

This should be a pretty short race report, because honestly, there wasn't a whole lot of drama that happened in our race. James (Skittles), Little Paul, and I took a warm up lap and got back to the start/finish just as everybody was lining up. We were able to experience the ridiculousness of the wind out there and knew a little bit about what to watch out for during the race. We lined up, the whistle blew, and off we went for an hour and 20 minutes of pain and a fair amount of frustration for me personally. The race was calm down the first hill onto the dam, but as soon as we got on the dam, one guy attempted to pick up the pace and went off the front. I don't know what he was thinking. Maybe he was "feeling good" but so was I after 45 seconds of racing. Kind of an idiot move, but we let him dangle out there for a little bit and then easily pulled him back in. During this time, we passed the little pier for the spillway on the dam and holy crap, that little section was dangerous. As you pass the pier, the wind seems to let up slightly. A couple of seconds later, we'd all catch a gust from our left that was probably 40mph. The first time we went through it, the lead guy probably swept 6ft from left to right. Luckily, James and I were ready for it thanks to our warm up lap.

After surviving the wind gusts and the failed first-lap breakaway attempt, James and I got positioned close to the front of the 24-man group in preparation for the first time up the evil hill. It's a good thing we did, because the first time up was a doozy. Andrew Lyles (Colavita) attacked the hill hard and I attempted to go with him. I was never able to get back onto his wheel and, mentally, it was a big blow. I know he's been training a lot, and I was pretty concerned that I just didn't have enough to keep up with him up the hill 6 times. The group caught back onto him and I faded to the back to try to recover. This was another mistake. The back of the race is a stupid place to be because that's where tired people go to get dropped. Tired people tend to let gaps go and then can't close them and suddenly their race is over. I was in the back during the two right turns that took us from the top of the dam down to the road at the bottom of the dam. As I was sitting, attempting to recover, some guys in front of me let a gap go through the corners and suddenly I found myself in a horrific headwind, chasing the main group down. After a bit of panic, I latched back on and headed toward front, swearing I would never go to the back of the race again.

This time up the hill was much more sedated. A couple of guys put in an effort, and it was still very hard, but I was able to hang on over the top. Little Paul passed me up during this climb and was looking pretty strong. I was purposely fading back on the hill a bit, saving some energy since I knew I could make up ground on the downhill. I think it was on the next lap that a Mack guy and somebody else went off the front of the race and nobody else was able to go with them. They pulled away slowly and I wasn't super worried, but didn't like the way it looked either. James and I had been responding to almost every single breakaway attempt but somehow missed that one (I think James almost got onto it but couldn't quite bridge). The next time up the hill was relaxed and almost easy...almost. From this point forward, it was a constant battle to try to get people to work together to bring the breakaway back and every time we'd get something going, one guy would not rotate through and all our effort was for naught. The more times this happened, the more I got pissed off at people. It was basically four guys, plus James and me trying to work together to bring the two guys back and

whenever somebody wouldn't pull through, we'd have to start over and over and over to get things rotating properly. As my frustration grew, I occasionally yelled at people and I'm not sorry. I remember one guy screwed everything up and didn't rotate through and I yelled "really, do you need a push?!?" Needless to say, we never caught the two guys in the breakaway and that's pretty pathetic. With that much wind, two guys should not be able to stay away. The rest of the group seemed content to race for 3rd, which is also pathetic.

So, after all that, and a couple more times up the hill, it was the final lap. James and I were near the front of the main group, right where we needed to be. Unfortunately, I guess Paul wasn't having as much luck in the wind and had fallen off the main group on lap 4. As we headed across the dam, things were fairly tame, but I found myself on the front occasionally, probably working way too hard to have anything left for the climb. I knew it, but didn't try that hard to remedy it. I think James was racing smarter and didn't end up on the front as much, but was still putting out a fair amount of effort to maintain position near the front of the race. We headed to the bottom of the dam and into the headwind and just tried to sit near the front and answer any moves that went. Near the spillway, where the headwind was the worst, one guy wearing a red kit put in a dig and got a gap on the group. Nobody really responded and he was off the front by himself. I decided not to go with him because nobody else went and I didn't think he could survive by himself to the end of the race. It was hard to let him go because I had marked him, Andrew Lyles (Colavita), and Vance Fletcher (ISCorp) as guys to watch out for so letting him go was a calculated risk. Andrew Lyles came to the front and picked up the pace a bit. Vance Fletcher joined him and they were side-by-side on the final road that leads to the right-hand turn up the hill. I asked James if he wanted me to slingshot him on the hill because I didn't have anything left. He said he had nothing left either so that plan was a no-go. I was sitting on James' wheel and he was two bikes back from Andrew and Vance. I have seen Vance race before and was worried about him jumping so I told James to get on his wheel. James accelerated a little and moved over to sit on Vance's wheel and I followed, just as we rounded the corner and began the climb. I felt like our positioning was really good here.

At this point, the guy in the red kit was still off the front by maybe 15m, but our group was closing in. Andrew Lyles picked up the pace again and I maneuvered around one other guy to chase him. This maneuvering allowed Andrew to get a small gap, leaving me in the slight quartering headwind, chasing. James had grabbed my wheel and wasn't about to let anybody else have it. Right around the middle of the false flat section on the hill, Andrew Lyles finally made contact with the guy in the red kit and as he did that, I was able to close the gap to Andrew. Those two played a little cat and mouse game for a second and as they did that, I attacked. I honestly felt like I went way too early. In that moment, I had time to think about the pain I was about to produce in my legs and I wasn't looking forward to it even a little bit. Luckily (or maybe not), those thoughts don't last long because the pain takes over everything. Andrew Lyles got dropped quickly and so did Vance Fletcher, who cramped up. I started to feel myself slow a little so I clicked another gear and pushed hard to turn it over, surprised at how decently smooth my pedal stroke was. Don't get me wrong, my legs felt like

they were about to fall off, but I could see row of cones leading to the finish line and I wasn't about to let up. A second or two later, I could feel somebody creeping up on my left side and thought the whole group was about to fly by me, confirming my concerns about going to soon. I turned my head and saw James hammering his way up the hill around me. I looked farther back and, to my relief, nobody else was close enough to matter. I eased up a little bit and crossed the line a second or two behind James. We finished 3rd and 4th but took 1st and 2nd in the field sprint. Pretty good, considering we both told each other we didn't have anything at the bottom of the hill. Little Paul ended up 17th on the day and I know he can get a better result with some little pointers to help him along. He looked super comfortable on the climb, but the wind was a killer for him. Good job Paul and thanks again to your wife for the special brownies!

Anyway, seemed like a pretty good day for us and we seem to be riding pretty strong at the moment. Between James and me, we have a 2nd, 3rd, and two 4th place finishes in our two road/circuit races. I suppose James' 4th at Froze Toes doesn't count since he hadn't joined the team yet. Also, it was really nice to hear "Go Big D!!" every time up the hill so thanks for sticking around guys and cheering us on. After a post-race beer (or three) and some pizza, it's time to kick the feet up and study physics and chemistry. Great job to everybody else on the team who raced today. Overall, I think we had a very very strong showing today. Hopefully I'll see a bunch of you guys Wednesday and next weekend. Pardon any grammar mistakes or just plain gibberish. I'm tired and the beer has taken over.

[Here is the Strava link to my race for those interested.](#) I ran a power meter for this race which was pretty interesting to look at for me. Garmin said average power was 253 watts, Strava says 236. I imagine the difference is in how they count coasting time or something like that, but either way, seemed like decent power for 1:22 of racing.