

Cycles de Oro/The Printery Masters Cycling Team  
March 6, 2005  
Greenville-Pickens Speedway

## THE TABLES TURN BACK!

Coming off of yesterday's River Falls Road Race, we could only brace ourselves for today. Mark Griffin still held the overall series lead, but only by a point. We had two problems. First was the tour de force which Smith Barney had unleashed yesterday. They not only had 10 riders, but this perennial powerhouse of a team has what one of its ex-pro racers acknowledged was the strongest edition of their team that he has seen. And after yesterday, who could argue? Second, to add insult to injury, our ranks were even thinner today. Dave Petree and Richard Melencio had returned to Greensboro after Saturday's road race. Over night, Blair Palmer had gotten sicker and could not race. We decided over dinner that because of what we were up against, and with only 5 of us racing, we would need everyone's efforts to look after Mark. Even with that focus, it was hard to be optimistic.

On an up note, Gary Moore was one of our five, lining up with us Sunday for his first race of the year. He turned out to be more than just another entrant. Gary is from Concord, so many of you probably don't know him, but when he shows up to race, he shows up to race. All of us raced hard. He raced even harder. Good to have you back, Gary.

Despite their dominating line-up, Smith Barney would not dominate today. We placed a rider in every single move that went, or we chased it down. Not all by ourselves, but we carried our share of the load, with just Gary, Michael Satterfield, Rodney Simpson and myself to do the heavy lifting. Mark remained vigilant and covered particularly dangerous moves himself.

By not putting us out of the running before the race ticked down towards a field sprint, the competition made a mistake. Only three races into the season, they have not yet realized what we are coming to realize about our team: We have one of the best finishing teams around. Out of 4 races, the worst that we have come out of a field sprint has been 3rd. Although Mark's finishing ability has come to be expected, he is now being joined by teammates who can win races at the finish line. Credit Mark for making us all better that way.

So, perhaps the competition should have seen it coming. But either they didn't or they just failed to stop it. Mark finished second, narrowly missing the win to Radisa Cubric. Michael joined him in the top 10, finishing 8th. Walking away, we had two more top 10 finishes for the series,

and maintained Mark in a tie for the series lead (with Cubric), on a day when we started off with few face cards. Smith Barney managed to place only one rider who is not a threat to the overall in the points.

Most significantly, even with a bad hand to play, the team pulled together. One more week to go in Greenville. Saturday we return to the Donaldson Center Road Race course. Sunday, it's a shorter, circuit race course. Keep your fingers crossed. We'll let you know how it goes.

Matt Mason