

Season recap 6-18

Hello everyone, especially all the OFBITS team supporters on the trip to Spain,

One of my old riders, now a team supporter in NYC told me that he enjoys my call each February when he asks how the team looks. He says I tell him, "Oh man, it's great. It may be the best team I've ever had!" He mentioned that I seem to say that every February, not remembering that it said it last February. I don't know if that's true but I do know that, to me, they are getting better each year.

This year is no exception. We started the season later than a lot of teams but that's because we want to be racing well in August when it matters and not used up in June. Most of us started with a spectacular training camp at Jeff and Doris Muir's house in the north Georgia mountains in April. We were missing three team members for different reasons. Lawson had just finished a month in Europe with the national team and had school to make up for and Cameron and Brendan McCormack, at sixteen years old, could not miss school.

Lawson, while racing with the US national team placed third in the Stur van Limburg in Belgium, winning a stage and third in the junior Paris Roubaix. Cameron and Brendan were going 1,2 in every junior race in New England while we were gone. Yannick and Robin, our two German born guys were taking it to the local pro 1/2 guys in Colorado. Stuart was in France for the month leading up to training camp and in the five races he did, I think he finished second three times and third twice. Stuee was in France because there is no racing where he is from. It's interesting though, where he lives is the world's leader in exporting of igloo's and sold ice products.

After training camp we did our team trip to Europe. We raced in Holland where we won a stage and had the yellow jersey and the white jersey as the best young rider. We raced in Belgium where we won a single day road race and we raced in France. Not to give too much away since I've not finished my race report from the stage race we did there but we won a stage, finished second overall, won team CG, finished second in the young rider competition and third in the points.

In Texas, everyone is glad when Lawson goes to Europe with the national team. When he's there, he wins the pro races. Don't get me wrong, they love him there in Texas, they are just glad to have someone else, other than a junior, winning the pro events. He won at least three pro races that I can remember in the few weeks that he's been home this year.

From there Stuart stayed in Europe with the Canadian national team while the rest of us returned to the US. A week later Lawson and Anders returned to Europe to race with the US National team. You may wonder why not just stay, it's only a week. It is, but they are students first and that's the way it is so cycling adjusts. In the first stage race they did in Switzerland, Lawson won the opening prologue and lead the race every day until the last stage where he lost the lead and finished third overall. According to the national team coach, Benjamin Sharp, Anders was critical to the success of the team. His words were, " Anders is crushing. Super domestique, very loyal and highly coachable. Very pleased with his performance."

The second race they did was in Germany called Trofeo Karlsburg. This had Lawson and Anders for the US and Stuart for Canada. Lawson won the second and third stages and lead the race almost wire to wire winning the overall in the process. Again, Anders was a monster and, I think, earned a spot for Italy and the world championships in August based on his riding on this trip.

We had Robin and Yannick in Germany racing earning the chance to race the German national championships. It will be still two years before they will be US citizens and able to stay here for nationals. I get very few results from Germany and the racing for them is both hard and political but they are racing well. Robin was fifth in a time trial stage and Yannick is winning sprints from the groups he is in. Their national championships are this weekend and next weekend so we will see how it goes.

While the rest of the team was in Europe, Austin was back home in Bend, OR finishing up school. Austin raced the senior category three men's race at the MT. Hood Cycling Classic in OR. This race, for those of you that don't know, is hard. The queen stage was ninety-five miles with over 10,000 feet of climbing. Austin won this stage, was second in the time trial and third in the first road stage and won the overall. He's only seventeen, by the way and has been riding for just six months now.

For us, it's nationals time. We head to Bend, OR next week with Lawson, Anders and Austin while Stuart gets ready for Canadian nationals in Edmonton a week later. Yannick and Robin do German nationals this weekend and next then it's the Fitchburg stage race and the Tour of Ireland.

Thank you for reading,

Toby