

Bradford Wins SingleSpeed Stars and Stripes

Written by Staff Reports

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The win and the title came down to bunny hopping the barriers at the men's singlespeed race at the USA Cyclocross National Championships earlier today. On the final lap, two men were battling at the front,

Aaron Bradford (Bay11/HRS/Rocklobster) and JT Fountain, both had taken turns at the front throughout the race while in the lead group. But Bradford had a plan.

"I pre-rode the course yesterday and there were no barriers over there so I didn't know that those were going to be there until the start, somebody went 'yeah you see the barriers over there?'. 'ah no, but okay, I'm sure I will see them.'" Bradford told podiuminsight after his win.

"We went through for the first lap and I thought 'sweet I can hop those'. So I saved it for the last lap or when I actually really needed it. The last lap, I had just a little bit of lead, I knew on the descent coming into the barriers, I wanted to be at the front so I hopped them and I think I got a bit of a gap there and that was that."

Though it's not the first national title for Bradford, he called the win "rewarding".

"I've got a couple of Collegiate National titles, and an Elite Super-D." said Bradford. "It's been a goal. I went to SingleSpeed Worlds and I was really hoping to get a solid finish there but I wrecked in the middle of the race and knocked myself out so it came down to this. It was definitely a goal, it was rewarding."

The pre-race favorites quickly hit the gas on the first lap, led by Fountain who took over the pace making after Brady Kappius (Clif Bar) grabbed the holeshot. Bradford was happy to slide in behind.

"He's kind of the man when it comes to this stuff. He's got the most experience with singlespeed, he's a good wheel to follow so it was good." Bradford said of Fountain.

Fountain, Bradford and Kappius were joined by Michael Gaertner (CDAVR/Vertical Earth) and Bradford's teammate Scott Chapin at the front while the field exploded behind them. But Fountain hit the gas again dropping Chapin while Kappius was taken out of the front group by course tape getting stuck in his cassette, and he also stopped to change a wheel.

"We all had our own wrecks here and there throughout the day but it's just a matter of being able to salvage what happens when you do wreck. I don't know what happened to him. I got wrapped up in the tape once over the bars. I know that JT dumped it somewhere over here after the hit. We had all our issues." said Bradford.

The surface of the course was getting greasy and slick in some spot with the temperature starting to drop at the end of the day. With two laps to go, Fountain was still setting the pace with Bradford and Gaertner behind him, but another surge left two men at the front, Fountain vs Bradford. Gaertner was just a few seconds behind, trying to catch back on.

Bradford knew what he had to do, he passed before the second descent onto the barriers.

"Hopped the barriers, did it smooth, I accelerated a little bit and then as when we through the pit, I could look back and I had a decent gap." Bradford said. Then, he knew that he had the Stars & Stripes jersey in his grasp. His only thought was to "stay smooth."

"At that point, I probably had a seven to ten second gap, that's pretty hard to make up when you're both going fast, so keep it upright, it's all I needed to do."

Bradford is not done racing as he plans on lining up for Sunday's Elite men's race. "I got a good

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preview of the course. " he laughed.

The question on everybody's mind is how will the temperature fluctuations and all the racing impact the power course?

"If it continues to dry out which I assume it will, I'm not really familiar with the kind of dirt here but with the freeze, thaw, freeze, thaw thing, it's slow and it's a power course, there's going to be lots of bike swaps." Bradford commented. "I think the powerhouses, Jeremy rides really well in the mud, Trebon can run in the mud, if that hill gets any slicker it will be pretty cool to watch him ride away. It will be good."

Top 5 Singlespeed Men

- 1. Aaron Bradford (Santa Cruz, Calif./Bay 101-HRS-Rocklobster) 44:47**
2. J.T. Fountain (Moscow, Idaho) 45:01
3. Michael Gaertner (Coeur d'Alene, Idaho/Coeur d'Alene Velo Racers-Vertical Earth) 45:03
4. Scott Chapin (Santa Cruz, Calif./Bay 101-HRS-Rock Lobster Cyclocross) 46:10
5. Braden Kappius (Littleton, Colo./Team Clif Bar) 47:52

Photo Courtesy: Aaron Bradford, LMC Athletics