

French Broad Cycling Classic

Masters Race Report

criterium

The three days of French Broad Cycling Classic Omnium racing terminated as it always does with a criterium on Sunday. The crit has been held for the past few years on the campus of UNC Asheville. I think most of us liked that venue. It had a pleasant air about it, plenty of shady parking, and the circuit was challenging but not over the top. This years circuit was over the top.

I believe the organizers had responded to criticism during the past couple of years that the race had gone soft. Used to be the FBCC could be counted on for really tough racing venues, especially the road race. Due to venue difficulties that had changed until this year when once again the road race was especially tough. The crit course followed suit. I'll bet there'll be no such whining this year.

The crit race was held in a unique light commercial business park/housing development called Biltmore Village Park. It was quite upscale with new houses lining parts of the course that reportedly sold for upwards of a million dollars each. The mile long lap twisted and turned through the houses, plaza, and shops in eight turns. It was almost never flat. In fact it was nearly one-third uphill and two-thirds downhill. The uphill section began immediately after the start/finish and was hard and long enough to have many of us guys showing ugly faces very quickly once the race started (I was showing mine as we did a warm-up lap between races).

The boyz of GVC lined up with good numbers among the fifty-one starters -- Mark Griffin, Matt Mason, Michael Satterfield, Rodney Simpson, Blair Palmer, Richard Melincio, Lonnie Brooks and myself. I'm glad some pictures were taken of us all before the start because it wasn't long at all before many of us were out of the race picture, either figuratively or literally. When the man with the badge said go Richard thought it a good idea to attack. He blistered it up that long hill nearly dropping me (among others). The move had me wondering if Richard had noticed some of those others dudes lined up with us at the start. Guys who make you pay for such aggression without mercy. Rich got our jersey out front for a while and then paid dues. That hill was killing a bunch of us. I think Lonnie was next to go. Then Blair and me. Only three of us would finish this thing on the same lap as the leaders.

It's always nice when the home town boys do good at their event and this was the case this day. The Asheville Bicycle Racing Club picked up a stud from the town of Boone named Patrick Brittain this year. This guy delivered big rolling off the front of the race and holding on for a very impressive win. Radisha Cubric and Pat Raines managed a break from the field but could never pull Brittain back. When the pack came around for the gun lap they were racing for seventh place. Matt Mason threw caution to the wind. Matt happens to be going uphill a bit faster than others these days and decided to have a go. It worked. He opened up enough gap that the charging pack could not make contact with him before the finish line and he won seventh place. If your jaw is not hanging open from what you just read, read it again.

Mark Griffin and Rodney would also have strong finishes at ninth and fourteenth respectively. Michael Satterfield would finish just off the pace after putting in a completely sacrificial pull near the end of the race to pull the pack within striking range of the Cubric/Raines duo.

GVC/DeOro/The Printery went home proud after this three days of hard racing. They had placed four riders in the top fifteen where only one other team had three.

Now we move on to the Hanes Park Criterium this weekend in Winston Salem and the Cross Roads Classics starting next Thursday night in Salisbury (then Statesville, Charlotte and Concord on Sunday).

