

Team Swift Special Report

Freddie Rodriguez promotes Team Swift Junior Development Program

Tuesday, December 28, 2004
Santa Rosa, California

Three-time U.S. PRO Champion, Freddie Rodriguez and his wife Annie spent three days in Santa Rosa to lead a ride with the Team Swift Juniors and to celebrate their wedding anniversary. Freddie came ready to ride with the Team loaded with lots of Fast Freddie Coffee. He spent all day hanging out with us, sharing race stories and helping with skills.

Northern California had experienced a fairly warm and dry December up to the week of the ride. But Monday was a record-setting day of rainfall and many people were wondering if the ride would be held whether it was rain or shine. We went out to see the roads Monday afternoon and decided which flooded ones we would avoid the next day. Fortunately, Tuesday morning gave us a slight break in the weather. It wasn't sunny, but it wasn't pouring (yet) either.

Freddie came down early to Norcal Bike Sport to set up the Fast Freddie Coffee Machine for the approximately 60 riders who braved the elements. Boy does a cup of this coffee do the trick!



Team Swift with US Pro Champion Freddie Rodriguez



Before leaving the bike shop we all posed for a group shot.

The ride consisted of a number of top area professional bike racers including Glenn Mitchell from Sierra Nevada, Nathan Miller and Sterling Magnell of Team Monex and Steven Cozza of the U.S. National U23 Team. Then as an additional treat Freddie had arranged to meet Webcor strongman, Mark Hagenlacher, and Santa Rosa resident and ninth place finisher in the 2004 Tour de France, Levi Leipheimer. It was incredible to ride in a group with such notable racers. Thank you all for riding with Team Swift.

Now we were off and riding with the Team Swift team van following along to help with flats. We headed north toward Healdsburg and had a regroup before making the return trip down Westside Road. Freddie worked with the Team Swift riders in a rotating paceline until we had another regroup at Wohler Bridge. Here he went on to talk about his stage victory during the 2004 Giro d'Italia and other great racing stories in Europe.



Levi Leipheimer joins the ride with Freddie and Team Swift

The later portion of the ride was really all about redemption. Two years ago when Freddie rode with the Team Swift Juniors down in Berkeley we had a sprint in which the juniors formed a paceline increasing in speed to a pre-determined sprint line. Team Swift led out Freddie and their sprinter, Duke. Team Swift came away with the victory and they were pretty excited to even have been out there sprinting against him. So of course he's never heard the end of it and the kids were just waiting to get another crack at the current US Pro Champion.

This time, Freddie led the group down to the sprint sign in a fast paceline led by Swift riders Bob Harris and Ethan Weiss with Joe Iannarelli on Freddie's wheel. Freddy dropped the hammer; living up to his reputation as Fast Freddie by pouring on the speed to win "The Race."



Freddie leading the Swift riders through a paceline workout

What was great was seeing him out there having fun and working with the kids. Great job to everyone and I'm sure you'll see the Team Swift/Laguna Rd. "Stop Ahead Sign" Road Race victory on his resume for 2005!

Freddie has become interested in Team Swift and feels strongly that by working with us he is making a difference for young riders. He strives to bring experience, energy and drive funds toward the program.

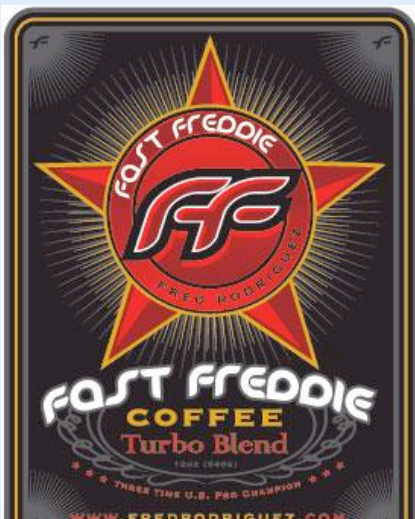
"It makes me feel good to know I can help out. I enjoy taking a teacher's role in watching, paying attention and giving tips but also to make cycling fun. Being a coach/teacher tests my skills on what kids look up to. The Team Swift kids remind me how important it is to be a role model."

Freddie is extremely personable and had advice for everyone. He shared the following thoughts and advice with the team and coaches:

"I genuinely enjoy working with these kids knowing I can help them in their personal and athletic growth. This event extended the invitation to people who support this youth program in thanks for their efforts and for them to see my interaction with the kids. Some of the juniors I met two years ago are now top U23 racers and it is interesting to see how they have developed. I remember how hard the transition was from being your best and at the top of the Junior category into the very beginning ranks of the Senior fields."

"This time period can test to see how much you really want to achieve your dreams in cycling. This is the time people step up to the plate and stick with it or they back out. What you don't want is to look back and wonder how far you might have gone. Advice from people like me and your coach Laura who have made it to the top levels of the sport can help guide a young athlete through these hard moments. Giving them the tools and advice to help them continue the journey toward their dreams of excellence is personally rewarding."

Freddie is leaving for Europe soon and is focused on the spring classics with his new team Davitamon-Lotto from Belgium. Updates to Freddie's schedule are available on his website at <http://fredrodriguez.com/>



Freddie would like to encourage you to drink his Fast Freddie Turbo Blend® Coffee and help raise funds for Team Swift. Contact Team Swift at SwiftandFFCoffee@aol.com to order your coffee from the Team Swift program and/or rider. This is an easy way for everyone to help the kids and enjoy great coffee. Watch the website for a link to be added to order your coffee directly from the team. For the proceeds to benefit Team Swift the coffee needs to be ordered directly from our program.

Team Swift director Laura Charameda would like to thank Freddie for supporting Team Swift; Norcal Bike Sport for sponsoring both Team Swift and hosting the event; and all of the supporters, donors, coaches and volunteers who help make this program possible.

"I am so happy to have a community program that everyone can feel good about. These are an exceptional group of young people and I am proud to have this top-notch cycling organization which provides great advice and resources for its riders as well as opportunities to meet professional athletes like Freddie Rodriguez," said Charameda.

Following are quotes from the rider participants. There will be more pictures in the Team Swift photo gallery at <http://www.teamswift.org/>



QUOTES:

I've experienced some very intimidating moments as a cyclist, but none even compare to starting out a ride directly behind Freddie Rodriguez. For anyone who doesn't know, he is pretty much the only person to convincingly beat Petacchi in a sprint finish. Not to mention, he was also wearing the stars and stripes jersey as the reigning US professional champion. To say the least it's pretty cool to find yourself on this guy's wheel, so I was really psyched when he offered to do some paceline work and sprints with us (more about this later).

f you can't beat 'em, join 'em!

About 3 miles into the ride I caught a glimpse of this poser wearing a Rabobank jersey. I didn't give it a second thought until I took another look and realized that it was actually Levi Leipheimer. It was really awesome to have him on our ride because he is a top contender in the tour, with very tight schedule. Unfortunately, perhaps due to the epic pace set by Coach Laura, he and Glenn Mitchell (a top domestic pro) split off after a couple miles. It was still really cool to have those guys come out for the ride though.

After we passed through Healdsburg, Freddie organized all of us juniors into a paceline. He had some really awesome advice about positioning, timing, and little tricks. One of the things he taught me was that you can save energy without putting too much stress on your back by getting really aero when you're at the front, and taking a more comfortable position when you're on a wheel.

After a couple miles of pace lining we took a quick stop to regroup. While we were stopped, Freddy gave us a blow by blow of his stage victory at the Giro. It was great hearing his take on the final kilometers because there is so much you don't pick up on TV. It also got us really psyched up for our own sprint. The plan was for me, Nathan, and Ethan to set up a lead-out, and Freddie, Duke, and Joe would fight it out. The lead-out went really well and the sprint was incredible to watch, It came down to Freddie and Duke, I didn't see the final throw at the line to confirm who won, but they were REALLY fast. We tried to set up another sprint and it went surprisingly well considering that none of us really had a clue where the line was, so we had a bit of a laugh about that one.

Right as we were rolling back into town it started raining. Jim was really cool to let our crowd of drippy cyclists take over his shop for autographs and pictures with Freddie. Our representative from Clif Bar, Dylan, showed up with free bars and hats. He was very familiar with the regional racing scene so it was fun talking to him about the goals and main objectives for the season.

All in all it was a really great ride. Freddie said he might come back for another ride so I definitely have my fingers crossed. A final thanks to

everyone who came along or helped organize the ride.

Best Luck,
Bob Harris

Laura, thank YOU! I am swept away by what you have done with those kids, how you motivate and inspire them.

The ride was superb. I've never been a strong climber, but I'm old enough to have learned to get to the front when I see a hill coming. That worked until the rest stop at the end of Westside Road. I wasn't paying attention as we left the parking lot, and was a bit behind. Then came a roller, and I was off the back. I chased and was catching the pack, but came to a fork and just missed seeing which way the pack went. So I waited for the stragglers, who included young Tyler making the longest ride of his life, and his wonderful father. We and another guy rode in together, about 1 mph slower than the pack, with Tyler starting to cramp near the finish. He hadn't been drinking enough, so we had a talk about hydration. He was also in his big ring the whole ride, but it seems that his front derailleur had jammed. He was wiped, but still game. He will be a good one.

As we were driving home, I said to Dianna that I thought it was one of the finest days of my life. I kid you not.

Michael Alexander
Dianna Waggoner

From: Leon Iannarelli

Wow that was really neat. Fast Freddie seems like a real nice guy. I can not remember the last time I rode in the rain. I was tired, cold and delirious all at the same time. What fun.

thx
Leon

Thanks for the ride you organized today with all the superstars. It was a lot of fun to ride with all the juniors too. I really enjoyed my chat in Italian with Freddie. Let me know if I can come along on any future rides.

Ciao

Giampaolo Pesce

Debbie and I were just talking about what a great time we had yesterday. It was awesome! Thanks for putting it together. I am so amazed at the quality of people involved in cycling. Dianna was such a terrific person. She and Debbie rode back to Norcal together while I waited for the van with Brentley. He is such a great kid. He had this "happy to be here" attitude that is so refreshing. Freddie was so kind and positive. He took care with everyone he spoke with. You hardly see that in a pro athlete. And the ride was terrific! I felt great at the beginning and I was chatting away with all the new people. It was great for me to take the sign in sheet around before the ride because I remembered the names and could say, "Hi". And chasing you all back to Norcal at the end was cool too. I don't know why because after I hopped on my bike I knew I was doomed. I realized that I'd been sitting too long and should have been drinking the whole time I was in the van. Anyway, I was able to catch up for a few seconds and those were the best seconds. I felt great riding back to Norcal even though I was alone. I returned to the shop with two full water bottles which made me realize that I really need to work on drinking while I ride. Laura thanks for another great experience. THANKS. I was stretched a little yesterday and it felt good.

It couldn't have been better.

Take care,
Nancy Baum

Story time with Freddie is the best! Hearing him talk about why he did or didn't beat Petacchi on a particular day was awesome. There are a lot of important tips that you can learn from what he says. The thing that I found to be the most interesting was why Fassa Bortolo couldn't repeat at the Tour what they did at the Giro. They tried to start their leadouts too early and couldn't hold the pace all of the way to the end. By the time they reached the last 2km they would be fried and another train would overtake them (at the Giro everyone was content to sit and wait). At each race you do, keep in mind how strong of a field there is behind you and whether or not they are going to be content to sit there and let you lead it to the line. Then, plan the length and intensity of your leadout accordingly.

Nathan Miller

I have to say that I had been looking forward to this ride ever since Laura sent out the email about it. Not only was I excited about the opportunity to ride with Freddie Rodriguez, but I was also looking forward to meeting new Team Swift riders, seeing old Team Swift riders again and getting to know other riders in the cycling community.

I think one of the many wonderful things about cycling is how amateur riders get a chance to ride with people who have excelled to the highest level of the

sport. During the ride, and especially during the paceline, I just kept thinking to myself how awesome and inspiring it was to be riding with Freddie, and how great of him it was to come out and ride with us.

I also got to talk to people who have been reading our Team Swift race reports for several years. I always knew someone read the reports, but never knew exactly who, and it was really nice to be able to hear their cycling stories.

Again, it was a very fun ride. A big thanks to Freddie for coming up and sharing his expertise and signing posters, to Jim for driving the van and having the best bike shop in town, to Clif bar, to Laura and everyone else who showed up to make a great ride.

Lia Winfield

I don't know if I can say thank you enough for setting up the ride on Tuesday and letting me tag along. Going on a ride with Freddie, then meeting up with Levi, and having a large (easy-going) group was cool. That's the kind of thing you don't forget for a while, I've seen Freddie and Levi in the big races in Europe, right up with the best in the world! And I (ME!!) was riding on their wheel ... good times!

Also I think the program that you have set up with Team Swift is quite impressive, I'll probably see you guys at some races throughout the season, even though you'll be going to bigger races than me. I wish your team good luck and much success in 05, unless you're in my race, then I gotta beat cha ... j/k. Did you know, had I been one year younger last year (a junior) then I definitely would have wanted to be on Swift!

Oh yeah, when you are able to get the picture of me (the one in the red sweater) and Fred, I would love to get it, so I can print it out and brag to every one!! ...

Talk to you later,

Jason King

Tuesdays ride went good and it was also fun. It was cool meeting pros like Fred Rodriguez and Levi Leipheimer. They are some of the best there is. Everything from the sprint to the paceline went good and the younger riders looked ready to represent Team Swift in the future. Fast Freddie is really fast. I

don't think he was even trying when he pushed the pace at the end of the ride. One of the more interesting aspects of the ride was when Fast Freddie was telling how he won a stage in the Giro de Italy. I would like to thank the

Clif Bar guy who showed up and all our other sponsors for helping with our team.

Now off to go race hard.

Joe Iannarelli

I rode in the van for the team ride. I wasn't planning on it, but before the ride, I asked Jim Keene and he said yes. The beginning of the ride was kind of hectic because Jim was needed at the shop so we had to wait a second. Finally, we were off, but there were no riders in site. So we called Laura and she told us where they were riding.

We had to pick up Levi, so we were still running a little behind. We ended up in front of the ride somehow and then we waited. After a while we saw a pack of cyclists. We rode behind them until Jim thought we were holding up traffic..so we went on ahead. Right after that we got a call that someone had flatted. It was Sterling and a friend of his. Anyway...we fixed Sterling's flat and it was just one adventure after another with all the flats!

Later in the ride, I got to see FF (Fast Freddie) suffer in the second sprint. The sprinters actually misjudged the city limit sign and after they all let up-- Eric Wright slipped past them for the real win!

Freddie, when I met him after the ride, seemed like a really, really nice guy. I also like the poster he was giving out. I had my picture taken with him and my poster signed. I liked having him visit and would love to have him again. I like my Clif Bar hat too...and the Mojo Bars are delish!

-Myles

Please also pass a long our Thanks to Freddie and the others for making this ride possible. Brentley said he believed it was Nancy, who stayed with him until he jumped in to the wagon, please since I do not know her thank her.

Brentley had a great time and saw how strong Freddie is and how there is great support for the sport in this area. We are so lucky to have people such as yourself and others around you making these dreams come true.

Please keep us informed and if you can send pictures it would be great.

Tim Friendly, Brentley's dad

On the recent all team ride with Fast Freddie I got a chance to have a conversation with him that really influenced me. At this time in my cycling career I am having some trouble finding the drive and motivation that I was

used to as a junior. Many people have told me that this is normal, as the first few years out of juniors is often the hardest. For me though I was looking at the success that Nathan and Steve are having and in comparison I haven't really done as well. Well back to Freddie. While talking to him we got on to the topic of being a sprinter. Listening to what he had to say about being one of the fast men in the pro peloton, and about being a young sprinter, helped me look at my situation in a different light. That 5 minute conversation helped me immensely with my outlook for next season. Thank you Freddie for giving me some words of wisdom that could change my career.

Duke Schimmer

Riding with Professional cyclist Freddie two years ago when I was a Team Swift Junior one of the most inspirational moments I have had in my cycling years. He symbolizes what we all want to be doing as we move up through the ranks to get closer and closer to our dreams. Seeing him doing so well in Europe gives me more hope in my own racing over there on the USA National U23 Squad.. He demonstrates that it is possible to have a great career over in Europe if you work hard and are determined enough to make it happen. Cycling is a great sport in that we often get chances to ride with our heroes unlike other sports.

Thanks Freddie for being a good model for us as we begin to see and reach our dreams.

You inspire all of us young cyclists.

Steven Cozza

Bill Schum, our NorCal mechanic and I were very excited to see the local guy, who beat Petacchi in a sprint stage of last year's Giro, in our store. We felt as if we had helped him with some good vibes that morning as we were talking about how nice it would be to see him finally get a big win and sure enough, it happened only moments later as we watched it live. That was pretty cool but I was even more thrilled to get my beloved pet, Ned the wonder whippet to pose for a picture with Fast Freddie. The only way it would have been better is if Ned could have taken Freddie on in a 200 meter drag race. I'm biased but I would've put my money on Ned. I'd bet Ned's pink slip on it if he had one.

Jim Keene