

CWRU Cycling Club @Miami U
By Edwin Hadi

This past weekend the Cycling Club traveled to Miami University (of Ohio) to compete in the first NCCA race of the season in our conference. We took five of our nine-person road squad down, and we all did quite well for our first race of the season, even though it was really our first time we had all ridden together.

So, Saturday morning after a waking up at 6:30am to go enjoy a pre-race breakfast at Bob Evan's, we arrived an hour before our race's start time. After winding through the enormous registration lines, getting our bikes ready, and changing into our riding gear, we had about 10 minutes to ride around the parking lot in futile hope of warming up for our 27 mile race. Never mind trying to pre-ride the course, we saw half of it going in the wrong direction as we sped through Hueston Woods Park to the main lot.

In the midst of the starters in our race, we looked around at our competition and started to get a little intimidated at the sandbagger's galore – C race for beginners, eh? Compared to our Adam's Trek 7000 mountain bike, the \$4,000 Titanium Colnago in front of us seemed a bit out of our league, but oh well, there goes the police car to lead off the race.

Ouch! right from the start, the lead packs pace spit half the field off the back -Nate, Cale, and I managed to hold on. The quick pace and early hills took its toll on us (or at least me), not having warmed up. Midway through the first of three laps though, Nate had a tough encounter with lady luck and was taken down by the rider in front of him in an early crash. During his chase back up to the peloton, his damaged rear derailleur sheared off at the tab in a gear change sending the derailleur into his wheel, leaving Nate for the sag wagon.

Not knowing who crashed, I took advantage and swung out of the carnage to sprint into the reforming lead pack that of course upped the pace to break off even more riders. Along with a bunch of others, I got spit out the back into a world of hurt.

Trying to keep the damage to a minimum, I did my best to keep going. Soon, Cale in a small group caught up, and I tried to hang in their draft, but my burning legs said no, and I got spit out the back... again. So there I was all alone and suffering. After a few painful hills, I finally caught a break on the flats and the downhill. Midway through the second lap, the guy who caused the early crash caught up to me, bleeding through his torn shorts and everything. I drafted off him for a bit, finally catching up to the Indiana guy who had been about 20 meters in front of me for half the lap. Ah, I caught a second wind and dropped about two tons of lead from my legs - looks like at least some of that early season training paid off. My speed climbed and I started reeling people in. Man, how many people does the Indiana and Ohio State teams have? Seemed like there was always another one up the road.

Anyway, about half way through the third lap, I check my computer to see about five miles remained, but my calves were cramping and my lower back was hurting. "Gotta catch that small group just ahead," I said to myself as I put my head down and hammered up the hill to the small loose group, but the hill broke that group apart, and it wasn't worth sticking around for it to reform so I keep going. One guy in blue and white looks like Cale about 30 meters up, and I do my best to keep up the pace and bridge the gap between us to join my teammate. 25 meters, 20, 15... the distance closes, but what's this? That isn't Cale! It's some guy from another team with blue and white colors. He sees me closing and does a good job of keeping a safe 15-meter gap between us as we finish. "That's it?" I say to myself, crossing the line to meet Paul, our advisor, Nate, and Cale.

A few minutes later, Korey comes soloing up the final climb to the finish not looking like he enjoyed the last hill either. Cale finished about 10 minutes ahead of me in a group of five. Adam on his trusty mountain bike made it a good 18 miles into the race, but couldn't finish given his equipment choice for the day.

Great job, guys! Hope you had as much fun as I did, and a special thanks to our advisor Paul Salipante for coming down and helping us get our stuff together right before the race. Can't wait for our next weekend of racing, which will be a weekend double header – OU, Saturday March 31st and OSU, Sunday April 1st.

If this sounds like fun to you, or if you like riding your bike for fun (road or mountain bike), check us out at www.cwr.edu/orgs/cycling or email Korey (krd3) for more info.

See you on the road...