

2 Hrs From Anywhere

Unless someone decides to take on the Michelin Classic in mid-October, this may be your last Masters Race report of the year. This may be music to your ears as some of you may be more than happy to have a several month hiatus from our cycling exploits.

To start things off, I was convinced to do this race by Matt Mason and Dave Petree. Not just for the racing, but for the social aspects of an event like this. Usually the "Cup" denotes the end of my season, glad I change my mind and did this event as it may be the last year it is held. Unless another organizer steps up to the plate, this beautifully organized 3 day omnium (TT, RR and Crit) will not be on the calendar next year. That would be very unfortunate given that there are questions as to whether the French Broad omnium will be held or not.

Special thanks to Dave and Sharon Petree who secured our resting place for the weekend. A secluded 3 bedroom farmhouse nestled beside a bubbling creek near Hayesville NC. In addition to securing accommodations, Dave and Sharon carefully prepared four perfectly hand-tossed pizzas for dinner on Saturday night.....If you need concierge services, the Dave and Sharon are the real deal! I now know why Dave and Matt like this event so much. It is an excuse to get away from home with some friends and do some story telling, beer drinking', good food eating and share some laughs.

The support of our wives and the Mason duo outnumbered the racers, Dave and I. Also staying with us is the winner of the "all time great guy" award Kent Williams. Most of you don't know Kent, but he raced for Cane Creek and Smith Barney for years and this year is riding for ABRC. Kent, while a fierce competitor of ours on the road, is a good friend and a great conversationalist.

The racing began on Friday with what they call a 9 mile TT (we think it is a bit shorter). Dave Petree ripped a time good enough for 2nd place in the 45+ category, only to be beaten by prior world time trial champion David Grice. My time was 1:15 slower than Dave's and was only good enough for 9th in the 35+ (typical). The goal going into day two's road race was to protect Dave's 45+ second-place.

The hilly road course proved to be catastrophic for most of the field. Starting with around 45 racers the final hill, about a half mile in length and

around 14%, quickly dispensed of weaker riders, and those that did not prepare properly and bring enough gearing....(yours truly). The field whittled down to about ½ its original size after only 1 lap! Dave managed to get around the course with what was left of the main field to finish 5th in his category. This was enough to keep his second-place in the overall. I finished, off the back for a lonely 12th place in the 35+ category.

Moving into day three, Dave was 2nd overall in the 45+ category and I was 9th in the 35+ category. What we had to do was clear, protect Dave's 2nd place in the overall.

Day three's downtown Hayesville criterium was a scream. .6 miles in length with 4 fast corners and one slight hill to the finish was single file from the gun. Mathematically the only way for Petree to win the overall was to win the race and for Grice not to finish. Knowing this, the goal of the day was clear, keep Dave out of trouble and protect his second-place in the overall by marking David Grice the overall leader.

Dave and I swapped turns marking Grice. Our hope was that Grice would go and take Petree with him knowing that even if Petree finished in front of him he could not beat him in the overall. Grice would never pull the trigger and give it 100% to stay away. About half way into the race Patrick Britain took off solo and stayed away (barely) for the win. With one lap to go and the pace slowing I attempted to get Dave on my wheel for a full last lap lead-out. With communications not clear I moved beside Dave and accelerated hard into turn one, then turn two. What I did not know was that Dave had been boxed in when I made this move and was unable to get on my wheel. With my head down I headed into turn three and four at the front of the field. Sprinting hard for the line I was passed by two riders at the line leaving me 4th on the day. Dave finished near the front of the field securing his 2nd in the overall.

At the end of the day Dave collected his three daily winnings as well as a nice check for 2nd overall. I moved up 3 places to 6th in the overall, collecting a decent check for the day's results.

The weekend was a tremendous success for the team. With Matt Mason making the 5+ hour drive and being at every event giving insightful advice, hand-ups and cheering us on epitomizes what a teammate is all about. I hope for the sake of fun weekends this race continues next year. If it does, you can be assured I will be trying to convince as many of you as possible to make the drive for one great weekend of relaxation with friends with a little

racing thrown in.

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