

Friday Center Criterium, Chapel Hill, NC

Sunday June 12, 2005

Masters 45+

Tropical Storm Arlene whipped up some angry looking skies as David Pendleberry, Gary Moore and I lined up to represent the GVC for this one. Given the skimpy numbers for the Top of the Hill Road Race on Saturday I was expecting this to be good opportunity to sneak in results. I was wrong. Although the pack was small it contained most of the guys that are hardest to beat -- Barney Baxter (1st), Randy Shields (2nd) and Mac Cannon (3rd).

The course was as flat as can be found and offered no technicalities. All that was required of the racer was to lean right and pedal fast. And fast it was. Probably one third of the field was lapped within the first 10 laps. Despite a few hard efforts by each of the afore-mentioned guys the thing stayed together. I was finding my nerve giving way to survival instincts more than once as riders (three of them to be exact) kept grinding their pedals as we leaned more right through the corners when those attacks went off and the speed went up.

The pack nearly split as Mac took an early flyer when one the three Red Flag Boys ground several ounces off his pedal and necessarily forced a nice big gap to open. Nobody panicked and soon we were all back together. This one was coming down to a field sprint.

Gary Moore had the power to punch it hard on the last lap and managed to close down a gap that the top three guys had opened. He finished a very impressive fourth. Gary may have been the only non-Cat 1/2 racer in the top ten. Nice going Gary. I'll take this moment to point out that Gary returned to bike racing after a several year hiatus. The form that saw him racing the elite category back then has started to show itself again this year. In case you haven't noticed, Gary has quietly placed top three in most of the Cat 4 and Masters Cat 4 races he's intered.