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Gold Medalist Part Of Maryland Race

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Marty Nothstein, who won a gold medal in the match sprint at the 2000 Summer Olympics, will compete against regional cyclists in today's Silver Spring Grand Prix race.

Nothstein is among 500 cyclists set to compete in the inaugural race around a one-kilometer loop in Silver Spring's commercial district.

"A lot of big guns will be there," Nothstein said. "It's a perfect time in the racing calendar and everyone is pretty much pointing at Silver Spring. I wouldn't be surprised if it's an extremely fast and tough race."

The premiere women's event, the 25-mile pro/elite race, will begin at 11:45 a.m. Nothstein will race in the 35-mile men's pro/elite contest at 1 p.m.

Admission is free. Each race will begin and end on Ellsworth Drive and run through Georgia Avenue, Bonifant Street and Fenton Street.

-- **Walter Gabriel**

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Nothstein Withstands Heat to Win Race

By Walter Gabriel
Washington Post Staff Writer
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The towel wrapped around Marty Nothstein's shoulders was not enough to stop the sweat from dripping from his hair and cycling clothes yesterday.

Nothstein, the 2000 Olympic gold medalist in the match sprint event, said he had just enough energy to finish the inaugural Silver Spring Grand Prix, winning the men's 35-mile pro/elite race in downtown Silver Spring in 1 hour 6 minutes. On a day marked by a heat advisory, Nothstein was in a five-man race with 10 one-kilometer laps remaining until he sprinted the final 100 meters to win.

Kyle Wamsley, Eric Murphy, Ben Lindsay, Jon Wirsing (of Glen Allen, Va.) and Nothstein kept a distance from the pack that ranged from 20 to 30 seconds, but only Wamsley was with Nothstein at the finish line.

"The difference was the sprint at the final turn. It was a matter of me working to get to second or third. I knew I had it with 20 meters left in the race," Nothstein, of Orefield, Pa., said. "It was a war of attrition. It was pretty hot on the last 15 laps. At one point we were looking at each other like, 'Gosh, it's hot.' "

A video review was needed to name Rebecca Larson of Gainesville, Fla., the winner of the women's 25-mile pro/elite race in 1:03. Larson and May Britt Hartwell stayed about 30 seconds ahead of the pack, which stopped trying to catch the two with about three laps remaining. Veronica Martinez and Graciela Martinez, sisters from Allentown, Pa., who are members of the Argentine national team, finished tied at 11th place.

"When the field can't see you, it's always a good thing. After about five laps, I knew the field would stay away," Larson said.

Larson and Hartwell swapped short leads in the final 10 laps. Neither made significant moves until the final lap. When the two crossed the finish line, Larson raised her hands in celebration after the race, before judges confirmed her the winner. It was the only time in the race Larson knew she was going to win.

"Sometimes another racer will act like they're more tired than they really are, so you never know how tired another racer is," Larson said. "At the end I knew I had it, my wheel was just in the right spot."

Pedals were pumping in downtown grand prix

by Jamie Rosen

Special to The Gazette

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Silver Spring race draws competitors from all over

The bikers whirred past traffic on Georgia Avenue, turned the corner onto Bonifant Street, zoomed leftward onto Fenton Avenue, and crossed the starting point on Ellsworth Drive to complete one of 48 one-kilometer laps before a cheering crowd. A minute later, the racers passed Ellsworth again at an average speed of 27.5 mph, creating a breeze that could be felt by the hundreds of cheering onlookers behind the barricades.

Downtown Silver Spring's first bicycle race, known as the Martens Volvo Silver Spring Grand Prix, took place Sunday and included 206 experienced racers from 10 states, Washington, D.C., and abroad who competed in five events for a total of \$9,000 in prizes. The races attracted world-renowned cyclists, such as Olympic gold and silver medalist Marty Nothstein and members of the Argentine national team.

Some spectators came to the event to support a favorite cyclist or just enjoy the novelty of an urban bike race, while others happened upon the highly visible event. "We just came out for brunch and liked what we saw and decided to stay," said Cheryl Wadley-Russell, who came from Chicago to visit her daughter.

"It's a very spectator-friendly sport because you can be so close to the athletes," said Mark Sommers, president of DC Velo/Martens Volvo. "It's great for the community, the revival of the downtown area and the cycling community's emergence in the area."

Jon Gardner, chairman of the DC Velo Public Relations Committee, said Team DC Velo suggested a bike race in Silver Spring in part because the sidewalk cafes and foot traffic make it a visible venue. "You don't get a lot of that in the United States, and this is a wonderful opportunity," he said. "I think we realized that it was a good showcase not only for the community but also for our sponsors and a good way for the community seeing what bike racing is all about."

As many organizers hoped, the race drew people to Silver Spring who have not been here since the redevelopment. "I haven't been to Silver Spring in five years," said DC Velo rider Josh Frick, a resident of Rockville who finished first in the 30-plus category. "I am shocked. Every franchise in the world has a store here."



**Susan Whitney-
Wilkerson/The Gazette**

**Cyclists compete in
Sunday's 35-mile men's
Martens Volvo Silver Spring
Grand Prix pro/elite race in
downtown Silver Spring.**

In addition to professional racers, the competition included less experienced participants who raced for trophies, medals and ribbons. A race for children age 6 and younger attracted a few children of professionals clad in full racing gear, and many more youngsters on bikes with training wheels with parents to steer.

Seven-year-old Sam Quick, who biked from Bethesda to race other youngsters ages 7 to 9, said he especially enjoyed the Silver Spring track. "It was a bigger length than my last race," he said. "It was a bigger course, so I could get more momentum."

After Quick crossed the finish in third place, he joined kids and some older cyclists, hot from racing in the humid weather, in the Silver Plaza fountain.

Public service personnel and other officials also were invited to race, with Montgomery County Councilman Steven A. Silverman (D-At large) of Silver Spring, normally a recreational rider, coming in first. "This is a wonderful community event," Silverman said. "It's a great start to what I think will be huge in years to come."

Race Director Greg Werth said that the organizers of the race would like to make it an annual event, to be held around this time each year. "We really feel like this was just a tremendous success and we can springboard off of this," he said. "Now that the riders have come back and said, 'This was just a tremendous event, could you please put this on again,' we're going to do anything that we can to host this race again."

A local growth cycle

by John Y. Wehmueller

Staff Writer

July 20, 2005

In the Pyrenees Mountain range in France Sunday, an American rider, George Hincapie, won a stage in the Tour de France. At the same time, cycling's most famous face, countryman Lance Armstrong, held on to his overall lead in the Tour, which concludes this weekend.

An ocean away, but at the same time Sunday, another pack of cyclists was whizzing through the streets of Silver Spring's revitalized downtown area. It was no coincidence that the first-ever Silver Spring Grand Prix was being held on a weekend in mid-July.

"We're literally sitting in the shadow of the Discovery [Channel] building, which is the sponsor for the world's leading cycling team," said Mark Sommers, president of the locally based DC Velo/Martens Volvo team, which hosted the event. "And the timing was about right, because everybody is thinking about the Tour de France. So there was a lot of synergism."

Sure enough, there was a tent set up, selling replicas of jerseys worn by famous Tour de France riders, including Armstrong and Hincapie's Team Discovery Channel. More importantly, though, were the scores of fans lining the one-kilometer circuit of Georgia Avenue, Bonifant and Fenton Streets, and Ellsworth Drive, where races started and finished.

"There's a lot of spectators, a lot of people downtown; it's an awesome little area," said women's pro/elite race-winner Rebecca Larson of Team Colavita. "I think it has the potential to be a really great, huge race. For the first year, it was really well-run."

There were six different races throughout the day. The morning featured races in three different men's divisions, and one for kids. The women took to the course late in the morning for a 25-mile race. Larson and former Norwegian Olympian May Britt Hartwell broke away from the main pack midway through the race and stayed out front, with Larson just winning the sprint to the finish line.



Susan Whitney-Wilkerson/The Gazette

Former Olympic cycling champion Marty Nothstein crossed the finish line just ahead of Kyle Wamsley in Sunday's inaugural Silver Spring Grand Prix. Nothstein, who won a gold medal in the 2000 Olympics and a silver in 1996, finished the 35-mile course in 1:06.

The 35-mile men's pro/elite race followed, and with it, the event's main draw. Marty Nothstein, a gold medalist in the match sprint (track) event in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, headlined a field of the top professionals in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Nothstein, who also won a silver medal in Atlanta in 1996, converted to road racing after Sydney and didn't disappoint Sunday. He was part of a five-man breakaway that led the last half of the race, and his specialty, the sprint, got him to the finish line first.

"After winning the gold medal in 2000, I wanted to continue racing, I didn't want to retire," Nothstein said. "So that's why I decided to throw my hat in the ring of American road cycling. ... I've always been naturally fast in no matter what I did, so that's why I lean toward track cycling, sprinting. But even go back before that, I was state road champion as a junior. So I always showed I had a lot of ability on the road."

Sunday's race may have looked a little unfamiliar to anyone who only tunes in to cycling during the Olympics and the Tour de France, but is the way that American cycling seems to be following. It's called criterium racing, and according to Team DC Velo/Martens Volvo rider Josh Frick, downtown Silver Spring is the ideal spot for it.

"This is a true criterium," said Frick, a Rockville resident who won the 30-and-over race Sunday morning. "It gets all the retailers, the whole city, to come out for it, and it's a whole vibrant event. ... For corporate sponsors, it's the future of the sport. Some people don't like that, because it's not Euro. But this is American racing. This is what happens in America."

The event Nothstein won two medals in takes place on an enclosed, steeply banked track, with two cyclists competing head-to-head. The Tour de France is a road race (with multiple stages), from point A to point B.

A criterium takes place on the road, but in a loop, usually one-kilometer long, like the one in Silver Spring Sunday. That allows spectators to follow the action on every lap, rather than waiting all day for one glimpse of the riders. For the riders, it means plenty of cornering, acceleration and deceleration. It also means that breakaways can occasionally lap the field and leads to some interesting tactics.

According to Sommers, the idea for this criterium, at this time, came about before the actual renewal in downtown Silver Spring. The growth of cycling in this country, and the re-growth of the corner of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road, just seemed to coincide.

"The synergy of things that happened was really prompted in large part by the chamber and the regional development center," Sommers said. "You can see it's a very vibrant area, a very vibrant time. People are out having fun and enjoying themselves and getting to see real, top-quality bike racing right in their own back yard."