

Two crits with all of my skin

Posted At : August 10, 2008 4:11 PM | Posted By : Erik Voldengen

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I really enjoy criteriums. The tight turns and high speeds are a real thrill, and the short courses are spectator friendly. I raced two of them this weekend, and I had a blast.

Friday night's race was the Health Net Twilight Criterium. The crowds were huge, the course was pretty fun, and we had over 60 people racing. I started in the back of the race, and could not move up enough to stay with the leaders. There was a LOT of crashes, but I made it upright through each one. I probably should have sat down on the ground and regrouped at the pits with everyone else, but I just kept riding and falling further behind with every crash. I just had fun while it lasted and chalked it up to a learning experience. Several friends (and kids) came and cheered me on, which was really nice.



We stayed and watched the Pro race at 7:30, and everyone really enjoyed that one. The kids saw a guy from team Jelly Belly (Aaron Tuckerman), and liked the colors on his shirt the best. They didn't know what was on his jersey, so they decided it was Fruit Loops. They started cheering for him, with every lap yelling GO FRUIT LOOP! When I told them he was on the Jelly Belly team, they got even more excited, though they decided to stay with the nickname *fruit loop*.

Saturday's race, the Sunset Criterium, was held at Bethany Village, about a mile away from my house. The field was a lot smaller; we had pile-ups on Friday night larger than this. This course had a couple concerning corners, but there weren't any major crashes. I was happy to be sprinting at the finish with the leaders, but came up short with a 5th place. It was a lot of fun, and some of the neighborhood kids were there running along the course cheering for me. That was cool.



Technical note - I raced both races with 180mm cranks (longer than probably everyone out there), and I was pedaling through a lot of corners that others coasted through. I was a little worried about pedal clearance, but not any more!

And so, I had a lot of fun, and I am happy, if not a little surprised, to have all my skin intact.