

## Team Swift Race Reports

### Sawyer Taylor's 2017 Track Season!

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#### Track Nationals (Los Angeles, California)

31 July 2017 - 4 August 2017

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Junior Women 17-18 Points Race
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Junior Women 17-18 Scratch Race
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place Junior Women 17-18 Team Pursuit
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Junior Women 17-18 Team Sprint
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Junior Women 17-18 Individual Pursuit
- 7<sup>th</sup> Place Elite Women Omnium
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Junior Women 17-18 Omnium

#### Track Worlds (Montichiari, Italy)

23-27 August 2017

- 16<sup>th</sup> Place Team Pursuit
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Place Individual Pursuit

Since road nationals, I have been taking a break from racing road to focus on track. As many of you know, I crashed pretty badly only three weeks before road nationals and didn't race my best. Luckily, I still had another chance to show what I could do on the national level in track as track nationals didn't start until the last day of July. It took a lot of work and a lot of racing with some ridiculously strong women but I came into track nationals in excellent form. As a result, I managed to race really well in not just the junior category but the elite women's category. In addition to picking up six medals and a jersey to go along with one of them, my performance at this year's Track Nationals earned me a spot on the US National Team to race at world championships in Montichiari, Italy! I would be racing the individual pursuit, team pursuits, and would serve as the backup for our mass start racer Alijah Beatty. Here is a brief account of what my experience was like at worlds. For the most part, the racing was very short. My most important event was two minutes and thirty-three seconds. So I'm going to focus more on the preparation and experience in these reports.

The pursuit is all about preparation and focus. For the two weeks leading up to track worlds, I just rode my pursuit position on rollers and did pursuit efforts. In addition, I spent massive amounts of time in the gym to get my body strong and stable. This process was incredibly beneficial and gave me the ability to put out a lot of power in an extremely aggressive position that is needed for this event. I came into track worlds even stronger than I came into track nationals and managed to take 6 seconds off of my 2k time! This time would have won the IP at nationals by 5 seconds which

was one of the events that I got second in. Considering how few pursuits I've done, getting such a fast time surprised me and definitely gives me hope for the future!

### **18 Friday 2017**

Today I departed for Italy! I knew it would be a very long flight so I brought my homework as I don't sleep on planes. I got a lot done and was able to relax. Really long travel days can really destroy an athlete's legs so I made sure to move around in the airport and stretched whenever I could.

### **19 Saturday 2017**

After a long flight I finally made it to Italy this morning. I was picked up from the airport by a driver from UCI and Joanne Keisan. Joanne retired from racing last year but is a three-time Olympian and multi-time National Champion in New Zealand. She now lives in Seattle and I knew her from Marymoor Grand Prix where I had raced her. She was going to be my madison partner! I had no idea she was one of the coaches and I was so excited to see her. Joanne spoke fluent Italian from when she was living in Italy and racing on an Italian team so she helped me communicate with my driver.

The three of us drove directly to the velodrome for lunch and then went to the hotel. Everyone but Alijah and McKenzie were already there. After such a long day it was nice to see the team and relax for a little bit before going back to the track for a spin. Claire was there so we had two of the four members of our team pursuit team and were able to practice a few exchanges.

This was by far the fastest, slipperiest track I had raced on. I was thankful for the awesome wheels and tires that my friend and track teammate Ethan Boyes had let me use. I don't own track wheels so he sent a Mavic five spoke and a Mavic front and rear disc to Italy with a mechanic he knew. Despite being a few years old, the wheels I used were ridiculously fast and are probably among the nicest wheels for track.

### **20 Sunday 2017**

After a relaxing morning of unpacking and getting organized for the week, Alijah and McKenzie arrived! This meant we could start working on exchanges as a team. We went to the track at 1:30 today and were there for an hour and a half. After an on-track warm up with the boy's team pursuit team, we did a few efforts to work on rotations. Dropping down the track on double discs felt different and I'm happy I was able to practice it. After a good cool down on rollers we went back to the hotel.

Track tubulars are usually very thin and the pair on my race wheels are not to be used on rollers. This means that whenever I switch from riding on the track to riding rollers I had to switch wheels unless of course I'm just using training wheels while on the track. For this reason and many other reasons, I'm super appreciative of all of Team USA's incredibly talented mechanics! I was able to focus on my race while they did everything bike-related for all of the athletes. This was super helpful and allowed us to perform our best!

After training, almost the entire team went to nearby Lake Garda to swim and hang out on the beach. It was a lot of fun and a great way to unwind before racing started.

### **21 Monday 2017**

Two days until race day! As today would be an easy day, I opted out of a morning spin. After lightly warming up on rollers at the track, I got on the track with the rest of my pursuit team. We kept it pretty easy and just worked on exchanges. As we had not raced together as a team before nationals, it was incredibly important to get our exchanges down before race day.

It was also time to decide how many laps each racer would be doing as well as order. Alijah had a great start so she would be first wheel. Her first pull would be a lap and three quarters and then she would do lap and a half pulls. McKenzie would be second wheel as she also had a really good start but would be taking one lap pulls. I was third wheel and, although I didn't have the fastest start, I was pursuing really well and would be taking a lap and a half pull on my first exchange and then two lap pulls for the rest of our team pursuit. Our last racer (Claire) would take one really hard one-lap pull to get us to a really hard pace and then pull off.

### **22 Tuesday 2017**

I woke up this morning knowing I had little over twenty-four hours until my first race at the World Championships. While definitely excited, I was also a bit nervous. A hard pre-race ride helped calm me down and put me in the right zone to race my best. Today we did a half-length, all-out team pursuit effort (two kilometers) from a standing start and then a 6-lap flying effort after spinning on rollers and then warming up even more in a pace line on track. It felt really good to open up my legs. One thing that the coaches took note of was that I would kick it up when I was at the front and heard a slow lap time. This is something I need to work on as I should be bringing the pace up slowly to keep it consistently fast and smooth. For a while the coaches were considering putting me in an even bigger gear. Right now, Alijah and I would be running a 93.6 while McKenzie and Claire would be in a 92.6. This would force me to be smoother by making it harder for me to instantly bring the pace up. In the end, it was decided that I would stay in the smaller gear so the team could start faster. After cooling down, the team went back to the hotel. We had a morning session today so we had all day to relax and spin on rollers again.

### **23 Wednesday 2017**

Today didn't go as well as we wanted. After Claire pulled off, McKenzie (who unfortunately was sick) cracked and Alijah and I had to slow down the pace as it is the third racer to cross the line that gets a time for the team. We did take time off of our time from nationals but we didn't hit our goal time. We ended up in 16th which isn't a bad result at world championships.

As for my process (how I ate, warmed up, and raced), I did everything very well. My pursuit team had breakfast and then a pre-race meal three hours before our 1:30

start. I hydrated all day and timed my Cif Shots perfectly around my warm up and race. I warmed up hard and then I raced my best. But in order to have a great team pursuit, all four racers have to do everything perfectly and we just didn't practice enough as a team for that.

While we didn't get the result we wanted, my first race at worlds was overall really good. I learned a lot and overall felt really good. If I could hold the splits I was getting on my pulls in my team pursuit for my IP, I would set a really good time. I would just have to follow the same process and hope for a better result.

## **24 Thursday 2017**

Easy spin today on the track before racing began. As we didn't ride until the early afternoon, I didn't do a PM roller spin as I didn't think I needed to. I felt really good after stretching. Myself and the other racers that weren't racing today went back to the hotel to shower but were back at the track soon after to watch the a few races.

## **25 Friday 2017**

Waking up on Friday morning I realized that I was even more excited for my individual pursuit than I was for my team pursuit! I had been focusing on this event since track nationals and knew I could set a really good time if I did everything right. A lot of that would come on race day but today I could focus on my standing start and a really good pre-race ride. After a good warm up on rollers and on the track, Brian Abers (Team USA's head coach for the trip) worked on my start with me on the inner circle. It definitely helped and I was able to apply what I learned in my first effort which was a four lap standing effort. Then, I did a four lap flying effort to work on pacing. I knew that if I wanted to hit my goal time I need to ease up on my third lap by a little less than a second so I could keep a consistently high pace in my last kilometer. Training today definitely made me feel prepared for tomorrow's race!

## **26 Saturday 2017**

Happy that race day was finally here, I prepared for my race as well as I could. I got everything together the night before so I wouldn't have to stress before my afternoon race and with the help of coaches I timed my eating as well as I could. Soon enough it was time to go to the track! I did part of my warm-up before a huge crash in the Men's Omnium that delayed everything by half an hour. It was really warm in the track so I didn't need to fully restart my warm-up. However, I definitely warmed up more before my race began.

Soon enough I was on the chairs near the start with only two heats before mine. I was warmed up, hydrated, and ready. It was only a few minutes before I was on-track and the counter beeped letting me know that I only had 50 second to go. Not my best start as I went forward a bit too soon but I was able to get off the line fast enough. I stayed out of the saddle until corner three and it took be a bit longer to fully get up to speed on the big gear. My lap times were all just a little bit faster that what my goal was. As a result, I took a huge amount of time off of my time from nationals to

get 22nd! I finished with nothing left and Brian Abers grabbed me and my bike to keep me from falling over.

Worlds would definitely have been one of the highlights of my season regardless of how much time I took off of my 2k. Riding a faster race than I ever could have expected was just icing on the cake! Coming this far in track racing in less than a year has been quite an experience. And while it definitely was a lot of work on my part, there's no way my journey so far would have been possible without the help of my family, friends, coaches, sponsors, and of course Team Swift! I cannot express how much I appreciate all of the support. Here's to an awesome 2017 season!

### Other 2017 Track Results

#### **Wednesday Night Racing (San Jose, California)**

12 July 2017

1<sup>st</sup> Place Women's P123 Omnium

#### **Alpenrose Velodrome Challenge (Portland, Oregon)**

14-16 July 2017

4<sup>th</sup> Place Women's Open IP

6<sup>th</sup> Place Women's Elite Omnium

- Women's Elite Elimination
  - 2nd place
- Women's Elite Points Race
  - 10th place
- Women's Elite Scratch Race
  - 5th place

#### **Marymoor Grand Prix (Seattle, Washington)**

21-22 July 2017

1<sup>st</sup> Place Women's Team Pursuit

6<sup>th</sup> Place Women's Elite Omnium

- Women's Elite Elimination
  - 5th place
- Women's Elite Points Race
  - 10th place
- Women's Elite Scratch Race
  - 8th place

4<sup>th</sup> Place Women's Elite Madison

#### **Wednesday Night Racing (San Jose, California)**

26 July 2017

4<sup>th</sup> Place Women's P123 Omnium

1<sup>st</sup> Place Junior State Championships Points Race