



SPORTS

LAMORINDAS LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Race Day Lafayette

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"Riding a bike is easy," I say, "but racing bikes can be brutal."

The announcer: "Riders ready?"

Boom! We're off. Click, click, click: The crisp sound of dozens of clip-less pedals. We're rolling!

I start in the third row back. Single file into 'turn one' I see riders ahead already up and out of the saddle. One rider is making a move, jumping out front. A seventy-minute race, I need to conserve and not work too much or work too hard into the wind, I tell myself. Be smart - let him go.

Rider down! That nasty combined sound of metal and Lycra on asphalt makes me wince. The rider who tried to jump clear early is now sliding across the pavement. The pack cleanly avoids the carnage and sling-shots into a strong tailwind down Golden Gate Way at speeds of over 30 mph.

Don't create any gaps; keep it tight.

Now riders are moving up on both sides of the line and bunching up at the front of the pack. Hugging the inside corner, the pack, now three lines wide, brakes lightly and leans into turn three. One rider leaning too far hits his left pedal. Sparks fly. Somehow, he manages to keep his tires on the road. Later, a tire explodes.

Often riders will literally lean on one another, holding each other up, and then get right back to racing. I'm just happy when the crash I hear is behind me.

Hammering down Mt. Diablo, the increasing headwind drives the group together, forcing everyone to 'find wheels' to draft. Riders that want to work quickly find a train of riders in their wake - 'wheel suckers.'

I try to maintain a spot in the top ten to see if any 'attacks' are happening and be in a good position to grab a wheel should the one ahead of me start to slow

down. There are also usually fewer gaps near the front - less of a "slinky effect." At times, I find myself on the front, quickly take a short pull, and let the next rider through.

The crowd noise is not a factor: a few cowbells (standard bicycle racing noisemakers). I can just make out the muffled announcer's voice as we approached the start/finish. The biggest factor is the wind blowing down barracades and cones on either side of the course.

Seeing that rider crash in the first lap made everyone a little edgy; much braking going on. The lead riders drive the pace. Locked onto the wheel in front of me for much of the race, unattached, without a team to work for - or rider to work for me - I save myself for the final sprint.

It's "go time."

At '2 to go' we whip around the corner and up onto Mt. Diablo Blvd so fast I can't breathe. Rip-

ping through the start/finish, I hear the bell signifying the final lap - ONE to go!!!

The announcer beckoned and it's all out to the end. We come in hot around the last corner. Everyone is up and out of the saddle, spread wide on both sides of the road. I'm on one wheel, then another, and then there's the line. Pain, broad grins.

It was a good race: well organized and fun. I finish 21st overall - in the top half. It helps me justify racing in the main event.

Will I be out there next year? Definitely!

Orinda resident Michael Foley is a USCF Category II racer and has completed solo bicycle tours from California to Montana and Oregon. He is author of "Bicycling Beyond City Limits," which chronicles his 55-day cross-country journey with six friends (available at Orinda Books and Amazon.com).

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Power Square Off Against Sissi And The California Storm

By Kevin D. Shallat



10 Sarah Churchill



11 Bethany Garchar



Photos by Jordan Fong

Stead Open: World Class Tennis with Small Town Charm

By Sarah Henningsen

In the second round of recent Championships at Wimbledon, a relatively unknown player named Hana Sromova from the Czech Republic faced Venus Williams, eventually losing to the legendary player in straight sets. Though she has yet to win a Grand Slam title in her tennis career, Sromova is a multiple champion at what Lamorinda locals know as the Stead Open.

The tennis tournament, held annually at Moraga Country Club in August, features everything from professional players at the Wimbledon level to local athletes rising in the sport. Such diversity among competitors has made the Stead Open a very popular, respected, and interesting competition.

"What is so unique about this event is that it includes players from all different skill levels—ex-tour players, new people on the circuit, local juniors and collegiate players," said Mark Orwig, the tennis pro at MCC and director of the Stead Open. "That's the kind of flavor we want to keep in the tournament."

Play begins Tuesday, Aug. 7 in the morning during early-round matches and sometimes continues throughout the evening depending on how long the matches take to complete. Registration entries are

available to USTA members and must be turned in by the end of the July for inclusion in the tournament; seeding will be announced by Aug. 5. Consistent with the tournament schedule from the past two years, several matches will also be featured specifically on Thursday night. This addition to the tournament has enabled individuals who work during the day to attend the event and watch some topnotch tennis matches.

Since its inception in the late 1980s, the Stead Open has grown to become one of the best open tennis tournaments in the country, mainly due to the high caliber of athletes and a large purse of prize money. As Orwig acknowledges, Stead Family of Fine Automobiles and Alain Pinel Realtors continual support of the tennis tournament shows "a real desire to be a part of the community." Even more importantly, their huge donations to the overall prize money for the tournament have clearly been successful in attracting talent new and old from throughout the world, the nation, and Lamorinda.

All of the Lamorinda community, even those who are not members of MCC, are welcome. "I absolutely love watching the Stead and it is often the highlight of my summer vacation," said Theresa Luu, a senior at



Mark Orwig - Head Tennis Professional

Miramonte High School who has played golf and tennis at Moraga Country Club for many years. "Even those who don't play tennis, or know anything about it to begin with, should come out and cheer on the players. I always have a great time."

The Stead Open combines a small-town feel with some world-class tennis - a gem of an event. Who knows? The next big star could be warming up to play right in front of your eyes.

Event Highlights Aug. 7-12:	
Tue:	9am Singles
Wed:	9am Singles and Doubles
Thu:	9am Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles 5:30pm Evening Featured Matches
Fri:	9am Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles
Sat:	9am Singles and Doubles 1pm Ladies Doubles Finals
Sun:	9am All Finals: Ladies Singles, Man Singles, Man Doubles, Mixed Doubles

The Lamorinda East Bay Power soccer team and Power Head Coach Ernesto Silva knew they had a tough task ahead of them when they took on the California Storm at Acalanes on Saturday, July 21. From Sacramento, the Storm has one of the best women player's in the world: Brazilian-born soccer player known as Sissi. She and her teammates gave the Power all they could handle this last game of the season, beating them handedly by a score of 4-0.

The first half started off promising for the Power, as several players played well on the defensive end. Utility player Sarah Miller had a nice play by the Power goal. She placed herself in front of the goal - the only angle the player could make a shot - and blocked the ball with her body, while Power goalkeeper Bianca Delahousaye had some wonderful kick saves around the goal. The good news was that Delahousaye played well in the first half; the bad news was that she was getting too much action around the Power goal throughout the half.

As dominating as the Storm were, the Power were only down by one goal at the half.

The 1-0 halftime score soon changed. The Storm had a wide-open, almost free shot on goal, but the Power were unable to take advantage of the Storm mistake, missing it wide left. The momentum stayed with the Storm. Playing with their backs against the goal for most of the game proved too much, as the Power tired and the Storm took advantage.

Although Sissi did not score any of their four goals on the day, she was stellar at setting up shots for her Storm teammates. The most impressive as-

pect of Sissi's game was her ball handling skills. Every player who had possession of the ball Saturday would have a defender in their face immediately, physically attempting to kick the ball away from them. There may have been one or two times all day where anybody got a leg in on Sissi to try and extract the ball. She was simply too good with the ball and too fast to allow that to happen.

Samantha Faber had a good game for the Power as she had a few powerful shots on goal. Fantastic play by the Storm goalkeeper kept her shots from the net.

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sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com.