



Al Allen

Left to right: Inga Thompson, Esther Van Verseveld, Tricia Walters and Julie Young

YOUNG, KAHLUA WIN TOUR De L'AUDE

Thompson takes Epinal, Bankaitis-Davis, Bliss, Golley take Classics

Northern California native Julie Young scored the overall victory at the 10-stage Tour de L'Aude, one of the biggest women's races in the world, while her Kahlua teammates Inga Thompson, Sally Zack, and Dede Demet took 3rd, 7th and 10th, respectively. Said Young, "It was heartening to see such strong team riding in an Olympic year, when some riders are just out to get themselves noticed."

The critical break came on the race's penultimate and most mountainous stage, where narrow, twisty roads, hard climbs, and congested passages through small villages allowed her breakaway group of 5 to 9 riders to consistently outpace the peloton after going off the front only 6 kilometers into the 106 km race. As the tape neared, along with a chasing peloton, Young enlisted the help of breakaway companion and friend Karina Skibby of Denmark, offering to let her win the stage in exchange for working to maintain the

group's lead, a margin which would ultimately put Young in the race leader's jersey. Meanwhile, back in the peloton, the Kahlua team worked hard to control strong attempts by Van Moorsel of Holland and Katherine Marsal of France to break away and bridge to the leaders.

Young described the next day's final stage circuit race as the hardest race she's ridden. "It was insanely hard. Everyone was riding aggressively. Attack after attack. It was the kind of technical course where a breakaway could really put time on the pack, but the team worked so well to keep everything together. And at the end, we all got to the front to help Sally Zack win the sprint."

Young and Team Kahlua now plan to attend the Ore-Ida stage race, the Olympic trials, and the US Nationals. Says Young, "I came into this season less than 100 percent. I seem to be riding into shape, and I feel there's still a lot of room for improvement."

In other international racing news, Bunki Bankaitis-Davis won the Bergen op Zoom in Tiel, Holland, a 60 km criterium, as well as the next day's Haasdonk Classic, a 65 km road race in Belgium. Inga Thompson took the 3-day Epinal Stage Race in France. Karen Bliss of Quakertown, Penn. won the prestigious 90 km Flevotour Classic in Kampen, Holland on May 9, while her US teammate Laura Charameda

News Writers:

Piet Canin

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Michael Ferrentino

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Henry Kingman

gained fourth. The next day, in Brecht, Belgium, American Jeanne Golley took the 65 km Mother's Day Classic after a solo breakaway, while Team USA's Bunki Bankaitis-Davis took the field sprint for second with Laura Charameda again taking fourth.—H.K.