

Author



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Flashback to 1989. I had been bike messengering for about a full year and had met plenty of cool cats. One of these people that I had been riding with on the weekends was Eric Sprattling (see the right shoulder on your jersey). Eric would organize training rides by talking to messengers all week. He would say "come on man, come out on Saturday, we'll ride to the Fort and back." He would ride down from Rogers Park to pick you up at your house, then we'd go the next person's house and so on until we had about six or eight people heading North to the Fort. The Fort what is that? Geez, how much father I always thought. I still flash that same thought on those two sharp turns just south of the Fort.

Well, one week Eric changed things. "Come to this race (Sherman Park 1989) with me. We can even ride to it." Eric said over his chips and coffee. Sherman Park must have been later in the season that year because my memory of that day is stored in sepia tone in my head. The sunlight had that autumn twinkle. We all rode down together. I registered for Cat 4, and I can't remember what category Eric raced. I remember hearing someone ring a bell. What was that? Prime. What is a Prime? Sprint and find out. Well, I won a Silca Track pump and two laps later some powerbars. But when the final lap came around I was completely out foxed. I think I ended up like tenth or eleventh. Not bad for my very first criterium. Regardless, I had a blast.

Reel it back to Sherman Park 2007. I had just joined xXx last year and had been only mountain biking training by racing for the last 5 years. I volunteered for almost the whole day last year. I didn't race. But I did watch Morrissey go off the front for a couple of laps with a huge smile on his face. Then I knew I would race it this year.

Sherman Park 2008 Cat 5, Surprisingly, I felt no jitters. The cat 5 race started and the lights went out. It was all black at the front, the sides, the middle, and the back. Attacks were flying. I heard that prime bell and the pedals seemed to react by themselves. I found myself in the front. Yumm, Cliff Bars, alright. I dribbled back to the pack. Last lap, now it counts. Got in a good spot. Waiting, waiting, he is not going fast enough. Tension behind is building. Subconscious takes over I hear Eric say "go". Clear. This is the first race I have ever won. For me, it could not have been a better time or place. It brings me back to the roots, simple circles and smiles.

Sherman Park 2008 Masters 4/5, More black attacks. Then smack and whacks. Bryce is the rad man. He bounced right back up and got back to business. Second crash had me dirtbagging thru the mulch. Last lap, I am in the middle of the pack on the inside. I figure I'll block up the inside lane from any attacks thru turn 1 and 2. We are at the bottom of the course and I can see it. The pedal pumpers have swung the leadout train to the outside. It looks like a ladder and there is Newt hanging on the inside of rung six. Perfect. I get on the inside of Newt, he gets my wheel, and I lead him out as far as I can. Newt sprints it out and gets his first(? I'm not sure if that's right) win. Good job Newt, I am not sure that we could have even planned it. xXx brought it all together like magic.

Sherman Park 2008 represented a lot of different things to me. The memory of my first criterium, a repaid favor to an old friend, my first win, teamwork, and new friends. Well, I think Eric Sprattling is very proud right now. His team posted great results across the board. Thanks to Stockmaster and crew for putting on a great event. Also thanks to the xXx team that is so well developed, diverse, and friendly that just about anybody can feel comfortable. Wow and thanks.

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