

Going into the 3rd weekend of the Perry Dam Series, I was 2nd overall with 20 points. Kenneth Pike (CPC) was in 1st with 21 points, and his teammate, Peter Oien was in 3rd with 12 points. This meant that if he got more than 8 points and I didn't improve on my 7 points from the first week, he would overtake me in the overall. I was pretty happy with 2nd overall, but obviously wanted to move up into 1st place. As Skittles and I rolled up to the line, Oien was telling Pike who was who so they were obviously aware of the situation and we were marked from the start. Skittles and I knew what was up already so we were just chilling at the start.

As soon as the whistle blew, Vance Fletcher (ISCorp) attacked down the hill and James covered it. Vance wasn't a threat to me though, so I didn't really react much. The group responded pretty quickly and we were all back together on the dam. My plan was to let any breakaways go that didn't have one of the CPC guys in it and to get as many KOM points as I could in the process. I knew with the tailwind up the hill, it was going to be a really difficult day for me, and would favor the better climbers. The first time up the hill was pretty fast, but I felt surprisingly good. The next lap consisted of me sitting in a bunch more while James tried to keep me protected. At some point, I ended up on the front and one of the Colavita guys attacked and went off the front. That was perfect for me and I didn't respond at all. A couple of Colavita teammates were near the front too and just let their guy go. Eventually some other guys came to the front and picked up the pace, but by this time, the breakaway rider had a very decent gap. A Chamois Butt'r guy kept coming to the front and trying to chase. I sat on his wheel and let him pull and pull and pull. He'd slow down and flick his elbow for me to come around and I'd just slow down with him and sit on his wheel. Eventually he got me to come around him so I just went to the front and soft pedaled as long as people would let me. My heart rate was comfortably in the 140's (very low for me during a race) and the breakaway rider continued to pull away. Another Colavita rider came to the front to relieve me of my duty and set a similarly slow tempo. The Chamois Butt'r guy came back up again and yelled "Come on, if we all just take 20 second pulls we can get this guy!" He seemed mad at me and I just told him "I'll give you a hint. I don't give a #@% about that guy up the road." He realized he was practically on his own chasing the guy down and seemed a bit demoralized.

For the next couple of laps, the CPC guys traded off attacking the group. James and I had to take turns covering every attack they made, but were doing fine. The 4th lap was the KOM lap. The Colavita rider was still off the front so he was going to take the KOM and the 4 points that go with it. That left 2 or 1 points up for grabs for the rest of us. My biggest goal on the KOM was to make sure I didn't let Peter Oien get the 2 points. Ideally he wouldn't get any points. As we rounded the corner to the climb up the hill, Oien went to the front and set a hard pace up the hill. I immediately positioned myself next to him as we climbed. We began the 2nd pitch up after the false flat on the hill and I kept my eyes glued to his right hand so if he was getting ready to shift for the sprint to the line. He clicked a gear and I popped out of the saddle to go...but Oien didn't pick up the pace very much. It turns out he didn't realize we were on the KOM lap so he was just setting a hard pace up the hill like he always does. As we continued climbing, James yelled at me from behind because Kyle Skinner (Bicycle Shack) was

coming up hard on the left. As soon as James yelled, I clicked a gear and began my sprint to the line. Skinner came around and passed me by about a half bike length and then I matched his speed. I clicked another gear and gained about 6 inches on him. A few seconds later, I clicked another gear and gained another 6 inches or so, but he was still in front of me with the line coming up quick. I clicked one more gear and gave whatever was left and threw my bike across the line. I'd managed to just nip him at the line and took 2 KOM points. Peter Oien ended up with no points from the KOM. Along with my 2 points, I'd also ramped my heart rate up over 200bpm.

As Skinner and I crested the hill and headed down the other side, we kept pushing the pace because we had a gap on the field. This is how I got in a winning breakaway the week before so I figured I might as well do it again this week. Unfortunately, we got caught about a quarter of the way across the dam, effectively giving me a lot less time to recover from my KOM sprint with nothing to show for my effort after getting those points. It was a bad move and I should have just sat up as soon as I crossed the line. There were more attacks launched by the CPC guys on this lap. Kenneth Pike attacked a little bit before the hill, which was very bad for me. I absolutely had to match his attacks since I stood a decent chance at the overall series win with a high placing at the finish of this race. He apparently didn't even try at the KOM and was feeling much better than me at this point I'm sure. Every time up until now, I felt moderately comfortable leading up to the hill. This time, after chasing Pike down, I was already going hard at the bottom of the hill. Pike and I had a bit of a gap on the field at this point so I made another error in trying to keep the pace high on the hill so we could get away from the field and finish in a 2-man breakaway. I cracked a bit near the top of the hill this time and everybody passed me and started riding away. I yelled at James a few times to wait for me and help me get back to the group, but he didn't hear and I watched him ride away with the group. I was freaking out a bit when Kyle Skinner, the guy I'd beat in the KOM sprint, came by me and said "come on dude, hang on to my wheel." He pulled me over the crest of the hill and we teamed up to hook back onto the group just after the bottom of the hill.

At this point, I knew I was in trouble. We had 3 more trips over the hill and I needed to recover somehow, but the CPC guys kept on attacking. Again, Kenneth Pike attacked before the hill, putting me in a lot of trouble going into the hill. I should have let him go, but I tried to go after him again. I never made it up to him and then the group swarmed me and went around me at the bottom of the hill. I sat in on the hill as much as I could and was with the group through the false flat. Once things pitched up again, I began going backwards with James yelling at me to grab his wheel. I quickly found myself off the back again. I told James to go ahead and make sure Peter Oien didn't finish in the top 3. James went up the road chasing the group with me 100m or so behind. James caught the group sometime shortly after the turnaround at the end of the dam. I caught them on the road below the dam, just before the small rise over the spillway. That left me with hardly any recovery time to get ready for our 7th time up the hill. James said his leg was cramping and I was right there with him. Every time my left leg would come up the back of the pedal stroke, I wasn't sure if my calf would lock up or not. Soon after that, both legs were feeling that way. I think Kenneth Pike

had attacked again and was off the front by himself, which was actually a good thing because that took points away from his teammate, Oien. As we made the turn to climb the hill again, I told James not to wait for me this time. I popped a lot closer to the bottom of the hill this time, but tried to keep a reasonable pace up it to maybe catch back on again and challenge for the final sprint. James popped on the hill not long after me and we were both left chasing again for the entire 8th lap. As I rounded the corner at the end of the dam this time, I passed by the Colavita rider that had gone off the front near the beginning of the race. Shit!!! That meant more points were up for grabs for the main group. I kept pushing and chasing after James, making up ground very slowly, if at all. We were both riding hard, and at a pretty good pace, but would never catch the group.

As we climbed the hill the final time, I watched James zip up his jersey and tried to zip up mine. It was useless. I was so dizzy and out of sorts, I couldn't safely ride for more than a few seconds with no hands. I climbed to the finish and just hoped that Peter Oien hadn't gotten enough points to take over 2nd place. Since he started the race with 12 points and got no KOM points, he needed to finish 1st or 2nd to get the points to overtake me. Unfortunately he finished 2nd and ended up with 21 points, tying his teammate for 1st overall. His teammate, Kenneth Pike, who had gone on a breakaway on the last lap said he cracked and was cramping. Had he stayed away, Peter Oien would not have gotten the points to overtake me. If the Colavita breakaway rider had stayed away, Oien wouldn't have gotten the points to overtake me. Basically, a lot of stuff didn't go the way I needed it to, but I still ended up 3rd overall. The CPC guys were very strong and rode a good race. James and I did a butt ton of work in this race and it took its toll. The CPC guys came into the race with the advantage and rode smart. I think if James and I had one or two more teammates in the race to help cover some of the attacks, we would have fared a whole lot better, but with just the two of us having to cover so much, we were screwed.

Nice job to all the other racers this weekend too. Big D had a good showing overall. I'm glad Perry is over though, as that is just not my kind of race. James might disagree, but I think we both over-performed at this race. I'm happy with the overall result, but had I gone into the last week with the plan of just holding onto 2nd overall, I would have probably kept it. Trying to take over 1st place killed me. I don't generally believe in racing for 2nd place though so it's all good. I averaged 30 more watts than in the previous weekends and it was for an extra half hour so I guess I'm getting stronger which is a good thing.

Some numbers from the race:

Totals

Duration: 1:52:05

Time Riding: 1:48:36

Distance (miles): 39.4

Averages

Speed (mph): 21.8

Power (watts): 285

Heart Rate (bpm): 174