

Read Dave Hoyle's race report from the 1997 USA Cycling's Nationals Festival in Seven Springs, PA. Dave is an aspiring U23 racer with a promising future. Following is his play-by-play from his first Nationals Cat1,2 event:

July 12, 2007 - Course was a 27 mile loop done 3 times to total 81 miles with two very long climbs each lap and a 1 mile climb to the finish.

The race started out easy with an 8-9 nine mile stretch of a few flats and a lot of descents, the fastest part putting us in the mid 60 mph range (holy . . . !). A lot of positioning went on to prepare for the first climb, 5-6 miles at a steady but low grade. Going up the climb the first time I felt mostly fine, aching only a little bit toward the crest. I came over in the top half of the field and stayed there through the rollers and numerous small hills until the second big climb. This climb started out steep, stayed steep, and finally when you thought it was over as there was a small downhill, only to go up again for another steep 3/4 mile. The first lap the pace up the hill was pretty quick and it hurt me pretty bad. I was starting to feel twinges in my muscles and was fearing I'd cramp up bad before the end of the race. I completed the first lap in the top 40 with a large gap on the other stragglers behind us. By the end of the big descent though, the race had come back together.



Second lap was a lot easier-pace, slower and the cold 65 degree air was going into my lungs a little easier. I also did the second climb out of my saddle for the most part and learned that I climb a lot better for long periods when I stand rather than when I sit. Again the field broke up on the climbs and came back together on the descent.

The first climb on the last lap started brutal, with guys attacking hard to try and bridge the 5 or so escapers 1.5 minutes in front, and it stayed brutal. Gaps started opening from the constant accelerations, which I had to close a few times and that was beginning to wear me down. When we got to the last main climb, the group was only of about 35 and the attacks were again happening with guys falling off the back and gaps opening up. Finally a group of about 15 started to pull away from everyone else. Unfortunately, I wasn't in it so I made a big effort to leave the group I was with and bridge. Just before I hooked up with them they accelerated again shelling off two more guys. I couldn't match that acceleration and finished the climb with the two that came off the back. On the short and twisty descent to the finish hill we tried like mad to try and gain ground on those in front of us but had no success. Instead, three more caught us from behind. Going up the finish hill for the last time I knew one thing: I was going to attack hard and drop all the guys with me. I wasn't sure what place I was looking at but neither did I care. It was the US Nationals Race! I would have fought for 90th place. I attacked with about 300 meters to go and according to plan, dropped all the guys with me to come across the line in 24th.



It will always bother me that I couldn't bridge the gap completely on the last main climb because then I could have been contesting a top ten finish, but again there will be other races...

Thanks for reading-Dave