



REPORT FROM CROSS FEVER #1: HART PARK CX

By Dot Wong

Sunday, January 4th was race #1 of the inaugural SoCal 'Cross Fever Series -- all events taking place in January 2009 and showing off cyclocross racing at its finest on some of the best courses southern/central California has to offer! Sam Ames and the Kern Wheelmen Bicycle Club kicked off 'Cross Fever with the classic Hart Park CX event in Bakersfield, brought to you by Action Sports, Glinn and Giordano Physical Therapy, Guinn Construction and Bidart Farms.

The rains passed throughout the holidays and a couple days prior making the parcourse the best its been in years. Green grass and awesome soil conditions treated racers to the classic style Euro course that Bakersfield is famous for and brought with it a little taste of Belgian-like slippery conditions taking its share of victims in the turns and off-camber hillsides. Ample pavement at the start led riders into the twisting grass downhill and off camber sections followed by technical twists, turns and wide open power sections. The true test on the day lied in the three run ups strung together in succession. While not very long, they were challenging and proved to be the deciding factor before the start finish.

Competitors came from across the region from Fresno to San Diego, many still trying 'cross for the first time. The event also drew notables like Brent Prenzlou (Celo Pacific/Alan) who said he wouldn't miss it being a part of the series celebrating cyclocross and the finale of the 2008-09 season! Brent had a successful day winning all three events he entered in commanding fashion, though he was challenged by some new faces to SoCal'Cross including David Rous, Ryan Rickard, and Brian Monroe of Team AIAGE in the masters 35+ men's race.

New racers in the Juniors and Women's 3/4 fields is always a treat to watch and the women's 3/4 race did not disappoint with the most exciting finish if the day, as Emily Georgeson outsprinted Erika Noel at the line! The two stayed together for the entire race and both women loved their first experience with cyclocross! Junior 15-18 Men's winner Jacob Dodge (Team Vapor) from Fresno raced for the first time on a Jamis Nova Pro CX demo bike and loved it! Jacob was a natural and won his race, but he didn't have enough duking it out in the men's 3/4 race later that day! Local favorite, Junior 10-14 Women's winner, Christina Fuentes (Simply Fit/Action Sports) took her Felt road bike, complete with road tires on the slippery course and her cool demeanor brought her in first place and clean too! Christina's pit crew (her family) was there to greet the smiling future star of cycling! SoCalCross Prestige Series winner 10-14 Jr Men, Joshua Said from Huntington Beach and 'Cross Fever #3 host club Velo Allegro, used his cycling AND surfing skills to win his race.

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In the masters 55+ race, Bob Llamas (Team MBS) took the victory. Bob was using this race as a tune-up for UCI Masters CX World Championships in Belgium on January 24th along with R.Lee Wilmore (Celo Pacific). Both Bob and Lee are National CX Medalists and it will be exciting to see how our two SoCal men do!

In the elite Women's race, Sarah Kaufmann (Roaring Mouse) on her Christmas gift to herself, a Redline Conquest Team bike, won the first cyclocross race of 2009 in commanding fashion. Her consistency on course kept her away from her chasers leading the race after taking the lead from veteran crosser Dot Wong (CICLE) and Colorado visitor and triathlete, Molly Hummel. Sarah is using CX for weekly intensity training in preparation for her upcoming Pro MTB race season!

In the elite Men's race, a quality field of riders took off and stayed together until the infamous triple threat hill climbs stretched the field and finally broke apart the race with Brent Prenzlou and his steady strength and solid form won the day! Race Director, Sam Ames (Action Sports) had a solid race and was cheered on by his friends and family to a strong 2nd place finish. Ray Stephen (Steven's Bicycle Racing) from Fresno completing the podium finishing 3rd -- don't miss the Lou's night race in Fresno on 1/31, by the way.

And just when you thought it was over, the highlight of the day, it was time for the Bidart and Ablin Hillclimb Challenge! Racers, fans and all had a chance at \$100 CASH...first one to the top of an amazing run up climb that rings the bell wins! Brent Prenzlou won for the second straight year taking the traditional switchback route, while his challengers including race director, Sam Ames tried some shorter routes directly up the steep mountain face.

Thanks to our great product sponsors: Action Sports, 53x11 coffee, Kool N Fit Sport, Vitalyte, Protech Skin Care, Voler Team Apparel, Bare Naked Granola, Thule and Warner Springs Ranch, racers were awarded some really great prizes throughout the day!

Grand Prize drawings in the Cross Fever Series include: a Bailey Bikes CX frame, a SRAM Rival Crankset, a 2-night stay at Warner Springs Ranch in San Diego, goodies from SDG, Planet Bike, Michelin and more!

Complete race results can be found at www.CrossFever.org
Race photos from the race can be found at LA Sports Photo and SoCalCross Photo of the Week.

Next up Nimble Creative and SLO/Nexus cycling team will host the first ever cyclocross race on the central coast at Talley Vineyards in Arroyo Grande. Bring your family and friends for the weekend of racing, vacationing and wine tasting. Special hotel rates are available. Check out details at: www.CenCalCycling.com

More info on SoCal'Cross Fever Series can be found at: www.CrossFever.org or www.SoCalCross.org

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