

From: Campbell, Michael  
Sent: 4/28/2014 5:35:57 PM  
To: Dietz, Sidney (/O=PG&E/OU=Corporate/cn=Recipients/cn=SBD4)  
Cc:  
Bcc:  
Subject: FW: Wente Race Report

LIVERMORE, CA. April 26, 2014.

### Summary

**Food:** 2 coconut macaroons and a banana 2 hours before race, 2 scoops superstarch during race in one water bottle, leftover Chinese noodles at home and ravioli w/ gorgonzola sauce & bottomless wine for dinner.

**Race:** Nearly came off second to last lap, but didn't, then botched the sprint to the line horribly.

I'd been looking forward to this race for two years. I was eager to do it last year, but I wasn't ready due to a broken collarbone. This year with the C510 morning pain train up Tunnel, I was thinking I was as ready as I'd ever be. I love Wente. It is hard. It is pretty. It is windy. My first road race ever was as a cat 4 here in 2001, and I went too early on the final hill and finished 7<sup>th</sup>. I'd been in a long breakaway in 2003 and got caught within sight of the line. I'd been dropped awfully on the third lap when I tried to return to racing in 2008. Often wente is my first race of the year. This year it was my fourth, and I was lighter than I'd ever been for it.

I got to line up with Phil and Alex for the cold start (low 50s). The cat 3 group was about 60ish riders I'd guess. Like Zamorra, the field seemed to be 30% squadra boys. Our race was five times up the Altamont hill, four complete laps of the course, for approx. 65 rolling and windy miles. The final is with a cross tailwind, and in the race where I got detached, it was in the rollers after the big hill with the cross tailwind where I got gapped and fell off. I knew I needed to be near the front each lap in that section to stay out of trouble.

Two non-squadra riders attacked the first time up the hill. This made the first hill hurt a lot

more than I'd remembered, but it could have been that I was in my big ring, but I shifted down when I realized it towards the top of the steep pitch when the group started to slow a bit. I thought that was a good sign. The two got a gap, and got themselves out of sight. This race was a lot more negative like my usual experience of Cat 3 races. Folks would try to attack, and there would be a big surge, then they'd get caught, then the bunch would slow (dangerously sometimes), and then the cycle would repeat. The two stayed up the road and were still clear with two laps to go, and the squadra boys started pushing the pace, burning out their riders. In so doing, they'd string out the field and started to ping people of the back. The race also got a lot safer. No matter what they did though, Alex was looking strong and seemed to effortlessly stick in the top 15. Meanwhile, I was falling back when the surges would happen, then roll back to the front when the wind direction would change or the pace would let up.

The last time up the climb, the two were in sight and the pace was punishing me. We caught the two at the top of the main climb, and the pace stayed high. I'd drifted too far to the back and saw gaps opening. I was 100 yards from the pointy end, and was concerned my race could fall apart right there. I had to dig, and kept coming around riders that were popping, only to barely catch on at the top of the first decent. I tried to move up through the decent as best I could, even though riders were fanned across the road, because there was a left hander at the bottom that went into another cross-tailwind climb that was a bitch if you were too far back.

At this point in the race, Velominati rule #5 was going through my head. "Harden the Fuck Up." You see, mental weakness is my biggest challenge. When it starts to hurt, and it takes grit to hold the wheel, my brain says: "why do you care so much about this wheel? Why not slow down, catch your breath, go to the car, and find the nearest bacon-cheeseburger?" So, as I moved to the front on the crosswind section (there was plenty of room on the lee side in the gutter), I was giving myself a pep talk. "Everyone hurts. It doesn't get easier, just faster. If I hurt, they hurt. If it hurts, go harder. Just harden the fuck up and get to the line!"

And with that pep talk, I wheeled myself into third wheel as we turned right for the final trip up the climb. On the flattish leadout, two riders surged ahead, and I let a third close the gap, with me on the wheel. It didn't do much other than string things out and burn a portion of a match, but it did settle things down, and a hard tempo was being set, with me happily in the top ten. As we turned right again for the steep section, I once again focused on rule #5.

Around the corner, and everyone is out of the saddle, trying to surge forward. The sound of downshifts was like strange metallic popcorn. The but rule #5 wasn't working. A group of about 20 was slowly pulling away. I knew it was a long way to the finish with a false flat tailwind, so I kept it at a max pace I could hold. Near the crest of the steep section, to my

amazement, I was closing the gap on the 20 riders. They were seriously slowing down. In a flash I was moving around them in the gutter, and at the feed zone area, I just kicked it and pulled past. I surged by, feeling that rush of awful and wonderful that only happens in races when your nose is finally in the wind – then I looked up. Fuck. The finish line was another 300 yards away. At least. And although I had a gap, I was dying. And then I didn't have a gap, I had five on my wheel. And I tried to dig some more, and nothing happened, and they rolled by. I had enough time to watch them in slow motion pull away. I sat down. The group was 40 yards ahead. It was over. I recovered for about five seconds. Then I remembered rule #5, and I tried to put it in the big ring, but I failed that shift. So I just stood up and powered away. Again I was accelerating in an anaerobic lactic fog, and again I was closing – fast. Fast enough to catch the tail end of the bunch and weave through a few spent riders falling off the back.

My guess was I finished near the top 20. My guess was pretty good. Final results had me at 23<sup>rd</sup>.

My lesson is to wait until after my brain says it is too late. And then wait some more. I really suck at this finishing a race thing. But it's fun, and I'll be back for more. Maybe Hamilton or Berkeley hills?

Next Race: Boggs on a 2 person coed team with my wife. At least in mountain biking, I don't have to be smart in the final 300 yards – at that point, the race is usually long since decided.