desperate attempt but it was worth a shot. I was really lucky to still have Parker in the very small and selective field with me at this point. "I'm cramping some dude, so let me know how I can help you out." he said about 2 laps out. "Thanks so much dude. Just stick near the front and cover anything that tries to chase me if I am off the front." I told him. Camden and I punched it together on one of the smaller climbs after Hennessey and found ourselves with a small gap. We held it off for a few minutes but the field chased us down pretty quickly, we weren't attacking clean enough to get a solid gap. We tried one more time before realizing that we had to wait until the final climb to try to place.

Coming into the final climb, a group of 3 or so riders attacked hard on the downhill and got away. I tried to join in but couldn't do it. I knew that I just had to pace myself as best I could on the climb and pick off riders as I went. I began to crack about a third of the way up, and by halfway up the 3 mile climb to the finish I had lost contact with the rest of our 10 or so rider group. I kept pushing as best I could despite having a darn tough race up to this point, and stayed in contact as best I could, but I couldn't seem to catch the leaders. Finally, I saw my friend from Limitless, Jordan Ruffino, slipping back on my left. I pushed onwards but couldn't seem to make any ground on the leaders. "Come on baby, push it! You got this Ben!" He cheered for me. I dug as deep as I could and began to claw back at what was left of the group, now about 6 or 7 riders. Zach Gottesman, another friend of mine, drifted backwards as I dug deeper. "You got it Zach, let's go." I said as best I could while breathing hard. "No, it's you! Go! Hills are your thing Ben, go get them!" I couldn't really believe it. Zach and I had been riding together since 7th grade, back when we were in the same middle school. Back then I was always the "climber" and he was the "sprinter", and to this day, 5 years later, our roles haven't changed that much. I pushed onwards as hard as possible through the 500 meter sign. I looked up to see the leaders about 5 seconds ahead of me. Finally, at 250

meters, I saw Coach Laura, Tony, and Maxine standing the inside corner of the last left hand bend to the finish.

"Go Ben, now." Coach said quietly so the others wouldn't hear. I was already in my drops and ready to sprint, and when I started to attack she picked up her voice. "Go Ben!" I heard her and Tony yell as I sprinted towards the line. I took the inside of the bend, and had just managed to catch the entire bunch in front of me and blow right by them. I sprinted as hard as I could and looked behind me to see Rupert from Limitless chasing, but not catching me. I pushed into the line, and finally collapsed after the finish. I set a foot on the ground and panted, completely wiped out after such a hard race.

The rest of the group rolled in behind me. There was the slight chance that I was sprinting for a top 10, but I had counted the riders ahead of me, and who had slipped away from the group at the bottom of the climb, and knew in my gut that I was 11th. At the end of the day, I was both happy and upset with how my road race went. This year's course lacked the feed zone climb from previous year's making the race much more tactical, which called for more daring racing. After a tough circuit race yesterday, and not feeling my best today, I was simply unable to take the risks necessary to get in that lead breakaway. I was happy that I really gave it my all into the finish and came out with 11th, but I know that in the future I could do better. I learned my lesson well, that to do well, you have to attack and be aggressive. It was more of a mental race than a physical race for me today at Sea Otter, and I'm proud to say that I had a great time as always, and learned some valuable lessons for next time. Coming up next week was my first mountain bike race of the year and the Wente Road Race, one of my favorite courses in Norcal, and I was determined to take some risks and pull out some results.

-Ben

## **Ethan Frankel**

26<sup>th</sup> Place      Sea Otter Classic Road Race

Juniors 17-18

Three years ago, I raced my first and only Sea Otter Classic road race. The only thing I recall about that race was the heat and how terribly I had felt. This year was no different, although I knew I was several orders of magnitude stronger. Ben, Parker, and I all lined up at the front for a 50-mile road race.

After a neutral start, the race went up a long, steep climb. I knew this was going to be the point at which attacks were going to be made, and I knew it was crucial for me to hang on and try to be at the front. The first lap, no attacks went, so I had no trouble staying up near the front of the pack. The second lap went quite differently. Halfway up the climb, I started to cramp up. *Uh-oh*, I thought to myself. Not a minute later, a Hot Tubes rider attacked. Bam! I was off the back in a flash. My hamstring was barely moving, and I was using sheer willpower to push me up and over the climb. I was now 10 seconds back, going

into a windy descent. I was never going to get back on. The cramp faded (but never really left), and I waited until a group behind me caught up. It included a friend of mine, Justin, and we chatted and rode at a steady pace. I rehydrated and ate and my cramp slowly disappeared.

We were directed to do one less lap, so after five laps, instead of six, we pulled off and began the climb to the finish. It was about a 10-minute climb that was relatively shallow until it pitched up with 3 km to go. Our group grew to about 10 as we caught more dropped riders, and I led until the steep pitch. I allowed some others to pull, and was prepared to jump around the group to beat out the others. As we neared the finish, I jumped around, but not early enough and came in third in the group.

Again, Ben finished in 11<sup>th</sup>, and Parker was not far behind in 19<sup>th</sup>. Then we watched our teammates Gianni and Isaiah finish 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 15-16s! It was an eventful yet tough day in the saddle, but I'm glad that I was able to race such a challenging race. With each national-level race that I participate in, I know that I am getting stronger and developing as a rider.

-Ethan

### **Parker Rous**

19<sup>th</sup> Place      Sea Otter Road Race      Juniors 17-18

I rolled up to the start with Ben and Ethan and we were able to get a front row start. Even though the first few miles were neutral it was still nice to be up near the front especially after the day before which didn't go well at all. Coming back from a crash I hadn't ridden much in the week leading up to the race mostly because I broke my precious bike in the crash. I didn't know what to expect but I know I can climb so this course should favor me. After the neutral start was over the attacks were constant and fast. The pace rarely dipped to an easy pace and the group was strung out making it hard to move up, which again made a front row start nice. At the end of the first lap my buddy made an attack that initiated the break that stayed away. The racing was never slow and there was lots of attacking and hitting the main climb hard each time. This wore on me and going into the last lap the group split and I was caught behind. I eventually made it back to the group but was cramping and was not able to hold on for the final climb to the finish.

-Parker

### **Chase King**

32<sup>nd</sup> Place      Sea Otter Road Race      Juniors 17-18

During the drive down to Laguna Seca, I had checked the profile for this race - 6 laps of about 8 miles each, one steep climb by the feed zone, and several rolling hills totaling several thousand feet of elevation. The title for this race, "Juniors," was a complete understatement for the strong riders in the

group. In the first climb, a few riders and I were dropped off the back of the group. Luckily, the main bunch wasn't going very fast so I managed to catch up. On the first climb of the second lap, there was an attack near the front, and since I was towards the back of the group, a handful of other riders and I couldn't keep up. I would like to be able to say that climbs are my strong point; however I wasn't prepared for the palpable sense of strength and talent belonging to the experienced riders in this race. I setup a chase group paceline with 6 or so other riders who were dropped, and since we were lapped by two riders in a break, we only had to do 5 laps. As I crossed the finish line at the top of the two-mile climb, my legs were completely shot, but I was happy to see that Ben had gotten 11th in my race and Gianni 2nd in the 15-16 race.

-Chase

## Sea Otter Classic Road Race – Juniors 15-16

### **Isaiah Chass**

3<sup>rd</sup> Place      Sea Otter Classic Road Race      Juniors 15-16

The race started off neutral down a 5-minute descent until we got onto course where we would do 6 laps. When we got on course, it started out on a climb that the field rode pretty slow over. The group stayed together over the feed zone climb, and then along the rollers on the backside of the course. Still together at the end of the first lap, we were coming back up the feed zone climb. A rider made an attack at the bottom of the climb, but didn't get off the front, so we still stayed together on the rest of the climb. I stayed at the front nearing the top of the climb, and then going over the top, a LUX rider attacked. Being in the wrong gear, it took some hesitation before following the attack. After getting on his wheel, I looked back and we had a gap so I pulled through and put in a big effort. We took turns pulling, and started opening up a gap. On the backside of the course, I looked back and the field was about to catch us, so I eased up. The field started to slow up as well, and then a Tieni Duro rider attacked from the field. The field wasn't chasing his move, and he was coming up to us, so I picked the pace back up and we started working together again. There were now 3 riders including me, so we took turns pulling, and opened up a gap again. By the last real climb on the lap, I looked back and couldn't see the field, so after pulling through, I went to the back and ate a Clif Shot. I looked back again and saw the follow car was now behind us, so I knew that we had a good-sized gap from the field. We kept working together the rest of the lap, and were coming into lap 3 of 6. On the feed zone climb, the LUX rider and I did most of the work. Near the top of the climb, the other rider was dropping back, so we eased up a little over the top and let him catch on. I figured we would lose more time not having an extra rider to help pull than going hard over the top and dropping him. We kept rotating and on the backside of the course, the race official gave us a time gap of 1:30. At this point I knew

we had a solid gap, but we still had to pull hard to hold the gap for another 2½ laps. On the feed zone climb on the 4<sup>th</sup> lap, I pulled hard to try to further extend our gap from the field, because we could put some time in on the field on the hard parts of the course. I grabbed a bottle at the feed zone, and then rotated with the LUX rider. At the top of the climb, the other rider wasn't there, so we decided to keep pulling hard and not slow down. After the descent, we kept a good pace over the rollers, and the race official told us we now had 2:30 on the field. For the rest of lap 4 we just kept rotating and pulling hard. On lap 5, the feed zone climb really started to get hard, and I wasn't too happy about doing it for one more lap. I grabbed another bottle at the feed zone, and poured some on my back. The next time check from the race official was 2:40, and I couldn't wait to be on the final climb. We still had one more lap, so I ate another Clif Shot and had a few Shot Bloks. I was really hurting on the feed zone climb on the last lap, but I knew it was the last time I would have to go over that climb. The other rider was dropping back, but I waited a few seconds over the top of the climb and he pulled through. I pulled down the descent, and after the other rider pulled hard on the rollers, he said that he cramped. I was now by myself with half a lap to go as well as the finishing climb. On one of the last climbs on the loop, another LUX rider and my teammate Gianni were coming up to me. I recovered going over the top so that I would be able to jump on them. We were now on the final climb, and a few miles from the finish. The LUX rider attacked at the base of the climb, and I had to stay with him. He attacked again right away, and I couldn't hang with him this time. I gave it everything I had to try to get back on, but he kept attacking and pulling away from me. I still was racing for 3<sup>rd</sup> place, and I had to just get to the finish as fast as I could. I saw the 1K to go sign and started going as hard as I could. The climb started to pitch up near the finish, and I saw people coming behind me. I only had a minute or two left, so I gave it everything I had to the finish for 3<sup>rd</sup> place. From the race, I really learned how important it is to be in a breakaway especially when there are strong riders in the field.

-Isaiah

## **Gianni Lamperti**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place      Sea Otter Road Race      Juniors 15-16

When we rolled off the start it was neutral down to the bottom of the hill then started off as we turned right for the first lap. It was pretty slow over the first climb then rolled for the rest of the lap. Coming into the second lap it was once again not super fast over the climb but after the top Jake Chromy from LUX attacked and Isaiah covered it. Once they got a gap it slowed down for the rest of the lap and they got a good size gap. Coming into the climb on the next lap Kevin Vermaerke got on the front and pulled hard over the top bringing it down to 5 of us. I just sat on and once he closed the gap about halfway and nobody would help him he sat up and about 10 more kids caught us. Once again he

pulled really hard on the climb and brought it down to five people. This time only about another five caught us by the bottom of the climb again starting the next lap. Kevin started out pulling hard but then slowed down through the feed zone and LUX attacked over the top. I was on his wheel and pulled through over the top. He then attacked me and I sat on for a few miles then pulled through again. I did not work hard but I should not have worked at all since I had a teammate off the front who could win the race. We caught the LUX kid that was with Isaiah and at that point I did not pull for the rest of the race. We caught Isaiah a few hundred meters later and he got on my wheel. Coming into the bottom of the finish climb LUX attacked and Isaiah could not hang with it. I stayed on and he attacked me about five more times before the 1k to go sign. At that point, he attacked again and I could not stay with him. I rode to the finish for second and Isaiah held on for third. It was a great race!

-Gianni

## **Luke Lamperti**

DNF Sea Otter Classic Road Race Juniors 15-16

The morning of the road race I was sore from the circuit the day prior. I was excited to race again. My race was not until later in the day. About an hour before the start we got on our bikes to go do a warm up. We did our jumps and then headed to the line. We started off neutral until we got to the bottom of the climb. Then the race was on. We rolled easy the first lap with no attacks. Then on the second lap of 6 we went a little bit hard but nothing much until we hit the climb the pace picked up. Then over the top Lux attacked with Isaiah my teammate on his wheel. The two big teams were up the road. The only rider doing work was Kevin who had no teammates. Then on the third lap the pace was super hard on the climb. Over the top I was having some allergies problems and could not breathe with a really bad stomach ache. Then I made it back into the group and was barely able to pedal. On the next lap I was supper bummed but I had to pullout. I was not happy but I will be exited for next year.

-Luke

## **Esteban Ramirez**

19<sup>th</sup> Place      Sea Otter Classic Road Race      Juniors 15-16

I was dumbfounded when I saw the sheer magnitude of the Sea Otter festival on Friday when I got there. The registration process was pretty complicated and it took us 30 minutes to complete. The next day before the race, I took my warm up very easy because I normally never warm up before road races because I warm up as I go. The neutral start worked as a sufficient warm up for me and as soon as the race started I was able to keep up with them for a while. Towards the end of the second lap though, the peloton did a rapid acceleration on a big hill and I couldn't keep up because I didn't want to

completely waste all of my energy right then. So, I rounded up a few similar performing racers like me and I was in my own echelon. During the race it was getting difficult for me to breathe properly and I was developing a massive cramp. I started getting water from the neutral feedzone people yelling out "ENERGY!" which helped a great deal. Still, I had cramping issues in my stomach for the duration of the race and I was seriously considering stopping but I could never do something like that. I kept repeating to myself "I got to stop doing these incredibly difficult races." Going through all of this, I still maintained my place in the group I was with and it stayed that way all the way to the end of the race when we got directed to head for the finish line, we all slowed down as if we finished. To my extreme disappointment, at the 1Km sign my left calf muscle almost fully locked up causing an enormous amount of pain, but I had to keep going because I was basically at the finish. Everyone used their remaining energy to sprint to the finish but if I would've done that I felt I would tear a ligament on my leg. So I was the last to finish in the group. These big hilled road races are very difficult and I am proud that I finished the one in San Dimas and the Sea Otter Classic RR. These were two of the most difficult races I've ever done alongside Cats Hill Criterium and it left me with a feeling of never again doing rolling hilled road races, though I'm definitely going to continue doing road races with rolling hills.

-Esteban

## Sea Otter Classic Road Race – Juniors 13-14

### **Andrew Mathiesen**

3<sup>rd</sup> Place      Sea Otter Classic Road Race      Juniors 13-14

The day before the race I did two, one minute pyramids. For dinner that night I had pasta and the next morning I had eggs and two pieces of toast. My dad and I left the house around 8 am and the car ride there took three hours. When we got to the race I had half a PB&J sandwich. When we arrived at Sea Otter we had problems locating the start of the race. While we were searching for the location I spotted the team and we walked together in the festival area. After visiting the sponsors we went with the rest of the team to where they parked. When we got there we started preparing all our things for the race. When we were all ready we started riding to where the race started. During the warm-up I pushed myself a little too hard to stay with the team and I felt the effect at the beginning of the race.

I was in the breakaway on the first lap which had three people for the remainder of the race. The race was never flat and the two other opponents could go downhill faster than me. When we got to the last hill on the way to the finish line, a guy started pulling away from me. I sprinted to get back with him but he was too far ahead of me. When we were near the finish line I was exhausted from the earlier sprint and could not push harder and a kid passed me

at the finish. I got third place. The race was very challenging but at the same time fun.

-Andrew

## Sea Otter Classic Road Race – Junior Girls 15-18

### **Sawyer Taylor**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place      Sea Otter Classic Road Race      Jr. 15-18 Girls

After a victory at the circuit race Friday and the crit on Thursday, I was excited for a hard road race on Saturday. I wasn't actually racing until 5:30 at night, so I knew that I would have a long day of waiting ahead of me. While my mom was riding in the morning, I finished the race reports I still needed to do and made sure that I had everything I needed for my road race. Then, my mom and I got lunch to take to the course while watching the boy's race. We finally left at around 12:30 with plenty of time to watch the boys take off and for my warm-up. Like for the circuit race, I did my warm up on the road. Then, with 15 minutes before my start, I headed to my start on Barloy Canyon Road.

I was hoping for a more competitive junior girl field and I was not disappointed. There were several riders that had not been there for the circuit race including the girl who had gotten off the front with Summer Moak in the previous year's road race at Sea Otter and then who went on to nationals to take seventh.

Following the neutral start, we started to climb up the feed zone hill. A girl from San Jose named Illi moved to the front and I grabbed her wheel. As we came over the crest of the hill, I slipped back a few wheels to get out of the wind. We took the first lap easy. The entire group managed to stay together which was nice because I remember from last year that the break happened at the top of the first hill right after the neutral start.

At the bottom of the feed zone hill on our second of three laps, the break happened. The girl from San Jose went for it after we passed the feed zone, and myself and two other riders (including the girl who got off the front last year as well as another junior I had raced with at Valley of the Sun) caught her as we moved to the top of the hill. By the time we had descended and were climbing again, we had a gap.

I was feeling really good at the beginning of the second lap. Then, about halfway through, I flatted. I quickly pulled to the side of the road and called over the sag car. The mechanic got me back on the road in less than two minutes and I saw the break by the base of the feed zone climb. By the time we got to the top of the hill, I had caught them.

Coming into the last lap, I knew that I was more tired than the three other riders in the break after flatting and two previous days racing. I would really have to race the last lap smart if I wanted to podium. I tried to be as conservative as possible and really focused on staying out of the wind. Then,



after a good final lap, we hit the finish climb. With one kilometer to go, Illi went for it. None of us could catch her and it became a race for second. Upon hearing a man yell, "500 meters to go," I attacked and pulled ahead of the other two to take second.

Overall, I'm pretty happy with how I did in this race but think that I would have maybe had a shot at first had I not been as tired as I was at the finish from flatting and my previous days of racing.

-Sawyer

## Sea Otter Classic Road Race – Senior Women Category 3-4

### **Sawyer Taylor**

3<sup>rd</sup> Place      Sea Otter Road Race      Senior Women 3-4

Waking up on the morning of the women's 3-4 road race at Sea Otter, I didn't feel great. I had raced three days in a row with my last races being only 12 hours ago. During my warm up, I felt sick probably because of my late, unusual dinner and a breakfast too close to getting on my bike. When I finally did get to the line, a junior who I had raced with a few times before named Gabrielle started talking to me and we decided that our goals for the day were first to not die and secondly to finish this race in one piece.

As soon as we were de-neutralized, the fast group pulled away up the feed zone hill. Out of the thirty to forty women who started, fifteen were in the fast group including myself as well as Gabrielle and the girls who had gotten first and fourth in my road race on the previous day. This should mean that there would be enough of us to work together in a happy, friendly relationship in the pain cave, but this was not the case. We were a bunch of category three and four women being catty instead of racing. This made the race harder than is needed to be at the pace we were going just because it was hard to get a decent pace line working. If we had only managed to get along, our race would have been so much faster which would have made it a lot more fun. In addition to this, there were a few riders who kept on trying to form breaks at all the wrong times so there was a lot of random, pointless attacking. Especially being as hot as it was, I was shocked by how much energy some of the riders had to yell at each other to pull through while they themselves were just swerving all over the road. On the third lap, one woman even ended up crashing into a bush.

In our fourth lap, I still had three quarters of a bottle left so I decided not to take a feed and just finish the race with what I had. After descending from the feed zone hill, I ate a Clif Shot and got in the draft as best I could for the remaining two laps.

On the final climb to the finish, I was pretty gassed. About halfway up the climb, a small group attacked. I was able to almost catch on but just missed them. In the last kilometer, I passed two category three riders that had been dropped to take third in the fours and top ten overall.

In this race, I was really able to see what not to do. Also, I was able to focus on riding conservatively which is a skill that will help me a lot in harder races.

-Sawyer

## Sea Otter Classic Road & Circuit Races– Senior Category 4 and Category 5

### **Chase King**

17<sup>th</sup> Place      Sea Otter Road Race      Senior Category 5

When I woke up a few hours before my 7:00 am start, I could feel the aftermath of yesterday's hilly race in my legs. I had forgotten my foam roller, which accounts for my usual post-race ritual, so had improvised with massaging my thighs with a metal water bottle. I had a bowl of oatmeal, and we drove over to the raceway to warm up. It was still a bit nippy this morning, and in hindsight, I'm glad the race was early in the morning instead of in the scorching 90° afternoon sun. Up the first climb in the race, there must have been an attack because the pace shot up and the group of 40 or so racers crumbled apart. I was somewhere in the middle, and at the top of the climb before the descent, there were no other riders nearby. I tried to time-trial my way back to the lead group, but only managed to catch up to and pass riders who got dropped. I never managed to setup a fully-fledged paceline for the remainder of the race, but rode with several other riders over the remaining four laps. On the final climb, I gave it every last watt I had in my legs, and managed to pass about 6 riders total before crossing the line. I wasn't too happy with the mistake I made in the first climb, but barely winning the hill sprint finish with another rider made up for that. Sea Otter made for a fantastic weekend; really looking forward to next year!

-Chase

### **Ryan Yust**

13<sup>th</sup> Place      Sea Otter Circuit Race      Senior Category 4

My first Sea Otter was a blast. The race turned out to be only 43 minutes when the registration said 50 minutes. I was happy with that because my legs were not feeling fresh. I was feeling tired going into the race. We started and it was a sprint for the first lap. I sat mid pack on Jake Yackle's wheel for just about the whole race. It was my first time doing the circuit descent and it was ridiculously fast. It got to the point where I was outside of my comfort zone, but I guess that's how you improve your skills. It eased up after about 2 lap then it felt like a smooth training ride. The last 2 laps were full gas. It was hard to stay with the leading pack but I did it. The last lap I could feel everyone's nerves and

everyone was antsy. The last hill felt very short. We were flying up it and I got to the top 5th wheel then I lost about 4 places on the descent. On the last turn I lost a few more places and witnessed a very large crash of about 8 riders in front of me. At this point we were strung out like stringbeans and I'm surprised it only took out 2 riders coming into the sprint. I didn't have the legs and I finished at the end of the lead pack. All in all, my first official cat 4 race went ok. I came out of it unscathed and I had an amazing time.  
-Ryan

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#### **4. Sea Otter Classic MTB XC Race** 4/17/16 Monterey

### Sea Otter Classic MTB XC Races

#### **Luke Lamperti**

1<sup>st</sup> Place Sea Otter Classic MTB XC Juniors 13-14

The morning of the XC I did not start until 10 so I did not have to wake up too early. I ate around 7 and then relaxed after all my stuff was ready. I had to start warming up at 9 so I had on my kit and was ready by then. When I left I spun for a little bit then did a little bit of zone 3 and then a 1 minute pyramid. Then I rolled to the line around 9:50. Then the officials gave us our speech. Then the race was on. We started on the road. When we hit dirt there was a roller. I attacked to see if I could split up the group. When we got to the bottom of the little descent there was one other kid with me. We rotated on the fire road and then I led on the single track. We had to pass a lot of groups that stated in front of us. Then at the feed zone about half way through we had a long fire road climb. I attacked at the base a quickly got a gap. Then I found a rhythm and kept it going for the next 10 minutes up the climb. Then I hit some single track. I knew I just had to keep a good pace to hold it to the line. So I rode were I was comfortable in case he caught me, but still going hard. I rode it to the line and was super happy to get a win.

-Luke

#### **Ethan Frankel**

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Sea Otter Classic, Cross Country Cat 3, Jr. 15-18

It was my first ever USAC mountain bike race and I was bubbling with nerves and excitement. Ryan and I, teammates on the road, were going to work together to try to get one of us the win. I looked behind me at the start and saw a huge field, the biggest I've ever raced in a mountain bike race.

The whistle blew and the race was on. We started on the Laguna Seca racetrack, and Ryan and I stayed at the front: top 5. We had soon dropped most of the riders and we were now off the front with one other rider. He was

extremely strong and we knew that we weren't going to be able to drop him. I was feeling the effects from the previous two days of racing, but Ryan was feeling good so we decided that he would try to beat out the other rider for the win.

We hit a paved, flat section and I took the lead. Having never pre-ridden the course, I missed a very obscure transition into single-track. I quickly whipped around and sprinted into the single-track. All of a sudden, I saw another rider approaching behind. The three of us, however, kept a high pace and soon dropped him.

It was after the single-track that things got more interesting. We hit gravel, flat fire road and I went to the front to initiate some attacks and try to wear down the other rider. Attack after attack, and he was always on my wheel. Eventually, Ryan became fatigued enough that he wasn't able to follow. We hit a steep, long hill, and the rider attacked. Neither of us had the legs to follow, and by the end of the grueling 15-minute climb, Ryan was a couple of minutes back, and I was a further minute behind him.

The rest of the race was a battle between mind and body. My mind said push, my legs said no. Finally, I saw the last, punchy climb and came over the top onto the raceway. I unleashed my sprint and finished 3<sup>rd</sup>, about 2 minutes behind the winner. I had a great race considering my hard efforts the previous day and during the race. And I was very happy to bring home a Sea Otter medal! It was a great end to spring break, and I can't wait to race again next year!

-Ethan

## **Ryan Yust**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Sea Otter Cat 3 MTB

Ethan and I raced this together and it was awesome having another teammate that I could work with. Ethan and I decided before the race that whoever was feeling the best 5 miles in, the other person would work for them. At mile 5 there were 3 of us, this guy from Arizona, Ethan and I. We had a few minutes on the rest of the field. I told Ethan my legs felt good and he started to pull more of the time. For the first 5 miles it was all downhill and we got to the bottom of this canyon. I knew it was time to come up. We gradually started to climb then it hit us like a brick. It was a fire road that went straight up. This is when the guy from Arizona attacked and I sat on his wheel. Ethan fell off. I hung on for about 5 minutes and then I couldn't hang anymore. He slowly got away from me. I had about 2 miles to the finish when I fell off the lead rider. It was disappointing. But I finished out the race in 2nd place and Ethan got 3rd. It was a great way to wrap up Sea Otter 2016 and my first Sea Otter!

-Ryan

## **Gianni Lamperti**

14<sup>th</sup> Place    Sea Otter XC Cat. 2 15-18

The morning of the XC I was excited to ride the new course this year. When the race started on the course it was pretty fast right away and I knew that it was going to be hard. I went into the singletrack towards the front, still a little too far back. Once we came out to the pavement I drilled it and caught the leaders and was 3rd into the second single track. I could not hang with them so I started to drift back a little but caught them on the sand pit decent again. I then drifted back more on the next fire road and was out of water which was a bummer because it was so hot. At this point, I knew I was way too far back so I kept going hard but had fun on the course. I had a really good weekend of racing at my favorite venue and I can't wait to come back next year.

-Gianni

### **Isaiah Chass**

DNF Sea Otter Classic MTB XC    Cat 2 Junior Men 15-18

I was feeling really tired from the previous days of racing, but I wanted to do well in the XC race. The race started off hard, and I knew it was going to be a tough race as I was already towards the back. We got to the dirt where it started out on a little climb and then some rollers. I was pretty far back after the climb, but I tried to make up time on the rollers. I sprinted hard down the descent, and got in a group on the road section. I pulled my group on the road and up the first climb, and then got on a wheel for the next climb. I was drifting farther back throughout the climbs, and couldn't hang with the riders ahead of me. I got to the fire road climb about halfway through the race, and was almost out of water already. At the top of the climb, I realized how much farther I had to go, so I pulled off the course where the course had looped back near the start. As much as I wanted to finish the race, I wasn't racing for top 10 or anything, and there was no point being out there for another hour. I was happy with the racing the previous days, and I can't wait for next year's Sea Otter Classic.

-Isaiah

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### **5. Wentle Road Race**

4/24/16

Livermore

### **Ben Cook**

1<sup>st</sup> Place

Wentle Vineyards Road Race

Senior Category 3

Short Version: My friend bet me a dollar that I would win the race. At approximately 10:56am on Sunday, April 24th, I made one dollar.

Long Version: After a tough mountain bike race the day before, I showed up to Wentle with my friend feeling confident but tired. The plan for the day was

for Luke and Gianni to keep me protected all day and then for Gianni to lead me out in the sprint. We weren't going to try any new tactics today; it was time for me to win my first race.

The first lap was a moderately fast pace up the climb, which was just a few miles after the start. I got my heartrate up to about 180bpm, which was a good way to break in my lungs and legs for the rest of the race to come. The 72 rider field stayed mostly together throughout the first lap. I stayed around the top 30 riders while Gianni while Luke sat a bit further up, being attentive for breakaways. If anything were to go down the road, we wanted him to be in it. Right away Gianni noticed the crosswind and pulled me out of the left side of the race and over to the right where I was more sheltered. We predicted that the race would stay mostly together in the strong head and crosswinds, especially on the climb.

The next lap everything stayed together once again on the climb, but a move of 8 riders went on the descent, containing a Dolce Vita rider, being the only rider in the move from one of the big teams. Luke hit the front and took a pull with a few other riders, and when I saw the pace slowing down I joined him for a short pull then got out of the wind. I looked around for Gianni but he was nowhere to be found up at the front. Finally, 3 Specialized/MuscleMilk riders came to the front, but they each took a rotation and sat up. The move lingered at about 10 seconds. "Let's keep it rolling guys!" I said with some encouragement as I pulled off, but the whole team sat on my wheel. I remembered this move from Chico, when a rider called me out to pull down the break since I had a big team behind me, and instead of standing up for myself I went right with it and chased the move down. This time I was pretty tired of playing games, so I learned from my past mistake and jumped through the MuscleMilk riders to the break. I bridge up in about 45 seconds, and about 2 minutes later the field had caught us. It was a bummer to have to do the work myself, but at least I didn't have to pull the whole group this time like I did at Chico. The MuscleMilk guys and I called it a truce and understood that we both just had different plans in mind for the day, and got back to racing with no hard feelings.

On the 3rd lap Gianni and I sat a bit further back than we would like. Luke moved up to the front before the climb but I lost his wheel and had to take myself up. Gianni and I struggled for position and hit the right hand turn into the climbs steepest pitch in about 40th wheel. As soon as we came around the corner I sprinted up as many places as I could for about 10 seconds, and then held the pace as high as I passed riders and tried to make it to the front of the group. I managed to make it to about 20th wheel by the top of the climb, and soon regrouped with Luke. When I looked back, I saw that only about 30 riders had made it over the climb together, and I feared for Gianni, since he was near me at the bottom.

After a bit more time riding in the pack I finally found Gianni towards the back. I found out that he had barely made it over the climb and was struggling

every time the gradient and wind picked up. Nevertheless I knew that Gianni was strong and Luke needed his help at the front. I struggled a bit with how to phrase this, and realized that if he were at the front he would be having an easier time than constantly sprinting at the back, and I would be right there along his side. It's always hard to ask a rider to work for you in a race situation, and even though I was the protected rider I wanted everybody to have a good race and make it over that final climb. Gianni and I headed up towards the front together and began monitoring the field while Luke sat a bit further up. Coming into the climb on the 4th of 4 laps, Gianni and I had much better positioning. We sprinted up as hard as we could, and dug deeper and deeper as the climb went on but eventually made it over in top 10 position.

"Alright you guys, we're all here." I said with Luke and Gianni at my sides. "For sure. I'm all yours now Benji, let me know what I can do. You're gonna win!" Said Gianni confidently, and we both cracked a smile. As the wind and climbing picked up on the back side of the course, gaps and splits began forming more and more frequently, and Gianni helped me over the climbs by closing the gaps and chasing down lone riders, doing an excellent job of keeping an eye on all parts of the race. As we came into the last few miles, I knew just where I wanted to move up, at the right-hand curve just about 3k out. From there I planned to be in the top 10 through the final turn about 500 meters to go. I told Gianni of my plans, as Luke still sat in the top 10 keeping the race together for the sprint.

At this point in time there wasn't too much going through my mind. It was one of those moments where everybody has told you something big will happen, and right before it does you are totally calm. It ended up being kind of a funny day because everybody joked with me that I would win the race, and here I was, 3k out with the perfect plan all coming together. I took the far left line in the right-hand curve and made up about 10 places before slotting back into the draft. I continued to move up with Gianni a bit behind me as I could feel the field getting anxious. I picked up the pace every time a rider tried to pass or move up through the field. I sat on the right side protected from the crosswind with Luke and Gianni on my left. I kept moving up towards Luke and was finally cut off by the right hand turn. The pace picked up for about 15 seconds before we finally hit the bottom of the hill, where Gianni came buzzing by on my left and told me to hop on. I held his wheel but soon lost him when a rider cut in to avoid a crash. I started to think a bit more frantically, searching for ways out. I tried the right side and didn't make any ground, I had to move up. "Gianni! I lost you!" I tried yelling, but I knew he couldn't hear me. Before the race I told him one very important thing, and that was during my lead-out, that he should never stop sprinting. It was too risky at this stage for him to "drop me off" by pulling to the side and allowing me to open my sprint. I had lost a potentially good result when a teammate of mine in Europe pulled off too far out from the line, and I was forced to sprint too early and was eventually passed. But today I wanted things to be different, and I knew that if Gianni

sprinted to the line, he could grab a result himself and I would be guaranteed a well timed lead-out.

"Come on Ben!" yelled Luke as he came by on the left. I hopped on his wheel and he sprinted as hard as he could and took me right up to Gianni before pulling off for me to grab the wheel. I saw Gianni sprinting as hard as he could in the lead towards the top of the hill. On his wheel was a Sunpower rider and behind him a Dolce Vita rider. I hopped on the Dolce Vita rider's wheel and got back in the saddle for a brief moment. I was in the position, now it was a waiting game. I could feel the crest of the hill coming up, and the finish line was just 200 meters after that. I remember what Coach Laura told me about sprinting and attacking, that you have to wait as long as you can to jump first. I felt the bike begin to crest the hill; we were just 15 seconds from the finish at most. I locked my eyes on the line and jumped as hard as I could out of the saddle past the Dolce Vita rider, then the Sunpower rider, then finally past Gianni.

"GO BEN! GO!" I heard from behind me. I sprinted as hard as I could and saw nobody around me. I remembered the rush of wind on my left side at Copperopolis in this same position as I was passed and lost the win, but today there was nobody. I sat back down in the saddle and looked to either side of me to see nobody. I looked forwards, saw the finish line, and raised a hand in victory. "YEEESSS!!!" I yelled in absolute excitement. I couldn't believe it! I put my hand on top of my head in disbelief. Riders came by me on either side with words of congratulations and pats on the back. I had won! Gianni came by with a huge smile on his face. Together we spun down the other side of the hill and back to the finish line. I could not have been happier with how we rode. Well, there you go! I won my first race. You may have read these lengthy reports, and read of my mistakes, my close calls, my good and bad luck, but never of a race like this.

I learned a few really important things from winning today. The first and foremost being that winning does not make you happy. And it's not to say that I wasn't super duper happy, that I won, but I realized at the end of the day that I had just ended a really big journey in my life. Embarrassingly enough, I have been a cat 3 for almost 3 seasons now, and had been dreaming of a day like this since the moment my cat 3 upgrade was approved back in 2014. But I realized along the way that the journey is way more important than the destination, and that my close calls, flat tires, crashes, 2nd places by an inch, and all of the above have helped shape me into the rider and the person that I am today. Johan Bruyneel wrote the book "We Might as well Win" in 2008 as a documentary of Lance Armstrong and Bruyneel's success together. He started off in the first chapter, called "what I learned from winning", but describing just that. He listed all of the fantastic things he gained from winning bike race after bike race. But I would love to argue with that mentality, and say that winning is purely a reward for hard work, for crashes, flat tires, pack finishes and near misses, of various forms of failure. I learned from winning Wente that you don't gain experience



and character from success, you gain it from failure. My season in 2016 has been amazing. It has been my breakthrough season. I have been on the podium more times than not and yet I didn't win a single race. But from everything from DNF to 2nd place by a tire, I was learning, getting stronger and experiencing more and more.

The next thing I learned is that you don't have to work your teammates over to have them help you. This year, my teammates and I have worked on racing as a unit, and for our first couple races, we didn't even pick a protected rider so we could learn to help each other as a team. You may already know my experience of being permanent lead-out man and break-catcher in Europe; we don't need to talk about that again. And while I did learn from that experience, there is so much more to be gained from treating a team with respect of every rider's individual goals. Today, by helping Luke and Gianni as they helped me, I would like to say that we proved that every rider on the team can be happy, and we can win the race at the same time. At the end of the day, Gianni had ended up sticking it out for 5th place, the last spot on the podium, after his amazing lead-out. Luke dropped back after he took me up to Gianni and didn't finish in the top 20, but I want to give a special shout out to him for being such a fantastic worker and teammate to have around. He was at the front all day keeping tabs on every situation in the race, and even came over the 3rd and 4th climbs well ahead of Gianni and me. At one point in time I even told him that if he gets away on the climb, he should go for the win.

That leads me to my next point about picking a leader. Back at San Dimas, I wasn't sure whether or not I would make it over the last few climbs, so I switched leadership and told Ethan and Parker to work for Tomas for the finish. But by the end of the day, I ended up finishing higher than him, me taking away a result with a top 10 finish. I learned that when you switch leaders on the road, it takes confidence away from the team and my ability as a rider, and the faith they will have in me (or the protected rider) that I can finish with a result. Of course, I also learned that when you win, it's a big confidence boost for your teammates.

I'm not sure where I will go from here, or what my future goals in the coming races will be, but I do know that I have ended a three year journey of finally winning a race, and that there are lots of good things to come from this day. Whether my future holds more flats, crashes, near misses, or even another win, I know I have learned a lot from this experience, and am finally able to fully reflect on my season and my adventure as a category 3 racer. I also don't know why I held up three fingers in the winning picture, but I sure as heck was happy!  
-Ben

## **Gianni Lamperti**

5<sup>th</sup> Place

Wente Road Race

Senior Category 3

After signing up and rolling around for a few minutes we lined up and got ready for the start. It was neutral until we made the first left onto the course. I was excited because we have never done this race and I knew it would be hard with the strong winds. The first time over the climb it was not too bad as everyone knew it would be hard to be in a break with all the wind. I sat back a little to stay out of the wind and keep myself fresh for the next climb and more importantly the end of the race. On the second lap, it was pretty hard for me to stay on over the climb but I made it and immediately moved back towards the front. Luke was on the front covering stuff for pretty much the whole race and Ben was right at the front the whole time as well. Coming into the climb on the next lap it was the hardest lap for me to stay on. I barely made it over the top but did in the top 10. Coming into the climb on the next lap I was feeling better and was second wheel. There was an attack and 5 guys made it off who had about 7 seconds. I went as hard as I could to get there and was on them before the top, but everyone sat up and the field caught us. At this point, I knew it would be together all the way to the finish. The group was a lot smaller now and down to about 20 guys. Coming off of the last descent and to about 2k to go all three of us were in the top 10. Coming out of the last corner SunPower was on the front with their sprinter second wheel and as soon as we got to the bottom of the hill I jumped. I went as hard as I could over the top and Ben passed me up the right side for the win! It was a fun race and I can't wait for next year.

-Gianni

## **Luke Lamperti**

24<sup>th</sup> Place    Wente Road Race    Senior Category 3

Bang! And the race was under way. A rider attacked and I got on him. Then everybody slowed down. We settled in before the main climb that was only a few miles into course. All three of the riders on our team moved up. Nothing happened on the climb. Over the top a rider from Dulce Vita attacked. He rolled by himself so nobody chased. It was super windy and we knew it would be a hard race to solo. He was still off the front going into the second lap. Just as we passed the start finish we caught him. I got ready to go hard up the climb. I ate and drank. Then we hit the climb and a rider got on the front and drilled the pace. I rode about 4<sup>th</sup> wheel. Then the pace started to slow. I got a feed in the feed zone. For the rest of the lap I was riding in the top 5 covering moves for my teammate Ben who we were working for. Then as we headed into the third lap I ate a Clif Bar. I was still riding top 10. I knew the climb was going to be hard so I made sure I was top 5 the whole time so no gaps formed. I rode wheels and followed attacks in the back wind sections. Before we were going to hit the climb on the fourth lap I rolled a little bit back and moved up Ben. Now all three of us were in the top 10 so we had room to fade on the climb. After we all made it over the climb I knew I had to keep the race together so Ben could sprint. I was covering moves when I noticed I was in a group that had a little gap. I did not

pull and the field brought it back. Now we were about 2k from the line. I made sure Ben was up there on Gianni's wheel. Then I got on his wheel. He got pinched and fell off Gianni's wheel. I went on the left and got Ben on my wheel. I pulled him to Gianni's wheel. Then I got back in the field and was smashed. I put in the best I could but Ben was able to take the win so we were super exited!

-Luke

### **Sawyer Taylor**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place      Wente Vineyards Road Race      Senior W. Cat 3

"Illy! How are you?" I called across the start line at the girl who had won my junior's and women's road races at Sea Otter. Despite having done the NorCal Race the day before, I was super pumped to have some tough competition in my first category three race. Illy was seventeen and the only other junior in my race, but I knew that she would be the stronger woman out there by a long shot. Additionally, she had a strong team to support her.

The first time up the finish/feed zone hill, some of the weaker riders in our group of twenty seven were dropped. On a punchy course like Wente with windy conditions like these, I did not expect this to happen quite as fast. Then, right off the bat, riders from the two strongest teams (Mike's Bikes and JLVelo) started taking turns trying to break up the group. Every time they tried this on the first and second lap, they just got pulled back in. I tried to save as much energy as I possibly could as I was still tired from my race the previous day, so I mostly just rode wheels.

About a third of the way into the third lap, another rider from Mike's got off the front. This time, however, she brought five other riders with her including Illy. I was in the pack and wasn't able to get out in time to grab on, so I had to get out and chase. When I latched on, Illy and one of the Mike's riders attacked again. I grabbed Illy's wheel and the three of us dropped the rest of the break. We took turns pulling and managed to stay off the front for almost the rest of the third lap before being pulled back into the pack.

Coming into the last lap, I didn't feel great. I was pretty gassed from both the NorCal race and being in the break and knew I would have to be pretty conservative if I wanted to finish well. I just stayed in the pack as much as I possibly could. At the base of the finish hill, Illy went for it. Again, I was stuck in the pack and had to take the far right line to get in a good position. With two hundred meters to go, I was five wheels back and had to sprint really hard. I managed to pass everyone but Illy to take second overall and in my category. I was pretty shocked by this as I didn't think I would even be getting on the podium in my first category three race especially with how tired I was. Overall, I'm super happy with this race and am excited to do more races in more competitive fields!

-Sawyer

## **Ethan Frankel**

Racing Age 18, Senior Category 4

2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Wente Vineyards Road Race	Senior Category 4
DNF	Wente Vineyards Road Race	Jr. 17-18

### Race 1: Cat 4

Yesterday, I had dropped out of my mountain bike race because I was so tired. I was really hoping that I was going to feel better today. I arrived at the race, warmed up, and rolled to the line. Suddenly, I saw Ben ride towards the start after his race had finished. "How'd it go, dude?" I asked him.

He smiled a huge smile and exclaimed, "I WON!"

"No way that's awesome! Congrats!"

"Haha thanks. Have you raced this before?" he asked. I shook my head in response.

"Alright, so the finish is on a short, punchy climb but it's right at the crest. You won't be able to see it until 200 meters to go, and that's where I started my sprint. Also, you'll have time to put your arms in the air!!!" he exclaimed, grinning from ear to ear.

"Sounds good, thanks dude! And congrats!"

With that, we parted, and I began racing. The race began with a neutral start until the actual course, which began on a short, punchy climb. The finish was at the top of that. It then descended for a few minutes until it flattened out and we turned into a crosswind flat section, before we started a several-minute climb. The climb wasn't particularly steep, but it was definitely selective: only the strongest climbers were going to be able to hang on for the finish. It then descended until it hit a flat section with a headwind. If attacks were going to go, it was going to be on crosswind section of the climb.

The first three laps of 5 were relatively uneventful. I stayed towards the front, and made sure to cover any moves that threatened to get away. There were several big teams, so not a lot was allowed to get a huge gap, but if there was a break with a few of those big teams, I wanted to be in it. A few riders attacked in the crosswind to split up the group, but they were brought back quickly. These attacks, however, slowly whittled down the field.

By the start of the last lap, the field had shrunk from 42 to about 22. I stayed inside the top 10 up the climb, and covered an attack. We rounded the penultimate corner, and I found myself in 10<sup>th</sup> wheel. I needed to move up. I sidled my way up the right of the field and found myself in 5<sup>th</sup>, exactly where I wanted to be. We rounded the final corner and I got onto a Mike's Bikes' wheel. Mike's Bikes started their lead out from about 500 meters to go, and I knew they were going to fade. I stayed in 3<sup>rd</sup> wheel. 350 meters to go and the lead out rider pulled off to let the Mike's Bikes sprinter begin his sprint. I rode his wheel. 200 meters to go. I looked beneath my shoulder and saw a CBRE rider coming

from the left. I began my sprint, and had a gap. All of a sudden, a flash of green and white went by on my left. It was the CBRE rider. I knew that there was no way I was going to beat him. I lost by a little over a bike length, but finished on the podium.

I congratulated Stuart on his win, and talked with the Mike's Bikes riders before making my way back to the start. I was especially happy to have received redemption after a dissatisfying NorCal race the day before. It was a great, satisfying result, and I'd ridden a smart race. Not only did the result indicate my physical development, but my mental development as well.

### Race 2: Jr. 17-18

Ten minutes until the start. I finally got back from my Cat 4 race. Oh boy, it was going to be close. 5 minutes until the start. I was pinned and ready to go. Wait! Podium! I ran over to the podium for the pictures and prizes from my Cat 4 race. 2 minutes until the start. I hopped off the podium onto my bike and got to the line just as the juniors fields and Cat 5 field rolled off.

I was now in for another 28 miles of racing. I had no idea how my legs felt after a NorCal race and a road race. All I knew was that they were tired, but I needed more upgrade points. In the end, it wasn't worth racing for points, because firstly there weren't enough riders, and secondly my legs were extremely fatigued. I pulled out after three laps and decided another 7 miles alone in the wind would be detrimental to me. However, it was a fun race for three laps and I was able to work with some other junior riders to try and get them the win. I then watched Sawyer finish 2<sup>nd</sup> in her first Cat 3 race!

Although the junior's race wasn't a success, I was still very happy with the Cat 4s race, and knew it was time to call it quits after a long weekend of racing.  
-Ethan

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## **6. Norcal MTB Race #3**    4/9/16    Fort Ord, Monterey

### **Isaiah Chass**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place    Norcal MTB Race #3    JV Boys D2

Coming back to the same course as race #1 due to rain, I knew the course pretty well, except for a few changes at the end of the lap. I got to the race early again, and rode for a long time to warm-up. With 20 minutes until my race, I rode back to the car and checked all my gear, before riding to staging. When the race started, I couldn't get clipped in right away, but once I did, I sprinted back to the front, and was 3<sup>rd</sup> wheel going down the descent. I moved up the next chance I had into 2<sup>nd</sup> place. I rode 2<sup>nd</sup> wheel for most of the lab, and when we came to the gravel climb, the riders we gapped the riders behind. At the top of the climb, the rider in front of me slowed up a little, and I should've

attacked right then, but I stayed on his wheel. I was second wheel still but in hard left, sandy corner, I lost my front wheel and went down. The rest of the riders attacked, and I jumped back on my bike and started sprinting back up to them. I caught them before the next hill, and then recovered for the rest of the lap.

Coming into the Start/Finish for the second lap everyone tried to move up on the climb. I got back into 2<sup>nd</sup> wheel for the descent. The rider in front of me had something happen on the descent, and pulled off. I went to the wrong side of him, and the rider behind me attacked. I got back on the trail, and was still 2nd. The rider ahead of me started picked up the pace, and went hard over the next climb. The next time I looked back it was just us. I stayed on his wheel for the rest of the lap. I was feeling comfortable on the 3<sup>rd</sup> lap, and I should've attacked him, but I was waiting to do it on the next lap. I thought we were doing 4 laps, but it was only 3 laps instead. At the top of the gravel climb, he started sprinting, so I knew it must be the last lap. I stayed on his wheel, down the descent, and when the trail opened up, I attacked him and got in front. I was leading going into the last hill, and was coming up to a slower rider from another category. I attacked again up the hill to get another gap, but the slower rider ahead of me pushed me into the fencing, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> place rider was able to get by. I was now in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and the slower rider was trying to race us, and was in between us. I had one last chance to pass at the finish and the final straight was a decent length so I figured I could make the pass before the finish. Coming out the final corner, the 1<sup>st</sup> place rider went wide, and I had a lot of speed coming inside. I started sprinting for the finish, and then the slower rider ahead of me pushed me off the trail again. I had to unclip, and by the time I was back sprinting, I couldn't catch back up.

-Isaiah

## **Gianni Lamperti**

7<sup>th</sup> Place      Norcal MTB Race #3      JV Boys D2

The morning of the race I knew that if I did well, I would be able to start towards the front in the next race. The morning was pretty cold and the forecast called for rain but it was dry all morning. After I warmed up a little I rolled to the line and then all the sudden, guess what? It started to rain, but in all reality I was happy with the rain. Once the race started I went as hard as I could to get past as many people as I could then was with my road teammate Ryan Yust. We got up within 15 seconds of the leading group then on one of the corners I went the wrong way and slid out. I got back on and chased Ryan back down. Once I got to him I fell off by about three seconds and could not close it. I then went hard until the finish and was happy that I got to start towards the front next race.

-Gianni

## **Sawyer Taylor**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place      NorCal MTB #3      Freshman Girls

I have a love/hate relationship with the course at Fort Ord. On one hand, it's a good course for a roadie who is not the most technically skilled. However, it's a sandy course that we have raced on in two of the three mountain bike races so far this year. Also, in both of these races, I have had stupid little problems that have bumped me from first to second.

After a very early drive with my teammates and a good warm up on my trainer, I felt ready to race. I had first call up, so I knew that I didn't have to be at the line too early but still got there with enough time to be heckled by my mountain bike teammates for my mismatched tan lines in my leader's jersey and for going in the wrong entrance with the girls in C call up. As soon as we got over the top of the first hill, the other top three girls and I had broken off the front of the group. Within the first two miles, it was just me and the girl who came in second in the previous race (Cloudegah). I stayed with her for the remainder of the first lap, and then dropped her at the finish line. The second lap, I did not go as hard as I could have but still managed to get a gap of about twenty seconds. Then, on the steepest section of the course within in the last two miles, another rider from another category stopped right in front of me and I crashed into her. As I was getting up, I watched second place pass me and pretty much died inside knowing that I probably wasn't going to be able to catch her. When I got back on my bike (after losing about a minute and thirty seconds), I started chasing but wasn't able to easily pass some riders from the JV, varsity, and sophomore categories in front of me. Still, I was able to make up some time and only finished twenty seconds behind Cloudegah. We are now tied for the leader's jersey.

This race was a little frustrating for me but I'm glad that I did not lose the overall lead and am super excited to see how I do in the next NorCal Race!

-Sawyer

## **Ethan Frankel**

Racing Age 18, Senior Category 4

7<sup>th</sup> Place      NorCal MTB Race #3      Junior Varsity D1

"Dude, hurry up," I said to my friend, Jordan.

"Alright, hold on give me a few minutes to fill up my bottles and go to the bathroom."

"Ahhh!" I exclaimed. It was 9:15 and my race started at 12:25. The drive, however, was a little over two hours. Oh well, we weren't going to have much time to warm up.

Fast forward a little over two hours and I was scrambling to get my tires pumped, put food in my pockets, and put on my race plate. 45 minutes until the race. I warmed up; barely. The temperature had also dropped below 60°F and the clouds threatened to bring rain. So far, not so good. I kept on arm warmers and a jacket until I lined up at the start, trying to stay as warm as I could. I gave my layers to my awesome teammate Luke, and prepared for the imminent start. "GO!" shouted Vanessa.

I clipped in quickly and sprinted up the hill. The top 10 riders were all together, and I was in 4<sup>th</sup> wheel. Perfect position. I was able to hang on for several minutes, and then halfway through the first lap (of 3), I felt a pain in my hip and began to fade. The weekend before, I had crashed pretty hard on the last lap of the San Dimas crit. I had road rash all over my elbows and hip, and they started flaring up halfway through the lap. I had been off of the bike for several days, and was extremely tired from such a hard effort after taking so much time off. Anyways, I tried my hardest to stay up with the leaders, but by the end of the first lap, I was already a couple of minutes back.

Like the first two races, I was now chasing. I picked off several riders that had passed me in the first lap, and my legs were feeling much better. I immediately identified the tiny warm up as my issue. I hadn't had enough time to shake out my legs or to loosen up my sore hip. What's done is done; however, and now I could only focus on the next and final lap. I focused on the trail in front of me and soon enough, I found myself powering up the 200-meter gravel hill, about 2 miles from the finish. I flew by a Redwood rider, and was well on my way to securing a top-10.

For the remainder of the lap, I held my position, if not picking off a few riders. By the end of the race, my body was in absolute pain. That's what bike racing can do to one's body, but that is why I love the sport. To succeed, it takes more than just physical strength, but also mental fortitude. The race pushed me to my mental limits, and although I came through in 7<sup>th</sup> and was bummed to miss the podium, the growth that I achieved makes up for much more than just a placing.

-Ethan

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## 7. Norcal MTB Race #4

4/23/16

Petaluma

### Gianni Lamperti

1<sup>st</sup> Place

NorCal Mtb #4

JV Boys D2

We got to the race a little later than usual because I had 7th call up so I did not have to get to the line 30 minutes before the start. I lined up one person in from the right side on the second row so I had really good positioning. When the race started my teammate Isaiah sprinted and was immediately 5 bike lengths in front of everyone so he was first into the first corner. I came into the



doubletrack fourth or fifth wheel and I felt like it would be perfect. Going up the climb Taylor Kring passed Isaiah and started to pull a little bit of a gap so I came around some people and got up to him. I stayed on his wheel for the whole first lap which was pretty slow after the climb. Then the second lap was a little faster but not much. When we came into the third lap it was once again not very fast up the climb until about halfway up. Taylor attacked on the front and when he sat up I passed him and was first wheel going into the next sharp left hander. I sped up then jumped hard out of the corner and got a gap. I then started to pull a little gap and as hard as I could for the rest of the lap and got the win! It was a fun race and I can't wait for the next one.

-Gianni

### **Isaiah Chass**

14<sup>th</sup> Place    Norcal MTB #4    JV Boys D2

I got clipped in fast, and sprinted off the line. I looked back and had a gap, so I kept going. I got to the dirt where the climbing started, and my lungs started closing up. I couldn't breathe very well, and I started getting passed by the riders behind me. I kept getting passed throughout the climb, and was now in about 40<sup>th</sup>. At the top of the climb, I started catching some riders down the descent and on the last hill before the finishing descent. Coming around for lap 2 I tried to start catching as many riders as I could on the climb. I started moving up, and held a good pace on the climb. I caught a few more riders on the descent, and was around 18<sup>th</sup> place coming into my 3<sup>rd</sup> and last lap. I put in a hard effort over the main climb and down the descent on this lap. On the last little climb, a rider was on my wheel, so I kept my pace high so it would be hard for him to pass me. I managed to stay ahead of him into the descent to the finish. Coming out of the last corner, I stood up and sprinted to the line. This race didn't go how I wanted it to, but I am excited for the next one.

-Isaiah

### **Sawyer Taylor**

1<sup>st</sup> Place    NorCal MTB #4    Freshmen Girls

With a frustrating crash in the previous NorCal race, I was totally psyched for the fourth race of the season in Petaluma which only happened to be a short thirty minute drive away. When I finished unloading all four bags of my stuff from my teammate's car, we pre-rode the course together before a meeting with my coaches. This was my favorite course we had raced on all season. With a good amount of climbing, a flowy descent, and a fast, paved start, it suited me really well.

After saying hi to Ethan and Ben (whose teams' pit zones were right next to mine), I got back on my bike for a pyramid before heading to the line for my call up and my start. Along with my leader's jersey, I was sharing first call up

with Clodagh so we were the first two to the line. As soon as we started, I got right on her wheel and the two of us charged up the first hill. I let her lead for about a mile and then passed her. I ended up staying ahead of all the freshmen for the remainder of the race.

I got a pretty good gap going up the big climb, and I passed a lot of girls racing in other categories. I managed to hold this gap going down the first more technical switchback section. However, once I got out of the bermed section of the descent, Clodagh was right on me again. The second time we hit the climb; I went for it really hard and got a good sized gap. This time, I was able to hold it through the switchbacks and the berms although I'm sure I did lose some ground.

Coming into the home stretch, I knew that, unless I crashed, I had the win so I was pretty cautious on the final descent. I ended up crossing the line thirty seconds ahead of Clodagh and three and a half minutes ahead of third. This gave me enough points to be the sole wearer of the leader's jersey for NorCal Championships.

While, I'm really happy with how I did at the fourth NorCal Race, I was really able to see what technical skills that I really need to work on for NorCal Champs and states. I won this race only because I was the strongest girl out there on the hills racing in the freshman category. This probably won't be enough to win races next year or even more technical races this year. All of skills are things that I am really looking forward to working on to make these races faster and more fun!

-Sawyer

## **Ben Cook**

7<sup>th</sup> Place      Norcal MTB#4      JV boys

After not having raced mountain bikes with my high school all year due to road commitments earlier in the season, I was really excited to come back to Petaluma and shred some dirt. I knew that I would be starting from the back of the field, but it was a good start for me, being a road climb right into a double track mountain climb for the first half of the lap.

I did a good warm-up on the rollers and then rolled over to staging. I ended up in the front row of the masses at the start, placing me about 4 rows back. Right off the line the pace was brutally fast, but I moved my way up as quickly as I could and ended up about 10th wheel before we hit the double track. My heartbeat was soaring in the heat but I continued to move myself up the pack of riders and ended up about 6th wheel. The remainder of the climb was mainly set by Ethan Wolfe, a friend of mine from racing last year in the sophomore category. About half a mile from the summit of the climb, I shifted hard down my cassette to jump up out of a turn, and my chain popped right off my chainring in the front. I did my best to keep calm, got off the trail, replaced

my chain and went right back to chasing the group. I was maybe 10 seconds off the back at this point, but I kept the leaders in sight.

Here I was faced with the choice of potentially blowing myself up to catch the top 10, or pacing it out but risking losing them for good. I decided to go for it and try to make the catch, and while I passed a few riders, I was unable to latch back on before the downhill. There I kept the pace up but continued to lose time on the downhill. I learned today that smoother is faster, and when you are working hard but trying to descend as well you have to give yourself more time to react.

After the downhill the course heads straight back up again, so I hunkered down and got ready for the long climb ahead. "That's Ben Cook with a great first ride back in 7th place!" Yelled the announcer as I passed by. I was in 7th! I thought for sure I was lower down than that. The rest of the lap was spent picking off riders and chasing one in particular, Gustavo, a friend of mine from San Rafael High that lingered about 20 seconds down the trail from me in 6th. I kept chasing to the top, and went down the next downhill much smoother this time. I entered the turns a bit slower but ended up exiting much faster, making me more efficient and fast. At the bottom I was closer to Gustavo but I hadn't caught him yet. The rest of the race was much of the same, and by the finish he was about 30 seconds ahead of me. I rolled in happy with 7th place. At the end of the day I was thrilled with my first race back to mountain biking and had a great day with the team. I was a bit worried about how much my back hurt afterwards though, so I decided to make some goals to strengthen my core and maybe work out my bike fit a bit better before the next race. Overall it was a hard but very fun adjustment back to the NorCal League.

-Ben

## **Ryan Yust**

6<sup>th</sup> Place          Norcal MTB Race #4

This race was fast. I lined up behind Isaiah and great thing I did because when the whistle blew, he was off and at the front and I was right there with him. We started up the hill and I passed Isaiah. There was a group of 5 off us that got established by the top of the hill and we were gone. The group was Gianni, Taylor, Colin, Austin and me. On the downhill Gianni was leading and I was 3rd. He kept the pace fast and he flowed through the turns. On the climb, lap 2 no one was really going that hard. Everyone was waiting for someone else to attack so the pace slowed down substantially. Sixth place bridged up and now there were 6 of us going into the last lap. Going up the final hill on lap 3 I couldn't match the power the rider that bridged up to us had and he took my spot on the podium. It was a disappointing day because had we worked together, we probably wouldn't have been caught and I would be on the podium. But that's racing, now I know that when it starts to feel good while you're racing, you are going to slow!

-Ryan