



SoCalCross Prestige Series - Race #4 "Spooky Cross Night Race" Saturday, 10-25-2008

RACE REPORT By: David Sheek and DOT Wong, www.outsideallday.com

On Saturday afternoon the circus came to town... Grown men 'cross-dressed as strippers, a man in a banana hammock, superheroes, ghouls and goblins came together for Spooky Cross Night race as the SoCalCross Prestige Series hit the grounds of Camp James - Wild Rivers Water Park in Irvine, CA. The weather was So Cal perfect and as night fell so did cooler temperatures, riders were finally able to apply the arm and leg warmers for the first cyclocross night race in Southern California.

The juniors took the course first with Team Sho-Air dominating the day as did the big air ramps for the FMX freestyle motocross shows as part of the entertainment for the Spooky Cross festival hosted by Bike Religion Cycling Club and Bike Shops of Orange County.

The fast course was exciting to watch. Smooth riding and consistency were critical as one small foible would cost a racer at least two-spots. Impressive performances were had not to mention the large field sizes in the men's 4 and women's 3/4 new to 'cross categories reflecting the Prestige Series' 70% growth so far this season.

As the sun was finally setting, the Elite women lined up for the first night race ever. Team CICLE's, Carolyn Popovic took control of the race until a wide line on turn the grassy Fluid U-turn, allowed 16 year old Junior, Coryn Rivera (Redline Factory Team) to make the first strike of the night. It was now, Rivera leading the race with her young rival, 16 year old, Junior Kendall Ryan (CICLE) leading the chase along with Popovic. Voler Series Leader, Dot Wong, teammate, Heidi Kanayan, and new to cross Pro MTBer, Joy Duerksen (Coach Gareth) all biting at the heels of Rivera. Rivera's smooth execution of the course allowed her to open a gap on the field by lap three. Carolyn, Kendall and Dot separated themselves from the rest of the field in hot pursuit of Rivera. However, It was Popovic and Wong who held close to Rivera but could only battle it out for second, Popovic and Wong, third as Kendall took a nasty spill mid-race in the Michelin horseshoe. The podium race was tight as the ladies went full throttle to the end with Duerksen just gapping out Kanayan for 4th and 5th.

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SoCalCross'ers showed their true colors in the Spooky Costume Contest/night race – three short laps on the Spooky Cross Course following the women's race. A slew of 'cross-dressers, hookers, skeletons, Wonder Woman and who can forget the banana as the circus of riders took to the course. Costume finalists included Flava Flav, Nacho Libre and the real Chet Bearclaw. Podium finishers donated their money to the Susan Komen OC chapter for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Ellsworth, SDG and Defeat offered up prizes for the benefit.

The elite men's race lined up about the same time as the fog machines were on full blast, filling the course with a cloud of danger but no more than that of the freestyle motocrossers of FMX Boost Mobile/Monster Energy Drinks whipped, as they flipped 50 feet in the air and executed some impressive gravity defying stunts above the racing action.

The elite men's field was stacked with the always strong riders of SoCal and new appearances from World Cup and Olympic MTBer, Sid Taberlay (RockN'Road/Sho-Air), Cal Giant's, Mark Santurbane in from SLO, and Kyle Gritters of the Health Net/Maxxis, racing for the night on the local RockN'Road team.

From the start, it was Michael Easter (Action Sports) leading the long straight start past the ferris wheel with Voler Series Points leader Brent Prenzlou of Celo Pacific/Alan, Fritz Bottger of PAA/Vitamix/Sixtufit and the rest of the field right on Easter's wheel. It was impressive to see the large field together on the first lap, racers flying over the Kool N Fit Sport barriers and charging across the lit up course, past the SRAM 2-way Pit and Ellsworth/Mafia Spooky Party Zone.

An unfortunate rear flat on the first lap sent Prenzlou to the pit early to grab a back up bike, putting the series leader in 20th position. Prenzlou was quick to exchange the B bike on the second half of lap two after mechanics made a speedy switch of the rear wheel. Out front, it was still Easter battling it out with Mark Santurbane who kept unleashing impressive attacks which separated the two from the field. In the first chase group, Fritz Bottger, Sid Taberlay, Jason Siegle (CICLE), Brandon Gritters (RockN'Road), and Jason Lowetz (Bearclaw) battled it out the entire race for cash and podium spots. It's believed that Lowetz would have raced better if were not for the chaffing he was getting from his stockings and miniskirt.

Back in the field Prenzlou continued to move his way up catching the first chase group with two laps to go. On the final lap Brandon Gritters and Jason Lowetz got hung up on a lapped rider, allowing Taberlay, Bottger, Prenzlou and Siegle to slip away, but not enough to catch the leaders. With Easter seemingly trying to hang on to Santurbane's wheel, he managed just enough for the final charge gapping Santurbane to take the win in a sprint. The racers definitely left it out on the course with Taberlay taking third, Bottger fourth, and Prenzlou fifth after an impressive come back from 20th.

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This was by far the best event of the SCPS ever and putting more night races on the schedule is a definite must for the future. It was definitely fun, from the fast course, great turnout of participants and spectators, the FMX Freestyle Motocross, and costume delights.

Don't miss out, as the SoCalCross Prestige Series is proud to introduce ECO-SPORTFEST '08: combining a 5k 'Cross Trail Run on the cyclocross course: a mix of pavement, dirt, and grass courses at five premier cyclocross races across Southern California. Each event will take place in a scenic park or lake front setting - making it a welcoming atmosphere for the entire family. The festival will kick off this Sunday, 11/2 in Ventura. This 5k run will benefit local triathlete/CHP officer Tony Pedferri's Angel's Project www.angel-project.org. Eco-Sportfest will also raise money/awareness for CICLE www.CICLE.org advocating transportation bicycling.

EcoSportFest '08 will feature our 'Green' eco-sponsors, as well as each city's Green Programs. The “Fitness” portion of the expo includes our FREE Kids Race, Fun Rides, 'Cross Run, free beginner 'cross clinics and sponsor booths promoting healthy lifestyles. The Prestige Series will strive to educate racers and spectators by promoting reduction of car use and transportation bicycling. Each event in the Prestige Series is solar powered by Energy Efficiency Solar.

Bring a friend to race any of our Eco-Sportfest '08 events: 5k cross run and CX racing. Each time you bring someone new to 'cross, you get a \$5 discount coupon off the next Prestige Series race!

Eco-Sportfest is five events of the SoCalCross Prestige Series beginning 11/02 at Convert Cross - voted number one CX race in 2007-08, 11/8-9 UCI Dam Cross Weekend, 11/22-23 Collegiate & District Championship weekend, 12/7 - High Desert Cross, 12/21 - Santa Cross... take a break in between with the Prestige Series classic, Turkey Trot Cross hosted by PAA in Glendale 11/30.

Questions? Contact: Dot@SoCalCross.org For more info go to: www.socalcross.org

