



Junior Cycling Development Program

P.O. Box 103 | Fulton, CA 95439 | www.teamswift.org

Team Swift Race Report #10

**Tour of the Gila
Cat's Hill Criterium
Berkeley Road Race**

Berkeley Hills Road Race

Anton Nicola

1st Place Berkeley Hills RR Juniors 17-18

Solo Break Stays Away

After a very slow 2 mile promenade to the start line, the 17-18's finally start off. The start was also dramatically slow. When you're doing 14 mph, it was almost as though we were warming down from our warm up just 15 minutes earlier. The plan was to keep the race together. We wanted to do an attack on the last climb of the last lap to hopefully get a top 3 placing at the finish. I soon adjusted our plan when I heard the 3 Vannini guys talking about ripping up the field on the first climb. "Shucks," this was my plan. So I knew that with the hill only a mile away, I had to make the first move. I wanted to be on the offensive, so I wouldn't be caught on the defensive chasing Vannini up "Mama Bear" Climb. So while the pace was still going very slow, I placed my hands on the tops of my bars, sat up, looked around, and made it look like I was out for a leisurely spin as I was pulling away from the group. Vannini let me get a pretty good gap. They could catch me if they wanted to, but I could get away if I wanted to. So at the base of "Mama Bear" climb, I hit it hard. I hammered all the way up to the top. 13-14 mph all the way up. By now, Vannini had also put down the hammer, and now were chasing me. I had a 30 second gap on them at the top of "Mama Bear" Climb. I kept hammering, and by the time I got to the top of "Papa Bear" Climb, I was a minute and a half ahead of the main chasers. Vannini realized their mistake by letting me go on that wonderful easy morning ride earlier in the race. They were tired, and they knew that they couldn't catch me, so they gave up chasing. However I didn't know this. I thought that the main chase group was only one corner behind me, so I kept doing the hiding in the corners, taking the inside, quickly going over the climb, so that they

couldn't see me. All of that the whole race. I hammered till the end. I was done by the end of the 1st lap. My back was aching, my butt was hurting, and my triceps were hurting. But I kept going till the end. I got to the finish, and did a one handed punch in the air with the little energy I had left in me. I get off my bike, and wait for the pack to be coming any time. I waited 7:30 minutes before 2nd place came across the line. I felt kind of silly trying to always get around this corner, and over that climb, and trying to stay hidden, when really they were 7 minutes back from me. I felt really good about my performance today. This is the first win that I've gotten in an official race. This race was a prime example of "psyched you" tactic. It almost psyched me; I didn't think that they were going to let me go that easily.

I got to see what the outcome of the rest of the race was.

Our plan was to do a 2 person attack. The move was supposed to be a "V" shaped attack somewhere in the middle of the climb to the finish. The original people who were supposed to do it were Aaron and I, but Team Swift quickly adjusted to do the move with someone else besides me. So now it was Aaron, and Reno who were going to do the move. So in the middle of the climb, Reno is right towards the front and he just puts in a harsh attack. However Aaron was too tired to do the move, so then Reno quickly adjusted to him being the only one to attack, and hammered till the finish. Aaron however without even knowing it acted as a blocker. Because the guy that was in front of him couldn't catch Reno, and the guys behind Aaron couldn't catch Reno. So therefore, Reno was guaranteed a 2nd place. It was another "in your face" type of sprint.

This race didn't quite follow the team plan all the way. But Team Swift did an awesome job adjusting to the situation. Aaron spent most of the race attacking to shake the riders off that were just being wheel suckers. He managed to drop 2 of the racers. He knew that I was so far ahead, that now they could basically have their own race without interfering with my move.

I just want to tell Aaron and Reno that they did an awesome job today. Aaron, way to sacrifice your placing for Reno. Reno, way to go on the attack.

If we race like a team, we will win like a team.

Reno Garcia

2nd Berkeley Hills RR Junior 17-18

The plan was to sit in and wait for the final lap to attack in a V shape in order to insure a top placing for at least one swift rider, but I guess this idea went out the window from the line. Anton was riding a few lengths away from the main group for the first half of the first lap and attacked on the first climb. that worked and he stayed away for the entire race to get the win. after that there were a series of short attacks from the other riders, none had an impact on the size of the field. The pace was piano most of the race. of the final climb me and Aaron were in the top three with an SGW rider in between us, I attacked to the left and the SGW rider chased, Aaron took his wheel and came in fourth. I think that we worked well as a team and the plan came together in the end.

Bob Harris

2nd Place Berkeley Hills RR Juniors 15/16s

This race went just like all the other road races have been going for me: my inability to climb caused me to lose! I was hoping that maybe I would be climbing better this time because I've been doing a few more hills in training and I made the switch from 170mm crank arms to 175s. Additionally I recorded my fastest time up my test hill about a week before, but still I couldn't really pull it off. There was only one other guy in my 15-16 group so I knew that I just had to stay with or drop him. Over the early climbs I launched a few little attacks just to see what I was up against, and he marked them pretty easily. On one of the last climbs about 10 miles to from the finish, he attacked me and I simply couldn't match him. At the top he had about 30 seconds on me, and with a furious descent I brought that down to about 10 seconds, and then 7, but eventually I blew up. I was still riding decently though and passed about four or five of the 17-18's before the finish. On the bright side, despite this horrible showing I still won a bunch of stuff so I have to say that I really like how the Berkeley Bicycle Club runs its races. My conclusion from this race is that I can't expect to do well on hills if I don't train on hills. My next big goal is the NCNCA junior crit championships so the fact that my climbing has been so bad recently doesn't really worry me. On the other hand, there is a little over a month before Nevada City and I would like to improve my climbing enough to compete in that race. So I will keep you all informed as to whether or not my climbing actually improves,

Mike Margraf

8th Place Berkeley Hills Road Race Sr. Category 3

Berkeley Hills RR was my very first road race last year so this time I was actually going to know what to expect from this course. It has some good climbs in it but they are not very long or steep and are mostly power climbs. The roads are great and the scenery is even better. All in all it is a great course.

The race started easy for pretty much the whole first lap. I stayed in the peloton and conserved energy. On the second lap people started attacking and the field got more active. On each of the three big climbs I stayed in the top five or so. On the third big climb (also the longest) where the feed zone is, a couple of guys upped the tempo so I stayed on their wheels without putting in too much effort. We got to the top and I looked behind and saw we had a pretty good sized gap on the peloton. We pushed it for a while but then the peloton reeled us back in. However, it was a good sign to me that I was able to get a gap without working too hard since this last week I have been feeling the effects of stage racing. On the third and final lap, the pace was much higher and there were quite a few attacks but none were successful. It looked like it was going to come down to the finishing climb which was one kilometer long. As we started the finishing climb, I was sitting in the top ten. Right away a couple of guys put the hammer down and really strung everybody out. I tried to follow but my legs just did not have the usual "spunk" in them. As we got towards the top I did make up some ground on the leaders but it was too late. I ended up finishing eighth. I feel pretty happy with my result because I gave it my all. I know once I fully recover from Gila I will be a much stronger rider. My "all" was just not quite enough today. Next time.

I am looking forward to next weekend's race at Infineon. We will have everyone there and will try to get a win as a team.



Mike Margraf

Tour of the Gila

10th Overall G.C.

Tour of the Gila, NM

Sr. Category

<http://tourofthegila.com/2004race>

MEN 3'S IND GC AFTER STAGE 5

1	11:31:36	@ 00:00	Zirbel, Tom	Boulder, CO
2	11:34:52	@ 03:16	Gould, Nicholas	Durango, CO
3	11:35:17	@ 03:41	Parobek, Daniel	Landis / Trek / VW Tempe, AZ
4	11:36:37	@ 05:01	Seagrave, Matt	Mapei/Team Diabeti Austin, TX

5	11:37:23	@ 05:47	Redpath, Cale	Hassletree Sports	Durango, CO
6	11:37:48	@ 06:12	James, David	Texas Lone Star Ra	Austin, TX
7	11:37:53	@ 06:17	Nydam, Scott	Totally Wired/Rock	Fraser, CO
8	11:38:03	@ 06:27	Moore, Richard	Team Revolution Ra	Tucson, AZ
9	11:38:14	@ 06:38	Rients, Jesse	Penn Cycle / Nature	Valle Lakefield, MN
10	11:38:54	@ 07:18	Margraf, Mike	Team Swift	

Stage 3 results

1	3:36:21	@ 00:00	Cano, Rene	Rica-Burguer	Mexico	--
2	3:36:21	@ 00:00	Guck, Courtney	FCCC	Windsor, CO	
3	3:36:21	@ 00:00	Saperstein, Joseph	FCCC - Lee's Cyclery	Fort Collins, CO	
4	3:36:21	@ 00:00	472 Margraf, Mike	Team Swift		

Stage 4 results

MEN 3'S STAGE 4 CRIT

9 0:50:36 @ 00:00 498 Renick, Chase Team Swift

MEN 3'S STAGE 5 R.R.

9 3:20:16 @ 01:20 472 Margraf, Mike Team Swift

This past week and weekend I was off to Silver City, New Mexico for a five day stage race. It is known to be one of the toughest 5 day stage races in North America. A lot of people from altitude and who are good climbers come to this race. The first stage is a 16 mile time trial with 1100 feet of climbing. The second stage is a 72 mile road race with 5000 feet of climbing. The third stage is a 80 road race with 6000 feet of climbing. The fourth stage is a one mile criterium with 80 feet of climbing per lap which we had to complete 20 times. The fifth and final stage is 72 miles with 6000 feet of climbing.

Stage 1

This being my first race in altitude (Silver City base altitude is 6000 ft) I was unsure at how I would react to it. The first thing that I really noticed was the wind in New Mexico is crazy. It was blowing 40 to 50 MPH with gusts up to 60 MPH on

Day One. I still went ahead and used my disc rear wheel since all the pro's were and it did not seem too bad while I was warming up. There was a full field of 130 riders. I started off a little slow to make sure I did not blow it too early. There was a head wind all the way up so it was pretty much a big hassle to say the least. Once I got to the summit, I started to pick it up. At the turnaround the wind almost blew me over. (I was riding with one hand on the TT bars and one on the outside of the bars). After climbing back up to the summit it was all downhill from there. I started to realize that I had taken it too easy because I still had way too much left in the tank and it was all downhill. This was the really scary part

because there was kind of a crosswind and when you are going 50 MPH the whole way down, it keeps your attention! I ended up with 25th place and 3 minutes down - ouch! I was pretty disappointed because I knew I could go faster but I just did not quite have it.

Stage 2

This stage had the single toughest, steepest climb in it of all of them. The first 65 miles were just rolling and no big attacks really happened. Everyone just seemed to be saving it for the finishing climb which climbs 2200 feet in 3 miles. There were sections that were 19% but most of the time it was 11 %. Right before the climb there was a big plateau and there was a nasty cross wind that just splintered the field apart. I managed to stay in the front group of about 25. Then the leader of the race attacked just as we started to climb. There was no way I could go with him and neither could the other 23 guys. He just took off. So now it was every man for himself and it turned into a sufferfest. I finished strong, outsprinting some guys and grabbing 15th. I lost another two and a half minutes to the leader who easily won the stage. However, I did move from 25th to 13th overall. It was a fast stage, we AVG. 25 MPH in spite of the climbing!

Stage 3

I got out to the course and it was a pretty cold, overcast morning. However, it did not seem too bad. This stage is known to be the toughest stage because it is always going up or down and hardly no flats. Within the first couple of miles you start a good little climb that climbs up to 7500 feet. About 15 minutes before the start, I started hearing that it was snowing at the top of the summit on the first climb! I could not believe it. So at the last minute, I decided to wear my long sleeved jersey. However, I still went with just shorts. So we began the stage and it started to rain - freezing cold rain. I started to believe that it was snowing at the summit! Once the climb started, my mind switched gears and all I was thinking about was staying at the front. Going up the climb, the leader of the race put in numerous attacks to break up the field which he did so. However, I was able to stay right on his wheel. Going over the summit (it had warmed up and to my relief the sun came out), I realized I was in the lead group of only about ten guys. There was this really sketchy descent coming up with some really tight fast corners. It was only 3 miles long but had 6 or so medical crews in all of the switchbacks which only gets your mind going even more. I was glad to be in a breakaway on the descent so I would not have to worry about another 100 guys! After the descent, we did a pace line for a little bit but then everyone got disinterested and the peloton all came back together for the most part. We still had some major climbs in the last 20 miles of the race. I was at the front starting the climbs. There were many attacks but I still stayed at the front and the group was able to cover them. After the main climb it was still pretty much all together.

There was a really nasty head wind this time so it made it really tough for a breakaway to go. Now all we had left were some big half mile rollers. There was attack after attack. The leader of the race actually went down right next to me on one fast descent, but he was able to catch back on. Since I was feeling really good I attacked on one big roller with about 6 or 7 miles to go and I got a big gap, but the wind was brutal and I could not hold it. Three guys got away during all the mayhem which I did not know about. Going into the last mile what was left of the peloton chased super hard to catch the break at 300 meters. They were right there so I started my sprint and to my surprise I was able to get the same time as the breakaway and get five seconds on the peloton. I finished 4th! I was now 10th overall! Today I felt so good. I have never felt stronger. It felt just so easy out there even though this was known to be the toughest stage.

Stage 4

Stage four was a Crit but it had a good climb in it. My plan was to just conserve energy and make sure no breaks got away. The Crit was much faster than I anticipated because I thought people would use it as a rest day...wrong! It was fast - we AVG. 26 MPH even with 80 feet of climbing per lap. However, I was feeling really strong so I had no problem staying with the pack. It came down to a mass field sprint so I ended finishing 30th with the same time as everyone else. Chase was racing and he was able to snag a top ten finish and almost pick up a prime! Nice job Chase.

Stage 5

The final stage had all the big climbing coming within the last 20 miles. This stage was basically the same as Friday's stage but backwards. The pace was pretty relaxed until we started the climbing. All the action took place on the scary descent on Friday but now we were climbing up it. When we stated the climb I saw the 20 miles to go sign and I knew it was a basically uphill from here. I thought to myself "this is going to hurt". Right at the bottom of the climb everyone went into their red zones and immediately the field blew apart. I was able to stay in the front group of 30 or so riders. The group slowly got smaller and smaller until it was down to 12 or so riders including me. Then an attack came and I there was no way I could go with it. The leader of the race and 6 other guys went with it. Now there were just four of us. Over the top of the big climb, the lead group still only had 15 or 20 seconds and we tried to chase. It was kinda up and down for the next couple of miles. I looked behind and there was a group of 25 guys or so coming onto us. So now we were all trying to chase but that was a really elite group of guys up front. Going into the Finish climb I was sitting in 4th place and slowly guys got tired and pulled off while my legs were feeling good. With 300 meters to go I was sittng in the second spot and still feeling good so I attacked and got a gap. I was easily able to roll across

the finish to win the sprint and get 9th for the stage. I felt good about this stage because I only lost a little over one minute to the winner of the stage.

This race was a great confidence builder. There were a lot of excellent Cat 3 racers there who were top climbers yet I still finished 10th overall. The race began with 130 guys and ended with 90. I felt myself get stronger on each stage. I am now looking forward to racing against local Cat 3 racers. It is going to seem easy after doing a stage race like this.

Thanks,
Mike Margraf

Cat's Hill Criterium

http://www.catshill.org/2004results/ch04_jun1014.html



We had a group of riders that some did the junior race and others did only the senior races. Below is a copy of the Junior (and coaches) results.

Cat's Hill 2004 Race Results

Juniors 10 - 14

Field Sizes:

Junior Boys 10-12 7

Junior Girls 10-12 2

Junior Boys 13-14 8

Junior Girls 13-14 3

Junior Boys 10 - 12

Placing	Rider	Club Affiliation
1	Daniel Tisdell	Los Gatos Bicycle Racing Club
2	Joel Shaffer	Unattached
3	Cody Kaiser	SGW / City Bike Works
4	Rudiger (Rudy) Schwartz	SVTC
5	Cooper Parkerson	.
6	David Tisdell	Los Gatos Bicycle Racing Club

Junior Girls 10 - 12

Placing	Race Number	First Name	Last Name	Club Affiliation
1	690	Lily	Gordis	Tieni Duro
2	691	Elissa	Stolman	Bay Area Velo Girls

Junior Boys 13 - 14

Placing	Race Number	First Name	Last Name	Club Affiliation
1	553	Julian	Wyss	Davis Bike Club
2	552	Alex	Wick	Davis Bike Club
3	554	Phil	Mehlitz	Los Gatos Bicycle Racing Club
4	555	Gabriel	Patterson-King	Team Swift
5	556	Robert	Pulford	Unattached
6	557	Marko	Vatavuk	Unattached
7	558	John	Hietter	RMCEF
8	551	David	Alexander	.

Junior Girls 13 - 14

Placing	Race Number	First Name	Last Name	Club Affiliation
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1	790	Colleen	Hayduk	Los Gatos Bicycle Racing Club
2	791	Kelly	LaFleur	Team Swift
3	792	Michelle	LaFleur	Team Swift

Cat's Hill 2004 Race Results

Juniors 15 - 18

Field Sizes:

Junior Boys 15-16	7
Junior Girls 15-16	3
Junior Boys 17-18	10
Junior Girls 17-18	1

Junior Boys 15 - 16

Placing	Race Number	First Name	Last Name	Club Affiliation
1	179	Collin	Samaan	SGW/Bicycle Business
2	177	Blake	Anton	Davis Bike Club
3	178	James	Ryan	Los Gatos Bicycle Racing Club
4	180	Ben	Barsi-Rhyne	Los Gatos Bicycle Racing Club
5	181	Tim	Reuss	Bicycle Trip
6	176	Nathan	Birnbaum	Team Swift

Junior Girls 15 - 16

Placing	Race Number	First Name	Last Name	Club Affiliation
1	977	Dawn	Tisdell	Los Gatos Bicycle Racing Club
2	976	Kimberly	LaFleur	Team Swift
3	975	Michelle	LaFleur	Team Swift

Junior Boys 17 - 18

Placing	Race Number	First Name	Last Name	Club Affiliation
1	580	Adam	Switters	Lombardi Sports / Klein

2	581	Clint	Rogers	Lombardi Sports / Klein
3	577	Eric	Riggs	Lombardi Sports / Klein
4	583	Daniel	Holloway	Lombardi Sports / Klein
5	579	Geoff	Olin	Amgen Abici
6	582	Matt	Mosby	Los Gatos Bicycle Racing Club
7	578	Jonathan	Cintz	.

Cat's Hill 2004 Race Results

Women 1/2/3

Field Size: 39

Placing	Race Number	FirstName	LastName	Club Affiliation
1	234	Karen	Brems	Webcor / Alto Velo
2	227	Laura	Charameda	Dewar's Racing Team



Kelly, Laura & Michelle at Cat's Hill Criterium



Michelle, Kelly & Kim get to meet Kathryn Curi from the Rona International Women's Team. Kathryn has just returned from the Fleche Wallone to compete at Cat's Hill.

Anton Nicola
Race Report
Tuesday Nighter
05-04-04
3/4's, 1/2/3's

TDF RIDERS IN LOCAL TWILIGHT RACES!!!

Tonight I almost quit a race that if I had I would have been really upset. As usual I did 2 races. The 3/4's, and the 1/2/3's. I'm going to write about the 1/2/3's race. It's exciting.

It's another ordinary Tuesday night crit. A place where I can just go and practice my tactics in my first race, and then get beat up in my second race. Nothing too out of the ordinary, just a training crit tonight. I just finished my 2nd race, and knew that my seat was too high, AND tilted back too far. So I run back to my van and get the tools I needed, and just about the time I get back, I hear the echoing sounds of 45 1/2/3's shoes clipping in for a 50 minute race. I ask Jim for a free lap due to a mechanical, and fix my seat in a hurry. I hop in the next lap, and the pace is grueling. I'm barely hanging on. Gritting my teeth, and just hoping that the surge will end fast. I notice that my seat is still out of wack (guys, once your fitted, leave the bike alone, or else you'll end up with a bad race) so I try to ignore it, but a guy just can't ignore the pain of sitting on his crouch for 50 minutes. I started to count how many laps I was completing. I turn around, and I notice that there is this guy in a Rabbobank outfit behind me. I think to myself, "hah, wannabe Levi, get your own clothes" So finally I was so frustrated that from not getting power into my legs because of my seat, and my crouch giving me grief that I rolled up to the finish line in anger, and got off my bike, and threw it on the grass. Oops. I was notified at once not to treat my bike that way. (Thanks Jim.) I told my dad what was wrong. My race was done; I did not want to go back into that race. My dad says, "Get back in the race, you don't get to race with Levi every day" my head pops up, and I ask Jim for another free lap, and he so graciously gave it to me. I fixed my seat, got back into the race, and I was now determined to finish this race. It wasn't done till the end of the final lap. I didn't want to have to say that I raced with Levi in a race, but that I dropped out. I go to the back where Levi was just chillin and ask him how he's doing. I soon found out that he was a really nice guy. I raced either behind him, or in front of him the rest of the race. I still had a little bit of legs in me to take a couple pulls at the front of the pack. At the end of the final stretch, I just rolled in with Levi just chatting, and being my nosy self that gets all excited when I see a famous pro racer. I found out that I was also racing with Dave Zarbriski. One of Lance's teammates who's going to the tour this year to help Lance win his 6th. If the race had been 2 or 3 laps more, I could have also asked him how he's doing as he rushed past us to lap the field. Both of them were really nice guys. I finished the race, just at the back of the pack. I learned some lessons in this race. DON'T GIVE UP. I want to thank my dad for telling me to get back in. Even though my bike was totally out of wack, I still hung in there and made it till the end. Overall it was very exciting riding with Tour de France riders in a local crit.

Alumni Reports:

Nathan Miller

Well, a lot has happened since I last wrote to everyone. So, let me start with the Tour of the Gila and go from there. I wanted really badly to go to this race, but wasn't sure if I was going to get to. As it turned out, I found out two days before we left that I was in fact selected to go with the McGuire Pro Cycling team to this race. At this point, they were thinking about moving me up onto the pro team and wanted to see what I could do at a big NRC stage race.

We arrived in Silver City, New Mexico, three days before the start of the race. We pre-rode some of the courses in the next couple of days and talked about where the hard parts would be and where you should be watching for the moves to be made. The terrain was unbelievable in this area and it appeared as though the race was going to be tough.

Stage 1: Individual Time Trial- I had decided that since this was my first big stage race that I wanted to try to conserve a bit more energy than I normally would and use the TT as more of a leg opener than a 40 minute max effort. The weather was very unpredictable and the later you went in the day, the more unlucky you were. The wind got worse and it started pouring on all riders that had a number of 50 or higher (numbers were given out in alphabetical order). Very few riders who had a number higher than 50 made it into the top 50 on the results sheet for the stage. I was number 77 and I managed to place 64th on the stage (out of 130), which was a decent finish considering I only went at about 90% effort.

Stage 2: Mogollon Road Race- This stage was a totally flat 98 mile road race that finished on top of a 6 mile climb. The whole flat section leading up to the climb was not at all difficult. There was a slight crosswind, but as long as you could position well enough to be tucked in on the right side of the gutter, then you were fine. When we finally made the right hand turn leading up to the big Mogollon climb, Healthnet drilled it at the front, strung the field out single file, and put everyone in the gutter. John Hunt was the rider right behind the Healthnet train, and he said he didn't get any draft at all on the lead in to the hill. As was to be expected, the field shattered before we even hit the hill and I was caught off between the first and second groups on the road. I came around the riders that gapped me off, but it was too late and I ended up just blowing myself for five minutes trying to catch back up to the lead group before the start of climb. Eventually, the second group did catch back up to me and I paced up the climb the rest of the way with a small group of guys and lived to fight another day.

Stage 3: Inner Loop Road Race- This was by far the easiest looking road race stage in the race. It had two Cat 3 climbs towards the beginning of the race and one more closer to the end of the 85 mile race. The first two climbs hurt, as it was very cold (it snowed right before the start) and my legs were tired from yesterdays ascent of the Mogollon. The last climb was a breeze though and I found myself in the lead group coming over the top. I told my team leader, Mike

Taylor that I would help in the sprint which was coming in about ten more miles. With five miles to go the pace picked up and I kept us at the front. An attack came from Frattini of Team Monex and was quickly covered by Moninger or Healthnet. Two riders tried to bridge up to them and Mike shouted for me to go. I attacked off the front of the field with him on my wheel and we quickly caught the four leaders. The little break quickly swelled to about 20 or 30 riders who also jumped the gap as we approached the 1 mile mark. We took the last right hand corner with a little over 1k to go and a rider slammed on his brakes and chopped my front wheel. I quickly recovered and didn't lose many spots, just a bit of momentum. Mike ended up in front of me after that though, and I was never able to get back in front of him, because a gap had opened up due to another sketchy rider being allowed to ride at the front of the bunch. I had done my job of getting Mike into that lead group of ten though and he was able to take fifth out of the bunch. I came around the rider that gapped us off and started sprinting from 500 meters to go. Only one rider came around me at the line and I finished in 12th place.

Stage 4: Downtown Criterium- The crit course had two very descent size hills in it and a fast downhill to the finish. It was obvious that there was going to be a breakaway on this stage and the most likely rider to start it was Mike Seyers of Healthnet. We covered only a few dangerous looking breaks in the beginning of the race, but then a little less than half way through the race Seyers started to become more active. He attacked once and I went with him. His initial acceleration is unbelievably fast and it took me a little over a straight to catch his wheel. There was a group of three of us and we worked for about a lap before being caught up by the field. I knew that Seyers would go again and I waited for him, but I got a flat on that same lap. I went into the pit and was back out on the next lap, but Seyers had already made the race winning move by the time I was back out onto the course. I was so bummed, because I knew that I could have been in it.

Stage 5: Gila Monster Road Race- This was a brutal 105 mile race that traversed a Cat 4 climb, a Cat 2 climb, a Cat 1 climb, another Cat 2 climb, and then another Cat 4 climb to the finish. My goal was to simply make it to the Cat 1 climb with the group and then pace to the finish with a small group of guys. I made the cat 4 and 2 climbs no problem, but then punctured on the descent of the cat 2 climb. After a very long wheel-change, I began chasing. I was joined by three other riders who had been dropped on the climb and only provided me a small amount of help during the chase. We caught back onto the group right as the Cat 1 climb was about to start and then I was straight off the back again, as the small field of climbers with fresher legs rocketed up the climb. Again I was left with a few other dropped riders to ride the last two climbs into the finish. It was an extremely long thirty more miles of hills into the finish from there and I was happy to be done after that. I knew that I had gained a lot of fitness from this race and that in a couple of years I will be back with a whole new level of fitness and a full team behind me in order to win this race. Until then...

Nathan Miller



Nathan digging deep on the Gila Monster climb after getting a flat and chasing back on and then getting dropped. What fun!