

SoCal does it again with its Second UCI Cyclocross Race



By Dave Sheek: www.outsideallday.com

SCPS #6- C.I.C.L.E Cross and SCPS #7- The UCI Dam Cross

It was another Damn bumpy cross race this past weekend for stops 6 and 7 of the Southern California Prestige Series (SCPS) as Southern California hosted its second 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 first California UCI, C2 cross event. The Hansen Dam Park's bowl-like features were a perfect setting for plenty of striking racing. Series Promoter, Dorothy (DOT) Wong, pulled together another great UCI, C2 event by presenting a race with her Green SCPS, as it is completely run on solar energy (powered by: Energy Efficiency Solar), a lot of recycling, yummy organic/wholesome goodies from the green truck and rewards to competitors who practice their greenest efforts each week.

The course this weekend was the magical challenge 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 course is a true love/hate relationship amongst competitors as they can be eaten alive by the physical demands of Dam Cross. It is the type of course I would like to see a few more stars like Kona's Twin Towers (Wicks and Trebon) or CyclocrossWorld.com's Triplets (J.Powers, Driscoll, and Johnson) come to try.

The weekend forecast was for 80-degree weather, which was seen Saturday with temperatures reaching almost 90-degrees but with the heavy winds Saturday night really cooled things down for Sunday's UCI competitions, around 60-65-degrees. CICLE Cross- SCPS #6 started the weekend with grassroots racing as Team CICLE showed all how to pedal their way to a greener future. However, the Dam Cross- SCPS #7 on Sunday went down with another fantastic UCI cross race, one that should be considered as a UCI, C1 event or an additional stop to

the USGP series in this ever-growing sport.

Saturday, November 8, 2008- CICLE Cross

The jarring course was again to be fast, with the most pavement used on a course design this season. However, it looked like the gophers had another good season as their hidden potholes and holes made racers wish they had front suspension or put Vaseline inside their gloves. Those who didn't wear gloves paid the price again but most racers learned on day one.

Racers pushed hard all weekend but it was the great battle of power between SOCAL series leader, Brent Prenzlou, (Celo Pacific/Alan) and Chris Jones (Sonic/Jittery Joes) who traveled from Colorado to challenge the series leader and gather more UCI points which 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. But, with that said it was still exceptional racing as Jones and others in town for the UCI weekend joined the Elite field. The racing Saturday was a strong pace for such grueling conditions as the heat and bumps took a toll on equipment and bodies. In the end it was Prenzlou who made a last lap move to pass Jones and capture the first win on the weekend, with Sid Taberlay (RockNRoad) rounding out the top three.

In the Women's Elite it was another SPCS series leader, Coryn Rivera of the Redline Factory 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 Kari Studley (Velo Bella) who finished 2nd as the three battled for the lead. It was Rivera riding away with the win for the first of the Dam races on this UCI weekend.

Sunday, November 9, 2008- The UCI Dam Cross

SPCS #7 started with more of the same, dry weather as gusty winds and a bumpy course were alive to hurt the hungry racers who came out to the second UCI cyclocross event in Southern California. The day 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 30mph in the later afternoon. During one of the long straight-aways, the racers pedaled with a nice tailwind on their back resembling road-racing paces even with their knobby tires.

But later as the Elite UCI races approached their start times, the winds picked up with spectators and competitors pooling 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 or a commandingly rough course like the UCI Dam Cross.

The women approached the line first with more than just SCPS competitors crowding the ranks, as last years event winner, Northern Californian Rachel Lloyd (Cal Giant) joined the field. Along with, Velo Bella's stars Kari Studley and Shannon Gibson, Barbara Howe who is now racing unattached, and Kristi Berg of Team Redline, who came down to support her teammate and rising star, 16 year old, Coryn Rivera . As elite women headed out, it was not young Coryn Rivera to grab the usual lead but Lloyd, followed by Rivera and 17 year old Kendal Ryan (Team CICLE) who piled together pushing the field back and led the first climb. It took some time for the group to break. The battle for the lead was not highly contested as Lloyd and Rivera rolled through. Halfway through the race, Lloyd pulled away from the group and never looked back. She continued her attack to open a huge gap which kept her in the lead to earn her second SoCal UCI win. Rivera and others might have just gone out too strong as somewhere along the way Howe and Studley, who battled it out with Rivera to the finish on day one, made their move to pass Rivera. In the end second for the day was Barbra Howe, closely followed by Studley in third, and the Redline Women Rivera fourth and Berg to round out the top five.

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 the entire race. It was looking like it was going to be the powers of the previous day Brent Prenzlou (Celo Pacific/Alan), Chris Jones (Sonic/Jittery Joes) and Sid Taberlay (RockNRoad) who challenged the lead but the field was stacked. This was the West Coast Showdown...SoCal, NorCal, Washington, Utah, Texas, with riders such as Bart Gillespie (Monavie/Cannondale), Russell Stevenson (Redline), Justin Robison (CalGiant) and others stepping to the line. The pace was fast and quickly set by Stevenson who blew open a gap on the field less than halfway through the first lap. Stevenson was commanding the race like he has this season in his home state of Washington. But, the dry Californian air would not allow him to keep his blistering pace long. In the third lap Chris Jones and Chance Nobel (Cal Giant), U23 and SCPS star, made a break for Stevenson. It was a close one for Nobel but he just could not close the gap on Stevenson. Jones, however, caught Stevenson who was happy to grab onto his wheel for a little break from the winds. While the top three were putting out some of the most impressive speeds not far behind was the first chase group and the real battle on course. It was Taberlay, Mark Nobel (Bailey Bikes), Prenzlou, Gillespie, Robinson, Ryan Iddings (LaPierre), Gary Douville (Team Platinum) and another U23 Jeremy Ferguson (CalGiant). The battles where close at first with the group working well

together chasing down the top three but that soon turned into just a group of attacks as they were changing positions in the group so much it was hard to tell who was going to lead through the next turn.

The race finally came down to the end with Stevenson and Jones on the last lap, with Jones putting his final moves on Stevenson, much like Prenzlow did to him on Saturday, as Jones bursted down the last two technical sections opening more than a 20 second gap for the win. Stevenson, who also showed some of the most impressive racing finished second with the days, U23 favorite, Chance Nobel in third. In the second group it was still up for grabs, as they had brought themselves down to a much smaller group. It was Taberlay who put in the last attack much like that of Jones to give him enough space to get to the finish for fourth. But, hot on his heels were Mark Noble and then Robinson who sprinted it out to the finish. Following close it was Bart Gillespie, who unfortunately had to ride in on a flat, and Prenzlow seventh to round out the days top battles.

It was another great festival of racing in SoCal with our great weather, competitors, fabulous sponsors and eco-friendly green series for the UCI Dam Cross weekend. I wish it was 2009 already so we could see who will show up to next years event and which sponsors will step up to the plate allowing this series and race to grow to the next level.