

Team Spine News

Top Tens as Team Spine Travels to San Dimas



Team Spine continued its southern incursions, leaving Northern California to head to the San Dimas (formerly Pomona) Stage Race on March 18-20. The Elite 2 team had more than its share of misfortune, with broken handlebars and stomach flu; the Elite 3 squad also lost a rider due to a crash, then mechanical problems at crucial moments. Still, the southland saw some impressive results, with Spine riders taking top stage placings and holding on for three top tens in two fields.

The Elite 2 racers sat in cautious position after the opening time trial stage, but saw its first setback when strongman Wayne Puckett crashed out on the first lap of the second stage's road race, leaving only Michael Buckley and Ryan Ramos to work their way through the field of top riders. And that they did: by the end of the stage, over 50 riders has been dropped or abandoned, and as the field sprint of 30 rushed to the line, Ramos slipped through existing and imaginary holes to nab the bronze for the day. Buckley also managed a top ten, at eighth.

At the start of the crit, Buckley sat in 14th place on GC, so when a strong break moved off the front of the fast-paced crit, Buckley made an impressive solo up to the group of five, making it six. This break gained up to 30 seconds, but GC contenders in the field rallied their teams, whittling the break, which had shrunk to four riders, down to a nine-second gap. Buckley held on for third on the day, taking him to 10th in the General Classification.

The Elite 3 squad relied on climbing strength for its success. Murietta Stage Race winner Chris Berry abandoned due to stomach flu and a broken handlebar on Stage 2 and strong climber Jason Williams crashed out in the same stage, cutting team power. Quist had little help fighting the strong winds of the day after a flat two miles before the finish, yet he lost only seconds that day, falling from third to seventh on GC. In the closing crit, a crash allowed four riders to go free in the last few hundred meters; Quist and Jason King took 14th and 19th, securing 7th and 9th place overall for the weekend.

GO FAST, GET OFF THE FRONT, STAY AWAY, WIN

It's really that simple. Of course, it helps to have great talent and a great team to back you up. With an expanded roster, Team Spine is moving ahead in the quest for Best All-Around Team in 2005. In addition to our returning Masters racers, who dominated the scene in 2004, Spine has a strong presence in most 1/2/Pro fields, with up-and-coming talent fresh off the collegiate circuit, and Elite 3 riders who are collecting upgrade points.

McLane Pacific Road Race

Merced, CA

6 Mar 2005

Master 45+ 1/2/3: Mark Caldwell, 1st Place; Chris Urban, 3rd place

Master 35+ 1/2/3: Clint Gaver, 4th place; Michael Hernandez, 8th place

One of the first National Racing Calendar (NRC) races of the year saw strong showings from most major U.S. teams in all categories. In the Master 45+ group, Morgan Stanley, Dewar's, Webcor, JBL and others filled the field. The pace was high from the gun, with no breaks sticking. After a race of teammate Ted Jaworski feinting off the front, Caldwell and Urban sat back, until in the last lap Caldwell launched an attack, dropping all to go solo. It didn't stick, with four teams working hard to bring him back. But with 1k to go, Urban counterattacked with Caldwell on his wheel. This long lead-out paid off, with Caldwell sprinting for the win and Urban keeping in for 3rd.



Michael Hernandez: Faster than shutter speed.

In the Master 35+ race, Team Spine was the marked group. No Spine attack was let go without two or three remoras, throughout the day. Finally, after crashes thinned the field, Clint Gaver fought through a skittish field for 4th place, with Michael Hernandez, who had been active all day, coming in at 8th, for one of the best combined team finishes of the day.

Kearney Park Road Race

Fresno, CA

12 Mar 2005

Master 45+ 1/2/3: Mark Caldwell, 1st place

With no more than five feet of elevation gain per lap, this race was going to be decided by wind or a sprint. Numerous breaks tried to get away in the fog throughout the day, but Caldwell used his experience to mark dangerous attempts, and then used his sprinting skills to come around the field in the final few turns that had claimed casualties in other fields. This continued Caldwell's winning streak – every road race in 2005 he has entered, he has won.



It was a foggy start at Kearney Park

San Dimas Stage Race

San Dimas, CA

18-20 March 2005

Elite 3: David Quist, 7th place (GC); Jason King, 9th place (GC)

Elite 2: Michael Buckley, 10th place (GC)

Stage Placings: Quist, 3rd place in Stage 1; Ryan Ramos, 3rd place in Stage 2 (Elite 2); Michael Buckley, 3rd place in Stage 3 (Elite 2)

See front page for full coverage.

Land Park Criterium**Davis, CA****19 March 2005****Master 35+ 1/2/3: Michael Hernandez, 1st place; Scott Fonseca, 8th place****Elite 1/2/Pro: Michael Hernandez, 3rd place**

It was the Hernandez show all day long, with the Spine rider from Reno throwing out attack after attack until he got away, and then powering the break to the finish line. In the Master 35+ race, Hernandez was the engine leading the four-man break to lap the field, and then pass it, with still half the race to go. Not content, he outsprinted his drag-along compatriots, as teammate Fonseca nearly took the field sprint. Less than two hours later, Hernandez offered a repeat performance, only in the final sprint fading to two pro racers.



Another win for Hernandez at Land Park

West Sacramento Criterium**Sacramento, CA****20 March 2005****1/2/Pro: Michael Hernandez, 3rd place****Master 35+ 1/2/3: Scott Fonseca, 1st place; Michael Hernandez, 4th place****Master 45+ 1/2/3: Mark Caldwell, 2nd place; Joe Saunders, 3rd place**

The Master 35+ race was almost a repeat of the day before at Land Park, with Hernandez brutally (but cheerfully) attacking again and again. However, the powerhouse field, with full teams from Morgan Stanley, Safeway and others worked hard to stymie all Hernandez's attempts, allowing only a few breaks to get away, but not for far. The wind played a role, too, with rain flying

horizontally into the withering headwind into the last corner. As the pack came around that corner after the bell, it seemed too late for another Spine victory, but Fonseca showed why he's a sprinting star, coming to the fore only meters before the line.



Fonseca on his way to a win of his own.

In the Master 45+ race, Team Spine's duo of Caldwell and Saunders had to face off against AMD's (formerly U.S. Postal) Larry Nolan and Peter Allen. Saunders attacked non-stop, at one point getting away with Nolan on his wheel. Caldwell bridged up to the two, dropping two riders along the way. However, Nolan found a small gap in the last corner and managed to hold onto his lead -- amazing what an Olympian can do.

Copperopolis Road Race**Milton, CA****26 Mar 2005****1/2/Pro: Pat Caurant, 11th place****Master 35+ 1/2/3: Michael Hutchinson, 1st place; Clint Gaver, 3rd place; Colin Cooper, 7th place****Elite 3: David Quist, 3rd place; Jason Williams, 6th place****Elite 5: Chris Spencer, 4th place**

The Masters team took revenge for last year's miss with a dominating performance (see <http://www.abbiorca.com> for downloadable photos of Team Spine in action) over the nearly destroyed roads of Copperopolis. David Quist came within 10 meters of his first win of the year, just failing to close on a late-race solo break. And Junior racer Chris Spencer, despite an ill-timed break to water a tree, came back to place in this, his last race in the Elite 5 field.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE**McLane Pacific Road Race, 6 Mar 2005**

1st Place: Mark Caldwell (45+ 1/2/3)
 3rd Place: Chris Urban (45+ 1/2/3)
 4th Place: Clint Gaver (35+ 1/2/3)
 8th Place: Michael Hernandez (35+ 1/2/3)

Kearney Park Road Race, 12 Mar 2005

1st Place: Mark Caldwell (45+ 1/2/3)

San Dimas Stage Race, 18-20 Mar 2005

7th Place GC: David Quist (Elite 3)
 9th Place: Jason King (Elite 3)
 10th Place: Michael Buckley (Elite 2)
 3rd Place, Stage 1: David Quist (Elite 3)
 3rd Place, Stage 2: Ryan Ramos (Elite 2)
 3rd Place, Stage 3: Michael Buckley (Elite 2)

Land Park Criterium, 9 Mar 2005

1st Place: Michael Hernandez (35+ 1/2/3)
 8th Place: Scott Fonseca (35+ 1/2/3)
 3rd Place: Michael Hernandez (1/2/Pro)

West Sacramento Criterium, 10 Mar 2005

1st Place: Scott Fonseca (35+ 1/2/3)
 4th Place: Michael Hernandez (35+ 1/2/3)
 3rd Place: Michael Hernandez (1/2/Pro)
 2nd Place: Mark Caldwell (45+ 1/2/3)
 3rd Place: Joe Saunders (45+ 1/2/3)

Copperopolis Road Race, 26 Mar 2005

1st Place: Michael Hutchinson (35+ 1/2/3)
 5th Place: Clint Gaver (35+ 1/2/3)
 7th Place: Colin Cooper (35+ 1/2/3)
 11th Place: Pat Caurant (1/2/Pro)
 3rd Place: David Quist (Elite 3)
 6th Place: Jason Williams (Elite 3)
 4th Place: Chris Spencer (Elite 5)

For the latest results, please visit

<www.teamspine.com>

For information about sponsorship opportunities,
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