

## Team Swift Race Reports

### July 2016

#### Race Reports for:

1. July 4<sup>th</sup> of July Criterium
2. Colavita Gran Prix
3. San Rafael Criterium
4. Leesville/Ladoga Road Race
5. NCNCA Junior Road Race Championships
6. MTB National Championships
7. USAC Talent ID Camp – Flagstaff, AZ
8. USAC Talent ID Camp – Davis, CA
9. Death Ride Report

#### July Top Results:

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Memorial Day Criterium	Juniors 17-18	Ethan Frankel
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Davis 4 <sup>th</sup> of July Criterium	Juniors 13-14	Andrew Mathiesen
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	MTB National Championships	Juniors 13-14	Luke Lamperti
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Davis 4 <sup>th</sup> of July Criterium	Juniors 15-16	Esteban Ramirez
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Davis 4 <sup>th</sup> of July Criterium	Juniors 13-14	Grant Feige
4 <sup>th</sup> Place	Junior Road Race NCNCA Champs	Juniors 13-14	Andrew Mathiesen
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	San Rafael Criterium	Senior W. 3/4	Sawyer Taylor
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	Junior Road Race NCNCA Champs	Juniors 17-18	Ethan Frankel
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	Davis 4 <sup>th</sup> of July Criterium	Juniors 15-16	Creighton Gruber
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	Colavita Grand Prix	Senior Category 2/3	Ethan Frankel
8 <sup>th</sup> Place	Fort Ord Circuit Race	Senior Category 3/4	Ethan Frankel
10 <sup>th</sup> Place	Leesville/Ladoga Road Race	Senior Category 4	Creighton Gruber
12 <sup>th</sup> Place	Colavita Grand Prix	Senior Category 2/3	Luke Lamperti
12 <sup>th</sup> Place	Junior Road Race NCNCA Champs	Juniors 15-16	Creighton Gruber
14 <sup>th</sup> Place	Colavita Grand Prix	Senior Category 4	Esteban Ramirez
14 <sup>th</sup> Place	Colavita Grand Prix	Senior Category 5	Grant Feige
16 <sup>th</sup> Place	Colavita Grand Prix	Senior Category 2/3	Isaiah Chass
20 <sup>th</sup> Place	Davis 4 <sup>th</sup> of July Criterium	Senior Category 4	Creighton Gruber
35 <sup>th</sup> Place	San Rafael Criterium	Senior Category 3/4	Isaiah Chass

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### Rider Race Reports

**1. Davis 4<sup>th</sup> of July Criterium**      7/4/16      Davis

#### **Andrew Mathiesen**

1<sup>st</sup> Place      Davis 4<sup>th</sup> of July Criterium      Juniors 13-14

Even though I was at a barbeque where someone made incredible beef brisket, I had pasta. The following morning I had a PB&J sandwich and half of a Clif Bar. At the event I warmed up and went to the starting line and found Grant, from Team Swift. We talked but we did not make any plans for the race which we should have. During the race Grant stayed behind me, and I tried to breakaway many times but did not succeed and it was getting harder each time. The main group was going at a leisurely pace and a kid from the Sacramento team kept catching me. With five laps remaining, one of his cleats came off of his shoe and he had to pull out of the race. At one point I was out of the draft and luckily Grant let me in front of him. The competitor in front of me kept leading until the last lap when Grant broke away, I was caught by surprise so I drafted off of a guy that was chasing him. When they caught up to Grant I pulled in front of him and let him draft off me to the finish. When we crossed the finish line we were in a full sprint so nobody could pull in front of us and we finished first and second. This felt great and we were both super happy about it. In this race I learned the importance of working with your teammates.

-Andrew

## **Grant Feige**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place      Davis 4<sup>th</sup> of July Criterium      Juniors 13-14

I had just gotten back from a 10 day trip in Wyoming and South Dakota so I really hadn't been on my bike as much as I would like. I got to the race earlier than I had at other races so when we started I felt more ready. I talked with my teammate Andrew and discussed who to look out for and I remembered Memorial Day so we planned out a potential attack. Not to mention this was my first race in my new sunglasses but I'm not sure how much that affected the result. Once we started I felt good but I didn't want to go to the front. On one of the straight-aways, a boy from We Tri touched wheels with someone and went down quickly, I barely avoided the crash but a 13-14 girl didn't. Right after that Andrew asked if I was ok. I responded telling him I was fine. But the only other 13-14 girl went to the front and pushed the pace because her main competitor had crashed. Then with 3 laps to go we crossed the line and I thought about attacking but I waited and took the turns in my own line on the inside and got by Andrew and sort of gestured forward to indicate that I was thinking about attacking. But we never decided anything and then there were 2 laps to go. I didn't want to have to follow any attacks or leave it all to a sprint so I went to the front and went for it. I got a good gap up but it wasn't enough. Well actually it was. Andrew followed up my attack and caught me and passed me going into the finish. He began to sprint and I would have sprinted for the win but a younger racer was in the line I would have taken so I followed my teammate for 2<sup>nd</sup> which I was super happy about because it was my first podium and Andrew and I had a lot of fun hanging out afterwards and getting our medals and shirts. I look forward to racing with him before I move to 15-16 next year. It also makes me happy that we learned from our mistakes at Morgan Hill in May and this time took control of the race and got 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.

-Grant

## **Esteban Ramirez Fregoso**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place      Davis 4<sup>th</sup> of July Classic Criterium      Juniors 15-16

I was confident of the outcome of this race because it was only a 30-minute event and I am used to longer 40 minute races; also because I know the course pretty well. That morning I was exercising my normal routine before an early morning race I ate well, warmed up well, ate a banana, and stretched briefly. As I recall, the race started a minute early because everyone was ready to go and because a racer asked if we could start early. The race started off pretty quick immediately separating the fast racers and the faster racers. I was with the faster racers consisting of mostly 17-18 year olds and three 15-16yo racers that all made the podium. While racing, there were several near crashes that happened near me and one was so close to me that if they had actually crashed, I probably wouldn't have made it. On the second to last lap one kid attacked on the straightaway but everyone was able to keep up with him. On the last lap everyone was relatively relaxed and everyone was trying to get into a good position at the same time so the group was a blob. Everyone was very powerful on the sprint, probably because they were 17 and 18 year olds but I stayed in there and the person that got first place in my category was only about nine feet ahead of me. So I know I perform well on flat criteriums but the real issue is a criterium with big hills on a course like Nevada City.

-Esteban

## **Creighton Gruber**

5<sup>th</sup> Place      Davis 4<sup>th</sup> of July Classic Criterium      Juniors 15-16  
20<sup>th</sup> Place      Davis 4<sup>th</sup> of July Classic Criterium      Senior Category 4

I woke up at six that morning, already with butterflies in my stomach. After I did my warm ups I got on the start line for the junior race. The bunch started fast and within that first lap I was dropped, still not totally recovered from the road race the day before. Immediately I set my own tempo slowly bringing back 15-16's dropped from the 17-18 pack. After many laps of that, the main pack came around to lap me so I jumped on the back of that group and finished the race with them and ended up in 5th.

Now I had 8 hours to kill till the Cat 4s race. I first met up with Andrew to get my new Lazer Z1. Then I ate an amazing breakfast, then watched racing, then ate a good lunch, then watched more racing, then it was time to warm up for my next race.

I got to the start line of the Cat 4s race in a good position ready to take the first corner good so I wouldn't make the same mistake as last race. On the first lap I was in the top 5 of the group, but because of the fast pace the next lap I was top 10, next lap top 15, lap after that I was hanging on the back. Then I was dropped with another guy. We were working together being able to see the main pack so I gave one big pull to get back on but it wasn't enough, and then I started to fade. When he saw this he

yelled, "GET BACK ON HERE SWIFT!" So I burned some matches getting back on his wheel then we continued working together until we got lapped.

We both jumped back in peloton when they came by. I made my way back towards the second half of the pack so I wouldn't get dropped again. Then finally the race was over. I was just happy I got a little pack experience.

-Creighton

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## 2. Colavita Gran Prix

7/17/16

Rohnert Park

### Ethan Frankel

6<sup>th</sup> Place

Colavita-Norcal Grand Prix

Senior Category 2/3

Having never done the classic Colavita Grand Prix before, I had no idea what to expect, of anything: from the course to the racers. Luke and Isaiah would both be racing, which was awesome and going to be fun! "Be patient" was my motto for today. Yesterday was the CCCX Circuit Race and Junior NCNCA Road Race Championships, where I had put out hard efforts in two different races that had made me blow up too early. Today was a new day, a new race.

After a warm up with a couple of jumps with the guys, we rolled to the start. We would be racing with the 18 Cat 2s in addition to 25 Cat 3s. After the rollout, I went immediately to the front line. Isaiah and Luke lined up at the back. "We're Euro!" they exclaimed. I laughed and responded, "Ok, see you at the front in a bit!"

True that. As soon as the whistle blew, I dropped to 10<sup>th</sup>. Isaiah and Luke came past me on the left. I remembered what Coach Sam had told us at a TNT long ago: stay scattered throughout the field to cover attacks from various positions. My legs were pretty tired from yesterday's races, but I was still excited to be racing with teammates and wanted to race aggressively.

Luke and Isaiah were great about attacking and covering attacks. I felt belittled in the power of their legs, so after I got settled and used to the course, I came to the front to do some work. When Luke went up the road, I stayed in front to cover attacks and block. And when he came back, I jumped with a racer from SJBC, Jack, and we had 15 seconds on the field.

We stayed away for a lap and a half, and then as we were brought back Jack stuck out his fist. It was a sign of a good fight as I bumped his fist in a gesture of companionship. I came back, and Isaiah went off the front. After lap after lap after lap of attacking and covering, we finally heard the bell lap. So far, we had worked well together, but it all came down to positioning this last lap. I was pinched going into the first turn and fell back to 20<sup>th</sup> overall. Over the hill we went, and I came around the right side as I attempted to move up. Suddenly, the rider to my right moved into me. I reacted quickly and found myself in the large crack between the asphalt and the gutter. I was in danger of going down and taking down half the field as well. Thankfully, I hopped back onto the asphalt and made my way to safety.

As we started to come into the final corner, a Specialized Muscle Milk rider clipped his pedal on a curb, two wheels in front of me, and went into the side. His wheel came close to me, but we all managed to avoid the carnage. Then we came into the final corner and I was still in 15<sup>th</sup>. Luke and Isaiah were in great positioning, and then the riders in front swarmed them as they suddenly moved right. They were cut off, and I came through on the inside, and wound up my sprint. As I was giving it my all, and Echelon-Storck rider slowed rapidly and everyone had to come around him. Many of us lost momentum, but I managed to come around another couple riders and take 10<sup>th</sup> overall and 6<sup>th</sup> in the Cat 3s.

Luke and Isaiah had been particularly aggressive and had raced awesome, and even after two tough races yesterday I also raced aggressively to finish pretty well. Although we were disappointed with how the last 200 meters played out, it was a great and fun race! Oh, and remember that near-crash on the last lap for me? I looked at my front tire and found the sidewalls nearly destroyed.  
-Ethan F.

## **Isaiah Chass**

16<sup>th</sup> Place    Colavita Norcal Grand Prix    Senior Category 2/3

The race didn't start off very quickly, and I was able to move up through the field to top five within two corners. My teammate Ethan got in a break with one other rider, and they stayed off the front for a few laps. I was feeling pretty good, and mentally it was feeling like a really good race. I didn't want to make the really big moves early on in the race because it was a pretty long race at 60 minutes, but I followed the moves instead and stayed close to the front. I tested myself on one of the primes, and followed an attack on the second to last straight away. I didn't have the final corner line down, so I lost the wheel in front of me, and after sprinting hard for about 200 meters, I didn't think I was going to be able to catch him so I sat up to recover before the field caught me. This was a hard sprint for me, so I drifted back through the field, and recovered for a lap before moving my way back to the front. An attack went with a DNA rider and one other rider, and they got a pretty good gap and were off the front for a couple laps. I wanted to keep them close, so I made 3 hard pulls on the front. After that I realized that I shouldn't have been wasting energy pulling back that break because Mike's Bikes was a big team in the race, and if they weren't in the break then they would pull it back. Still feeling pretty good, I recovered through the next lap and followed attacks. With five laps to go, I was right where I needed to be, and I was on the DNA lead out. With three laps to go, I switched to my teammate Luke's wheel and did everything I could to stay on his wheel for the next two laps. On the last lap I was coming around on the outside on the second to last straight away, but I should've been on the inside as I was getting hit by the wind on the outside. I sprinted to stay on my teammate's wheel but a Storck rider attacked into the last corner and then slowed up causing the field to swarm and I got pushed back. Coming out of the last corner I was near the back and I sprinted to the line to make up as much as I

could. I was really happy with how the race went but the finish didn't go how I was thinking it was going to go.

-Isaiah

## **Luke Lamperti**

12<sup>th</sup> Place Colavita Grand Prix Senior Category 2/3

When we started the pace was pretty quick. I moved forward to the front and made a couple of small attacks and followed moves early into the race. Then I rode it and let moves go a little bit if I knew they would come back. I later started to set up my teammates for the sprint. The race went by quick as we just rode with small attacks. I rode wheels. On the last lap there were two crashes and then as we went into the last corner I got swarmed. I did not play it like I should have. I had fun and will look forward to next year.

-Luke

## **Andrew Mathiesen**

DNF Colavita GP Senior Category 4

The night before I was at my friend's house and ate pasta. The following morning I had a PB&J sandwich and half of a Clif Bar. I felt much better than the last couple of days. When we got there I found Grant and we talked together until he had to warm up for his race. When I was about to warm-up, Esteban arrived and we warmed up together. After we watched the end of the CAT 5 race, we lined up on the course. When the official blew her whistle, it was wild because my opponents went all over the road and a few seconds later they came back together again. For the first few laps we were going pretty fast, around twenty miles an hour, and I was little out of breathe but kept pushing up little by little until I was in third place. I kept this spot until someone tried to break away and I caught him. Since it was a prime lap I went for it, along with the person I was drafting off of. It was a sprint to the line and we both flung forward, he beat me by half a wheel length. After everybody caught us I got back in third place and stayed there until the fifth lap from the finish. As we crested the little hill I came up a little too fast on the second place rider so I had to stop pedaling. When I did this, the person I was drafting off of was quickly decreasing his speed. I tried not to hit him and ended up overlapping our wheels. For some reason my foot came unclipped, although I don't know how since I had no reason to clip out. At this point a person hit my back wheel and I lost control and fell. The crash took out most of the racers which were able to get back on their bikes and finish except for one which probably broke his collarbone. I stayed with him until the medics and other people arrived. I learned to never overlap wheels but I am not sure if the outcome would have been any different if I broke hard to avoid hitting him because we were so tightly packed.

-Andrew

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### 3. San Rafael Criterium

7/30/16

San Rafael

#### Sawyer Taylor

5<sup>th</sup> Place      San Rafael Criterium      Senior W. 3/4

"My car was literally out here for five minutes! What the heck?" my aunt said as she pulled a parking ticket off of the hood of her car. She had parked outside of the bike shop where I worked to drop off all my stuff for the two races I would be doing that day before heading back to her home in the East Bay.

"Welcome to San Rafael. I'm pretty sure that the city gets over half of its annual budget from tickets alone." I said. My aunt laughed, and after she signed me in at the registration tent, she drove away but not before telling me I better win the money back. Although this wasn't a major race, I did have some pressure to do well or at least put on a show trying. This was my home race and while both of my parents were unfortunately out of town, a lot of my friends and co workers would be watching. And of course, my aunt didn't want to pay for a parking ticket.

After a good warm up on my trainer, I headed to the startline for a few practice laps and rollout. I was ready for some hard, fast racing and was definitely not disappointed. Right off the start line, racers started attacking. I grabbed Amity Gregg's wheel. She won my race at Pescadero and Nevada City so I knew she was really strong and probably wouldn't end up popping off the back. The second lap was a prime lap. I wanted to just sit in on the first one and see how the sprint played out, so I just rode wheels and crossed the line in fifth. There were a total of seven primes in my only fifty minute race, so I would have plenty of opportunities to practice my sprint.

On the second prime lap in my race, I was yet again Amity's wheel. I knew she would go for this one, and if she did end up breaking off the front of the field as a result, she could hold it for the remainder of the race. She went hard for basically the whole lap, but going into the last corner, I still had her wheel. I waited until about one hundred meters to go before jumping hard and barely out edging her at the line.

Although I didn't go for any more primes, I did a great job of riding good position and was second or third wheel for almost the rest of the race. Makenzie from Team Mike's Bikes tried to break but she was caught with five laps to go. As it got harder and harder to hold on, more and more racers started to pop off the back. Still though, I felt pretty good with three to go and though I had a pretty good shot at the finish if I got in the right position for the sprint.

Going into the last lap, I was third wheel, but that changed quickly when someone attacked between the first and second corner. I swung out and grabbed a wheel, but I wasn't fast enough and ended up four wheels back from where I wanted to be. I knew that this wasn't the position I needed so I attacked into the last two corners and ended up leading out the sprint and got passed at the very end to get fifth. Although this isn't what I wanted, I think I made the best decision for the situation I was in, learned a lot trying to go for the win, and actually did win enough money to pay for my aunt's parking ticket.

Next I raced the Senior Category 1/2/3 race. Although the first lap of my race was fairly easy, everything after that was really, really hard. I managed to hang on for about thirty minutes (twenty minutes in the middle of the pack and ten minutes barely holding on to the back) before getting pulled. Regardless of this, it was really cool to be able to race with some of the top pro women in the United States as well as the Australian National Champion. I am really looking forward to this crit for next year and can't wait to see how I do after another full season of racing experience!

-Sawyer

## **Ben Cook**

17, cat 2

San Rafael Criterium          Pro/1/2

Lights, crowds, food and live music sums up the scene of the San Rafael Sunset Criterium. For years I had dreamed of racing in my home town under the lights against some of the nation's best professionals. I enjoyed a nice day with a little hike, some work on college apps, and then finally drove down to the race course at 6:15pm. Since staging would be a nightmare, I planned to be off of the trainer at 7:45 and down at the racecourse by 8pm, 15 minutes before the start of our race.

I parked up in the parking garage on the second floor, where it would be nice and cool to set up a trainer and warm up before the race. My parents came to greet me at around 7 as I was just getting started on the trainer. On the trainer I met with one of our coaches on Team Swift, Sam Bassetti, who would be racing in my race tonight. We talked about positioning and tactics, and how the real racing happened in the top 15 wheels, and if I could be there I would have a much better shot of doing well than not.

After a good warm up I rolled down to the start line where I met my teammate Sawyer, who had just finished 5th in the women's cat 3 race earlier in the day. We chatted about the course, and she told me that if you didn't have good position in the last two turns of each lap, it would hurt you on the next lap, and then the next one following and so on. Right then I spotted the long brown hair and glasses of my best friend Raimundo, who had come out to watch my race. "Yea, Charlotte, Hayden, and Harrison are all here too!" He said. I couldn't believe it! All of my friends had come out to watch my race. I rolled through staging and ended up in the third row back.

About 90 riders sat on the start line with me. "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the San Rafael Sunset criterium!" Boomed the announcer. I put my hands on the drops and got ready for a fast start. My dad was telling me before the race that in these types of races, if you can survive the first 20 minutes, you can survive the rest of the race. So that would be my goal, to survive the first 20 minutes and then see if I could go with any moves from there.

"TWEET!!!" Sounded the whistle, and we were off! I sprinted around the first turn and found myself in about 40th position. I hung onto the pack as we rode single file for the first few laps, before deciding to move up as the bunch moved up. The sun was still giving off enough light to light up our race, and with some clear lenses I could



see well. From there I made it into the top 30 and made it a goal to stay there. I felt strong and ready to race hard, but the pace kept on increasing and things got harder and harder. Still I held my position and made a point of moving up as often as I could. Very soon into the race I noticed just how aggressive it was becoming, even back in 30th wheel. Riders chopped each other off, a few of the pro riders yelled, and racing was generally unfriendly. I did my best to keep my distance and race my own race, despite the others around me.

I felt stronger and stronger between 20 and 45 minutes into the race. Moving up while I could, I stayed in the top 20 for the majority of the time. I knew I would finish! That was a big accomplishment for me on its own. I didn't feel strong enough to go for any moves, but I knew that I could finish, and maybe finish well, if I sat in and raced smart in the end.

However, right in the middle of one of my hardest laps, I saw the slowing of riders in front of me, and finally we all came to a stop at the start/finish line. "What's going on? Why did we stop?" I asked another rider nearby, admittedly a little nervous and disappointed. "My teammate's broken." He replied grimly. Broken? I looked up the road to see an ambulance and medical crew taking care of a rider on the ground. "Good luck to him." I replied. It turns out that the rider was from Muscle Milk/Specialized, and had suffered a bad concussion in a crash just a few laps prior. "Gentlemen, we will restart you on the whistle." Said the announcer. I put my hands on the drops again; it was like deja-vu! The race restarted as fast as it had originally started. I sprinted down the road to keep up, but soon found myself right back in the front group after just a few laps. At this point we had about 10 minutes left to race, and I was sitting in the top 20 feeling strong. I had noticed that throughout the race, the field bunched up on the outsides, and I had found the insides of turns open and clear to move up through, and that seemed to be the general trend with other riders in the race. I found myself on the hill between turn 1 and 2 looking to move up, so I jumped out of the field and prepared to slot back in before the turn. My plan was to slot in before the turn, take the turn safely, then continue to move up on the straightaway. I guess I didn't realize my position, or the situation at the front of the race, because as soon as I jumped out of the field, I was greeted by about 9 green Cyclance kits in their leadout train, chopping the inside line of every turn. "I'm screwed!" Was the only thought running through my head. I knew that I couldn't bail out to the right, and hitting the brakes was dangerous, so I decide to hold my line and go through the turn on the inside. It got really tight with the Cyclance sprinter, and we ended up brushing shoulders, and I did some riding in the very inside of the gutter, but we both made it out alive. What happened next was really unexpected. After the turn I was riding about 3 feet to the right of the train on the straightaway, trying to stay out of the way after realizing my mistake. Suddenly I felt a slam on my left shoulder, and realized that another rider had hit me, so hard it sent me off of my bike and onto the ground. A few spectators stopped to help me, and the motor ref asked me if I wanted to get back in to which I replied that I didn't. I was too hurt and admittedly too scared of the rider that hit me to go back in.

My friends came to help me and were amazingly supportive, and I went to medical and got cleaned up. The race finished up, and the rider who hit me ended up winning the race, with Coach Sam placing 2nd. I figured after some time talking it over with my dad that we should see the chief referee. When we went there, I was amazed to see about four other riders all telling my story to the ref; two of them were professionals themselves. They helped me tell my story to the ref, who was very supportive. In the end, the rider and his director told the ref that he couldn't be disqualified because no official saw the move. The rider offered little real apology to me, and the team director made no effort to contact me either.

As far as my after thoughts, I learned a lot of important things at San Rafael. First and foremost, don't mess with leadout trains. Riders will race aggressively and chop every turn to keep others out of their leadout. Secondly, I learned that I shouldn't be scared of a rider like the one who hit me. Many of the other racers who supported me after the crash gave me the same message- that if I was in the race, I had just as much reason to be in the front as anybody else does, and shouldn't be intimidated. Thirdly, and by far the most important, sometimes life happens at unexpected time. People are jerks, do wrong things, and won't help you when you are down. Is it worth it to contact USAC and make a whole complaint, or start a whole fiasco that doesn't need to happen? No. As I was angry and ranting on later that night, my dad told me that the only thing I can do is just beat him in the next race. Yes, my frame cracked, my BB broke, my bars and tape are shredded, and my body is in a lot of pain, but am I really going to open up a whole other world of complication by asking him for \$100 because he hit me? I don't think so. Things happen, and sometimes we have to move on from them, whether or not we want to.

So at the end of the day, or should I say night, I was raging mad at the rider who did it, and so were 20 other racers who saw it happen. But I learned a lesson, got a reality check, and I would hope that he did too. At this point in time I've moved on and am not making a big deal of it, like many people have since that night. I really hope to come back to San Rafael next year, as it was honestly one of the most fun and eventful races of the year for me, and I couldn't have asked for much of a better race before my crash. Until next year, San Rafael Sunset!

-Ben

## **Isaiah Chass**

35<sup>th</sup> Place    San Rafael Sunset Criterium    Senior Category 3/4

After doing rollout, I lined up almost at the back. It started off really fast for the first few laps, so it was hard for me to get to the front. I moved up to midfield on the first lap, but I was having a hard time getting farther up. I would make up a few positions on the first part of the course, but I kept fading back to where I was before in the last two corners. With primes starting to be announced, the pace started to get faster as since they were pretty big prizes. With it going faster, it started getting harder to move up more, and I was still losing my positioning in the last corners. The field was getting smaller, so being midfield was getting close to just hanging near the back. With

5 laps to go, I knew I needed to be way farther up. I pretty much stayed where I was for the rest of the race. On the last lap, I wasn't going to win or get top ten, so I just tried to get a few places where I could. I was able to get a little farther up in the first two corners, and then I just hung on for the rest of the lap.

-Isaiah

## **Luke Lamperti**

San Rafael Criterium      Senior Category 3/4

My teammate and I started in the back because that's where rollout was located. We moved up slowly until we made it to the top 10 positions. The pace was super high so I had to work to stay in the top 10. I was ridding good. I won a prime and then a couple of laps later my seat cradle broke. I quickly went to the Sram pit and they gave me a bike to ride. They swapped my pedals and a rear wheel so I had junior gears. I sprinted back into the race. My saddle height was low and the bike felt weird but I still knew I could do okay and ride well. I moved back up forward the front. With 4 laps to go I was top 15 but not where I wanted to be. Attack after attack I faded a little farther back. I was about mid field with 2 to go. I sprinted to about mid to back of the field in the end. It was a good experience to get on another bike and ride it. I learned a lot and had fun.

-Luke

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### **4. Leesville/Ladoga Road Race**      7/3/16      Williams

## **Creighton Gruber**

10<sup>th</sup> Place      Leesville/Ladoga Road Race      Senior Category 4

I came to this race going to do the Jr's race, but nobody else was signed up so I went with the elite 4's. Mike's Bikes had 4 of 11 E4 riders but 5 including the cat 5's who rode with us, so they could play the team advantage. They weren't doing too much the first 20 mile but, when the hill began they started attacking and the field blew up. I was then in no man's land and had a lonely 40 miles back to the finish. After the long steep climb there was a fast fun descent, that is where I started to hang on to other dropped groups. They were all much faster groups so I could never hang with them. Once there was only 10 miles left me and a cat 5 rode to the finish together.

-Creighton

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### **5. NCNCA Junior Road Race Championship**      7/16/16      Seaside

## **Ethan Frankel**

8<sup>th</sup> Place      Fort Ord Circuit Race      Senior Category 3/4

Circuit races have evaded much of my cycling career, but this year I have been able to race several. My first was the Chico Stage Race on a race track, my second the Sea Otter Circuit Race (also on a race track), and then just a couple of weeks ago the Junior National Championships Road Race felt all too similar to a big circuit race with 4.75 miles laps. Today, the laps were 4.3 miles with rolling hills, a fast descent, and a climbing finish. Yes, very similar to the Nationals course. The Cat 3/4 circuit race would only be 60 minutes, however, of fast racing. I lined up right at the front, feeling very confident that I would be able to do well in a race similar to nationals.

The race started slowly and I immediately went into the top five. From there, I covered several attacks and was able to get off the front once or twice. After the super fast descent, a friend from Dolce Vita, Jesse, came up to me and exclaimed, "Pulling a Froomey, I see!"

He was referring to the "pedaling supertuck" which I performed each lap to maximize aerodynamic advantage and not lose my spot. I was the only one with junior gearing, and the lightest by well over 15 pounds, so that was my way to keep up with the big boys. As attacks went left and right, but nothing stuck, I stayed at the front to help bring back moves. I was feeling strong. With 3 laps to go, three guys went off the front. I had been hanging back and recovering and had missed it. They didn't get far, however. They had a 15-second gap on the rest of us with two laps to go. A lap later, they had a 10-second gap on the rest of us.

We hit the rollers, and soon caught one of the racers. The other two still had at least five seconds. I rallied some others to begin the chase. A guy from Terun came to the front and worked hard to chase them down. The two of us brought them back, and I was still feeling good. At the bottom of the final hill, with 500 meters to go, a TRU Cycling rider attacked right. I was on the front and followed quickly, just as we were about to swarm the two leaders. The two of us had a gap, but were rapidly swallowed by the charging pack. As they approached, I jumped around the TRU Cycling rider to get back onto the group. I held my position but was too tired from following what I thought might amount to a dangerous move, and finished at the back of the group.

The winner was the one who helped me catch the break, and upon reviewing my race, I knew it was foolish and impatient of me to follow the move with 500 to go. I sat down at the finish line, completely toast and began my rest for the afternoon junior's road race.

-Ethan F.

## **Ethan Frankel**

5<sup>th</sup> Place      Junior Road Race NCNCA Championships      Juniors 17-18

So that was a difficult circuit race. My legs were exhausted so I massaged them and drank Clif recovery mix before rolling around and doing a couple of jumps to warm up. Then I lined up with the 10 other 17-18s for a 9-lap, 40-mile race. There were two from Muscle Milk-Specialized and three from Tieni Duro, while the rest of us were freelancers. Tieni Duro had Drew Levitt and Jason Frost, the former having gotten 4<sup>th</sup> at

the nationals time trial and the latter being the defending NCNCA champion. This was going to be one tough battle.

From the gun, Tim from Muscle Milk attacked. I was the first to follow his move and we were suddenly off the front by five seconds. I was grinning from ear to ear and yelled to him jokingly, "Why did you have to do that??"

After a quick laugh, we were brought back and rode in the pack, chatting. The field started a paceline, and after the first lap, Jason went solo. No one thought he was going to hold it. No one followed his move. No one had the clairvoyance to predict that he would win once again. A couple of laps later, Drew went off to bridge to his teammate. The 4<sup>th</sup>-place-in-the-nationals-TT rider was too strong for anyone else to follow his move, and he easily bridged to Jason within a couple of minutes. Their gap increased as Drew pulled him and worked with him lap after lap, and eventually they were over a minute ahead.

The other six of us (three had been dropped) worked together to bring the gap down, but they were too far ahead and although at one point they were just 30 seconds ahead and almost in our grasp, we never caught them. With two laps to go, we were two minutes back. It was clear it was a race between five of us (one more had been dropped) for third.

As we approached the finishing climb at the end of the third lap, a friend, Justin from SJBC who'd also gone to nationals with our team, called to us, "We don't have the firepower..."

Right then and there, I attacked. I came over the top of the climb with a 15-second gap and it was increasing. I took that statement as a sign. Of course, he meant to catch them but I wanted to prove him wrong and solo for two laps to third place. I wanted to put them in the hurt trying to chase me down. I wanted to have some fun. I was also just impatient with our slow pace. For a whole lap, I stuck out the attack, but as I saw they were rotating well and gaining on me, I sat up and allowed them to catch me.

Tim came up to me, "Why did you have to do that??" We laughed. The next 85% of the lap was easy riding. We chatted and waited. It was certain to come down to a sprint. With 300 to go, I knew Justin would be the first to go. He attacked, and I was on his wheel. Tim also started his sprint, but we didn't have the firepower to stick with Justin as he beat us for third place by well over five bike lengths. Maybe it was that I was tired from my solo effort, or from the earlier race, but I felt disappointed I hadn't won that sprint.

Jason and Drew had raced phenomenally and deserved their 1-2 placings, and Justin raced smart to outsprint us to third. It was a great race, and I enjoyed myself plenty. It was also the longest solo effort I'd ever held in a race! But after the day's races, I knew that I came in a little too confident and that confidence led to impatience. Because of that, I had suffered and been rewarded with disappointment. "Be patient tomorrow," I told myself as I drove home to prep for Colavita.  
-Ethan F.

**Creighton Gruber**

12<sup>th</sup> Place Junior Road Race NCNCA Championships Juniors 15-16

When my friend and I got to the race we had to rush to get warmed up because we arrived late. I was only able to get a 1minute pyramid in. When I got to the start I talked with my teammates Andrew and Ethan before I lined up. When we started the first 3 laps were slow but someone attacked on the downhill of the third lap and I got gaped. I tried to get back on during the uphill but they stayed the same distance away. It stayed that way for about 2 laps. The last 2 laps they really picked it up and then they went out of view. When I got to the end I out sprinted the guy I was with for 12th.

-Creighton

### **Andrew Mathiesen**

4<sup>th</sup> Place Junior Road Race NCNCA Championships Juniors 13-14

For dinner I had chicken and rice, but I did eat a lot or sleep very good because I had a bad stomach ache. The next morning when I ate I did not feel any better. When we got to the event I rode to the start/finish line, which was up a hill that had a gradient of 7% so I knew it would be a little hard. When I came back I jumped on the trainer and started doing my one minute pyramid. After my warm-up, it was about twenty minutes before my race so my father and I went to the starting line to roll out.

After roll out I went to talk to Ethan and Creighton from Team Swift. When the race started I was in the front with two opponents. We were in the front of the pack for the first three laps until there was a crash behind us and the whole field split. There were four people that made it into a breakaway and I was one of them. For a majority of the remaining laps I was pulling the break away. The last lap was the hardest because my legs were burning from pulling on the previous laps. For the last kilometer the speed increased a lot and we were going uphill. During this time I could not find a spot in the draft to escape the head winds so I died out and finished in fourth. I realized that my performance was not the best because I was sick the day before but I made a huge mistake of pulling the majority of the race. My father has said many times that this sacrifices myself for the competitors behind me but I had to learn this lesson the hard way.

-Andrew

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**6. USA Junior MTB National Championships** 7/13/16 Mammoth

### **Luke Lamperti**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place MTB National Championships Juniors 13-14

As I sprinted off the start line to quickly move up. I got to second wheel quick. I sprinted into the single track to lead. I rode a steady tempo. The altitude was killing me

with not being able to hold a consistent effort. I was with one other kid as we rode over the top. I led the downhill. We had finished 1 of 4 laps. I led the single track and the other rider led the fire road. On the last lap we hit the first fire road climb. The other rider attacked. I was not able to stay with him. He pulled away and I finished 2nd. I was happy with my result.

-Luke

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## 7. USAC Talent ID Camp

6/19-25/16

Flagstaff, AZ

### Ben Cook

#### Camp Purpose

Sometime in mid May my dad brought up to me the idea of a USA Cycling camp in Arizona that selected for the Tour de l'Abitibi (if that's how its spelled), the UCI's longest junior stage race. I had heard of the race but didn't know too much about it. We did some research, mainly by checking out other rider's strava profiles from the race and the Arizona camp, and decided it would be worth the shot to go ahead and try to get selected. Last year I had a hard time in my experience in international racing, but I knew, even though it would be hard, it would be worth it to go back and try again. All throughout the camp process, and now as I fly to the Tour de l'Abitibi itself, I have to keep reminding myself of that.

#### Day 1

I arrived in Flagstaff, Arizona for my first time the afternoon before our camp would start. Driving out of the airport I soon noticed a massive peak standing tall in the direction we were heading. I googled it to find out that it was Humphrey's Peak at 13,000ft, and it was 6,000ft higher than we were in Flagstaff. I knew I would like it here.

I was all alone for the first night in Flagstaff, so I figured I would take some time for myself while I could. I set up my bike (and inflated my tires with a hand pump, what fun!), and went out for an easy spin on a road I found by checking strava, Old Lake Mary Road. Even just spinning I could feel the altitude affecting me, but nonetheless I had a blast riding on the beautiful open roads, enjoying the warm sunset as I went.

#### Day 2

I was to be picked up at 10am by coach Jon (turns out there are two coach Jon's, the other is spelled John) and driven to the campus. One royal escort to the castle, please and thank you. There I checked in, met the camp coaches and directors, and also met my roomates, Sergejs, Brendan, and André. The others that had got in this morning set up their bikes and we all got ready to head out for a spin. Today we would be riding Lake Mary Road again, this time in the heat of the day.

We all waited around upstairs silently, a bunch of teenagers without their parents in spandex on a college campus. What a sight. There were 12 of us total. Then, spinning up the main drive to where we were standing came a figure so pale in the face he was either going through shock, or he had dunked his head in a bucket of sunscreen.

"See this guys? That's sunscreen. You'll need it up here." He said. Note taken. I later learned this figure, who was really not so pale, to be coach Mark. The next to roll in was coach John, flashing a sporty pair of 1998 Oakley M-frames. He bragged, rightfully so, about his shades as we began instruction. We were just going for a spin, but we were already being evaluated, not just on riding skills or strength, but ability to follow instruction and pay attention. Right away a rider's bars slipped down, keep in mind this was the same rider who had forgot to bring his pedals. I understood that whole "evaluation" thing a lot better now.

Our spin was fun and successful, and I got to know the riders I didn't already know from racing a bit better. It was hot and sunny up there, and we were riding at 2pm, right in the middle of the day. When we got back I took a cool shower and went to dinner shortly afterwards. After dinner we had our first "presentation", where the camp met and discussed the day's results, details about the Tour, and the next day's plan. Tonight was plain and simple; we all introduced ourselves and got acquainted with the coaching staff and goals of the camp.

### Day 3

The third day of camp proved to be one of the hardest for me. Today we would be doing 3 short uphill time trials. This part of the testing was for USA Cycling talent ID records, but also served as evaluation for the camp directors. I'll skip the whole, "I went hard and coughed a lot and wanted to die", part to tell you that the first days tests were extremely challenging for me. My times were consistently around 2 minutes and 45 seconds, give or take a few seconds. I think the hardest part for me was the altitude, I felt myself coughing and wheezing for air but not getting what I needed. I was bummed too when I checked my power files to find that I had done about 15% less power than I would have expected to do. It was somewhat of a shock and my body was already wrecked, but I tried to keep my spirits up.

In the afternoon we went for another ride, this time practicing paceline drills. Lucky for me I felt confident and comfortable in the paceline, seemingly more than some other riders I saw. After our spin we went back to dinner and presentations, where we were handed our results from today. I was surprised to see myself nearing the bottom of the list of 12 riders, but I had to face the facts of it and get ready for the next day, the long uphill time trial test.

### Mentality and notes, night 3

It was really interesting for me to go to a "selection" camp like this one. I had never truly been to a talent ID camp, even though I went to Europe last year in what would be considered a big talent ID camp. I constantly felt myself sizing up potential competition on and off the bike, and trying my best to be polite and educated and



impress the coaches. The biggest bummer of it all was trying all of this and still coming up short on test day. I decided to reset my mind and not stress the little things so that I could prepare for the long test tomorrow better

#### Day 4

Day four was our long hill climb test. A 15+ minute climb up Snowbowl, a local mountain in Flagstaff. We spun out nice and easy and I got to do a few openers on the road towards our start, but not as much as I had hoped. We started on a 6% incline, so it made things a bit more difficult to get up to speed. The remainder of the climb was steady and not too steep, between 4 and 6 percent gradient on average. I continued to check my power as I went, but needless to say it was another poor test. My lungs screamed and burned so badly I couldn't even feel the pain in my legs. By the top I looked down to see I had only done 270 watts, much less than I had hoped. I spun back with the team unsure of my time, again upset with the test, but today at least understanding what went wrong. My body was having a very hard time adjusting to the altitude, and I was really suffering in the tests as a result.

I came back to the dorm, showered and had lunch, and got ready for our afternoon ride. This time we would be working on echelon drills, rotating sideways to protect yourself and your group from a crosswind. We split up into two groups of six to practice our drills. There wasn't too much wind today, but we simulated the crosswinds on either side of us. Despite not having my best test in the morning, I proved to really understand the concept of an echelon and was able to show that to the coaches and to the rest of the riders.

That night I gave coach Laura a call, and she cheered me up as always, reminding me that the coaches and directors most likely knew that my tests were lower than expected, and that I shouldn't stress too much over something that I couldn't much help. Tomorrow we had three 5k flat time trials to do and I was beyond excited to try something that suited me better.

#### Day 5

I woke up in the morning and had a good breakfast, feeling tired but ready for the tests to follow. We spun out together to Lake Mary road where we would be doing our tests. This time, the tests were not for power but instead for time. I tried not to worry too much about warm up today, as I had a hard day the day before and was already feeling strong just by spinning out. I was shooting for somewhere around 6 minutes. I was the third to start, so I lined up with the first group and got ready for a hard effort.

Right off the start I shifted down into my 14 and picked up the pace. The first 500 meters were on a slight uphill, which suited me well, and then the road began to roll a bit more. I kept the pace as high as I could for the whole effort, as it was so short, that by the time I could see the finish line I was nearly blown. I pushed in as hard as I could for a 6:19 on my first effort, a time I was very happy about.

The next two efforts were equally hard. On the next test we went backwards the way we came, and had a very fast tailwind, so I did a time around 5:44. On the

final effort we did the same course as our first one, and the headwind had picked up badly. Each and every one of us began to feel the pain more and more on the long way back. I set a time of 7:04 on my last test.

In the afternoon we worked on flat tire drills. Each rider got a partner and a number, and when our number was called we dropped off the group, waited about 20 seconds, and then began our chase. My partner was Eben for the day. The main goal was to learn how to stay calm, not panic and steadily chase back onto the group in the caravan after receiving a wheel change. Afterwards we went back to the college, ate a good dinner, and had our evening presentation. That night we talked about the functions of the caravan, where cars sat and how their order was picked, and what to do if you had a flat tire, needed water, or needed to talk to our team director. Afterwards I got a good long sleep in preparation for the 20k time trial the next day.

## Day 6

It was a typical morning at camp before the 20k time trial. Wake up around 7am, throw pants and shoes on to replicate me having public decency, and walking (at this point into the camp it was more of a stumble) down to breakfast for the usual assortment of college food. I ate with my roommates Brendan Sergejs, and Andre again. On the walk back from breakfast the sun was already up and I could feel a hot breeze on my face, reminding me of what fun (also known as a time trial, also known as not fun at all) was to come in just a few hours.

The spin out to the start of our course on Lake Mary Road was long and arduous; we had ridden almost 2 hours by the time we made it out to beginning of the time trial. I spun with another rider, Eben, who I didn't know too well. We chatted about how we were feeling, and ultimately how long the ride out was dragging on. I would be the 4<sup>th</sup> to start today, as the order was in reverse GC from the previous tests. Coach John held me up at the start line, and I took off down the road aiming for a time of 27-28 minutes.

The first few miles were fast and hard but I kept my speed steady. The road was mainly uphill and there was a slight wind making things more difficult. As I was nearing 20 minutes I began ramping up the pace to be completely blown at the finish. At 23 minutes I was feeling strong and ready to push for the last 4 or 5. As I came back on the course we had done our 5k time trials on yesterday I began to wonder where exactly the finish was. I knew it was at "the mailboxes", but I had no reminder of that today, and was too delirious after the time trial yesterday to remember any mailboxes. I began to push harder up what I thought I remembered to be the final roller to the finish of the 5k, but it felt too early for today's test as I was only at 24 minutes. But when I came over the roller at about 18k, I was surprised to see Coach Mark and Barney standing with stop watches and waving arms at the finish line. I sprinted in for the last 400 meters while I could for a time of about 24:30. I was happy with my time trial and ended up placing well in the standings that night, but I was also a little bummed that I couldn't give it my full effort since I didn't take the time to check the course properly and find that it was only 18k and not 20k.

We all spun back to the school completely wiped out after our final time trial, but happy to have the tests done with. This afternoon we would practice bottle fetching and would finally have our race simulation. With only 12 kids at camp it would be hard to have a full on criterium, but we had a great course and split up into four teams to make a fun race.

The teams were split alphabetically, so I would be teammates with Maxl and Ian. Maxl had been continuously a few riders ahead of me in all of the tests, and had shown to be a good tactical rider and sprinter based on his past results. Ian was a few riders lower than me in the tests each time. Based on our different performances we decided to play roles accordingly in the race. It would be a 10 lap race, and every other time across the finish line would be a sprint for points, the first rider taking 3 points, the second 2, and the third taking one point. The team with the most points at the end won! Right off the start, Max, who was teammates with Charlie and Eben, attacked and I chased up to him. We had a small gap but weren't going anywhere fast. Charlie countered and Maxl was right on his wheel, along with Andre. Max made the move too by jumping onto Andre's wheel, which I missed. In the field Abraham made a few strong attacks but wasn't able to stay away to bridge up. Finally, after a few other riders attacked, Eben made his move and I went with him to bridge to the break, which Andre had just dropped out of, and Charlie had just attacked. We stayed off the front for a few laps and I took third in one of the sprints when Maxl was recovering to gain us a point. Ian stayed further back in the field until we all came back together at one to go. Charlie was currently solo off the front, a brave move, but Ian made his too and attacked the group! He stayed away for a good portion of the lap before getting caught around 500m to go. Maxl took 3rd in the final sprint to grab us another point.

In the end we all had a blast getting to actually race instead of time trial, and we were all happy with our performances. Charlie, with his solo move took 15 points, our team took 9, and the next team down took 6 points. We spun home and Maxl and I began to chat about what riding is like where we live, our group rides, the pros in our area, and our favorite races. We got back to the school late, got showered, and got ready for our final evening presentation.

## Night 6

Well, it was the moment of truth tonight. I had had a challenging time at camp performing how I had wished in the high altitude, but felt that I had put my best foot forward. Finally, Coach Mark announced his team. There were two automatic selections, Eben and Max, for being the highest on the GC, then there were two from the race, and that made for Charlie and Nathan, who took a lot of sprints for himself as well, and then there were two coaches pick riders. I held my breath, I was counting on being the coaches pick if I wanted to make the A team.

"That leaves me with the coaches pick." Began Coach Mark

"I chose these two riders because I saw that they would get along best with the other four riders and with each other, and would be a compliment to the team. Those riders are Maxl and, um, Ben!" I let out a huge sigh of relief. Maybe it was too

loud because Maxl gave me a little smile when he noticed. I had made the A team! Somehow! After coming near the bottom of the results most every day. I guess that Barney and coach were right, that they really picked riders based on who they were as cyclists, not just how they performed in the tests. I was extremely happy and extremely fortunate that I had coach to help me when I was struggling, and that Barney was such a great character and was so understanding as well. Immediately after we held our first team meeting and things got serious. We were going to race at the Tour de l'Abitibi!

-Ben

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## 8. USAC Talent ID Camp

6/19-25/16

Davis

### **Creighton Gruber**

#### USAC Talent ID Camp

I got to the camp tired after racing Nevada City three hours earlier. I got all my gear and went over to the check in spot to meet the coaches. Once I checked in and got my dorm key, I put all my stuff in my room, said goodbye to my Mom, and then headed straight to dinner. This is where I got to meet the other campers. After dinner we had the camp rule lecture then we went to bed.

The next morning I got up at 6am to go have breakfast. After breakfast I got dressed for the ride to the first power to weight ratio test (The 20min/ climbers test). It was about 25 miles of descent pace riding and getting to each other till we got to the hill. The Coaches told us about the test and how it would go down. We got weighed in and then they set us off in intervals of 30 seconds. When I went, I felt great and it was shaded and only about six percent. After 13 minutes of that, the trees were gone and the road was 15 percent. That is when I found out I went out too hard. After I got to the top I turned around to start descending, disappointed thinking I did horrible because I didn't pace myself all that well. Then the group rode the 25 miles back talking about the test. Once we got back we had dinner and then had a talk about the test. It turned out I got the 3rd best score with 4.47watts per kilo even with my bad pacing! The only people ahead of me were 17 year olds! I went to bed happy with myself.

The next morning went a lot like the last, breakfast, get ready, 25 mile ride to power test. The only thing different was this was the 5 minute power to weight ratio/ sprinters test. I started knowing I wouldn't do amazing, but I was determined to do my best. When I was 2 minutes into my ride up a slight incline the guy who started 30 seconds back passed me. That made me go even harder. But once we rode back and had dinner and got the results I found I had only gained .33watts per kilo from the climbing test, when most gained 1 to 1.5 watt per kilo more. I still finished mid pack in the test though.

The next morning we slept in to 6:30am for a more skills oriented day. We rode to a grass field for skill drills. We learned wheel tapping, fighting with your elbow and leaning on each other. Next we when for a short easy ride. When we got back we had a

lot of free time to bond and share racing experiences. Then like the other nights dinner, talk, sleep.

This day we went for a short adventure ride we did some gravel riding, dirt riding, and when there was crosswind echelon work. When we got back we did skill games instead skill drills at a field. After not doing well in all the games we got to last person standing. After a little bit someone who outweighed me by 60 pounds tried to knock me over, so I leaned in and they fell over. But right when I started to feel cool someone else knocked me over. I think this was one of my favorite moments.

The next day the only thing on schedule was an optional ride. My dad joined the group for the ride and it turned into another adventure ride. On this ride we ended up on cobble like farm roads. One of the coaches, who have ridden the roads on Paris-Roubaix, said the road was as bad as the cobbles. The best part was, another guy, the coach who rode on the cobbles, and I rode away from the rest of the group. When we got back I said goodbye to everybody and then got in the car and headed home from an awesome experience.

-Creighton

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## 9. Death Ride Report 2016

7/9/16

Markleeville

### Ethan Frankel

Racing Age 18, Senior Category 3  
10<sup>th</sup> Place, 2016 Death Ride, Overall

"The story of a 17 year-old boy on a solitary journey to destroy his legs," read my Strava ride title for the 2016 Death Ride. I thought that pretty much summed up the experience I'd had at this year's 'Tour of the California Alps'.

For the fifth consecutive year, I'd be participating in a 129-mile adventure with what they claim to be 15,000 feet of climbing (turns out it's actually 16,246 feet of climbing). The route consists of five "passes", basically just huge mountains that are each as difficult as a Tour de France *hors categorie* climb, with long, fast descents. This report is going to be fairly short, because I've already written four similar ones! I'll briefly describe each of the passes, but you can find a fuller description of the scenery and terrain in previous reports.

Each year, there are roughly 3,000 other participants and only half complete all five passes: it's a difficult ride for anyone. The ride was on Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, and I had arrived back home just five days prior from racing at Nationals in Kentucky. One day later, we drove into Nevada where we stayed at a hotel for a couple of nights. That day, I immediately hopped onto my bike and rode one of the passes. I needed to stretch my legs after a 5+ hour car ride.

The next few days were uneventful besides some rides to acclimate to the altitude and registration. We also camped the night before the ride so we could just hop on the bike and ride. Let's skip to the day of the ride.

It's 4:30 in the morning. I hear the tent unzip and the sound of bikes being handed through the cramped doorway. I perk up and wish my brother and dad luck on their ventures. I had planned to start later than either of them so I could get 30 minutes more of sleep. They head out into the darkness to commence their rides. I lay in my sleeping bag for another minute before I find the courage to change in the cold weather. I throw on my cycling clothes, pump my tires, eat a measly breakfast, and I'm finally out of the tent at 5:10. By 5:15, I commence my ride. By 5:30, I am on the first of five passes. I fly by hundreds of riders on the way to the top of the 9-mile climb. In that distance, I finish the climb in 47 minutes and have made my way from 1,000<sup>th</sup> position to 200<sup>th</sup>.

Then, a descent for the ages. As I get lower in elevation, the temperature increases from 50° to 65°, warming my body and mind. I fly down the straight descent, averaging 40 mph and hitting 55. For the most part, I am in a "supertuck" position to gain as much speed as possible. There was only one switchback that hindered my speed at all. At the bottom is the turnaround point and I eagerly started climbing. By the top, I've exhausted myself but I'm happily finished with two passes.

The next descent is just as fast and fun as I supertuck and feel the wind flying through my helmet and zipped up wind vest. Then came the flats. As I fly through the flats, I'm pushing my legs to the limits. I know that I have a towering climb coming up, but it's all about riding in the moment. I'll suffer more later on, but for now, I get low and push through the pain that begins to creep into my muscles.

Within 10 minutes, the climb has begun. "This isn't bad," I think to myself. I've ridden this several times, however, so I know what's coming up next: a grueling 10-miles of intense climbing. The first bit is mellow, and then I look down at my legs for a few seconds. When I look up, a wall seems to soar into the distance. The road pitches upward at 18% as I give a dig to pass another rider. Several miles later, I pass a lake. This marks 1 km to the top. My legs are burning and my mind is jumbled. By the top of Ebbetts Pass, I've passed at least five riders and the volunteers tell me I am within the top 10! After thanking them and retrieving some food to replenish my energy, I descend. It takes less than ten minutes for me to cover the five miles and I now have four of the five stickers that indicate the completed passes. I turn around to start the brutal climb.

Although relatively short, the next climb is steep and hot. I'm ready to pass out but am motivated to get to the top; pushed by the competition behind me and my drive to challenge my own limits. As I approach the top, the photographer readies his camera. I quickly unclip my right shoe, flex my calf, point, and yell "How do my calves look?!" He snaps his shots and laughs back and responds, "Great job, keep it up!" I finally make it after destroying my legs and savor the time I have with the Cup O' Noodles at the rest stop. Then, I drop down Ebbetts Pass on a mission to go as fast as possible, safely. When I approach the lake, a large gust of wind occurs, nearly swaying my bike out of line. Suddenly, a sizable, orange construction sign that reads "Caution: Bicycles Xing" blows off of its perch on the side of the road directly into my line. I narrowly avoid the hazard and look back to see a ride organizer on a motorbike

stopping to pick up the carnage. I gladly make it out of that one safely, and for the next few minutes I use a bit more caution on the descent.

A rider soon catches me as we hit the flats before lunch. We work well together through the sharp, winding road and after blasting through at 30+ mph we approach the lunch spot. I pull off to eat and he contemplates taking a break, but instead continues hammering. I know I've just lost an opportunity to go with him and keep speeding along, but instead I take my time to eat and replenish my energy. 15 minutes later, I'm hammering my hardest to get to the top of the next pass, which just happens to be in 30 miles. This will be well over 2 hours.

The next 29.5 miles are a blur as I keep my head down and focus on the road and on my front wheel. I once look at my heart rate to see that it's only 156 bpm. My effort should be showing at least 170, but this is an indicator that I'm tiring. The first pass my heart rate had been upwards of 180, then 170, and each pass it kept dropping. It was a telltale sign that I was physically diminishing. Mentally, I feel good. I hammered away and eventually came to the top of Carson in 10<sup>th</sup> place, finishing at 12:54 pm. My mom is there to cheer me on and congratulate me, brimming with more pride than I.

I descend back to Markleeville to cheer on my brother and dad, who finish 5 hours after me. Still quite the accomplishment. So that is the story of a 17 year-old boy on a solitary journey to destroy his legs.

-Ethan F.

## **Elliot Frankel**

Racing Age 14

Death Ride Report 2016

This was my second year doing the Death Ride, the second year of pain and records. Last year, I was the youngest person to finish the ride, but this year, I had a different goal; to beat my previous time. That goal was almost missed, as a lack of training caused some issues to ruin the ride. But I still finished, beat my time, and felt great along the way.

We arrived at our hotel a few days before the start of the ride. The car ride had been a short few hours, and I was working on a project the entire ride. It was a warm day, so we unloaded our gear quickly and got into our room. There was a casino next to our hotel with "Amazing All-You-Can-Eat Spaghetti!", so we checked that out. The smoke in there was awful, and we got out of there as fast as we could. By the end of the day, I had explored every crevice of our hotel.

The next day was the last training ride. We drove to the start location and started riding the course to get a feel for how it would be. I felt great, and imagined finishing the pass on the day of the race. My dad, brother, and I headed back to the start to go to the deli and grab lunch. Those sandwiches never tasted better.

The day before the race, Friday, we headed off on a cool-down ride around a lake. There was some off-roading involved, which was pretty sweet. As we rode around, we stopped at a dock and looked around, but saw nothing interesting. As we

headed back to our hotel, a house caught our eye. It was for sale, so we checked it out just for fun. In the house's driveway lay a dying rabbit, its hind legs broken. It was a sad sight, and my dad refused to do anything about it. We ended the day with some more off-road, and then headed over to a campsite where we would sleep for the night.

A 4:00 wake up, leave at 4:30, up before the sun. I'm tired all the way up the first pass, but my body feels good. I talk with a bunch of people, and pass even more. By this time, my dad was more than 10 minutes back. As I reached the final part of the ascent, I saw a kid my age but he was only handing out stickers, not riding. After waiting at the rest stop for my dad, we descended the second pass together.

I met my mom at the bottom of the mountain and dropped off my lights and extra clothes. It got pretty warm quickly, so I no longer needed long gloves or a windbreaker. I soon realized that I had lost my short gloves somewhere, so I had to ride up without gloves. My legs still felt good, and I ascended very quickly. By the top, I had passed a multitude of people and had completely obliterated my dad. And of course, I got a plethora of comments and questions.

My legs started hurting immediately on the third pass. This is where the lack of training started to kick in. I could barely maintain 5 mph; my legs were hurting so badly. I fought my way up to the top, where I was unsure that I could finish. I waited for my dad at the top, but after a miscommunication I ended up descending without him.

This pass was supposed to be the easiest one, but I felt so bad that it was one of the worst. All the way up, I was waiting for my dad, but he never showed up, so I just kept on chugging until the end. Back at the top, I regrouped with my dad, and we descended to lunch.

After a much too long lunch break, my dad and I started off to the final pass together. I drafted off of him, so the 8-or-so miles to the start went by pretty quickly. Then, the real Death Ride began. After 80 miles and 10,000 feet, you still had the most difficult part ahead of you. The wind started to get brutal, and the going got slow. Gradually we went, with cheers from adoring fans helping to motivate me. The destination was Pickett's rest stop, the last one until the end.

Of course, we got there. I met up with a family friend, and left without my dad. Together, we went much faster and soon met up with a group going a perfect speed. With only 10 miles to go, I felt really good. The friend got dropped by this new group, so I talked with them for a while. They shielded the wind for me, and stayed a good clip. As we neared the finish, I got pretty jumpy. At every corner I started sprinting, yet they weren't the finish and I just tired myself out. Finally, we reached the last turn. By that time, I had tired myself out. I didn't have the energy to sprint. My legs hurt, my mind hurt, and I was tired. But I had made it!

-Elliot



