

By Dave Sheek:
www.outsideallday.com

History Made with SoCal's First UCI Cyclocross Race

Presented by: SCPS #3- C.I.C.L.E Cross and SCPS #4- The UCI Dam Cross

Damn windy, bumpy, and bloody hands express this past weekend for stops 3 and 4 of the Southern California Prestige Series (SCPS) as Southern California hosted its first ever UCI Cyclocross race. The events were held at the Hansen Dam Recreation Area which offered an impressive backdrop for UCI-level racing. This San Fernando Valley location is the home of last year's SCNCA district championships and the Hansen Dam Park's bowl-like features were a perfect setting for lots of dramatic racing action. The course designer, Jonathan Livesay, pulled out some of his course-design magic to create a top quality UCI power course consisting of 60% grass, 30% pavement and 10% dirt that demanded the most from its challengers!

The weekend forecast was for 80-degree weather but with the heavy winds and UCI-level racing things heated up quickly. CICLE Cross- SCPS #3 started the weekend with grassroots racing as Team CICLE showed racers how to pedal their way to a greener future. However, the Dam Cross- SCPS #4 on Sunday went down in history as the first ever UCI cyclocross race to hit Southern California.

Saturday, October 20, 2007- CICLE Cross

The jarring course was going to be fast, with the most pavement used on a course design this season, but forget about keeping that pace on the dirt. The hidden potholes and gopher homes made racers wish they had put chamois cream inside their gloves. Those who didn't wear gloves visited the onsite EMT's after the race to have their swollen, cut, and/or blistered hands cleaned and wrapped with gauze.

Racers pushed hard all weekend but it was the great battle of power between SOCAL racer, Brent Prenzlou, (Alan Factory Team) and Tristan Schouten (Planet Bike Team) who traveled from Wisconsin to challenge his friend that made the weekend really stirring. Saturday's Men's race was missing some customary names from the field including the father-son duo of Mark and Chance Noble, as the two

decided to save up their energy for Sunday's UCI event. However, with that said it was still phenomenal racing as Tony Cruz from Team Discovery (11th) and other UCI competitors like Shawn Harshman of Harshman Wealth/Primus Mootry (4th) joined the field. Mike Easter (Time Factory Team) attacked the two leaders until near the end. It was a strong pace for such grueling conditions as the strong winds and bumps took a toll on equipment and bodies.

In the Women's Elite it was Coryn Rivera of the Kahala - La Grange Team who took off strong to set the pace. The women stayed strong, holding together for the first couple laps as the conditions began to space the group. In the end it was Dorothy Wong of team CICLE (3rd) and Melodie Metzger (California Giant) who came back for her revenge, after her loss to Rivera at SCPS #2, as the three battled for the lead. It was Metzger who rode away with the win gapping from the lead group in the end.

Sunday, October 21, 2007- The UCI Dam Cross

SPCS #4 started with more of the same, dry gusty winds and a bumpy course but more hungry racers came out to the first ever UCI cyclocross event in Southern California. It started early with the grass roots racing. Racers were happy that the course had flattened out a bit from Saturday's races but the winds gained strength from the day before reaching up to 60mph. It was ridiculous. During one of the long straight-a-ways, the racers pedaled directly into the wind resembling brook trout swimming upstream.

But later as the Elite UCI races approached their start times, the winds died down and spectators and competitors pooled together on and along the course for what was some of the best UCI racing. Southern California might not have a lot of mud and snow in its cross season but what it lacks in weather it makes up for with tall grass on long sloping climbs, fast descents that lead into sandy rollers and a dauntingly rough course. In the second day of events, more elites stepped to the line in both categories.

The women approached the line first but the ranks were crowded by more Northern Californians than just Melodie Metzger (California Giant), the previous day's winner. Velo Bella's stars, Barbara Howe and Rachel Lloyd (Proman/Paradigm), joined the field. As elite women headed out, it was not young Coryn Rivera (Kahala - La Grange) who grabbed the usual lead but Metzger, Lloyd, Howe, and Wong (Team

CICLE) who piled together pushing Rivera back and led the first climb. It took some time for the group to break. First Dorothy Wong suffered from a flat, dropping her back until she could return to the pit and change bikes and get back on course. The delay cost her about two minutes off the lead group. Even with this magnificent loss of time, she still pedaled her way back through the pack to take an amazing fifth place for the day. The battle within the lead group continued without Wong as Howe, Metzger, Lloyd and Rivera rolled through. Halfway through the race, Lloyd pulled away from the group and never looked back. She continued her attack and opened a huge gap which kept her in the lead to earn a win. Second for the day was Barbra Howe, closely followed by Metzger in third.

The Men's Elite heated up quickly as racers warmed up to the excitement and cheering from the women's event. And, like the women's field, more racers stepped to the line to earn their valuable UCI points. The racing was awe-inspiring and the battle in the top ten was tough through more than half the race. It was the powers of the Alan North America Rider, Brent Prenzlou and friend Tristan Schouten (Team Planet Bike) who challenged the lead. Most thought the two would not be able to keep up the pace because of the previous day's event. The top ten was rounded out by Mark Noble (Time Factory Team), Chance Nobel (California Giant), the up-and-coming Frederick Bottger (Team Bearclaw), Jason First (Voodoo), and Mike Easter (Time Factory Team). Everyone in the group pulled each other and attacked until the leaders were finally able to shake some of them loose and a few of the riders began to drop back. It quickly became evident that Prenzlou, Easter and Schouten were the strongest riders of the day. The three took off, separating the lead group into two and continued their clash until the Time rider, Mike Easter, let off the gas and held on to his magnificent third place for day two of racing. Again, it was Prenzlou and Schouten who came through with an amazing finish down to the final sprint but it was Team Planet Bikes, Tristan Schouten, who took the gold with Brent Prenzlou in Second.