

## **Bikers to take to Silver Spring streets in Grand Prix**

**Wednesday, June 14, 2006**

Talk of the Town Meredith Hooker

On Sunday, cyclists will fill downtown Silver Spring's streets during the second annual Martens Volvo Grand Prix of Silver Spring. The event, to be held rain or shine, is sponsored by the Montgomery College Takoma Park-Silver Spring campus.

Bikers — including children in a race for kids up to age 9 — will circle a 1-kilometer course. Streets include Ellsworth Drive, Georgia Avenue, Bonifant and Fenton streets. The races start 8 a.m. The children's race will be at 11 a.m. Registration for the children's race starts 9 a.m. and closes 10:30 a.m. in front of Lebanese Taverna at the Silver Plaza. Children race for free. E-mail kids' race inquiries to [kidsrace@dcvelo.com](mailto:kidsrace@dcvelo.com)

For more information about other races, go to [www.dcvelo.com](http://www.dcvelo.com). Registration for adult races closes 11:45 a.m. Thursday. To register online, go to [www.bikereg.com](http://www.bikereg.com). The entry fee for adult riders is \$30.

## Put the pedal to the medal

**In its second year, Silver Spring race attracts more bikers seeking glory**

**Wednesday, June 21, 2006**

by Chay Rao  
Staff Writer

The drama reached its fever pitch in the final two laps of the second annual Martens Volvo Grand Prix of Silver Spring bike race Sunday. On a day of several races, the centerpieces were the women's and men's professional events held in the heat of the afternoon. As the lead pack settled into the final two one-kilometer laps in the men's race, Mark Sommers, president of DC Velo, the locally based cycling club that organized the race, had a smile of anticipation on his face.

"Now is the time to eat your own," he said.

Early in the 56-kilometer (30-mile) race, a pack of riders, including German national champion Christian Grassman, separated themselves from the rest of the field in a move called a "break." Those riders used a bit of teamwork to keep the rest of the field at bay until the final rounds through the tight, four-corner track through the heart of downtown Silver Spring. Then they turned on each other, jostling for position to catapult around the final turn and into the straightaway in front of the gathered fans.

Brad Viera, of the Rite Aid professional team (Pa.), used the help of his teammate, Ryan Dewald, also in the lead pack, to blast around the final corner and tear through the straightaway, crossing the finish line ahead of Dewald and third-place finisher Paul Warren to claim the win and the \$900 prize check.

"My teammate [Dewald] covered an attack on the first turn of the final lap and I was sitting last wheel, so there was no one behind me to see me attack," Viera, 21, said. "I just drilled it for a couple pedal strokes and I took the corner smooth and I had to just ride it in. Everybody hesitated, and that's what it takes usually."



chris rossi/the gazette

Lisa Jellett, 32, celebrates her victory in the women's event at the second annual Martens Volvo Grand Prix of Silver Spring Sunday. Twenty-one-year-old Brad Viera won the men's race through downtown Silver Spring.

The women's race followed a little different pattern, as racers stayed bunched together for the first half of the 40-kilometer (25-mile) race. For those watching their first cycling live cycling race, they were treated to a spectacle a little different from the televised coverage of Lance Armstrong dominating the Tour de France.

Both women's and men's events followed the rules of criterium racing, a style of racing unique to urban America. Though shorter in distance, criterium racing puts a premium on the ability to stay steady through the corners and use bike handling and strategy to gain an advantage. Crash before the final eight laps, and a rider can use the neutral pit stop for repairs and get back into the race without losing position. Run into trouble in the final kilometers, and the rider is out of luck.

“Your position going into the corners really comes into play,” Sommers said. “It's all about quick acceleration. There is never a rest.”

Lisa Jellette, riding for the Verducci/Breakaway team, was able to combine both those skills to defeat a field that included Betty Terrell, a 23-time national champion, and Marjan Huzing, a world duathlon champion. Unlike Viera, Jellette did not have teammates to work with, as no other members of her Philadelphia-based team made the trip to Silver Spring. Despite the fact that she did not want to have to sprint to the finish line, Jellette saved enough energy to do just that in her push for the win.

“My goal was to get a break going,” Jellette said. “I didn't want to sprint it out with everybody, but it just wasn't happening. Nobody wanted to go with me, and I didn't have any teammates today, so I couldn't worry about that stuff. I had to do what I had to do.”

For her victory, the 32-year-old Jellette collected \$425, and illustrated why cycling has remained popular in the post-Lance Armstrong era. A resident of Springfield, N.J., Jellette gravitated to cycling after a balky back curtailed her running career. Though demanding, cycling is less physically stressful than running and has prolonged the competitive length of some careers.

“Cycling is hard, but it doesn't have the pounding that running has,” said Jellette, who has been competing for five years. “When I started riding my bike a lot, I thought I would never race. I would commute to work by bike every day, and when I moved [to New Jersey], I hooked up with a team that raced. It was kind of like ‘OK, you have to race because you're good.’”

For others, cycling provided a competitive outlet that could not be achieved in other sports. Josh Frick, a member of the DC Velo team who lives in Rockville, was one of the “host riders” in Sunday's event. Before the 30-year-old took his position at the front of the starting line, he ruminated on why he had chosen to involve himself in the sport.

“I started by doing triathlons,” Frick said, “but I'm really bad at running and swimming. Cycling is one of the few endurance sports that actually uses teamwork. Running a marathon is very individual. This is really a team effort. You can win or lose a race because of your team, and you don't see that in other endurance sports. I enjoy that aspect of it.”

Viera and Dewald used that teamwork to earn a one-two finish in the men's race for the Rite Aid team. Theirs was the only team that put two riders in the lead pack, and as it pushed out to a 30-second lead over the rest of the riders, the break neutralized the fast start of Grassman, who opened the race as a "headbanger" — starting out fast and setting a blistering pace — that lapped some cyclists in the field early, forcing them to drop out.

With Dewald parrying attacks from rival teams, Viera, of Lancaster, Pa., scooted ahead and claimed his first win of the season.

"I've been knocking on the door all season, and it's been a little frustrating," he said. "Finally the work paid off a little bit, so I'm happy."

Also happy were the event's organizers, including Susan Hoffman, marketing and special events manager for downtown Silver Spring. The second year of the event drew larger crowds than the year before, and the hope exists that the Grand Prix of Silver Spring will become a permanent fixture of the summer.

"It brings people downtown, which is exactly what we want to do," Hoffman said. "We're ready for primetime, and we want people from outside the area to come here."

Notes: Bethesda's Nick Bax, 16, won the men's category 3 event earlier in the day. Bax, who attends St. Alban's School (Washington, D.C), is also an accomplished runner. He completed the Pike's Peek 10K race in April in 33:21, placing 17th overall in a time that was well under U.S. Track and Field age guidelines.

# Bax Prizes Victory at Grand Prix of Silver Spring

Bethesda Teenager Overcomes Crash

By Josh Leventhal  
Special to The Washington Post  
Thursday, June 22, 2006; GZ28

Nick Bax excitedly listed several of the prizes he earned en route to winning a race at the Grand Prix of Silver Spring cycling event on Sunday.

A new watch. A pair of racing glasses. Shoes.

But there was one the 16-year-old Bethesda resident seemed particularly proud of -- if only for shock value.

"I won a \$100 gift certificate for a tattoo," Bax said of the prime (pronounced "preem"), which is awarded to the victor of specified laps during a race. "My mom won't let me redeem that one."

The St. Albans rising junior certainly left his own imprint on the second annual race featuring more than 200 competitors held in downtown Silver Spring on a steamy Father's Day. Bax overcame an early wreck to pull away from the field of older and more seasoned riders with 10 laps remaining, and he held on to win the Class C race -- the third highest of competitive cycling's five classifications.

Though the youngest cyclist in the field, Bax is hardly a newcomer to the sport. He races for Hot Tubes -- a prominent junior developmental team -- and already has several noteworthy victories on his résumé. In 2004, Bax won a junior nationals road race and, last year, placed first at the Maryland Category 3 Championship. He's won 15 junior state events and more than 20 other races.

Yet Bax, an honorable mention All-Met in cross-country last fall and a member of the St. Albans crew team, considers Sunday's victory among his proudest accomplishments. The winding kilometer-long course through the streets of Silver Spring was particularly challenging for Bax, who says his strength is climbing hills, not navigating technical courses.

"I did not come here planning to win," he said.

Then he had to overcome a nasty mid-race wreck that almost ended his day. Riding in a pack that took a turn too fast, Bax went head first into a lamp post. Despite being dazed and experiencing stinging pains on his face and legs, Bax decided that he was okay to continue. He rejoined the main pack with the help of a free lap -- a one-time courtesy extended to racers who crash.

After working his way back toward the front, officials rang the bell signifying a prime would be awarded to the lap winner. Bax didn't claim it but took off from the pack again when the bell sounded the following lap. This time he won the prize and, in the process, built about a five-second lead with fewer than 10 laps remaining.

Though still a bit woozy from the crash, Bax pushed on, although he planned to retire if the pack caught up to him.

It never did.

"I hadn't been planning on breaking away, especially since I was injured," Bax said. "I kept looking over my shoulder because I couldn't believe I was pulling away from these guys. I felt a little out of it -- I could've sworn I saw the eight-laps-to-go [sign] three times in a row.

"I was just so tired. But with four laps to go I felt like I could keep it up. Until that last lap, I was scared. But I started gaining more and more confidence. I kept visualizing my rivals next to me, which is what motivates me."

Also motivating Bax were the bell laps; he's not one to turn away free stuff. In all, Bax won six primes Sunday.

"Those were the best primes I've won all year," Bax said. "A lot of stuff I needed."

Except for the tattoo.



"I did not come here planning to win," said Bethesda's Nick Bax, 16, who pulled away from more veteran riders for victory at the Grand Prix of Silver Spring. (Dc Velo Photos)