

Tri-State Velo

2000 News Archive

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RACING GENEVIEVE

may 2000

Sarah Uhl

Elite Junior Cyclist, 11-Time National Champion

Jiminy Peak, Massachusetts

Last year at about this time in May we made the first of many treks to New England to partake in the awesome bike racing opportunities it has to offer. We were headed to the Jiminy Peak road race starting at a western Massachusetts ski resort. Last year, it was my first time doing this particular race, so I did not know what to expect of the course or how the race would turn out. One thing I did know was many of the women I would be racing - the typical hard-core crew of about 50 or more women (which didn't include another 50 cat 4 women). Many faces were familiar, except there was one face nobody recognized. It was the face of the soon to be Junior World Champion from Canada. I remember Genevieve Jeanson taking off 15 miles into the race and nobody even thinking about chasing down the unknown skinny little girl. The field never saw that little girl again.

That little Canadian girl is no longer anonymous to women's cycling. As I stood on the start line of the Jiminy Peak road race one year later, everyone was murmuring to their teammates Genevieve this, Genevieve that. The recent Fleche Wallonne Feminine (Women's World Cup #3 in Belgium) winner was the talk of the day. By this time we all knew that she would be out to get us the same way she did last year. The lucky women 1/2/3 field

would get the chance to race her for round two. The rumor was out a week earlier that she might show up at Jiminy and her name was on everyone's mind. The field had other great racers like Emily Thorne, Katrina Frederick and the buzz was still Genevieve.

The race began and 50 women were fighting for one wheel. How annoying! Once it was confirmed which one she was through the racers' grapevine she was marked like no other. The pace was medium to fast in the beginning, all eyes were on Genevieve. I think the occasional attacks from other riders threw some off; they were 100% concerned with only the Canadian. At the appropriate time I moved to the front of the field and sat on Emily Thorne's wheel. As we approached the half way point on the long finish climb (the first of three 30k laps), the moto told all the women to calm down and move to the right because we were about to be passed by a men's field. Move to the right we did, but it was prime time for Genevieve to move forward as well. That was it, in seconds she made her decision and was gone. Caught off guard and perhaps in a class below her in fitness, the field chased but was unable to catch her.

The red blur of her inconspicuous jersey disappeared quickly as it did last year, but unlike last year, we knew it was gone for good. So the race was on for second place. Much better are your chances in a small breakaway than in the field so I initiated an attack and settled into a group of 5 strong women. We stayed away for the rest of the race, working hard the whole way, maybe dreaming that the 5 of us together would pull her in with the 60K we had to go. A dream it was. At the end of the 90K race, Genevieve gained over 6 minutes on the breakaway alone. How crazy is that? Mountains are her game, she smashed the women's record time up Mount Washington to win herself a new car, so she must have gained her time on the hills of Jiminy Peak. The finish was a 1K climb and our break broke into 3. Emily started to sprint and my legs were about to fall off but at that very moment I started to think about

how cool it would be if my name was next to the world champs on the results sheet. It was enough motivation for second place and my name was surely next to hers on the results... even if I was 6 minutes behind!!

TOUR OF WILLAMETTE: FINAL REPORT

April 2000

Laura VanGilder

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Charles Schwab Cycling Team

Eugene, Oregon

Willamette was more fun, challenging, and more beautiful than I expected. The climbs were quite challenging with every stage ending on a hill. As I may have mentioned before I seemed to have found my climbing legs for this race and I was quite glad since I would have really been struggling without them. Each day found the team faced with new challenges, flat tires, rain, cold weather, rain, rain, oh and rain. The first day of road racing found us finishing as a field on the final 1 mile hill. As the climbers floated away I managed to finish 25th out of 80, Catherine C. finishing top fifteen. The next stage was far out into BLM land on tree canopied roads with moss covered asphalt (or gravel). We were all anxious since we heard that in the Men's race there had been a 30 rider pileup just 4 miles into the race. I was very tense for those first four miles, and only managed to get confident enough to get to the front after 15 miles. The racing was aggressive and the attacks started, Schwab was in every move and eventually a seven rider break away was established including Elizabeth Emery from Schwab. Autotrader had two riders, Elita one, Timex one, and another rider (Tidewell was her last name). They managed to get over the QOM with a gap and headed into the final climb.

Elizabeth attacked the group hoping to get away and was reeled in. Autotrader exchanged attacks and Pam Shuster managed to gain 30 seconds on the group. The remainder of the group came in with Liz finishing 6th, putting time on the chasing field. It was good to have the extra time since there would be a double day coming up which featured an individual time trial. Liz is an accomplished time trialer so this would be a good day for her.

The next stage was 66 miles and had 4 climbs in it. The pack rode conservatively up the first climb since it was only 4 miles into the race. I was dropped on the next climb just short of the top and began my chase on the descent. I was quite confident descending and making good time. As I caught the caravan and attempted to pass I came around a corner too hot. I was on the outside, on the yellow line, and beside the caravan when I realized I was going too fast. As I attempted to slow down I immediately put myself into a slide. Quickly letting off the brake to right myself and then depressing it again, I knew I would not make the turn. Heading wide to the edge of the road I unclipped my foot and braced for the worst (I had seen several girls remounting their bikes after similar experiences). As I got to the edge of the road, somehow I came to a manageable stop, took a breath and restarted down the hill, amazingly enough only losing a few seconds. The caravan had witnessed all my antics and was sure that I would be coming face to face with the moss covered trees. I felt very lucky to have come away unscathed. I resumed my chase and after what seemed an eternity I caught the group at the feed. Once back on the flats (a relative term in this land), Saturn began attacking the field. Schwab was represented in most groups, but nothing seemed to stick. As we arrived at the long climb before the finish, I moved back through the field tired from all the chasing. I ended up finishing mid pack with our best placed finisher in 13th, Catherine. The team really seemed to be improving each day, it was very encouraging.

Our double day had arrived. An individual time trial in the morning, 9 miles flat and a 45 minute criterium in the evening. Our time trial began in the drizzle. We all thought the temperature warmer than it was and felt the cold throughout our ride. Liz ended up 2nd only 8 seconds from the winner, Marie 6th, and Catherine 9th. Three riders in the top ten an excellent day for the team. Cold and wet we returned home to rest for our evening race. It rained intermittently all day and we kept our fingers crossed for dry weather. As we waited to begin, the rain began in earnest and the temperature dropped 6 degrees. The 6 corner race was shortened to 30 minutes without protest from the riders. The gun went off and the racing was underway. Fast and strung out from the start, the riders were intent on keeping the race safe. I remained at the front with Elizabeth in an effort to stay out of trouble. The bell rang for a \$100 preme and I charged to the front (this race had a dismal prize list and I knew this would be my only contribution to the team earnings). I got the preme and remained up front. Soon after another \$100 preme was announced and the cash register rang in my head. I sprinted and won the preme with Petra Rossner hot on my wheel. She countered my move with Mari Holden, I did not have the strength to go with them and they immediately opened a gap. I was hoping the field would chase, but they did not and the gap increased. Three other riders got off and now we were racing for 6th. Elizabeth went to the front to bring them back. I struggled to remain in the front of the pack, but my earlier efforts were taking a toll. As the second group came back I was not in contention to win the field sprint and finished mid group. Liz had done a great job chasing to bring them back and covering moves throughout the race. In the end we were \$200 richer not a bad day.

Our final day was the longest and toughest of all. 80 miles with two of the toughest climbs in the history of the world (according to me). We would hit the first climb after 30 miles and top it at 40 miles. During this climb we would face a steep section, 2 miles

long and requiring a 25 cog (which still required you to stand). This was the most incredible climb I have ever ridden. I was dropped early and watched as our star climber, Catherine accelerate with the front group. As I struggled over the top, she floated away relishing the climbs ahead. The descent after the climb was even worse than the previous descents, very wet, completely green with moss and quite twisty. I took my time knowing what could happen if I rode beyond my limits. With only 10 miles in between, 4 of them descending, the second climb came up quickly. It was not nearly as steep but still quite daunting. I was with Liz and Marie. We settled into our own pace and soon Marie was gone moving away on the climb. Liz and I topped out together with a group and resumed another downhill chase on another moss and pine needle covered road. Soon only 25 miles remained on relatively flat roads. We were in a group of 6 and I was completely wrecked. I considered sitting on, but knew that would not be fair to the group. Everyone was interested in finishing this stage as soon as possible so we all rotated through. Rain came down and any time the road went up we groaned. In what seemed an eternity we finished. We had lost some time to the lead groups but we had finished. Catherine had remained in the front group. Two riders slipped off the front and Catherine tried attacking her group but she was not to get away. She finished in this group, an amazing accomplishment and feat of riding. Our tour was finished. Satisfied that we had all achieved our goals during this tour, we headed off to our homes encouraged about the races that lie ahead.

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. In 1999, 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.

TOUR OF WILLAMETTE: STAGE ONE

April 12, 2000

Laura VanGilder

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Charles Schwab Cycling Team

Eugene, Oregon

Just finished the first 60 mile road race and had an awesome day. I just felt terrific the whole day, staying up front covering breaks and climbing very well. On the Qom hill I was dropped just before the top (a group of 20 or so away) but then our group caught on. As we headed into the final mile hill I managed to climb out of my realm and I think I was in the low 20's with Suzy Pryde and some other good company. It is very beautiful here, kind of like Vermont with valleys and mountains. The roads seem to suit me and I was really happy with my fitness. Last night was a tough 1km climb that I thought I blew, since I could barely turn the pedals over at the top. In the end I ended up 19th, 10 seconds off of 1st and the best placed finisher for our team. Go figure. Tomorrow is a 52 mile race with plenty of hills. The field is big, 80 riders, and very well attended. I know I can only benefit from this race.

Laura

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NEW YEAR, NEW TEAM

April 2000

Laura VanGilder:

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Charles Schwab Cycling Team

Pocono, Pa.

Greetings to everyone. I am back racing on the East Coast again for a few weeks after a month long stint in California with my new women's team, Charles Schwab. It was a very exciting time in California getting to know my teammates and logging the miles, not to mention the hard, fast racing. I was glad to come back home despite the cooler weather to mix it up with the boys and girls on the east coast.

(photo credit:
Phil Marques)

I started out with some training races in Branch Brook park with the Masters and the 123's. Fast, fast racing with everyone looking quite fit after the winter. Next was the T-town training race which was also fast and windy. I managed to get away in the B race with some other guys, a QCW, 2 Target, and one other man. I ended up 5th based on the sprint points (every 5 laps). It was a great confidence booster after feeling not very strong racing in California.

This past weekend was the Ronde von Mullica race in NJ. A ten mile loop with a 2 mile section of dirt. Last year I managed to get stuck behind a crash and get mired in a few inches of soft dirt which ended my hopes. This year the dirt was a bit more fun but

still nerve wracking. The field was big, at least 75Cat. 123 men. The wind was howling on the home straight which made for speeds of 36mph. Since the course was flat, a headwind in the dirt section, and a short distance of 40 miles, the pack was content to stay together. Actually the pack was probably not content to stay together but that was the way the day would be. I tried to go for some of the lap prems with leadouts from my former Navigators teammates.

As we headed into our final lap on the dirt section, tension was high to remain at the front of the pack. Suddenly I found myself tipping sideways in some deep dirt, wrestling with the bike I somehow managed to right myself. It was a close call for me and those near me. A guy next to me said he fully expected me to go down. Heading into the last mile I remained at the front, fighting for position. I knew it was a tailwind, downhill sprint and it would be important to be near the front. Tempers and fists flared to the right as I went left hoping for an opening after the cone section. I started my sprint and headed for the line, the pack surged around me. I passed some guys on my way to the line and ended up in the top 15 or so.

I really enjoy racing with the men, especially honing in my sprint. They are always very supportive of me and I in turn try to remain a good sportswoman. It was important for me to come back home and race with familiar people on familiar courses. I found that I was doubting my fitness, my sprint, everything while I was in California. This was just the medicine I needed.

Now I'm off to Austin, Texas for the first BMC race of the season. Our team will do the Ride for the Roses the following day and then head to Tour of Willamette in Oregon. I must be a glutton for punishment since all the road race days have at least 3000-4000 feet of climbing. I keep repeating the mantra that "this will be good for me".

Laura

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BMC CRITERIUM:HOUSTON

April 2000

Laura VanGilder

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Charles Schwab Cycling Team

Austin, Texas

The BMC Downtown Criterium in Austin, Texas was the first in a series of four BMC events. It was also an important weekend for the Lance Armstrong Foundation. Six thousand plus cyclists were in town for the many events planned in support of cancer research. Gala dinners, silent auction, expos, races, and the famous Ride for the Roses with as estimated rider attendance of 6000.

(photo credit: Phil Marques)

Racing began Saturday. The women's event was a one hour race on a short, 1 km, four corner course. There was one hill followed by a downhill to the final two corners. The fifty rider field was well attended by the Saturn, Autotrader, Timex, and Schwab teams. It appeared that this would be an aggressive race from the start since

BMC was placing \$250,000 on the line to the rider who wins all four BMC events.

Between preme laps and Saturn Teamwork Challenge points sprints we would be sprinting almost every 3 laps. For the first STC sprint I was second. I won the second won. I decided I would keep working for these sprints since no other team was aggressively going for them. Winning the STC would award me a jersey and assure the team being recognized on the podium. Our team strategy was to cover early breaks and then with 20 minutes to go start attacking to achieve a break. Our plan did not pan out exactly as stated, but Marie and I managed to get in a break of 5 which was eventually reeled in. Then Elizabeth came to the front to prepare for the final laps. With a few laps to go Saturn started their train. When it left the station I was further back in the pack than I should have been and could not move up. The pace was high as we headed into the last two corners. I passed several people enroute to the finish but it was a mistake to be so far back after riding a good tactical race up until that point.

Saturn pulled off the win with Nicole Rinehart coming in for the victory and surprise lead out rider Clara Hughes hanging on for 2nd, Karen Dunne with Elita for 3rd. I was a distant podium finisher at 6th. I did however retain the Saturn Teamwork jersey and gained exposure for the team on the podium. As a team we are working hard at developing successful strategies, it has been difficult for us to accept defeat at some events but we are trying to learn from each race and build our team to be strong and unbeatable. All our riders are capable of winning races so now we just need to start doing that. So far our results have been good with many podium appearances in the California races. Right now we are looking for the big victory. Wish us luck.

Laura

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PSYCHOCROSS

October 1999

Laura VanGilder:

This is fun?

Laura VanGilder--Professional Cyclist, Navigators Cycling Team

Pocono, Pa.

Happy Fall!!! In my opinion this is one of the greatest times of the year. The temperature is perfect and the leaves are spectacular. I have been really enjoying my leisurely rides through the Poconos. Amazingly all the hills seem harder than I would have expected. How quickly fitness leaves us, it is hard for me to accept. I must remember that this is a time for rest and enjoying the time spent on my bike.

As winter approaches the days are getting short and the air a bit cooler, but this is nothing compared to real winter weather. Even though the real race season has finished, my boyfriend organizes a local cyclo cross race and I participate for the fitness benefits. It was hard to motivate myself for the first race since I had gotten out of "race mode". I was also familiar with the amount one suffers during these races and this was foremost in my mind. I struggled through our 8 lap race and finished a distant 6th, a bit disappointed. It was after this I vowed to do better . The area I felt I needed to

improve was the run. I felt it would be best to run on some trails so no one witness the spectacle of me attempting to run. Yes, sore would be the word to describe how my muscles felt afterward. My next ride felt tough due to the sore "running" muscles. Imagine, Andrea Ratkovic, a former marathoner, was doing runs before the Wendy's races in Ohio this summer. As if the race wouldn't be hard enough.

At our next cyclocross race, which was two weeks later, I had 3 runs under my belt and felt ready. I went with the early serge and stayed with the leaders throughout, chasing back on when I would get gapped. As we came into the finish, the two leaders gapped me on the run up and I ended up finishing in sight of them in 3rd.

This week was our third event and I was hoping to stay consistent and hang with the good riders. Our group at the front was four riders. The leaders changed each lap due to crashes and burnout. As we headed into the final 3 laps (of 9), Rick Ball and I had a gap. I charged around him (not knowing he had a flat) and tried to increase my lead. With two to go the gap had grown. I knew this could be short lived so I gave it my all and headed into the final lap. Across the finish line, I had done it, I won. Yes, Rick had flatted but the other guys who had been in the top five the previous weeks were a considerable way back. I am in 3rd overall for the series with one race left and it seems nearly impossible to move up or even win. But who knows, I could always improve. I guess I have finally learned to suffer. Cyclo cross is a true race of truth if you want my opinion. From the start you are anaerobic with lactic acid building in your legs. You never seem to get a chance to recover. I have the utmost respect for these racers. So lookout boys, next week I will be poised to win again. Until then I will enjoy my fall rides and hope the temperature doesn't drop too much. Happy riding.

Laura

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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