

Taking an "oops, I did it again" cue from Britney Spears, Mark Griffin oopsed himself to another win Saturday.

The Masters 1,2,3 field was disappointingly small -- 25 or so -- for this race south of Chapel Hill. It shouldn't be. The race is well run. The course, although hillier than average, is good. With few slouches among the smallish field, a hot day, and some hills, Mark, Rodney Simpson, Richard Melencio, Blair Palmer, Dave Petree and I rolled out. The finish is sharply uphill and the idea was to protect me as much as possible until then.

In purely a set-up move not intended to have race-breaking consequences, Mark attacked moderately only a mile into the race. Four heavy hitters had him marked (no pun intended) and immediately jumped on. They would never be caught. Still on the first of six 7-mile laps, a 5-man secondary move went which Rodney and Blair covered. They also would not be caught. The race was over, almost, before the first lap ended. Showing the team player that he is -- easy to overlook when he keeps winning in spite of that fact -- Mark did not assist the lead group, hoping to have teammates come across and achieve their own results and taking undeserved grief as a result. Rodney and Blair's group could not catch the leaders. With Mark in the front group and Rodney and Blair in the chase, we had 3 of the first 10 spots, so those of us team members still in the field cooled our heels. Until a rider who shall remain nameless, who had missed the move, attacked and attempted to bridge across. This guy was the consensus strongest motor in the field. I jumped onto him, one additional rider from the field made the bridge, and we were off. (Apparently the effort interfered with this racer's ability to count, or he underestimated our team commitment, as he suffered a melt-down when he realized that I was not going to help him chase; the unabridged version of that tantrum would not make it past the censors.) When he finally gave up on the effort, it left the race in three pieces. The first two groups were out of my sight, so Mark and Rodney will have to provide the details, but the team was well-positioned in each and nearly completed a hat trick.

In the 5-man first group, Mark outkicked last week's winner of the District Masters road race, Rick Creed, for the win. Congrats to Mark. Out of the second group, now down to four, Rodney was second across the line, to take 7th. Out of the third group, I came across the line first and Dave came across third, to take 10th and 12th respectively.

Next up is a fun ride -- Tour de Kale -- this weekend, followed by the State Games Criterium next weekend. Stay tuned.

MLM

P.S. Former teammate Chad Gibson put a hurt on the Pro, 1, 2 field, winning

solo.