



## **Team Swift Race Report #12**

**2004 California/Nevada Juniors State Track Championships –  
Swift girls win gold**

**2004 Junior District Criterium Championships – Two second  
places for Team Swift!**

**Save Mart Criterium – Win for Reno!**

### **Save Mart Criterium**

#### **Junior 17 – 18, Field**

1. 97 Reno Garcia, Team Swift
2. 98 Jason Awe, White Jersey Sports
3. 93 Josh O'Mary, Tieni Duro
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## Kelly LaFleur

Encino Track Race – Junior Championships

Jr. 13-14w

1<sup>st</sup> place

2004 California / Nevada juniors state track champion, (W/1314), and of course, woohoo!

We didn't decide to this race till Thursday because it was 367.39 miles away and it wouldn't be too fun if we were the only jr. girls that showed up. So after calling the man in charge of the event and getting assurance that other girls would be there, then checking the EPA web site to be sure we wouldn't get air poisoning, we left Friday after school. We headed toward Encino. There'd be two other juniors coming from Nor Cal to do this race so we weren't alone. 7 hours is a LONG time in a car and I was actually looking forward to getting in a motel. We arrived at 10 and wasted no time getting to bed. The next morning we drove to velodrome and this is when the butterflies decided to visit my stomach, a la Capistrano. In all the categories combined there were about 12 Jr. Girls over all, but only 1 in our category.

My first race was a short 2k scratch race on the 250m track and the new surroundings made it hard to focus. Because it was a short race, the plan was for me to go off the front and Michelle to block the only other girl in our race. I eventually got caught with 2 laps to go, and then Michelle attacked. I was too tired to follow and got 3rd, with Michelle getting 1st. About 45 minutes later we had a 5k scratch race (20 laps). It started off slow because no one wanted to pull. Michelle and I took turns attacking which didn't do much and it came down to the bell lap. Michelle was in first position, the other junior in 2nd and me behind her. I take off from below, getting a gap and kept pedaling, at corner four I see Michelle catching up, trying to keep 2nd place, and knowing she had a better sprint I went harder which gave me 1st.

They gave us a 45 minute lunch break, where we ate a bunch of Clif bars. At 3 they ran the rest of the races, I had about 1 hour until my next race. I got warmed up all over again and stretched. The 500 TT was my next event and my only competition was really Michelle. She went before me and I snuck a peak at the ref's papers and saw she had a time of 44 something. By now it was really windy and I knew it was the start that would make a difference. The 500 was only 2 laps so it was over quickly and I had no clue what my time was, but I ended up getting 1st with a pretty good time for me. I had 15 minutes to recover and I was up on the rail to do a 32 lap points race. The first sprint was at 24 laps to go and I was able to take that one by attacking at the bell and holding it for the whole lap. The next bell rang at 16 laps and Michelle sprinted and I tried to get around but I wasn't able to and got 2nd, and we had no trouble getting away from the other girl. From the last two sprints Michelle and I were off the front so we decided to use the plan where after a sprint we would keep going and do half lap pulls. It wasn't clear who got the next sprint but the plan worked and we were 3/4 of a lap ahead and I took first overall. I took 1st in 3 out of 4 events with some help from Michelle, and took first in the omnium. From team swift, other than my sisters and I, Chase was there and did well, so good job to him. Thanks for reading!

Highlight text and  
insert Image here

## Kim LaFleur

8 lap scratch race  
500 m TT  
20 lap scratch race  
48 lap points race (AHHHrrrggghhhh)  
200 m TT  
Sprint qualifiers

After a couple thousand "are we there yet's" we finally arrived in Encino at around 10:30, now all we had to do was find a place to stay. We finally found the perfect one, the charming, romantic Starlite cottage inn (NOT!) We got to bed and wanted to call in a wake up call but when we looked for the phone there wasn't one. We woke up and got breakfast at Denny's with another tracky, Daniel Holloway and his father.

8 lap scratch race

when we got to the velodrome, the first thing we wanted to see what a difference it was from our track at home. It was much shorter and noticeably steeper. The majority of the Jr. there were boys and I didn't see any girls there my age. We got on the track to warm up and I saw Chase Renick, a fellow Swifty. During my warm up I went in a turn at full speed and was scared out of my pants, I felt the g-force; I had never felt that on our track.

After my warm up, my first race was a 2k scratch race (8 laps). My plan for this race was to sit in and see who had what and to see if I could do anything. There were four of us on the line two of which are active track riders. They started us off and I ended up in a bad position. I tried to move but they wouldn't let me in. at 6 to go a girl pulled an attack but backed off when she noticed I was on her wheel. No other attacks happened so on the fourth lap I pulled an attack and it turns out it was perfect timing because no one caught on my wheel and I was able to hold out for 4 laps for the win.

Sprint qualifying 200 m TT and 500 m TT

My flying 200 was tough. I wasn't quite sure on where to start my jump. So I had to estimate where I thought would be a good place to start. When I jumped I went hard but when it was over I still had more left. If I had jumped sooner then I would have gotten a better time.

The sprint was some thing new to me I didn't know how it worked so I was going in blind. It was a two person race and one person leads the first lap then you can do what ever you want the second. I lead the first lap then just took off on the second lap. the second sprint came to a surprise because it was only me and another girl so I thought wed only have to do one but it turns out its best two out of three. The sprint came after all my other races and after I was all dressed up. I had to do my quickest change of my life, or else she'd win by forfeit. on the second sprint she led and she was going slow so I attacked on corner three of the first lap and stayed off for the win

and.

#### 500 m TT

This was a standing start, something that I could use a ton of improvement on. My start was horrible and I had a weak jump so I had to compensate for it and get on top of my gear as soon as I could and hold it. Afterwards, Michelle thought she heard my time as being 44.something, so we guessed I would get 2nd or 3rd, as we heard another girl did a 41something, but later in the day we found out I got 1st! Talk about nice surprises!

#### 20 lap scratch race

this race was interesting, I guess by now the girls had picked me out to be the one to watch so right off the bat one girl pulled attacks. I was on her wheel each attack for the first 8 laps then she just watched me. no one made any moves until 7 to go then she attacked again and I was right there she pulled off and I pulled through and kept going, it took her a while to get on but when she did I pulled off and she pulled through I let her lead me around to the line and I sprinted her out there.

#### 48 lap points race sprints every 8 laps

in this race I had an idea of what was going to happen but I wasn't going to play their game. She did exactly what she did in the scratch race but only this time I played my own tactics. after her attempted attack shed pull up and behind and I was in front so I rode high and did fake attacks that looked like I was attacking but I was just using the banking of the track to carry my speed then id pull up and do the same thing on the opposite side. On the sprint laps we duked it out to the line and after the second one we decided to lap the field and then it was just me and her. she resumed her attacking strategies and I resumed my wheel sucking position, I think I won 4 of the 6 sprints, and on the last sprint I took a clear shot to the line.

This was the most tiring race of the day, if it weren't for her I don't think I would have worked as hard as I did.

I swept the 4 omnium events, won both sprints, and had personal bests in the TT's.

At the end of the day it felt good to know I earned it.

Thanks for reading!

Kim

### Michelle LaFleur

2k scratch - 1st

5k scratch - 2nd

8k points race - 2nd

500 TT - 2nd



Hey Team Swift,

Well at about 2:30 we were off driving to Encino, California in LA It took us about 7 hours to get there. We arrived at the motel at like 10:30. I had some trouble sleeping because I was both nervous and excited. In the morning we had breakfast, and then went to the velodrome. When I first saw the track I noticed that it was shorter and steeper. The shortness didn't matter. But the steepness was different from the track in San Jose. I started warming up on the track and all of a sudden I got butterflies.

Up first was the 2k scratch race. It was 8 laps and first one to cross the line wins. On the second lap Kelly took off for about 4 laps before we caught her. When we caught her there were only two laps to go. On the bell lap I jumped and sprinted to the line. I was amazed to see that I had gotten first.

Next was the 5k scratch. This time it was 20 laps. For the first 13 laps we were just cruising. It started getting down to the final lap and we started picking up the pace. Final lap Kelly attacks and I follow. I look back to see if someone is on my wheel but no one was there. Kelly got 1st and I had gotten 2nd.

For the 500 TT we needed holders. The holder that I had was leaning me over more than I wanted and I couldn't say anything because the official was counting down. When the holder let go I went down track a lot and had to work really hard to get back up track. I had trouble fighting the wind. I thought that I had a horrible placing but it seemed that I got second.

The last race for us was the 8k Points race. It was 32 laps and sprints every 8 laps. For the first sprint Kelly got 1st and I had gotten 2nd. Then for the second sprint I got 1st and Kelly got 2nd. I noticed that the others were slowly dropping away. So just before the 3rd sprint I took off and Kelly got my wheel. In the 3rd sprint I got first and Kelly got 2nd. The girls weren't on so we took off and took half lap pulls. But, Kelly ended up winning the race because she got first in the final sprint.

In the overall omnium I was second. I was pleased with my placing because this was my first year on the track. But I dreaded the long car drive home.

## **Anton Nicola**

Junior District Crit Championships  
Juniors 17-18  
8th Place

Wow! I don't know what to say about Swift's team performance today. I am amazed at what we got done today. We had very stiff competition. The main 4

guys were, Shawn Rosenthal, Max Spirin, Daniel Holloway, and Eric Riggs. They are very good riders, and I am very proud of Team Swift getting 2nd today. Congrats Aaron. It is all about team work.

The course was flat. The length of it was just under a mile. There were 15 racers in our race, and race time was about 1 hour. The plan was to have Reno get up into a break, or keep the pack together so that Reno could out sprint the field at the end. Reno was the designated winner for Swift today so that he could get a lot of points for his upgrade. However, like a lot of the times, the plan doesn't succeed, or go as you would like it to. For some reason, Aaron found himself off the front with another rider. They worked together for awhile until Daniel attacked the field, and bridged up to the break, then they dropped the 3rd rider, and Aaron and Daniel worked together the whole race. Reno and I were so tired from chasing, and reeling in attacks that we just didn't have it in us to chase down Daniel. We then worked together to keep reeling in attacks, and chasing, and blocking. It was a really tough job. After harsh attacks made from our three main competitors, Rosenthal, Spirin, and Riggs, we accidentally let Rosenthal go off the front, which then became a good thing. Because now Max Spirin, Shawn Rosenthal's teammate, was now blocking like crazy, so that his teammate could get up the road. This was good for Reno and I because it gave us a little bit of a rest, and gave Aaron, and Daniel more lead way. Then the attacks poured on again, and Reno, and myself kept covering them. The main field had dwindled to only 6 riders. The only problem was that those 6 riders were very strong, and skilled. Shawn Rosenthal couldn't hold it and finally gets caught, and he and Max pull for a long time. Reno and I just did our jobs, by sitting in behind them, and block, and let them tire themselves out. By this time, since the pace was going at a steady rate, the few attacks, and surges that were made very brutal, and harsh in acceleration. So towards the end of the race, there was another harsh attack, and I was caught off guard by it, and was spit off the back with Max Spirin who had worked really hard trying to reel the break in that was about to lap us. Luckily Reno, being aware, caught on, and he, Eric, a guy from SGW, and Shawn Rosenthal rode away from Max, and I to finish the final 2 laps of the race. I was dog tired. I had done my job, and I was officially done with the race mentally. The final lap, Max was all wondering why I was going to be sprinting for 8th place, and I just simply told him that I need to work on my sprinting. He assured me that he wasn't going to sprint. "Sure, that tactic isn't going to work with me. Psh, trying to pull a fast one on me." I thought to myself. Sure enough, when the final corner came, he sprinted, and I pulled out and took 8th. It was a pretty fast sprint. I think I hit 36 mph. (thanks to a little bit of tailwind)

Awesome job today guys.

Thanks for reading,  
Anton

## Aaron Woolsey

Junior District Crit Championships  
Juniors 17-18  
2nd Place



I wasn't sure until the last minute if I was going to go to the Jr. Crit Championship, because I really wanted to do the dash for cash Crit the day before. Know I am really glad I went.

Team Swift had Anton, Reno and I in the Jr. 17/18 race. The race was really long, so it was hard to figure out a strategy for the race. Our ideal plan was to set up Reno for the bunch sprint. Early on in the race I found myself sprinting away for a prime. No

one chased me down so I took the prime easily. I didn't want to stay off the front for too long so I let the pack reel me back in. A couple of laps later the same thing happen again. No one wanted the prime so I sprinted off and took another prime. This time I decided to hold my intensity and try and stay away. A guy from Los Gatos Matt bridged up to me. We worked together for a few laps and then Daniel Holloway bridged up to us. Matt couldn't hold the pace. Daniel and I worked hard at creating a big lead. Our lead became very big about half a lap ahead of the main field. It was only a matter of time left, to hold this break we still had over 25 laps to go. There was a horrible head wind on the back side of the course which made it difficult to maintain a high speed. Everything was going great until 4 laps to go when Daniel had enough of me and attacked. I was pretty worn out by now and I let him go. I finished about half a lap ahead of the main field. So I got 2nd place. It was an awesome race. Again Anton and Reno did a great job in blocking so I could still away. Thanks again guys. I think I have found my answer to Crit racing. If I can get in a break, then I'll do alright. It's hard very a skinny climber to sprint against the real sprinters. Thanks again Team Swift for another successful race together. Looking forward to this summer-Aaron V

## Joe

Jr District Criterium Championships  
2nd Place



This is typed by Joe's Dad until Joe gets his cast off his arm.

Joseph has had a bit of bad luck lately, but is handling his misfortune well for a fifteen year old. I know it is killing him not to race. He should be out of his cast in a few weeks. I let him do the district junior championships this week. He took second with his new cast he could not stand to sprint. Collin nudged him out at the finish. He was going to do the seventeen race but one of the 18 year old parents of another team made a big stink about it.

To boot Joseph had four wisdom teeth pulled last week. Ah to be young again.

-dad (Leon)

## Reno Garcia

Savemart Criterium  
Juniors  
1st Place

The course was a fast rectangle with really good pavement. We started off fast, and being the only swift rider in the group I wasn't trying to do any work. A couple of people went off the front but the course didn't have enough features to slow the main group enough for a break to get away. Vaninni was attacking about every other lap so I let the other riders do the work for me and chase them down. On the second to last lap one Vaninni rider went down on the third corner, but he was behind the field so the speed didn't change. on the second to last lap one CWL rider attacked and was about 10 or so bike lengths away, and on the last lap I dropped the hammer, put my nose to the wheel and came from behind for the win.

--Reno

## Mike Margraf

Mt. Hamilton Road Race

9<sup>th</sup> Place

Last weekend I raced the Mt. Hamilton Road Race. The course is 63.5 miles long. It starts out with a 19 mile climb that climbs from sea level to 4,500 ft. The course then has some really great descents with a lot of switchbacks. Then it has a couple big 1/2 mile rollers which is followed by a tough 3 mile climb. The course is mostly downhill from there all the way to the finish line. The finishing stretch is slightly uphill.

The race began and we started climbing right away. For the first 5 miles the pace was pretty easy, but attacks started to come at that point. With all the attacks there was a group forming of about ten riders up the road. I knew this was the last time I would see these guys if I did not go with them. I got up to the break which was getting smaller and smaller by the second. The break got down to six people including me. We were now riding by ourselves with no one in sight. However, we still had another 12 miles to the summit and then another 47 miles after that. Our pace was super intense but we were working well together. However with 3 or so miles to the summit a guy attacked and the group responded and was fighting hard to stay on. I got dropped (along with 2 other guys). I was really bummed about this because I knew that was the winning break. I tried to recover because I knew there would be people coming up on me and I wanted to at least stay in the chase group. To my surprise, it took a long time before anyone caught up. I was near the summit when about 25 guys came up on me which I thought was great because maybe we could catch the break. The next 30 miles were pretty uneventful - we were just chasing hard and many people were getting tired and dropping out. On the 3 mile climb there were a couple of attacks which I was able to cover. However, 3 guys still got up the road but then we were able to chase them down. Three guys were now up front and there were about 15 guys left in our chase group with just a couple miles remaining. One guy attacked from our group and other guys latched onto the back of him but for some reason the guy in front of me decided not to go. I got stuck behind him and there was now five guys up the road with a big gap! I tried to chase them down but they were gone just like that. I then began to get ready for the sprint finish in which our group contained just 10 guys. Going up the finishing hill I was easily able to win the sprint and take home 9th. I was pretty disappointed at not being able to keep up with the winning break, but I did a lot of training this past week so my legs just did not have it. I knew I was overreaching a bit during my rides last week, but that is what cycling is about. I can't taper for every race as I would then lose fitness. So it is a bit of a balancing act. To me, these races are just the stepping stones to the big picture I want to be in.

Keep reading,

Mike Margraf

## Anton Nicola

Mt. Hamilton Road Race

Senior 3

Bonking? Blowing up? Hitting the wall? Cracking? Getting Dropped? You name it, I did it. This race was the WORST race performance I had of ALL my

races I have done. I blew up so bad that it could almost be funny. To make things worse, it was a brutal course. The most climbing that I have ever done at one time. And to make things even more worse, I was racing with the Cat. 3's. I was so bonked that I wanted to get off my bike, and throw it off of the cliff. This was NOT a fun race. In fact, its races like these that really demoralize you.

When I got dropped at mile 17 out of the 63 that we had to do, I totally wanted to quit the race. I had way over done it trying to keep up with the lead group, and I was shot. I could barely rotate the pedals around for the next 20 miles. I stopped twice to rest. I felt like pulling to the side of the road in the shade and waiting to catch a ride to the finish line. But then I thought to myself, "What kind of example am I going to show to the other Team Swifter's if I just give up?" Team Swift, the one thing that I want that is the most important, is NEVER GIVE UP.

This is how the race went.

The course started off with a 1 mile promenade to the base of Mt. Hamilton. It then continued for 18 miles of climbing. There were only 2 short descents between the climbs. The whole climb to the top of the mountain was an elevation gain of 4500 feet. Then a twisty, windy decent with sharp hairpin turns, and multiple 180 degree turns. It then flattened out and went into another climb, and from there on it was basically just rollers. Then the last 15 miles was just steady flat, and some downhill's until the finish line. All of this was in trees. Hardly any of this race was out in the open.

We started off with a very easy pace going up the mountain. Then the pace got really intense. There was a little bit of a break with a down hill, and then it shot up again to a grueling pace. Dropping rider left and right, we were ripping up the road. Finally another little break then a short descent. I was hanging towards the back of the pack, and a guy rolls up beside me while we're going 40 mph, and we go into a sharp sweeping right hand corner, which then followed by a sharper sweeping left hand corner. The guy ends up getting whipped out side of the first corner because of the inertia which then forces me to whip out into the other lane, and to make things worse, there was gravel on the road. Luckily there were no cars coming the other way. He apologizes for forcing me into the other lane, and I tell him that when you're descending, you do it single file. So after that little incident, the decent ends, and we start climbing again. We climb up what is now the final and longest accent of Mt. Hamilton. We keep dropping riders off of the back. Towards the top I start to feel dizzy, but I keep pushing myself. I was beginning to feel sore, and tired, and by the time we almost got to the top, it was definite that I was hitting the wall. I finally blow up. I could not keep up with the grueling pace. I think I was feeling a little flat today. But just a little ways up the climb, I see that there is only 2km to go to the top of the climb. I make it to the top, and descend the backside. I have never been so blown up in my life. For the rest of the race, I just endured the pain, and frustration of not being able to race well today. Overall, this race was a total dud for me. The most important thing that I refreshed my mind with about this race was, NEVER GIVE UP.

Thanks for reading.

Anton Nicola

## Lia Winfield

Monterey Circuit Race

Cat 3 Women



This race was a 2.5-mile circuit, with several hills, that we did for an hour and twenty minutes. I was excited as always, but a little nervous also because the cat 3 women were racing with the cat 1 and 2 women. It was pretty awesome though being on the start line with riders like Brenda Lyons who I really look up to. I had to constantly remind myself not to be intimidated, and be confident that I could hang in there. It took me several laps to figure out what gear I wanted to be in for each hill. I ended up looking around to see what gears everyone else was in, and I finally figured it out. Around about the middle of the race, I really started to feel good, and have fun. When the lap cards showed six to go, I was positive I could hang in till the finish. I finished mid-pack, and very pleased with my race.

What I ended up doing a lot, was realizing a mistake and then trying to fix it the next lap. That's what's great about such a short circuit. For example, after the last and steepest hill, there is a very sharp right hand turn to a steady downhill. I noticed that every time I came around that corner I would lose a lot of position and then have to work really hard in the wind to catch back up on the downhill. So I really focused on getting up the hill in the front third, so that I wouldn't lose so much ground on the corner. It worked. Little things like that made me very happy with the race. This was a fun course and definitely one to do next year.

## Lia Winfield

Mt. Hamilton Road Race

Cat 3 Women



Lia Winfield takes on the big road races

I get tired even thinking about this race. I knew it was going to be a challenge and that I would have to work very hard. I wasn't able to stick with the pack and was dropped pretty early on the 20-mile climb. I rode the rest of the way up the hill alone, still working hard and reminding myself that it was good training. I kept going, progressively getting slower as fatigue began to set in. With about 15 miles to go (the race was 63.5 miles), a group of cat. 4 guys passed me. At that point it was all about getting to the finish line, so no one cared that I joined their group. It was nice to have companionship after about 3 hours of riding alone. The definite highlight was when a car pulled up next to us and handed us a cold soda. We passed it around so everyone got a good cold sip. I finished, over four hours from when I started, but finished none the less, and that always feels good. Looking back I'm totally glad I did it.

## Lia Winfield

Memorial Day Criterium

Cat 3 Women

My legs were pretty tired by Monday, after racing Saturday and Sunday, but I was still ready to go. The crit was in a business park, with each lap being about a mile long. It was a good race, I spent more time than I wanted to towards the back, but I will definitely work on that. I focused a lot on taking a good line through all the corners, so that I would not get caught in the wind after the turn. Those are definitely the two things I need to work out in crits: Getting to, and STAYING in the front, and staying in

tight on the corners. It was a good race, a beautiful day, and a great way to spend a three day weekend.

## Alumni Reports

### Steven Cozza

USA Under 23 National Team Member

Back to Belgium I go. I just recently arrived back in Europe for another session of blood and guts racing. Immediately after the first full day of being here I was sent off with the team to Luxembourg for 2 one day races. Being pretty fresh off the plane I suffered from horrible jet leg and almost fell asleep on the bike. Not only did I have jet leg but I had a horrible bout with a stomach bug and needed to stop and use a mobile toilet on the side of the road during the race. It was literally a shitty race. I lost a whole 7 pounds in just two days. I am now currently getting much stronger from that and feeling much healthier. Since I took some time off in between Europe trips I understand it will take me some time to get my speed up to date but I have some great races coming up this month all the way till I leave for home again July 6th. The sun is finally shining here and is actually in the low 80s this week. It's unbelievable. Me and a couple of my teammates walked around town today with are shirts off it was so hot. We even went swimming in the town's canal. That is unheard of in Belgium so I feel pretty lucky to be here at such a nice time of the year. I only hope I don't catch some weird disease from the canal water. I opened my Eyes up under water and I swear it was like chocolate milk. It was definitely no Lake Tahoe but at least it was semi refreshing and a good way to have some fun. I feel like I am finally getting use to this place and feeling more at home while being here. Everyday over here is an experience and a new adventure just waiting to happen. I look forward to the races to come and the US Nationals in August and than finally back over to Belgium to finish off this years racing season. Thanks for reading.

Carpe Diem my friends,

Steven Cozza

### Nathan Miller

McGuire Real Estate Pro

Mt. Hamilton had a pretty good sized field, maybe around 50 riders. There were about 5 Webcor's, 2 or 3 Lombardi guys and one Sierra Nevada. For McGuire it was only me and Mike. The race began and we started going up the hill faster than I think that we usually start climbing. There were a lot of guys from other teams that thought it was a good idea to do tempo for their teammates, so we cruised pretty well for the first ten miles up the climb. Then, Justin England from Webcor attacked and I immediately went with him. I was feeling good and I was so strong that day that it wasn't even difficult to attack up to him. I wanted to keep going harder. John Hunt and one other rider rode up to us a couple seconds later and another thirty seconds later Mike made it up to us. The five of us railed it as the field was chasing and were out of sight in no time. We dropped the one rider that I didn't know after about five minutes. Then, Justin looked at me and Mike as he drifted back after pulling and I knew that he was thinking about getting rid of one McGuire rider to even the field. So, Mike pulled and then I started pulling and Justin attacked. I expected it though and didn't have any trouble

getting on. Mike made it too. He kept attacking a few more times, but I wasn't really put into any difficulty at all. If anything it was just annoying. Finally, Mike cracked though and was shot out the back. I sat on Justin and John for a little bit hoping that Mike, who was still in sight for a little while, could eventually come back in contact with us. Five miles later though, there was no sign of him at all, even looking a long ways down the mountain, so I started to rotate a little bit, but not doing hard pulls. We rolled over the top of the mountain and agreed that Justin would get the KOM, because he was way stronger at the top of the hill, and he would have waxed the two of us in the sprint anyway. So, we rolled down the hill and I hesitantly started working a little bit. I wanted to hear a time gap before I started taking real pulls. A moto came up and said that we had over a minute on Mike and over two on the next couple of groups, so I started working. If we waited for Mike we would only have a minute over the other groups. We rotated together and the miles ticked by really quickly, because we were all feeling great and flying down the road. Some groups kind of came together behind us after the descent and the groups ended up looking like this: +1:15 Mike, Billy Innes (Lombardi), John Kelly (Webcor), and I think one or two other guys. +2:20 A group of about 6-8 that I think had Adam Switters, Dave Fuentes, and Ben Haldeman from Webcor. Nobody but the Lombardi guy in Mike's group was pulling so our gap was going to be enough to make it to the finish. Right after the feed zone though, John Hunt got a flat and they don't allow follow vehicles at this race so he was out of luck. After that, it was just me and Justin for the last twenty miles. We worked until about 3 miles to go and then he attacked me, but I got on really quick. I made him take a really long pull, but finally he sat up and really put on the brakes. We were still too far to go that slow so I pulled again really easily and, as I expected, he attacked me when I tried to pull off. I was pulling totally easy though and it was again no problem to grab his wheel. This time we were close enough that I wasn't going to have to pull again. Justin tried to lose me on the descent, but I clipped around the corners and stayed with his attack. I guess that the ref thought that I clipped a bit too much off the corners though, because he came up to us a few minutes later and said that I was disqualified for crossing the centerline. We just rolled across the line together and they relegated me to 9th place (the next spot out of the money). I tried talking to the refs afterwards, to have them at least place me in second, but it was absolutely pointless. Crossing the line made no difference to any position behind second, since the next rider was several minutes back. I walked up to the refs and the first thing that they said was; no we will not reconsider. That probably made me the most upset more than anything. They didn't even care to hear what I had to say. They just gave me an immediate "NO" and that was it. I think that I kind of now understand a little bit better all of the complaints from the riders in Europe. Like, when riders protest after room searches by the police or when Brad McGee was wrongly penalized during the Giro and was so mad that he almost abandoned the race. In just about any other big professional sport the athletes have way more rights than cyclists do. When was the last time you heard about a different athlete (or worse, one of their family members) being arrested for suspected use of banned substances? We have no say over anything the UCI wants and it's ridiculous. They nullify world records because the bikes are too good, they change and bend the rules whenever they feel like it, and they do whatever else they please saying that we have a choice to race or not depending on if we are willing to agree to the rules. For instance, read this from the US Anti-Doping Agency's website: "Out-of-Competition (OOC) testing is an integral part of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency program. The out-of-competition pool consists of athletes who are determined by the National Governing Body (NGB). This testing may occur at any time at an athlete's home or training venue. It is important that USADA is kept updated on the whereabouts of the OOC pool athletes to ensure that testing may occur." Now that I hold a pro license, I am technically supposed to notify them any time I am to be further than a couple of hours away from home. I'm sure that



they could care less about me right now though, unless I did something to really piss them off (like write this), but I don't look forward to being a big name pro like Lance or Tyler and having to notify them every time I leave for the weekend to go race. A few months ago, Tyler Hamilton almost got in trouble for this exact reason. He drove about six hours away to stay with his new team for a day and a half and got a call from some cup carrying USADA guys who were standing on his doorstep looking for a donation. He had to cancel the ride with his team and drive all the way back to give them a sample. He didn't get in trouble for being so far away, but if they wanted to, they could have suspended Tyler for that day and a half trip that went undeclared. I know several instances where riders have been penalized for things that they never even did as well. And how many races have you been to (just this year!) where they have made a complete and utter disaster out of the results of the race and won't change them, because there is no camera to prove that you were indeed placed wrong??? Anyone who has been DQ'd for taking their hands off the bars, wrinkled numbers, no helmet while warming up, or any other ridiculous, false, or made-up reason can better understand the problems that are prevalent throughout the sport. I guess I have finally joined the club

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