

## Clarke Claims Beaufort Win

*By Kirsten Robbins in Beaufort, South Carolina*

Night fell on the 140 rider field in Beaufort, South Carolina for the Beaufort Memorial Cycling Classic, a round of the USA Crits Speedweek series. Hilton Clarke (Toyota-United) teamed up with the Canadian-based team Symmetrics to take the field sprint victory, ahead of second placed Kyle Wamsley (Colavita/Sutter Home) and third placed Kevin LaComb (Kelly Benefit Strategies Medifast).

"Symmetrics and myself were not here for Athens Twilight, so we all ended up starting at the back of the race and there was absolutely no way to move up to the front," said Clarke, who was participating in the conflicting Tour de Georgia during the weekend's USA Crits Series opener. "So, when the break went up the road we all missed out on it and it wasn't coming back because it had every team represented in it.

"I spoke with the three Symmetrics guys and told them I'd work with them," he added. "A big thanks goes out to Symmetrics because without those guys I wouldn't have won today."

A dangerous break of six riders, included Wamsley, team-mate Davide Frattini (Colavita/Sutter Home), John Freddy Para (Toshiba), Kyle Gritters (Health Net), Alex Candelario and David Villeneuve (Kelly Benefit), snapped off the front early. The six escapees worked together and gained a maximum of 30 seconds over the peloton for over half of the criterium.

One team noted absent in the break was Symmetrics, which later found itself in an organised chase that closed down the gap just in time to set up for a field sprint. Alex Candelario, Mark Hekman (Toshiba) and Luca Damiani (Colavita/Sutter Home) instigated flyers in the final leg of the race, but none matched the speed set up by the sprinter's teams.

The red colours of Colavita/Sutter Home lined up next to the green of Kelly Benefit in a scuffle to get their respective sprinters in a good position. Instead of capitalizing on their strong position however, the teams were unable to stop Clarke, who surprised the field with his winning kick to the line.

"Our team did a great job to set me up perfectly for the sprint on the last lap," said second placed Wamsley. "Hilton took the inside corner first by my surprise and I knew that was the right move that I had planned."

## Pic Dons Stars and Stripes

United States of America Criterium Champion Tine Pic (Colavita/Sutter Home) is well on her way to success in the US Crits Series, after winning the women's race at the Beaufort Memorial Cycling Classic. Pic claimed victory with a break-away sprint over Laura VanGilder (Cheerwine) and Athens Twilight winner Rebecca Larson (Aaron's).

"Rebecca led around the last lap," said Pic. "It was a tough race and the three of us ended up together because Rebecca attacked, I covered her and then Laura bridged across to us."

The speedy trio kept a close eye on one another throughout the race. So cautious were each of the trio that they wound up in a nearly 40 minute break-away while they watched each other like a hawk.

Cheerwine, Colavita and Aaron's brought their A-game to the criterium series and controlled what was left of the field. Despite being outnumbered, Team Vanderkitten and Value Act Capital offered their services at the front of the field to help reduce the gap to the three power-house sprinters.

Larson led the three around the final lap and into the finishing straight where Pic took the convincing win.

## **Results**

### **Pro men**

- 1 Hilton Clarke (Toyota-United)
- 2 Kyle Wamsley (Colavita/Sutter Home)
- 3 Kevin LaComb (Kelly Benefit)

### **Pro women**

- 1 Tina Pic (Colavita/Sutter Home)
- 2 Laura VanGilder (Cheerwine)
- 3 Rebecca Larson (Aaron's)