

SPORTS

Young cruises to victory in women's race

By Ron Buck
Journal Sports Writer

Julie Young just wanted to find out who was going to be her competition Sunday morning in the women's race of the fourth annual Gold Country Criterium. So, after 12 laps of the 25 lap race, Young made a breakaway from the lead pack and waited for someone to follow her lead.

That someone never showed up.

So, for the final 13 laps of the race, Young rode alone, building her lead with each lap and eventually winning the 15-mile race by almost 30 seconds over second-place finisher Elizabeth Keyster.

"I just tried to ride as hard as I could up the hill," said Young of her breakaway on the 13th lap. "I figured at least two other riders would stay with me. But no one did and from there I just kept pushing myself to ride hard."

"I was a little worried about the turn at the bottom of the hill," added Young, who rides for the Davis Bike Club. "But it turned out that you could take it at full



Journal photo by Ron Buck

Women's winner Julie Young.

speed. And once I got my line down going around it I was fine."

While Young was breezing towards her victory, the battle for second was being contested by, first two, and then three riders.

Stacy Cooper and Kim Denton rode side by side, 20 seconds behind Young, for most of the second half of the race, seemingly headed for a dual sprint at the end of the race. But about seven seconds behind them, Elizabeth Keyster was setting her sights on the two and had plans of making it a party for three at the end.

"I saw that I was staying about 20 yards behind them and was not losing any ground," said Keyster. "I planned to get up to them, rest a lap, then sprint the final two laps."

On the fourth lap, Keyster made her move on the uphill climb to the finish line and caught Cooper and Denton at the top. And after two laps of side by side racing by the three riders, they made their final sprints to the finish.

"Nothing really happened until the bottom of the hill," said Keyster.

When they reached the the bottom of the hill, the three riders were side by side. And as they made their sprints to the finish line, Keyster was able to push ahead of the others, a bike length ahead of Cooper. Denton finished third, a wheel behind Cooper.

"I thought that I would be tired from trying to catch up to them (Denton and Cooper)," said Keyster. "But I think I was in a better gear than they were (for the climb up the hill to the finish) and the bigger gear helped push me up the hill."

For Young, the win was her first of the year. She began racing only a year ago and has recently place third at the Tour of Gila in New Mexico and has had top-10 finishes in both the Tour of Ore-Ida and Cascade Classic.

"I'd have liked to have been better at hill climbing this year," Young said. "But it has turned out that I have been doing better at criteriums."

Elizabeth Johnson of Sierra Express finished fifth and Keri Sharp of Hawaii's Maui Bike Club was sixth.