

Tri-State Velo

1999 News Archive

all contents copyright ©Tri-State Velo

D.O.M.S.

March 1999

Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness

Neal Stansbury, MD --Sports Medicine Orthopedist

It's pre-season again, and most of us are trying desperately to get into shape as quickly as possible. Suddenly, the day after a hard ride or weight training session, that familiar quad burn occurs whenever you try to go up steps or stand up -- what happened?

You're experiencing delayed-onset muscle soreness (DOMS), that is, muscle pain which occurs about 12 hours after an effort that your muscles are not prepared to handle. Technically, this pain occurs from micro-tearing of the muscle fibers and the associated swelling. Recovery is usually 2 to 7 days, depending on how much micro-tearing has occurred.

To avoid a total failure of your pre-season program, prevention of DOMS is critical; otherwise, you'll be recovering more than riding.

- * First, warm up thoroughly before an effort. This includes stretching, as well as a 15 to 30 minute easy cadence prior to hammering.
- * Second, be realistic about your work outs and goals; don't try to maintain 55-minute 40k timetrial pace if you haven't been on the bike for a month. Start out slowly and gradually increase your efforts. Also, a good cool-down period is also critical to avoiding DOMS.

Once DOMS has set in, several measures can be applied to decrease the amount of time to recovery.

- * First, avoid repeated hard efforts until pain is gone.
- * Second, gentle stretching and gentle massage can help, and
- * third, the use of an anti-inflammatory (e.g. Motrin, Aleve, etc.) can shorten the discomfort.

As always, if pain persists, see your local doctor (me).
Good luck this season!

OH! CANADA

August 1999

Oh, the Pain... the Pain!

Steve Lehman--Team Vice President and Junior Team Manager

Sutton, Quebec

"I enjoyed the whole thing"

- Maria Collazo

"Goddamn good time,"
says Ted Lewandowski

"...too hot..."
- Jim Weidner

"It's like...the most professional amateur event"
- Raves Diane Castor

"I feel your pain...well, not quite,"
says the sidelined Tom Grim

A six-member TSV squad with spouses and friends returned to this picturesque ski town for the sixteenth running of the Coupe des Ameriques Stage Race. Sutton is just across the border from

Vermont, but it is very French. The people, the restaurants, the fresh mountain air (maybe not this year) as much as the race bring us back year after year. Our team included Diane Castor, Ted Lewandowski, Jim Weidner, Thurman Kremser and the yellow jersey'd Maria Collazo and Steve Lehman, returning 1998 category champions. Tom Grim was also in attendance, but a succession of early season crashes relegated him from the competition.

PROLOGUE

The prologue traverses seven rolling miles into the center of Sutton. Here it makes a very fast 90 degree turn and immediately throws you up a two mile climb. It is steep enough that it requires climbing ability as well as power to have a good finish. And while this prologue is unusual with its bunch start, the finish looks more like a time trial. Finishers on this relatively short race are spread over minutes. The best finishes for our team were Maria with 4th among 30-39 women, Diane 2nd of 40+ women and Steve at 3rd 50-59 men.

SATURDAY MORNING

" Another trip to Bicycle Racing University"

-Steve Lehman

Saturday morning and it's us against the wind.

Conditions couldn't have been much better, clear sky and light wind. Everybody went well. Diane might have done a bit better, but she forgot her gum. Don't ask...something about dry mouth. I clocked the best time of our group. I not only bettered his 50+ field, but also the entire 40+ and all but two of the 30+ fields.

Third fastest time of the 217 competitors over 30. Sorry, I'm writin' and I gotta crow. My effort also put me back in yellow. I now led the 50+ boys by a wopping eight seconds.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

The afternoon presented us with what I consider the most difficult stage of the weekend. The women had a one hour, plus a lap, crit on this one kilometer, five corner, with a long sprinter hill, circuit. Maria represented TSV best with a second place finish, while Diane was a close third in the 40+ women's race. The men's races were contested on the same loop, but use a "miss and out" format. That meant the each of the men's races had at least 25 sprints. Ted and Jim were in a group that got gapped. Even though they had no chance of placing, they still rode hard. In fact Ted was the last person out of this group. My race was so hard that I tore soft tissue between the ribs of my chest, for the effort. When we got down to the last four riders, and I saw I was going to remain in the yellow with a decent lead, I dropped. I gave up only six seconds to the winner, and still led him by 12.

SUNDAY! SUNDAY! SUNDAY!

...Nothing like a nice little 68 mile road race, over the rolling countryside of southern Quebec to complete the weekend. This is the last opportunity for those close to yellow to win, or at least inflict pain on the leaders. So there are attacks and counter attacks and counter-counter attacks. Ted said it best, " If you think your in shape, you'll find out on Sunday. On this day you better have strength and endurance. The road race settles everything."

Ted and Jim finished 24th and 34th, respectively, in the 40-49 category. Maria was slightly disappointed with her 3rd place finish, but was not disappointed with the challenge of this years event. Her advice to anyone doing this race for the first time..."Have fun with it. Enjoy the whole thing without worrying about the finish." Without going into detail, I made a tactical error in the final 5 kilometers. The rider sitting in second attacked, I sounded the alarm expecting the field to jump, only to realize I was surrounded by Canadians. There man was up the road and they weren't going to help me chase. I lost the overall by a mere eight seconds. Laurent, I feel your pain.

This was another great TSV adventure.
Do yourself a favor. Put yourself and a loved one in this picture next year.

Monsieur Lehman

THE PROPER SPLIT

June 1999

Steve Lehman

What to do when you're "in the money" ...

Steve Lehman--Team Vice President and Junior Team Manager

June 14, 1999

Scenario #1

You just won the race or had a high placing. Was everyone behind you racing against you or were there teammates present in the peloton who contributed to your victory. What do you do?

Senario #2

You are feeling good today. If you attack you could win the race or have a high placing. If you sit-in your chances of a sprint victory are greatly improved. But you have a teammate up the road and with your help, and at the expense of your own race, he/she is almost assured of a podium finish. What do you do?

Answers:

A "winner" will find and reward those teammates who blocked, disrupted the organization of adversaries, or those who "led them out". These individuals deserve a share as much as the winner. If you are a rider who has **contributed** to the ride of a teammate, you should let them know that you contributed. Sometimes riders get

"caught up" after the race. So a reminder is appropriate. A successful team is served well by a proper split of winnings.

Next questions are:

How much and to whom?

Following is a minimum split standard. Each rider "in the money" is entitled to half of their winnings. The other half should go into "the pot". From this pot all riders **who contributed** should share equally. (Note: If you sat in, you deserve no share.)

Example: Rider A wins \$80, rider B wins \$40, rider C helped. Rider A keeps \$40, rider B keeps \$20, and the pot gets \$60. Then Riders A, B and C each get \$20 from the pot.

Steve Lehman

THOSE AMAZING VETS AND THEIR FLYING MACHINES

June 1999

Tour of Somerville Falls To Audacious Tri-State Velo Vets

Neal Stansbury, MD --Sports Medicine Orthopedist and Tour of Somerville Champion

Somerville, NJ

The day was hot, humid, and a good day for anybody with more than three marbles in their head to stay indoors - a perfect day, in fact, for Steve and Neal. As I was warming up (as if that was necessary) for the 30+ event, I watched the last couple laps of the 50+ vets race. The usual cast of characters were in place, with Steve hammering up at the front in a two-up brake with Joe Saling with 3 to go. I thought the worst, thinking Steve was going to fry. When they were caught, Steve continued to exhibit a commanding presence at the front - looking strong and confident - maybe this was going to be his year! On the last lap, all eyes and bodies on the finishing stretch watched corner four. Haverstick appeared first, head down and hammering. Steve sat comfortably and waited,

accelerating smoothly around Haverstick with just 200 yards to go, acting like he was actually a sprinter!

After the race, as Steve walked onto the start/finish stage for the awards ceremony, I tried to think back to my biomechanics lessons about the strength of the cervical spine. Could his neck hold up against the weight of his massively swollen head, or would he self combust? I determined that the only thing that could bring Steve back to the land of mortals was to have a teammate repeat his efforts in another category, which is where my story starts....

The 30+ race started with 125 riders and attacks from lap one. I managed to get into one or two short lived breaks before getting absorbed by the pack. The heat made everybody lazy however, and the pack was only cruising along at a 28 to 29 MPH pace instead of the normal 30 plus MPH hammerfest. With 8 laps to go, a break was being reeled in at corner 4, when I saw Dave Jordan and another rider attack. I managed to get on his wheel, and one lap later, the other rider dropped. Dave and I managed a measley 10-15 second gap for the first few laps, and I thought this was going to be a repeat of last year, when I got caught with one to go. With 2 laps to go, I realized our lead was increasing, thanks to the tireless efforts of Mike's (Grabowski) blocking in the pack. Dave was taking shorter pulls and looked tired. I still didn't have any confidence in my sprint, so with one to go, I attacked hard at the start finish line. I looked back and saw Dave firing his S.O.S. flares, conceding the win! The back straight looked long, but with all the TSV crew yelling, it floated by quickly. Winning Somerville certainly feels better than any other Criterium win, especially when I have a teammate to share it with!

IT TAKES A (TEAM) VILLAGE

June 1999

Steve Lehman

1999 Tour of Somerville

Steve Lehman--Team Vice President and Junior Team Manager

May 31 -- Somerville, NJ

Okay, I won the Tour of Somerville. Yes, I outsprinted Scott Haverstick (Red Rose Rockets) for the win, and finished the ten mile distance in 23 minutes flat. I couldn't be more proud. But, did I accomplish this feat alone? Was this field, reputed to be the strongest Grand Masters peleton ever, just enjoying a leisurely ride through the streets of Somerville? I don't think so.

To win at Somerville in the way that I did, everything must go right. You must train your butt off for years. On that day you have to be on top form. Your legs must carry all the speed of which they are capable. You need to be able to work incredibly hard, while being conservative at the same time. You also need to have teammates who are equally prepared, but willing to, unselfishly, put all that preparedness at your service.

So, at the same time I was basking in the glory of the victory, I was humbled by the selfless work my Tri-State Velo teammates, Phil Stanley and Mike Budjnoski, did to contribute to the win. A well organized peleton of elite level masters racers could easily have bettered the speed that my breakaway group carried. But organization was thwarted by this dynamic and seemingly tireless duo. They held over fifty riders at bay for most of the race. Riders like John Howard, Bobby Phillips, Darrel Vreugdenhill, and a host of other national, international, and Olympic champions couldn't break the iron grip of Mike and Phil.

The victory wasn't just mine. To win at Somerville it took a team.

Thanks guys,
Steve Lehman

MASTERS OF THEIR DOMAIN

May 1999

Steve Lehman

Pennsylvania Masters Prevail At States

Steve Lehman--Master Racer Extraordinaire, Team Vice President and Junior Team Manager

May 15 -- Chambersburg, PA

Seventeen, age 50+ riders toed the line at this, the PA State Road Race Championship. The venue was a fifteen mile, closed to traffic, big chainring, totally non-technical circuit. The finish, at the end of the third lap, was at the top of a 150 meter, 6% grade. This was a classic sprinter's course.....if they could hang.

Scott Haverstick and Barry Free, 50-54 and 55-59 National Champions respectively, were present but a bit overshadowed. Maryland's own, sprinter extraordinaire, Bobby Phillips received all the pre-race notice. With respect to the course, I don't believe he could have designed a more sprinter-friendly circuit. The long straights, gentle curves, and short big ring undulations (I hesitate to call them climbs) would make the "hard guys" work (that is, to break the sprinters' legs) very difficult. It was decided, however, that unless we wanted an "out-of-stater" to win, we had to attack on every gradient and corner, and "make" this course technical.

The start of our race was delayed for nearly a half hour and shortly after we rolled out, we were overtaken by the 40+ field as they entered their second of three laps.

They were in hot pursuit of a two-man break just up the road. Shortly after the main group passed us, they caught the fugitives and their pace slowed dramatically. Since we were just behind them, we were unable to conduct our race, as they blocked our way. This regulation of our pace would not allow the hard guys to do their work. It would keep our group together and basically hand the sprinters the race. The officials, however, neutralized our field to allow the 40+ group to get five minutes up the road before allowing us to proceed.

When they cut us loose, the endurance boys immediately commenced a stream of unrelenting attacks and counter-attacks. By the end of the first lap, our field was cut in half.

At mile twenty, the process brought the field down to Scott, Barry, Darrel Vreugdenhil, me and the hapless Bobby Phillips. Knowing the speed in Bobby's legs, it was four against one. Attack him! Gap him! Make him chase! Where's Bobby? He rode the last lap and a half somewhere between us and those that went before him.

Now, Barry and Scott are Red Rose Rocket teammates and used to having their way with adversaries, but each year someone new comes along. This year it was Darrel. And while Darrel and I have not yet decided to ride together, we didn't ride against each other. It's safe to say we all respect each other's abilities, but there were still attacks and counters. No one was close to success, but who cares. We are four guys of whom it can be said, "They enjoy the journey". With three miles to go the attacks were replaced by a game of cat-and-mouse.

At this point, those who would had taken any opportunity to jump at the front, sought the shelter of a wheel. This mutual admiration society decided the best offense was a good defense.

During the final mile, and at speeds of up to 12 miles per hour (I was afraid a track stand was next), we argued over who led out the sprint at the last race and the one before that. We were trying to shame someone into the leadout position. As we hit 200 meters to go I, trapped at the front, swung our group of four from the right shoulder to the left. Then I jumped hard back to the right with Haverstick, Vreugdenhil, and Free, in that order, on my wheel. They came around and we were in full flight for the line, now four abreast. This explosion of power on the ascent to the finish produced what had to be the closest finish of the day. Darrel, showing unusual patience (his own comment) bested our group. Barry, looking more like Darrel's stoker, came second. And I just nipped Scott. All this within one bike length of victory.

50+ racing doesn't get any better than right here in Pennsylvania.

UNIVEST, HOUSTON and BERMUDA

September/October 1999

Laura VanGilder:

What a Way to End the Season!!!

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Univest Grand Prix, Souderton, Pa.

The Univest Grand Prix held in Souderton Pa. was a show case event for amateur cyclists. This year John Eustice incorporated a women's event to run concurrently with the men's. The men raced a large loop and then finished on smaller loops in town. Our race consisted of small loops only.

Our race was short, just under 40 miles. It proved to be a challenging course with sprints twice a lap for 6 laps for the QOM and Sprint competitions. Two laps into the race, after numerous

attacks by various riders, Ann Gariepy of Elita attacked. The field looked at each other, especially Pam Schuster and Heather Albert, and waited. No one chased. I thought perhaps there might be an attempt to bridge to Ann and I hoped to go with that instead of towing the field up to Ann.

I guess others had the same idea and soon the lead was sizable and despite trying to bring her back we weren't making headway. We now knew we were racing for 2nd. As we headed up the hill the final time Pam attacked and the field split. She sat up and we were all together again. I felt confident about the finish since it was a steep fast descent into a short hill. As the pace picked up I found myself 3rd wheel. I would have preferred to be further back since we were still about 2km out. We were barreling into the descent and I would see over my shoulder the pack starting to move up. I decided that rather than get swarmed by everyone I would put it in my 11 and bury myself. They would have to work to beat me to the line. It worked. I just edged out Barb Gradley for 2nd. I also got the distinguished prize of \$1000 for being the first American finisher.

BMC Houston, Houston, Tx

As quickly as the awards presentation finished, Barb, Heather, and I were scrambling to disassemble our bikes and get showered to head to the airport to catch flights to Houston. This was the BMC Criterium the final event of the Saturn Pro Tour.

I was currently in 4th in this series and was capable of moving into second or down to 5th depending on how I finished in this race. Saturn was leading the top three spots and I knew I would have my work cut out for me since Kendra Wenzel was chasing me.

We arrived in Houston that evening put our bikes together and pinned our numbers in anticipation of the next day. Our race would

be one hour and our field was small, 20 women. It was a disappointing showing for a prize list of \$15,000.

As expected Saturn was there with a team of five (I was hoping it would be 3). The racing was very aggressive and fast (average speed 27). Lots of attacking a breakaways but nothing stuck. On the last lap Dede attacked and got a gap which she held to the line. In the sprint I beat Nicole Rinehart and Kendra. I would be on the podium today for 2nd. This also put me in 3rd overall for the series (since Anna Wilson did not race this event).

I was very pleased that I managed to get into the top three for the series because I felt I had worked very hard all season toward this goal. It was quite daunting many times to be up against so many Saturn riders. Often the racing was quite negative because it was dominated by such a strong team. I know that my racing reached a new level just having to compete with them endlessly for this series. I did have help from other riders in the peloton. " I got by with a little help from my friends".

So the weekend was very successful. I did feel like I spent more time taking my bike apart and reassembling than racing but it was well worth it.

Bermuda Grand Prix, Bermuda

The last race of the season, the Conyers, Dill, & Pearman Grand Prix in Bermuda. This was a 3 day event for women. An individual time trial, road race and criterium. Bermuda was a beautiful place to race and ride. This event was a fun way to end the season. The women's field this year was quite good with Elita, Timex, Saturn, and local favorite Melanie Claude all in attendance. After the 9 mile time trial I was in 3rd place. I was quite pleased since I was ahead of Kendra, Nicole, and Julie. Tina Mayolo won with Erin Carter in 2nd.

The road race was 47 miles on a circuit we did 8 times. Unfortunately they started us with the men and there was no clear separation so a few of us were in the men's field. Once we got sorted out we stopped and restarted the race. Soon we were overtaken by the men and some women slipped off the front. Unfortunately not everyone noticed this and soon these two girls had a gap. Now we were racing for 3rd. We assumed Elita would begin a chase since their leader's jersey was on the line but that didn't happen. At the finish they had 30 seconds and Nicole won the sprint for 3rd. I was 5th behind Kendra. It also moved me into 5th in GC.

We tried to protest the mixing of fields since we felt these women clearly worked with the men, but the official was reluctant to do anything, saying it was something he wanted us to sort out before the race. It was very unprofessional and many of us felt cheated. We resigned ourselves to racing aggressively and making the cheaters really have to work. After relentless attacking from Saturn, and Timex, I found myself off the front alone. I kept my head down knowing I had my work cut out for me. After breaking a spoke and getting back in my gap was 27 seconds. I was hoping to move into third or better and I knew I needed more time than this. With time to go I could see a rider coming across. Once I recognized Kendra I knew help was on the way. Perhaps we could lengthen the gap. As we headed to the finish I knew my earlier work had taken its toll and I had nothing for the sprint.

Kendra won and I was 2nd. Her victory would be the last of her career since she is retiring after this season. Our gap would be enough to move me into third (actually a tie, but due to my higher placings in the other races I was given the place).

The other benefit of racing in Bermuda was the late season tan to head into the winter with. I was sorry to see the season end and say

goodbye to my friends until next spring. Now it's time to enjoy the fall foliage and spend some time mountain biking with my dogs.

I would like to thank Cass for inviting me to write for Tri State Velo. I think she has done a terrific job with the site and it has provided this club with a great mode of communication as well as providing information. It has been a privilege to be included on Tri State Velo site. I have really enjoyed sharing my racing experiences with the readers. Have a great winter everyone. I look forward to seeing you all again on some rides and again in the spring.

Laura

Note: We would like to thank Laura for taking time throughout the year to share with us her experiences and insights on women's professional cycling. Recently, Laura was named one of the fastest women in U.S. cycling by VeloNews. She's been on the podium over 100 times(!) and is known as one of the few American sprinters capable of fast, consistent finishes. Finally, in 1997 and 1998, Laura placed in the top 15 in points as part of the National Race Series. We are honored to have Laura as a guest writer.

KILLINGTON STAGE RACE

August 1999

Laura VanGilder:

A Weekend of Pure Suffering

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Killington Stage Race, Vermont

The Killington Stage Race has, historically, been six days long. However, due to sponsorship problems, the event was shortened to 3 days: two road races and a criterium. I raced this event in preparation for the Univest race and Houston (the final Saturn US

Pro Tour). I knew it would be tough racing in Killington, but I knew I would not get the same type of training if I stayed home, since I am not very motivated when training alone.

I bunked with Team Amoroso from Philadelphia: Maria Collazo, Cassandra Ramirez, and director sportif Steve "Stevearino" Lee. Our strategy was to podium every stage, or at least finish respectfully in our field. In the end, we accomplished the later and gained much fitness and character.

The racing began on Saturday with a 78 mile RR that included the tough Brandon Gap climb in the middle of the loop and finished on the access road to Killington (a new kilometer-long climb toward the top was added this year). The field stayed together until Brandon Gap. At the base of this climb is the feed zone. It was incredibly hot for Vermont and we were all scrambling for our feeds. Then the climb started and the field began to split. I tried to keep a steady pace but slowly started pedaling squares. Most of the women were using 25s. I crept to the top and nearly exploded from the effort and heat. The ensuing downhill was fast and I was hoping to see a group ahead. Heather Peck and I were chasing and working together. Eventually we caught Nicole Rinehart and all started working a paceline.

We had 30 plus miles to go in the valley before we headed into the final climb. Soon we caught a Schwab rider and now we were 4. We never saw another group ahead or behind but kept a good pace. As we approached the final climb, I started to feel a sense of dread. I knew what the climb was like and I knew I would struggle. We clawed our way to the top, alternating pulls based on our strength on the climb rather than on whose turn it was. We finished in 23rd-27th place and 13 minutes down on the leaders, who had broken away on Brandon Gap. I was satisfied with my ride. I had hoped to be climbing with a bigger group but I knew I had worked hard.

The next day was the criterium. A tough 6 corner course with a power hill. I have always felt good on this course and was looking forward to a good ride here. On the second lap they rang a bell for a prime on the back side hill, \$100. I knew that this would be my only chance to make money since most of the prized money was in GC and I didn't think I would make it into the top 20. I got that prime by outsprinting Pam Schuster of Timex. I continued to sprint for these back side primes, winning several. At one point Andrea Ratkovic (Timex) countered my sprint and got off the front. I didn't respond and the field let her go. Soon Nicole R. and a Schwab rider were in pursuit. I was busy making money on the back side and could not respond to this move. I was a bit bummed since I felt that this could be the winning move, but I wasn't in a position to get across to the break. So their lead increased and it became obvious that we were sprinting for 4th the last place in the money. I kept going for the primes, eventually making \$200, and soon we were down to one to go.

As we headed into the final lap, I saw Kendra on Mina Pizzini's wheel moving up on the outside. I jumped over and before I knew it they were going down in front of me. The curb loomed ahead and I knew it wasn't going to be pretty. I hit the curb somersaulted over the bars and was hanging upside down on the snow fencing. Then I slid down on top of Kendra. After untangling we were up and muttering to ourselves about lost opportunities. Fortunately no one was seriously hurt and we all were credited with pack time.

Monday's race was 66 miles and challenging. It seemed you were either going up or down. Within the first five miles we hit the first hill and the climbers decided to flex their muscles. The field shattered and many were gasping for air (me included). Slowly we caught back on and looked at each other to see how we were going to survive the remaining 60 miles. Surprisingly I felt good on each ensuing climb and kept my focus and determination on staying

with the group. The field had whittled down to 25 riders by the half way point and we had been racing in the rain for over an hour.

Eventually 2 riders got off the front and the field let them go. Their gap increased to 3 minutes and we were nearing the final climb. As we approached West Hill, I drifted off the back of the group. My legs felt like they were going to cramp and I just needed to ride at my own pace. When I got to West Hill I prepared for the worst, thinking I might just have to walk. But this was not the case, I was actually spinning at a steady pace and alternating between sitting and standing. I actually felt very strong and determined. I was making progress on the two riders ahead of me and actually felt like a climber. Onto the access road with only 3 miles remaining, again my legs did not fail me. I don't know if I was able to climb better because I could do so at my own pace, but it was invigorating to feel comfortable on a climb.

I finished the race in 21st and was quite pleased at my performance. Many riders struggled on this course due to the weather and the difficult terrain. It was a character builder to say the least. I know I built up my character on this course my other years racing here as well as this year. Thoughts of quitting crossed my mind many times. It is difficult to race past your door (where a nice shower, food, and comfy sofa are) and continue up a grueling mountain climb. Once you have made the effort to finish, it inspires you to new challenges.

The women's winner was the young rider from Canada, Genevieve Jeanson, who I had raced against in Massachusetts. She truly is an amazing rider with many strengths. Apparently both she and Lynn Bessette made the mountains look tame and effortless.

In the Pro Men's race, my teammate Trent Klasna rode won of the most inspiring races I have ever seen. He own the first road race by countlessly attacking the field and then his breakaway companions.

He then went on to win the criterium by lapping the field twice, even after crashing in the first few laps. Finally on the final 126 mile day, he won the stage ahead of Jonathan Vaughters again ahead of the field. I can only imagine what his encore will be. John Hamblin another Navigator rider finished 3rd, which was also an outstanding ride. Congratulations to the Navigator team.

Laura

Note: We would like to thank Laura for taking time throughout the year to share with us her experiences and insights on women's professional cycling. Recently, Laura was named one of the fastest women in U.S. cycling by VeloNews. She's been on the podium over 100 times(!!) and is known as one of the few American sprinters capable of fast, consistent finishes. Finally, in 1997 and 1998, Laura placed in the top 15 in points as part of the National Race Series. We are honored to have Laura as a guest writer.

WENDY'S CLASSIC/CHICAGO GRAND PRIX

August 1999

Laura VanGilder:

Here's the Beef!

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Wendy's Classic, Ohio

The Wendy's Classic is a four-day criterium series, part of the Saturn Pro Tour. The racing started on a tight nine-corner course in the suburbs. Those of us who had raced in Toona were hoping for a flat start to the racing: it became apparent, that this wasn't going to be the case. Warming up on the course, some of us considered

using our small ring for the hill. Of course, once we were racing, it was a different story. We were in for a tough race.

The Saturn women's team was there with five riders. The rest of us assumed they were fresh from skipping Altoona. We were right: the race was fast and furious with many attacks coming from the Saturn and Elita teams. It was important to stay near the front since there were few places to move up on the course. Eventually, Saturn got a rider off the front. Next, a group of three, including another Saturn rider, went up the road. In true Saturn fashion, once close enough to the break, the Saturn rider ditched the others in the chase group and bridged up to her teammate up the road.

I attempted to go with the attacks that followed, but Saturn was not interested in having me anywhere in the top spots. Soon, another group went with a third Saturn rider in tow. Showing their amazing strength, the Saturn team dropped the other riders and soon it was a Saturn sweep for the top three. We picked up the 4th place rider with two laps to go and Kendra Wenzel jumped going into the final corner, holding off the field for 4th place. I finished 5th, Nicole Rinehart was 6th and Karen Dunne (just coming off a win at the Pan American Games RR the day before) was 7th.

Our next race was a flat industrial park crit with two corners and a sweeper into the finish. Nothing could stay away that day despite Saturn's efforts. Between the high winds and the course the race was destined for a field sprint. I had gone for some prems in preparation for the final sprint, predicting who would contest it, so I felt prepared for the final lap.

Saturn looked like they were attempting a leadout for Nicole, but that effort quickly fell apart. I got Karen Dunne's wheel and we were off to the line. Nicole Freedman was next to me and Karen started pulling away from us. Nicole beat me to the line but I managed a 3rd.

Street sprints were in order for the next night. A 250 meter standing start mass sprint in heats. I had done these before and felt confident. My first heat included Nicole Reinhart and we both advanced to the semifinals. Our semifinals heat was a who's who of sprinters. I wondered if they hadn't set us incorrectly because the riders in this heat were riders you would have expected in the final: Kendra Wenzel , Nicole Reinhart, Nicole Freedman, Karen Dunne, Tania Duff-Miller, and myself. The top four riders would advance.

Nicole Reinhart had the best jumps off the line (from years of track experience). I was getting nervous wishing I had a different cog on so I could start in my 23 without cross chaining. Also, I was remembering how earlier, one girl had crashed when her foot came out of her pedal. I made it through the semi's and now it was onto the final. I was lined up next to Karen Dunne and was nervous at the line. I couldn't stay in my gear when I back pedaled and it was making me more anxious. Off the line we headed to the finish and again Nicole had the jump off the line. Karen was 2nd and Lisa Mason 3rd. My gears had slipped en route on a bump and I was nipped at the line by Lisa for 3rd.

Sunday was the tough course in Grandview Heights. This course has a long gradual hill as well as some technical corners. I decided to cover Suzy Pryde and Lynne Bessette as I was most worried about them in the overall standings. Lynne made a few moves and I was right on her, but she sat up. Suzy did the same and again sat up when she saw me on her wheel. A group went up the road with a Saturn rider and Elita. Kendra bridged up, a good move, followed by a group of 5.

With 5 to go, Karen Dunne attacked and the field chased like mad. When we caught her, Suzy countered and we were within mere seconds of the field. Looking back, I realize where I made a

mistake: I sat up, thinking that others in the field would close this gap. I was wrong and within a lap the gap was back to 28 seconds. The opportunity to bridge was gone and now we were racing for 11th. I had been too focused on Suzy's moves instead of racing for the best place in the race. My plan worked early in the race but, ultimately, worked against me. It is difficult to think quickly during a race and assess the strategies from every angle, especially when so much is on the line. Karen nipped me at the line for 11th.

I hoped that my points from this event would move me into 3rd in the Saturn Tour standings, since Anna Wilson didn't race in Ohio. But the points weren't enough and I stayed in 4th.

Downer's Grove, Chicago

The race in Downer's Grove is a great race with a amazing course. This year they had to modify the course due to road construction. The modifications made for a tough technical course with no place for recovery. Our race was 45 minutes and our field had 40 riders, including the Schwab team, the only big team in attendance. Kendra and I were there but no Saturn riders.

Suzanne Sonye went for a preme on lap two and I went with her. We developed a gap and then opened it up. I dropped her on the hill and kept going hoping a Schwab rider would bridge up, but I was brought back. A few more attacks went and several times I thought the mix was right and we would stay off. But that was not the case. Toward the end Marie Holjer attacked and got off alone. A lap later Kendra went off and next lap we heard the bell (this was a timed event).

As we rounded the last two corners I was next to Nicole Freedman from Schwab. I knew from the previous preme laps that I needed to go from just before the last turn. So as things heated up I charged up the inside. The line was still 400 meters away which sounds like too far but the nature of that sprint was such that you

could hold someone off. It was a hard fought sprint to the line. With each pedal stroke my bike came off the ground as I powered to the line. I knew I had to get the thee slight decline to make it to the line first. I also knew I wanted to get on the podium and the only way to do that was to win the field sprint. As we got to the line it was a bike throw. I got her, just by a bit.

Following my race I was scheduled to do a publicity event, racing against an in line skater. This was a straight line sprint 200 meters one race. My opponent was a Guinness World record holder for the fastest woman on skates. I must admit I was more nervous for this event than for my criterium. I had watched the men do this in the past and sometimes the cyclist won and the last few times the skater won. I asked Steve Hegg, who had raced the skater in the past, what my strategy should be. He told me that the skater is always off the line quickly and then you make up ground. He had only caught the skater in the last ten meters. This day the men raced first and it was very close, with Jon Peters from Mercury only winning at the line. Now it was my turn. Off the line, boy I felt slow. Then within a few pedal strokes I was even with her, then I passed her and won with room to spare. What a relief !! I was representing all cyclists if I lost and I hadn't, thank goodness. Now if only I had won equal prizes to the men. The winner of the men won \$1000. But I had a great prize, a Festina watch, and come TJ Maxx gift certificates. It was lots of fun and I am anxious to represent the cyclists again.

Laura

Note: We would like to thank Laura for taking time throughout the year to share with us her experiences and insights on women's professional cycling. Recently, Laura was named one of the fastest women in U.S. cycling by VeloNews. She's been on the podium over 100 times(!) and is known as one of the few American sprinters capable of fast, consistent finishes. Finally, in 1997 and

1998, Laura placed in the top 15 in points as part of the National Race Series. We are honored to have Laura as a guest writer.

'TOONA AND BEYOND

August 1999

Laura VanGilder:

Redemption Comes On The Last Day Of A Grueling Week At Tour D'Toona

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Altoona, Pennsylvania

The Tour D'Toona is a stellar event that is contested every August. This year it was a six-day stage event for women's teams. I comprised a team of Navigator women including: Kathy Watt (Australian wonder rider), Christy Nicolson, Susan Hefler, and Shari Kain (Polo Sport mountain cyclist). Our goal was simple: get on the podium as often as possible.

PROLOGUE:

The first stage, a traditional prologue, was technical as usual and showcased the sprinters. Unfortunately, I did not have a good ride here and was in 16th place (our best finish for the team starting the stage race).

PENN STATE:

The next stage saw us on the Penn State campus riding a course that was challenging in more ways than one. We knew there were going to be several obstacles to face: an 18% grade climb followed by another 12% grade climb, wooden bridges and 110 degree corners. We also faced a multitude of crashes and pileups.

The overall classification didn't seem to change from this day forward. Many women spent the day chasing after being involved in crashes or delayed by them. Luckily, Kathy ended up third for the day and Shari 11th.

HOLLIDAYSBURG:

The next day was the race in Hollidaysburg. Again the racing was fast and furious and I was happy to be climbing with some of the best. With 10 km to go, Elizabeth Emery went off the front, being chased by a 3-rider group 30 seconds behind. These riders stayed away to hold off the field and I won the field sprint, placing 5th in the stage, after a great leadout by Susan.

MARTINSBURG:

On to Martinsburg for an 80 mile event. The temperatures all week were soaring into the high 90's and every feed was crucial for each stage. This day, the course record was broken and the racing was aggressive. The field was intact at the 3km-to-go marker and Kathy Watt went off the front. I got in position to use the chasers as a leadout but ended up boxed-in and in 8th position heading into town. Kathy was caught before the line but managed to hang on to 3rd place. I finished 7th in the stage.

THE INFAMOUS BLUE KNOB

Now we were faced with the longest most challenging day of the Tour: a 95-mile event with temperatures forecasted at over 100 degrees. I had felt confident of my climbing all week and was pleased the other girls were riding well also. Our plan: Susan Hefler would stay with Kathy and the rest of us would try to stay with them. The pack raced aggressively all morning and soon a break materialized before the first of three climbs, a grueling climb up the infamous Blue Knob.

Timex went to the front and the pack zoomed along in pursuit. When we crested the first climb, (mentally, I did not have as stellar

of a climb as I had hoped)I found myself in a chase pack of 15 riders, down over two minutes. Two of my teammates were in this group and Kathy and Susan were in the lead group.

Our group struggled along, getting as many bottles as possible from volunteers. At the finish, our group was quite a bit down from the leaders. But Kathy had won the stage and moved into 2nd overall. Susan had come in with the next group for 12th, a spectacular ride.

IN THE ZONE: THE FINAL CRITERIUM

One stage to go, the one I most looked forward to: the criterium. This crit has a tendency to be one of the hardest of the season and one which seems to affect GC more than any other in a stage race. I was quite focused on having a good ride here since the podium had eluded me all week. At the start, I knew I needed to ride this race at the front since there were many women who were not "criterium-friendly".

The pace was high with frequent attacks. At the halfway point, there was a major crash on the first corner, seriously injuring a rider. We were neutralized for a lap and then stopped at the line for 10 long minutes. Many riders chose this time to voice their opinion: they wanted the race cancelled. I was vocal against cancelling the race, not feeling there was a good enough reason. We resumed racing after much scuttlebutt and many a sour face.

The pack stayed intact with one lap to go. As we rounded the back straightaway, I was in 3rd position. Christy moved to the front to string out the field. Sara Ulmer was on her wheel and I was on Sara's. As we came into the final 3 corners Julie Young and Nicole Freedman moved up and I got on Nicole's wheel heading around the final corner. As we headed for the line, Sara leading, Nicole jumped and I sat on her for a minute and then launched off,

crossing the line with enough time to throw up my arms (I usually forget). I was ecstatic! A win in the Tour d'Toona!

Kathy remained in second overall and our team had visited the podium 4 times during the Tour. It was very exciting to execute team tactics and have riders giving it their all throughout the race. Christy's move was perfectly timed and professional, a key to my success that day.

Laura

IT TOOK A VILLAGE (... a Saturn Village, That Is ... To Keep Laura Under Wraps)

July 1999

Laura VanGilder:

The Hunt for Saturn Pro Tour Points Continues

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Fitchburg, Massachusetts

This past month has been quite hectic. There has been a lot of racing and traveling going on since I last wrote an update. It began with racing at the Fitchburg Stage Race in Massachusetts.

This race was one in the Saturn US Pro series and proved to be a hard one. I enjoy this race since there are two stages where I fare well.

The racing began with a ITT of 13 miles. I was the second to last starter with Lyn Bessette behind me. She caught me in 3 miles and I knew I had my hands full. In the end I finished 12th a 45 second improvement over last year, Lyn won with a 2 minute lead over me.

Next came the circuit race which I have won and placed consistently in the top five in the last few years. This course has a fast downhill corner into a steep staircase climb to the finish. I like this hill because it is more of a power hill. Unfortunately my legs did not agree once we started. I attempted to challenge for the sprint points and my legs felt quite heavy. I forgot to mention that it was also quite hot that weekend in the 90's for all races, which may have been a factor. Since my legs weren't up to snuff I decided to wait for the sprint and again I came up short (10th). Tina Mayolo had a great sprint for the win. The racing throughout was aggressive since there were many teams in attendance, Saturn, Timex, Elita, and Celestial.

The following day was our road race of 60 miles with a mountain top finish. I struggle during the last climb to the top of Wachusette Mountain each year, so this year I wanted to go into the climb as fresh as possible. This meant forgoing any sprints for points during the race. Since I had not gotten many points in the previous stage I knew I would be playing catch up anyway and my main plan was to finish as high as possible in GC so I could get Saturn Points (which only go to the top 20). I knew that the road race was where I would lose time and places. Again the racing was aggressive and many attempts at breakaways were made. It was in the 90's and the feed zone became a mad scramble each lap. The feed zone was also on one of the hardest climbs so this added an element to the racing. The pack was still all together when we hit the final 3 mile climb. I settled into a rhythm and found myself in good company, Sara Ulmer, Julie Hanson, and Sophie St. Jaques. I finished the stage in 18th my best ride ever up Wachusett. Still maintaining a place in GC at 16th.

Now we headed into the criterium and I was looking for a stage win since I had not seen the podium during the entire race. I made sure I was in some of the attempts at breakaways but nothing stuck. In the final sprint Pam Shuster made a move into the last

corner (which had won her an earlier prime) and headed for the home stretch. I was several riders back on the Saturn train. This proved to be too far back and when it came time to sprint I could only manage 4th.

My gc placing was 16th which assured me Saturn points and actually moved me into 3rd in the standing. It was difficult to race conservatively to protect such a low GC place but I am quite intent on doing well in this series and it was more important to get some points.

A happy note: Upon arriving in Massachusetts I was told that I had been selected as June Rider of the Month for the RIDE Magazine. My competition in this running had been Kevin Monahan (no slouch in racing). This honor also included a Festina watch, sweet.

Superweek, Wisconsin

After Fitchburg it was home for a few days and then off to Superweek in Wisconsin. This race was also part of the Saturn Pro series. We would have 8 races, 5 criteriums and 3 road races.

Racing on the first night was on a flat course and we faced 45 laps (30 miles). Saturn was in attendance with 5 riders all of them studs. It only took me a short while to see what the Saturn strategy was going to be. A few laps into the race Anna Wilson got away with Barb Gradly. Soon Clara Hughes was off and attempting to bridge. Barb was dropped due to a mechanical and next another Saturn rider and Tiffany Pizzulo went up the road. Lastly Tania Duff and Suzy Pryde (Saturn) got off. Any time I attempted to bridge or go off I was brought back. Soon all these riders lapped the field and the sprint was on for 8th. It was so disappointing and frustrating to have the racing be so negative. Kendra Wenzel won the field sprint and I was 2nd (9th place). I knew I was in for a long week of racing.

The next crit was in Greenfield and was 40 minutes. As would be the case the entire week an early break with two Saturn riders and a Timex went up the road. I had attempted to get away and bridge up to no avail. Just when I thought the race was over, Nicole Rinehart who was in the break came back to the field. The Anna Wilson and Kendra came back and there were three laps left. I immediately started planning my sprint. I knew Saturn would lead out Anna since Nicole seemed blown. I planted myself on the train and scooted around them when they gapped me out of the last corner. I was boxed in by all Saturn riders and then to my left was Anna. I jumped on her wheel and some how got out of the pack. As we headed for the line I knew I had to give it my all. I was sprinting against the #2 rider in the women's world cup standings a rider who goes neck and neck with Ina Teutenberg a phenomenal sprinter. I cam up even with Anna and then I pulled ahead and rushed to the line. A winner. I couldn't have been happier. This was the only event out of 8 that Saturn did not win. And the Saturn camp was not happy at this point.

Revenge came swiftly after this race. I was the most marked rider in the field with no place to go. Our next race was on a park circuit and again 2 Saturn riders went up the road. I was in a chase group of 6 with 2 Saturn riders (Suzy & Nicole). With under 10 laps to go Suzy started attacking me. I matched her time for time. I was determined to show my strength. As we headed into the final sprint Barb went off the front of our group. Saturn didn't chase, nor did I. Nicole jumped with 500 meters to go (her track specialty) and I went after her. I caught her and passed her at the line. It's amazing what frustration can do for you racing strength. I had moved into 2nd in the overall standings and now Saturn was on a mission. That mission was to move me down so I would get as few Pro points as possible.

The next two days of road racing proved to again be a Saturn show with two Saturn riders in each of the winning breaks. Again if I tried to go off the front or bridge the field was towed up to me. I knew I wasn't strong enough to hold off an entire field so I was resigned to sitting in and watching the race go up the road.

The best I could manage these two days was two 5th places. Then we were back to the criteriums and the Saturn plan was working. I was barely holding onto 2nd place and their riders were quickly working their way up in the standings. The next crit saw 9 riders go up the road and lap the field.

All the crits were 30 miles and the racing was fast from the start. I was completely frustrated and getting tired. I won the field sprint for 10th but it was no consolation. This was a bitter pill I had to take each day from Saturn. My supporters advised me to turn things around. If they were going to race like this then I might as well race hard and get stronger....attack them. So a new day dawned and that is what I did. Yes Saturn riders got off the front but I was at the front chasing and attacking and counter attacking. Barb and I had formed an alliance and we would counter each other's attacks. Saturn would not be handed an easy victory.

After two more days of crits I was disposed to 3rd place. This was our last event and I was determined to ride as hard as ever. I was the only rider in the top 5 who was not on the Saturn team and I was also the only non Saturn rider to win a race thus far. The racing began aggressively and the pace was high (actually the two previous days we had averaged 24 and 26mph). This day only two riders got up the road. Soon two more went and we were sprinting for 5th. I did not plan my final sprint well and came into the last corner 5 riders back. I ended up 3rd in field for 7th. I also moved down to 4th in the overall after a stellar ride (actually many stellar rides) by Clara Hughes. This moved me into 4th in the Pro Tour standings behind the top three Saturn riders.

As was pointed out to me many times throughout the race, it was a big compliment to have Saturn focus their efforts on me. And as my mom mentioned "it took a village (a Saturn village)" to keep me under wraps. If nothing else it certainly made me stronger. Altoona looms ahead and I am taking a Navigator team. I couldn't be more excited and am hoping we achieve some great results.

Laura

1999 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

June 1999

Laura VanGilder:

Nationals

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Cincinnati, Ohio

This past weekend the national championships were held in Cincinnati, Ohio. This was the second time these events were held at this venue. I opted to only ride in the criterium since I heard the course in the road race had changed and there was another hill with a 23% grade at the top. I was hoping to save my legs for the following day's criterium. Fortunately the weather was not as hot as last year, but Cincinnati always seems to be hot and humid.

I chose to go and watch the road race and cheer on those riders racing. What a great race! The women certainly rode hard and many local riders (to the Northeast) did well. After seeing them tackle the hill I was glad I had chosen not to race this course. It looked quite grueling.

Sunday's criterium was late in the day, a 5:15 pm start. We would race 38 laps of a .9 mile course with 8 corners. I knew an early

break would have a good chance of staying away since that was the case last year. And true to form that's what happened this year.

Apparently the first five riders through the first corner were the break that stayed away all race. I unfortunately had a start position not on the front line, but several rows back. Within one lap I had made my way to the front of the field but it was too late. Since Timex, Celestial Seasonings, Cox, and Helen's all had riders in this break it didn't look good for the field.

The course is narrow and has lots of turns and a few rises so there is little opportunity for moving up. this type of course is also good for team tactics in slowing the race down. Soon the break had 50 plus seconds. Several riders, myself included went to the front and took pulls and the gap started to come down. Schwab was the most organized at keeping the pack rolling and soon Timex started to work since their sprinter wasn't in the break.

With 7 to go the break only had 20 seconds and that gap was falling. Kendra Wenzel and Nicole Freedman jumped off the front and got a gap. The field began an all out chase knowing they could potentially close in on the break if they motored. At 4 to go a rider moved up on me and got their bars tangled in mine. I struggled to get them free and by that time was in the turn and subsequently went down. Free laps were over and so was my race. I would have to chase the pack and since so much was happening in the field and my bike was in need of some repair, I elected to end my race here. I was offered another bike from the pit but I knew the race was up the road.

At the end of the race the field was closing on the break, but they just couldn't catch them. Karen Dunne took the sprint from Pam Shuster and Suzanne Sonje. Ashley McCollough (formerly from NYC) was in that break and took 5th.

I must admit I was disappointed, not only from my crash but with my start since this was the key move of the day. The course in Cincinnati is a difficult one for me. A course I never can get in a rhythm on. But I must remember that nationals are only one race in a season long calendar of events. And overall I am pleased with how I have been riding, so I'll focus on some more big wins. Maybe Altoona again, that would be great. But this weekend it's off to Fitchburg and then Superweek. Both of these races are part of the Saturn Pro Tour and I have been holding my own in that series, currently standing in 4th.

Laura

NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

June 1999

Laura VanGilder:

From New England to Nationals

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Massachusetts

There were several races to choose from this weekend but all were on Sunday. I decided that on Saturday I would do an individual time trial on a 15-mile loop near my house, in order to prepare for Fitchburg (MA). I had done this course before so I knew my time to beat and I did by ten seconds. I followed that ride with a hour more of riding rolling hills to get in a good workout. Again, only thinking ahead to my upcoming races.

On Sunday, I decided to drive to Massachusetts for the New England Cycling Championships. This was a one hour race on a three-corner course with a small hill. Twentyfive women started and immediately a slender young woman from Canada attacked on

the hill. Each lap, she attacked on this rise and finally we had a group of six of the front. Unfortunately, only the two of us were working initially and then just three of us. This did not make for good group dynamics, riders who were working were getting angry with those who weren't. As the laps dwindled, Genevieve from Canada continued to show her strength. I knew she would be the one to beat because she was riding so well. Eventually our break away group became unmotivated, workers were not going to bring slackers to the line and we were caught by the pack with one to go. I still felt confident of my sprint and when Genevieve attacked with 500 meters to go I reacted and got on her wheel and then jumped around her with 200 meters to go.

After the race, I found out that this powerhouse from Canada is only 18 and is preparing for junior Worlds. She will be racing at Fitchburg and will bring her impressive riding with her I am sure.

Nationals (Cincinnati, OH) are coming up in just over a week and I am tailoring my training for these races. The courses will be the same, but hopefully the weather will be kinder (not as hot and humid as last year). Many women are now competing in the Hewlett Packard race in Idaho: 13 stages in 12 days. From the race reports, it sounds like the racing is hard and fast. Sometimes I wish I were there and then I think of the climbs (generally long and hard) and I am glad to be here. The big question will be whether or not the girls will be tired from this race when they come to Nationals.

My attempt at getting the same fitness (or as close to it as possible) is to train hard for these two weeks and do men's races as well as women's. I am anxious to have a good finish at Nationals especially in the criterium.

Laura

LAURA'S LIBERTY CLASSIC

June 1999

Laura VanGilder:

Second American to Cross the Line at Liberty Classic

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Philadelphia, PA

June 6th Philadelphia, 800,000 fans line the street in anticipation of the First Union Men's and Women's Races. 120 world class women anxiously waiting to start the 5th annual Liberty Classic a 72-plus-mile event this year. You could sense the importance of the race this year since it was a World Cup event and many international teams were in attendance. This was a day I had waited for since, well since I crossed the finish line last year (19th). I had tried to prepare myself for this race with more specific training this year and I was hoping it would pay off. My biggest fear was the increase in distance from 4 to 5 laps. My concern was that I would get dropped or cramp. I had cramped the last two years here despite what I thought was adequate hydration.

As 120 women waited in the staging area, boyfriends, husbands, and well wishers gathered to support their favorite rider. It was so nice to have all this attention focused on us since we all felt this was an important day and we all wanted to do our best. As the men continued their parade laps I decide that one more trip to the bathrooms was in order. Next thing I knew as I exited the bathroom, the pack was off to the start line and I was chasing though the caravan to catch up. Fortunately they did introductions for all the riders so I had some time to catch my breath.

Next thing you knew we were off. Our first lap to Manayunk was uneventful and we all stayed together despite a small group off after the climb. It is always so awesome to come into Manayunk and to hear the roar of the crowd. I felt good on the climb even though I started toward the middle of the bunch. I was riding quite conservatively due to the length of the race and at times was more than half way back in the field. I could see when there were breaks up the road but I was never in a position to go with them or bring them back. I felt that the race would take shape in the later laps. I was also keeping an eye on Petra (Rossner--German National Team), Hanka (Kupfernagel--The Greenery), Saturn (Nicole Reinhart), and Timex. Generally I was riding near either Jen McCrae or Nicole and I felt confident that those teams wouldn't let these sprinters get dropped.

Each time up the wall I felt stronger and stronger. The hardest part was getting to the front before you dropped onto Main Street. This was really where the speed picked up and the fighting for position began. I know that you can use a lot of effort here and I still wanted to have that kick at the end so I never got to close to the front . Had I been closer to the front I wouldn't have had so many people to pick around on the climb.

With 2 laps to go it seemed like the race might just come to a field sprint. Many breaks had gone up the road, but they always just dangled out there never really gaining any time. When with 1 and a half laps to go I saw Petra's team go to the front I knew I had a good chance of being in a sprint finish. As we came around the Ben Franklin Parkway and saw one to go I knew I need to get to the front so I wouldn't be caught behind any gaps. I kept telling myself, if I wasn't moving up I was moving back and that it would be easier up there. One more time up the wall, this time I could feel it. I ended up standing the whole way (previous laps I had sat and spun half of it) and my legs could really feel it. I was on Nicole Reinhart's wheel and I was determined not to get dropped. Once

we came down onto the drives I started looking for Petra. There was a group off but it didn't look like it would stick. Up Strawberry Mansion and over Lemon Hill. Now the pace was high and we were strung out. I knew not to get over anxious and go out in the wind just to move up a few spots, but it was had to be patient.

As we rounded the oval I found myself in the thick of the pack, about 4 riders back. I had lost Petras's wheel (everyone was looking for it), but I felt protected in the pack. In the past I have been on the outside and either hit the wind or gotten squeezed into the curb, plus I knew this was a long sprint and I was hoping that the sea would part in front of me. 300 meters to go and there was an opening. I took off knowing this was my chance. The sprint had started and the finish line was in everyone's sights. A rider to my right moved over and rather than elbow her out of my way (a move I need to perfect) I hesitated and dashed behind her to continue on my way. Across the line at last. I could see several riders ahead of me but I knew I was top ten. In fact I was 8th and the 2nd American rider to finish. I also manage to get 18 UCI points as a result. I was thrilled with my finish and happy to know that I was capable of more. Yes I was disappointed that I hadn't had a clean shot to the finish, but that's part of your strategy and part of racing. I was happy I had made it , had fun, and had some gas left at the end. It makes me anxious for next year, because I plan to be even stronger. Now my focus will be on preparing for Nationals in Cincinnati.

Laura

VANGILDER'S TOUR DE FORCE

June 1999

Laura VanGilder

Wins 1999 Tour of Somerville

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Texas, Delaware and New Jersey--

What a Way to Top off a Weekend !!

First, I would like to extend my congratulations to both Neal and Steve for their outstanding performances at Somerville. For those who don't know, four races at Somerville were won by local "Derby" riders: Steve Lehman (50+), Neal Stansbury (30+), Chip Berezny(40+), and myself ... I consider myself to be a Derby rider. (A "Derby rider" is one who participates in the Wednesday night ride that leaves from the Lehigh Valley velodrome in Trexlertown.)

As you might have guessed, this was a hectic an important weekend of racing for me. It began with the BMC Criterium in Austin, Texas on Friday night. This was the race sponsored by the Lance Armstrong Foundation. Many cycling greats were in attendance as spectators as well as racers.

Our race got off an hour later than scheduled, 9:30 (10:30 eastern time) and was shortened to 25 minutes plus 5 laps. That was all Suzy Pryde (Saturn) needed to hear and she shot off the line. Each time a Saturn break was reeled-in another one went and eventually there were two riders away. We were lapping riders and things got hairy. With one lap to go, it looked like Tina Mayolo (Celestial Seasonings) and Suzy would stay away. But, as we rounded corner two, there they were.

Now things got crazy with both Saturn trying to set up Nicole (Reinhart) and Timex trying to set up Jen Mcrae. Heading into the third corner, Jen went charging to the front with Suzy, Kendra, and me in tow. It was the right move. The finish was in just that order.

You needed to be first out of the last corner and Jen had the move to win. It was great for her since she hails from Austin and it was also her first big win for the season.

Now it was onto Delaware for the Christina Care Cup. A 31 mile race through Wilmington, Delaware. I was representing the Potomac/Stonyfield team at this race (as I will be at the First Union Liberty Classic in Philadelphia on June 6th). We had five riders and our plan was to get one of our riders in a break or set me up for the field sprint. There were several breaks one of which Mina Pizzini (Potomac) was in. We were hoping this was going to stick but, Saturn wouldn't work with it.

With two miles to go, a Saturn and Celestial Seasonings rider were just ahead of the field. Several attempts were made by my team to reel in the breakaway. Then with less than two miles to go, Jennie Buckley, my teammate, went to the front and hammered for at least a mile. This brought the break within striking distance and now things started to happen. Elizabeth Emery (Celestial Seasonings), with 1km to go, jumped hard to get across and I tried to bridge. Then Dede (Barry-Saturn) came by me with Nicole (Rinehart-Saturn) in tow for the leadout. As I tried to wedge myself in on this wheel, Jen Mcrae came up beside and started to squeeze me in. Instead of fighting for my position, I hesitated and now was out in the wind trying to stay with the leadout. As we came into the finish and the sprint began, I realized I was going nowhere. I felt like I was fighting just to turn the pedals. What was going on? It wasn't until I finished I realized I must have exerted too much energy with 1km to go and when things started heating up I just had nothing.

I can't describe how terrible I felt about letting my team down. The finish had come down to a sprint and I didn't have it. I ended up 13th. On the bright side, all of my teammates were in the front group and placed well in the finish. My disappointment also taught

me a lesson on patience during the race. I would know better next time and not waste myself until it was time to sprint.

Monday would be my redemption. Somerville the granddaddy of all races. I arrived a bit subdued after my racing in Delaware. I definitely knew I would have to ride a smart race to win. As I was warming up I heard and saw the winner of the Master's races and was happy to hear it was all people I had trained with .

At Somerville, I was again riding with Potomac only today we were in Navigators jerseys. Our plan was to either get Mina in a break or set me up for the finish. Timex was the dominant team and Nicole was the only rider representing Saturn. From the start, Timex launched attack after attack with Elizabeth Emery going with all of them. With four laps to go these two teams each had a rider off the front. It seemed like the race was over. With 3 to go we had them reeling in, but then Pam Shuster (Timex) attacked. On the home stretch, Betty Tyrell launched a massive attack and Jennie Buckley immediately responded with me in tow. Coming around the back straight we caught Pam and now we were coming to the bell lap with the field intact. Knowing that Timex would set up Jen for the sprint, I moved up to find her wheel. The pack swelled with the anticipation of the leadout.

On the back straight I came up on Elizabeth's wheel since I was getting boxed in. She was just off Julie Young's (Timex) wheel and we headed to turn 3. Out of turn three, Liz jumped and flew through the final turn with Julie, Kendra (Timex) and myself on her wheel. I had decided that it would be better to be 3rd or fourth out of turn 4 since the sprint was so long. As Liz pulled off the Timex train kept charging with about 250 meters left, I jumped the train and headed for the line. Out of the corner of my eye to my left I could see Nicole coming up on me, then she was ahead of me. I pushed harder and came even with her. Now it was do or die. I dug deeper and really pushed for the line and started to move ahead. In

the end I just nipped her, winning only by a half a wheel. The victory couldn't have been sweeter.

I have always wanted to win this race and come close only one other time. I feel like it's my hometown race; I know so many people there who are both spectating and racing. The support is amazing. It was also a special win since my Navigators team and club is based in NJ and this has always been a key race for them. They have supported my racing for 6 years and this was a victory for them as well.

There's no time to rest on my laurels. This weekend is the biggie: First Union ("CoreStates" in our hearts). We have 72 grueling miles this year and World Cup points on the line. It's going to be great racing by over 100 of the best women in cycling.

Hope to hear and see you there.

Laura

ONWARD!

May 1999

Laura VanGilder

And Her Quest for The Saturn Cup

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

ONWARD--Minnesota and Virginia

A truly hectic schedule, some might say the life of a pro bike racer. Two time zones, several states, and three races.

It all began with two press conferences for First Union to plug their events in Lancaster and Trenton. Then it was off to Minnesota for the Tour de Wings, an event to benefit Children's Cancer Research

in St. Paul, Minnesota. Unfortunately, this national calendar race conflicted with the Clarendon Cup race in Virginia as well as several European races. Therefore, the turnout for the Pro and Women's field was small.

The prize list was generous; the event was a well-intended effort to develop a premier event for women, so I knew it was a race I wanted to support. Our field was small, 17 riders, and notable within it were Kendra Wenzel, Odessa Gunn (newly acquired by Timex), Karen Dunne, and myself. At the first prime, Odessa got a gap and held it for the whole race. Karen and I tried to bring her back and, by doing so, split the field and got a gap. Kendra was right with us so we had an uphill battle on our hands. We tried to get rid of Kendra by attacking her many times but, to no avail. In fact, when Karen attacked several times I was desperately chasing to not get dropped myself. Needless to say, with the wind, the hard course (a slight hill), and Kendra's fitness, we didn't catch Odessa or drop Kendra.

Odessa lapped us and actually brought the field up to us. It came to a field sprint and Kendra won it with Karen in 2nd and I came in next (for 4th).

I had hoped to sprint better against these girls and was disappointed. I felt sluggish during the race and questioned my fitness the whole flight home. I kept asking myself what I could have done differently. I had really hoped to beat one of them in the sprint. I decided that I had made the right choices during the race and that tomorrow was another day.

Another day another race, this one in Virginia. I left Minnesota immediately after crossing the finish line and flew to D.C. then quickly put my bike together and hurried off to bed .

Up bright and early Sunday morning for an 8 am race in Arlington (Virginia). Despite all this crazy traveling, I felt great on Sunday morning. The field was respectable in size and quality since this was both a National Race event and a Saturn Pro Tour event . Timex was there with three riders, Saturn with 2, Cox with 4, Team Delaware, Celestial Seasoning, Jogmate, and several other teams.

The course was fast and flat with six corners. We raced for 45 minutes and it was an animated race since there were big money primes on the line as well Saturn Teamwork Challenge sprints(4) with double points on the last of the four sprints.

I decided to go for the first STC sprint which was on the 2nd lap just to test my sprint and wound up 2nd to Jen Evans from Timex. The next STC sprint finished the same with me 2nd to Jen. The 3rd sprint found me away with Kendra (Timex) and although she wouldn't completely commit to working with me (she never does) we stayed ahead of the pack for the sprint. I knew it would be a close competition between Jen and I so I set my sights on the final sprint and decided to forgo any cash primes. Meanwhile the pace stayed high with Saturn attacking and prime laps being announced. With 5 to go the pack was together and the last STC was announced. Jen was on Kendra's wheel coming around the final corner, I came around them to nab the double points and win the STC competition.

Now we were down to the final laps of the race with all the teams trying to position themselves at the front for their riders. I knew that I needed to be at or near the front so that's where I went and got in behind Jen and Kendra. Nicole Rinehart was on my wheel, a definite threat, but a risk I was willing to take to be at the front. Out of the final corner I came off the Timex train and Nicole shot up the left side .She had the push to make it count and I just nipped Jen at the line for 2nd. I was so pleased with the outcome.

I felt I had raced my own race and been successful. My fitness was good, which was encouraging after the day before, and I rode a smart tactical race. The victory of the SaturnTeamwork Challenge was especially sweet considering I was a lone individual riding against other teams.

Following the awards ceremony I packed up and headed north to Kutztown (Pennsylvania) to their criterium. I knew I would be cutting it close but I like that race and I wanted to support it. Late in arriving , I missed the women's race but chose to do the Men's 123.

A small field of around 40, but a FAST race with an average speed of 27mph. Toward the middle to end of the race I worked my way to the front to reel in a group which did not include a Navigator jersey. It was a short, hard effort and I went cruising back for air. All this time Neal Stansbury was holding off the hard charging field, at times even increasing his lead. When Jeff Rutter and Josh Taylor went to the front I thought my legs might fall off and considered crying out for mercy. The field never let up and yet Neal stayed away. Paul Pearson and another rider also got off and stayed away for 2nd and 3rd.

With 2 to go I moved up to 4 riders back just behind Jonathon Resick. Then the pack swarmed again and I lost my position (I was also too tired to defend it). I drifted back to finish in the back of the field. As I looked toward the front I could see Jonathon sprinting to what looked to be a field victory (one fast young man).

It was a really good, hard race and I was happy my legs felt so fresh with so many race miles in them (not to mention travel miles). It can only help me in my quest for fitness for the First Union Liberty Classic in Philadelphia (which I recently found out

is 5 laps instead of 4). As a result, I have even been sleeping with my bike just to log training time.

I have seen my competition and ...well, they're breaking everyone's legs at Tour de Laude ... and guess what? ...they are all coming to Philadelphia.

I want to be prepared.

Laura

A BEAR OF A RACE

May 1999

Laura VanGilder

And Her Quest for The Saturn Cup

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

RACING AT THE BEAR--Bear Mountain, NY.

Hellertown and the Bear sounds like a winning weekend to me. Saturday found me racing in Hellertown (PA) with a field of approximately 30, a good turnout. The race started at a good tempo and then the attacks began. I decided to attack early in hopes that some of the stronger girls would follow. I had read about Katie Compton's recent mountain bike wins and was sure she was in her usual good form. She bridged up to me, and Tania Duff-Miller (NZ) followed.

Ten laps into the race, we lapped the field. Katie and I went through the pack without Tania. I stayed on Katie's wheel for the last lap and jumped around her out of the final turn to take the win.

Next up was the 35+ Men's race. I attempted to get away (as did others) several times but to no avail (there had been one rider off

the front since the first lap). With one-to-go, I got on Patrick Gellaneau's wheel and was third out of the last corner. Dave Margolin won the field sprint for second and I was 3rd, besting a good set of sprinters (Patrick, Chip Berezny, Art McQ).

Sunday was the Bear Mountain RR (NY), good preparation for the upcoming races in Delaware and Philadelphia; 56 hilly miles. We had a field of almost 40, as this was also the NY State RR Championships. There were also QOM points on three of 4 laps. On the second lap, after the QOM, the field split. Initially, there were two riders off for a few miles, with 56 of us chasing. After we caught them, we continued working together to establish a good gap. Each time up the hill was a fight for QOM points. Mina Pizzini and a girl from Metro were each in the hunt; I won one.

I decided I wouldn't go for the last QOM in case there was attack. Mina won the QOM and the other woman was second. Nothing transpired the remaining ten miles and 7 of us headed to the finish. With 1km to go, I found myself at the front. I wasn't concerned since it was a downhill sprint and I was watching the other riders. I felt confident that if they made a move I could cover it. Suddenly, a Canadian girl made an attack, I was on her wheel when she sat up and I jumped for the line. It was more than 200 meters to the finish, but it was my kind of sprint. I held off the field for the win.

It was good to see so many new and strong riders at this race; it's just what women's racing needs. In fact, both events this weekend were well-attended despite small prize lists and the racing was aggressive. Girls Rule!!!

Laura

RACING UNDER THE LIGHTS IN ATHENS

May 1999

Laura VanGilder

And The Saturn Cup

RACING UNDER THE LIGHTS--Athens, Georgia.

Athens Twilight Criterium, now in its twentieth year, is a big early-season race for those of us on the east coast. This year was no exception. The women's race had a field of at least sixty riders and was stacked with Saturn and Cox riders.

I find the course very challenging. There seems to be no place to recover; slight rises, false flats, fast downhills, and tight off-camber corners make this race a true test for fitness and skill.

The racing was fast and furious for most of the forty laps. Although, Saturn attempted to break away, they were brought back. At about sixteen laps to go, our race was neutralized due to a crash with a downed rider on the course. It was wise to neutralize but, unfortunately, they also counted down our laps to ten, which made our race basically a 10-lap race. When the crash occurred, the pack was strung-out and splitting up. The neutralization gave all those riders the opportunity to get back in and recover.

I had tried several times before this to get away with a Saturn rider, but they were not keen on working with me. With seven laps to go, Anna Wilson got away, then Nicole Freedman. They held this to the line, while the rest of us settled for a field sprint. Dede jumped to start the lead-out on the back side and Kendra got on her wheel. I was behind Kendra but then Jen Evans snuck in. I was fourth out of the last turn but managed to get around Dede and then Jen to place 4th.

Sunday's race in Monroe, GA was a very technical, six-corner downtown criterium. Saturn had left for Europe, so we were left to

duke it out ourselves. The racing was aggressive. I attacked and got off the front several times and again found that neither Timex girl would work with me. Well, if that was the way they felt, then I would take my chances sprinting with the whole pack, too.

With one lap to go, Lucy Tyler-Vinicome (yes the world track champion) came to the front. Unfortunately, Lucy was a bit timid and sloppy in the corners and Jen Evans got around her. Kendra was next and saw that Lucy was gapping Jen. With two corners to go, she yelled for Jen to go. At this time, Lucy decided that this particular turn was unnegotiable and proceeded to ride herself into the curb. She kept it up but certainly detained everyone. Coming out off this corner, I jumped to try to get Jen. It was quite a ways to go until the line but, it was my only option. Tina Mayolo nipped me at the line for 2nd.

Certainly a great weekend of racing. I was very pleased with my performance and preparation and aggressive riding. I also was happy that I didn't ride "Saturn's race" which is what tends to happen when they stack the field. These races put me in the perfect mindset to get going on the Saturn Pro Tour Series (currently I'm 8th) and the NRC.

See you all in Bethlehem.

Laura

HOT, HOT, HOT FOR SATURN POINTS IN MISSISSIPPI

April 1999

Laura VanGilder Sprints

Into A Brand New Season

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

HOT, HOT, HOT! Jackson, Mississippi.

Trustmark Lefleur a 45 minute criterium with Saturn cup points available, as well a NRC points. Add six Saturn riders to the mix, hot and humid weather, and you have the ingredients for a fast race. Thirty eight women came to race at Lefleur and Saturn came the most prepared with 6 riders; Cox also had a big team of 5 and Timex with 3. It was obvious that Saturn had the numbers to control the race. That was the case as one rider went off the from immediately. The pace was fast: We had sprint laps for points as well as premes. As soon as that rider was reeled-in, Saturn sent Anna Wilson. Soon, Suzy Pryde bridged-up and the field waited for the sprint for 3rd. I ended up 7th in the field and 9th overall. Definitely not as good a finish as I would have hoped. I needed to be more decisive about my position for the sprint and, in the end, was too far back.

I chose to fly home the next morning since there was no race for women on Sunday. I headed directly to Valley Forge for the Lower Providence Classic Criterium. The women's race was somewhat negative with everyone watching Mina Pizzini and me. Cassandra Ramirez got off the front for 2+ laps and I chose to try to get across to her. Becky Quinn and Mina were right with me, which was good, but soon the whole pack was back together for the field sprint. Becky was glued to my wheel anxious to outsprint me this year. Tanya Duff-Miller jumped between the 3rd and 4th corners and led us out. Becky jumped from about 300 meters and held me off to the line. Becky is a true sprinter and is sponsored this year by Shaklee who is focusing on their women's track team.

I chose to do the men's race for training and felt very good in that race. I was in the front of the pack often and felt comfortable. No breaks stayed away so the whole pack came into the finish for the sprint, which meant the last lap was a bit hairy. Positioning was the name of the game and I ended up around 20th.

I'm off to Georgia this weekend for the Twilight Criterium in Athens, another NRC race. A hard four-corner course with a brick section and a slight incline on each long straightaway and between the short corners. No place to hide at that race and no recovery either. My best finish there was 6th and I am hoping to improve that this year.

Laura