



PERFORMANCE CYCLING CONDITIONING

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO IMPROVING CYCLISTS

www.performancecondition.com/cycling

From Frazier Cycling #14: Youth Camp- A Parent's Point of View

William Howells, Camp Frazier Parent



Camp Frazier was July 12-17 on the campus of King College, a Presbyterian school with a varsity cycling program nestled in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains in eastern Tennessee. Camp participants: 41 juniors (ages 9-17) and 11 parents/coach (all our camps are open to parents and coaches). The following is a commentary by William Howells on his camp experience with his 13 year old son, Billy. The Howells ride for The Hub-Canonball Racing Team out of St Louis, MO.

Every year Frazier Cycling comes back from nationals with a slew of medals, podiums and national champs in the junior ranks. Many of the national champs were in attendance at the camp, especially among the girls. In fact, the girls practice crit was a national caliber race with the current junior woman 13-14 national champ taking the win. Another junior just received a cycling scholarship to none other than King College, so you can see the connections in place. But Frazier Cycling is not just a racer factory, they take all comers and pride themselves in developing them to their fullest. Their regular program in the Atlanta area offers classes every night of the week for all levels with two 50 mile training rides and one 30 mile ride on the weekends. Their top juniors are on the bike six days a week, putting in upwards of 6000 – 10,000 miles annually, with weight training programs in the off-season for those past puberty. Most of the 13-14 yr old juniors have power meters. It's pretty amazing to hear 13 year old juniors chatting, "Wow, I did 300 watts up that hill!" Many stories centered around Frazier teamwork vs individual "stars" on other teams.



William Howells



Day 1: 5K TT

The camp was structured around four races or rides, a 3.1 (5K) individual TT, the criterium, the road race, and an endurance ride, plus tacked on for good measure a "fun ride" on the last morning. Day 1 was the time trial. Each day started at 8am with breakfast in the campus cafeteria. 9 am was plyometrics and stretching in the gym. Then it was off to the TT course, held in a beautiful park along the Hoilston River and Dam, a 1930's TVA project. TT was done in two groups, with the experienced group escorting the less experienced group to preview the course, a flat out and back along the river. This was a professionally run TT, timers, starters, holders, run as good or better than any USA Cycling TT. During the morning, the inexperienced group practiced starts from the holding position, instructed to start in the big ring and a couple cogs down so not to drop the chain. Each night after dinner, we had a recap and analysis of the days racing. This went on for about an hour of in depth interviewing of each racer in each race, with analysis, encouragement, and good natured kidding from Coach Ralph Frazier. This was probably the most entertaining and valuable part of the camp.

Day 2: Crit

First we had to practice pachelines. Coach Ralph split us into groups and sent us around the course with instruction to count to 10, pull off left, then flick the elbow to indicate the next rider should pull through. After that, we practiced lining up for a race. Coach Ralph sent us about 200 meters to the bottom of the hill in the "staging area", then called out "racers to the line" and blew the whistle. The idea was to make it to the front of the line.

Afternoon was the practice crit. They had set up a .6 mile course around the King College baseball field, which included a long uphill gradual climb with a little kick up the last 20m, then a little flat to the finish and then fast downhill through two tight turns with some rough pavement in the best line. Coach set up four races with two teams in each race and assigned a team leader who was responsible for developing a team strategy. Boys and girls raced together but were scored separately.

Day 3: RR

Before the road race in the afternoon, Friday morning was bumping practice. We were all looking forward to this. We all dressed in long shirts and pants in case we hit the deck, but we were riding in grass for the same reason. Before bumping proper, we did an exercise to just get used to riding close together. We were paired up and told to ride with one arm on the shoulder of the rider next to us, out about 50 meters, around a cone, and back.

Afternoon was the RR back at the park and dam where we held the TT. This RR was also professional run, with course marshals, follow vehicles, the whole thing, as good as any USA Cycling race I've done. In the evening after the RR and endurance rides, we had presentations from various people including a sports psychology consultant and Mr Krige Schabort, the professional wheelchair and cyclechair racer.



Day 4: Final Race

We had time for one more ride before having to check out by noon. Coach Ralph divided us up into two groups to ride over to the park where the dam loomed a good 300 m above the river, holding the lake above it. An access road winds up to the dam through the trees. At the park, Miguel, a 15 yr junior and the revelation of the camp, 13 yr Devin, were chosen as team leaders, and allowed to pick their teams. Within teams, groups of three were pitted against each other, who would form six man races up the climb. At the top, we were rewarded with a beautiful view of the lake above the dam, and the valley below.

Final Thoughts

For me as a parent, the camp was a nice mix of time with my son without hovering over him, allowing him to spend some time with his new friends, which also gave me time with the other parents. I had fun competing in the practice races, which were run better than some real races. I was really impressed with Coach Ralph's ability to mix adults and kids of similar ability to make competitive races. When you think about it, older juniors and 30, 40-something parents are on opposite sides of their performance curves, the juniors on the way up, and the parents on the way down, so it makes sense they could race together and have fun. O

Special Youth Educational Opportunity

Coach Ralph Frazier is presenting on "The Team Approach" at the USAC Junior Cycling Conference on October 22-23, 2011. Frazier Cycling will be introducing a series of tools for coaches and organizations to create and maintain a junior cycling team based on their team approach philosophy and program. For more info: info@fraziercycling.com or 770-513-8640.