

Cycles de Oro/The Printery
Masters Cycling Team
Greenville Training Series Day 6, March 13, 2005

Defending the overall lead

The last race was at the Donaldson Center short course, A one mile circuit with one long up and fast cross tail wind up hill and a long tailwind downhill. The critical part of the course was the head wind false flat before the descent. Again the biggest deal was the wind. But this time it was only blowing 20 mph with gusts up to 30.

Going into the last race, I held an 8 point lead over Aero Space's Radisha Cubric and a 10 point lead over Smith Barney's Pat Raines. All we had to do was mark those two to secure the win. The only problem was that Radisha was fresh and very angry over yesterdays disaster and we only had Michael Satterfield, Dave Petree, Matt Mason and me available. We were all tired from three straight weekends of traveling and hard racing 185 miles from home.

I still didn't have my shoes or pedals, because my girlfriend, Debbie forgot to remind Matt Mason to remind Dale Brown to remind my daughter to remind me to bring my bike shoes. (Just kidding!) Luckily we made lots of friends at the races, and the word was out about my crisis. So my rivals, who we'd been battling us for years stepped in to help me out. Rick Creed gave me some shoes that didn't fit, I swapped them with a guy from Greenville named Richard who let me borrow his Sidi's. Then another Greenville native, Glen Thrift loaned me his Look pedals. Finally, Dave Pendleberry let me use his shoe inserts and my friend Mark who owns The Great Escape Bike Shop put the package together with a wrench, a smile and more than a few good natured barbs. He even tightened up my head set. Gee! that was all I needed in the first place, (a tighter head set!)

It's weird I have conflicting feelings about my airheadedness, but at the same time, it shows how much my friends both on and off the team are willing to help. It makes me feel proud and a bit ashamed at the same time. Ashamed that I needed so much help both on and off the bike. But mostly proud that our team has such a good reputation as pleasant, hard working, unselfish gentlemen who have gained the respect of the entire race community. I know how hard it is to win and still be liked. But somehow we've managed to do just that.

Back to the race. The first significant move of the race contained two Smith Barney riders and Charlie Brown of the Carolina Master's Team. This was fine by us as none were a threat to the overall. I told Mike, Dave and Matt before the race to ride for themselves and try to get in a break as long as it did not contain Radisha or Raines. However, every chase group that formed behind the break contained those two, so my teammates again shelved their own aspirations to ensure my overall win.

After an intense blitz of attacks by Raines and Radisha I found myself isolated with them

and a small group of riders between the 3 up winning break and the shredding field. The Smith Barney riders didn't want to bring me and Radisha to the break, so they just kept attacking us one after the other. It was a series of over lactate threshold/under LT intervals. I was gritting my teeth to cover ever attack, but I knew that I couldn't let my teammates down so I had to hold on. I would have died before I let Raines or Radisha escape me. In the end, I managed to keep the S/B riders from escaping but Radisha beat me in another sprint finish. I sprinted in ahead of the rest to take 5th and seal the series win. My friend, S/B rider Richard Creed won the race from the 3 up break.

Our team celebrated our overall win in the parking lot as our rivals came by to congratulate us and pick up their loaned equipment. A small bike shop club team had defeated the big corporate sponsored Smith Barney/ Cane Creek Juggernaut, the as well as top ex-pro Radisha Cubric. We had gained the admiration and respect of the field by simplemindedly battling for the overall title ever day. I'm so proud to ride for the best, most unselfish master's team in the South East.

Mark Griffin