

Truth and triumph found in opening race

By RYAN HALE

Special to the Colby Free Press
Well, it's that time of year again. The cycling season is underway. In Colorado however, that means still riding periodically in snow until the end of May. In fact last week's season opener had to be postponed until July!

The actual season opener was at Carter Lake near Longmont, Colo., on April 29. The racecourse consisted of riding through a cross wind in the farmland of the Front Range, only to climb 1,000 vertical feet into the mountains only to descend again.

The race day loomed ominously on my calendar since I have not been doing the off-season training as in past years (graduate school really takes its toll on your time). I went anyway and as I warmed up and went to the start line I was feeling better and better about my chances.

My start place was in the back of the pack where the women's category was grouping for their start after ours. I was talking and joking with them before the race began ... something that would come back to haunt me, probably for the rest of my life.

The race got underway and immediately plunged down the 1,000 feet we would be climbing back up soon. I hit 46 mph. It wasn't that my bike couldn't go faster, my nerve just wouldn't let it. The road was patched and repatched and was very difficult at that speed.

The race eventually flattened out and we were soon in riding through farms in gently rolling hills, something I've have had experience at before. The group split up into sub-groups racing at different speeds. As soon as it did, I immediately realized the group I was riding with had a couple of certifiable jerks. I decided that no matter how good or bad I did in the race I was going to beat those two guys.

As the race began going back up into the mountains, the main group was still in sight. The race was a 18 mile loop for a total of 53 miles. When we came through the start/finish area, the main group began to pull

away and it became a race within myself, to just go my own pace. I left the group with the jerks behind me and the main group was going too fast to catch. I spent the next 34 miles riding by myself.

By that time the sun was up and the wind began blowing. A rider can save as much as 40 percent of their energy by riding in a group but there I was riding into the wind by myself. The two jerks eventually caught me and passed me, riding away on the next climb. Before the race was over though, they blew up and ran out of energy.

I blew past them on the last climb and never looked back. When I went by it looked like they were really suffering. My place was 80th out of 100, not too impressive but I was happy for two reasons, I finished after having not trained as much as I'd like to have, and I beat the guys I was gunning for.

This is where my conversation with the women's category riders before the race would come back to haunt me. After finishing, I found out that while we were out on the course, one of the women racers crashed on the plummeting downhill section. I saw an ambulance on the course going by me the other way, but was not alarmed. It's not uncommon to see that during a race but I never imagined someone would be killed that day.

She hit a guardrail going about the same speed that I took note of earlier. From what I heard, she died of head and facial trauma. I knew that since I didn't hear a helicopter she must have died at the scene. The paramedics attempted to cut a hole in her throat to allow her to breathe but there was so much trauma that it of no use. Usually that's a pretty last ditch effort in a case like that so I can only imagine her condition.

Even now I find myself rewinding the images of those riders I was talking to at the start line, wondering which one she was. I can't stop doing that. I just play it and replay it back again in my mind.

I finally decided I had to go back to the scene two days later to pay my respects. I found the place where she crashed and immediately saw the skid mark left that fateful day. It went off the pavement and through the sand on the



Ryan Hale rounded a corner in his first bike race of the spring in Longmont, Colo. Hale is the son of Roger Hale and Linda Hale, Colby, and writes about his experiences from time to time.

shoulder.

The gouge was deep and told the tragic story of someone desperate to stop what was about to happen to her. Everyone keeps telling me "at least she died doing something she loved." I suppose that's how I would want those close to me to think about it if, God forbid, anything ever happened to me.

I'm not so sure though. She loved racing, not crashing! I stood and stared at it for a good long time. Someone had left a single solitary flower across the trench made by her futile attempt to stop. It wasn't a fancy one from a flower shop. It looked like it was picked wild from somewhere out in the nearby field.

I didn't know her, but as a cyclist we were bound by something special. We raced and that made us unique ... I felt like I could know the kind of person she was without ever meeting her.

I suppose you can't do this forever without something like this happening, and I know what it is to lose a friend on a bike. This race held a range of emotions and looking back on it now realize that while on some level I found triumph, someone else found truth.

Ryan Hale lives in Estes Park, Colo. He is the son of Roger Hale and Linda Hale, Colby. He occasionally writes for the Free Press

St. Louis rallies twice; cuts Denver lead to 2-1

ST. LOUIS (AP) — It took the St. Louis Blues 60 shots to get to Patrick Roy, so they just kept firing.

Scott Young's goal at 10:27 of the second overtime gave the Blues a 4-3 victory over the Colorado Avalanche on Wednesday night, and new life in the Western Conference finals. The Blues twice rallied to tie it in the third period, and narrowed the Avalanche's series lead to 2-1 heading into Game 4 tonight in St. Louis.

"I don't know how many pucks we had to throw on the net," coach Joel Quenneville said. "I think across the board, the guys wouldn't be denied."

Al MacInnis got off 10 shots, including a slap shot to the gut near the end of regulation that doubled over Roy, Chris Pronger had eight shots and Young six. Young, who had a career-high 40 goals in the regular season, took a pass from Pierre Turgeon at the blue line and beat Roy just inside the left post for his sixth goal of the postseason.

"I just threw it in the middle and I was hoping it wasn't going to hit any sticks or skates, and it was a great shot," Turgeon said. "Great release, big goal, big win, good feeling."

The Avalanche weren't blaming Roy for the game-winner, or the Blues' two tying goals. Defenseman Adam Foote said the strategy of sitting on the lead put too much pressure on Roy, who had allowed six goals in his previous six playoff games.

"He's always there for us," Foote said. "We can't let him see this many shots. We were in our end way too long."

Goals by Scott Mellanby and Jamal Mayers erased third-period deficits, and Alexander Khavanov also scored for the Blues, who totaled three goals in the first two games of the series at Denver. The goal ended the longest overtime of this year's playoffs, topping the Blues' victory in Game 3 of their second-round series against Dallas by 61 seconds.

The Blues overcame a shaky outing from goalie Roman Turek, who gave up three goals on only 16 shots in regu-

lation. Turek handed the Avalanche their second goal of the first period when he fumbled the puck to Dan Hinote. He then gave Colorado an empty net at 4:40 of the first overtime after bobbling a Chris Drury drive, but managed to get his stick on a Stephane Yelle backhand that hit the goal post.

"I had to play unbelievable for them after what happened," Turek said.

Yelle said the missed opportunity will be hard to forget.

"I had a wide-open net, and all I had to do was lift the puck up a couple of inches," he said. "I'll be thinking about it the next couple of days."

Ray Bourque and Eric Messier also scored for Colorado,

which had 33 shots. Messier's goal on a 2-on-1 break with Shjon Podein gave the Avalanche a 3-2 lead with 7:20 to play.

Mayers, a fourth-line forward who scored a career-best eight goals in the regular season, forced overtime when he deflected Chris Pronger's shot past Roy with 5:43 left in regulation.

Mellanby tied it at 2 with the Blues' first even-strength goal of the series. He carried the puck into the offensive zone off a feed from Mike Eastwood, faked a forehand and whipped a backhand around Roy at 10:13 of the third.

Khavanov's third goal of the playoffs, an easy tap-in after Roy stopped Pavol Demitra's wrist shot, came on a power play and put St. Louis ahead for the first time in the series at 5:54 of the first.

The Avalanche, outshot 8-0 at the start, scored the first time they tested Turek. Just 1:02 after Colorado fell behind, Bourque scored his second goal of the postseason on a power-play drive from the point between Turek's pads.

Hinote had an empty net on the Avalanche's third shot at 8:36 of the first after Turek misplayed the puck on a dump-in by Dave Reid. Turek came out of the net but couldn't decide whether to glove the puck, dive on it or swat it away.

He did none of the above.



League Results

Here are the results of the Western Kansas Liberty League girls track meet in Colby on Friday

High Jump - 1. Poore, Cheylin, 5'2"; 2. Zumbahlen, Cheylin, 5'2"; 3. Baalman, Grinnell, 5'; 4. Hackerott, 4'8"; 5. Rhodes, Jennings, 4'8"; 5. Dixon, Greeley County, 4'8".

Discus - 1. Lewallen, Triplains, 114'2"; 2. Hickert, Golden Plains, 102'6"; 3. Petersen, Greeley County, 100'3"; 4. Foster, Utica, 97'; 5. Bussen, Wallace County, 89'11"; 6. Streit, Wallace County, 88'4".

100 meter hurdles - 1. Latham, Triplains, 15.49; 2. Williams, Wallace County, 17.56; 3. Unruh, Wallace County, 17.92; 4. Moritz, Greeley County, 18.09; 5. Zumbahlen, Cheylin, 18.44; 6. Dubois, Jennings, 18.58.

Long jump - 1. Barrett, Triplains, 15'6 1/2"; 2. Poore, Cheylin, 14'6 1/2"; 3. Fulwider, Brewster, 14'3 1/4"; 4. Carney, Brewster, 13'8 1/2"; 5. Beckman, Grinnell, 13'4 1/2"; 6. Rains, Wallace County, 13'4 1/4".

400 meter dash - 1. Vahling, Jennings, 1:02.48; 2. Siebert, Wallace, 1:03.41; 3. Poore, Cheylin; 1:04.65; 4. Carney, Brewster, 1:05.76; 5. Riedel, Golden Plains, 1:06.15; 6. Mackley, Triplains, 1:08.52.

200 meter dash - 1. Rogers, Golden Plains, 26.94; 2. Barrett, Triplains, 27.74; 3. Williams, Wallace County, 27.97; 4. Meitl, Jennings, 28.61; 5. Epp, Greeley County, 29.38; 6. Antholz, Cheylin, 29.57.

Triple Jump - 1. Barrett, Triplains, 34'02.5"; 2. Bixeman, Grinnell, 32'02.75"; 3. Vahling, Jennings, 31'11.5"; 4. Siebert, Wallace County, 31'04.5"; 5. Snyder, Cheylin, 30'07.75"; 6. Broeckelman, Golden Plains, 31'00.0".

3200 meter run - 1. Zumbahlen, Cheylin, 13:03.12; 2. Broeckelman, Golden Plains, 13:20.52; 3. Scammehorn, Healy, 13:21.62; 4. Carney, Brewster, 13:39.07; 5. Dixon,

Greeley County, 14:18.84; 6. Barber, Weskan, 14:22.62.

100 meter dash - 1. Latham, Triplains, 12.91; 2. Vahling, Jennings, 12.96; 3. Rogers, Golden Plains, 12.99; 4. Meitl, Jennings, 13.37; 5. Epp, Greeley County, 13:54; 6. Antholz, Cheylin, 13.67.

Javelin - 1. Welsh, Weskan, 102'1"; 2. Lewallen, Triplains, 96'6"; 3. Bussen, Wallace County, 95'4" 4. York, Healy, 94'; 5. Baber, Greeley County, 90'3"; 5. Streit, Wallace County 89'11".

300 meter low hurdles - 1. Latham, Triplains, 47.14; 2. Williams, Wallace County, 50.23; 3. Zumbahlen, Cheylin, 52.49; 4. Mortitz, Greeley County, 54.72; 5. Starns, Brewster, 54.73; 6. Dubois, Jennings, 56.66.

Pole Vault - 1. Unruh, Wallace County, 8'; 2. Hackerott, Weskan, 7'6"; 3. Juenemann, Golden Plains, 6'6"; 4. Horn, Weskan, 6'.

Shot put - 1. Lewallen, Triplains, 39'2"; 2. Hickert, Golden Plains, 37'; 3. Bussen, Wallace County, 36'6 3/4"; 4. Foster, Utica, 36'1"; 5. Moore, Cheylin, 33'11 3/4"; 6. Collett, Brewster, 31'9 1/2".

4x800 meter relay - 1. Cheylin, 11:08.69; 2. Greeley County, 11:18.91; 3. Grinnell, 11:21.54; 4. Weskan, 12:28.08.

1,600 meter run - 1. Welsh, Weskan, 5:50.67; 2. Siebert, Wallace County, 5:59.41; 3. Zumbahlen, Cheylin, 6:04.23; 4. Broeckelman, Golden Plains, 6:04.23; 5. Dixon, Greeley County, 6:26.32; 6. Scammehorn, Healy, 6:36.06.

4x100 meter relay - 1. Triplains, 52.97; 2. Brewster, 55.02; 3. Greeley County, 55.20; 4. Jennings, 55.27; 5. Grinnell, 56.512; 6. Golden Plains, 57.04.

800 meter run, - 1. Welsh, Weskan, 2:36.69; 2. Stephens, Grinnell, 2:36.79; 3. Mense, Grinnell, 2:43.54; 4. Fulwider, Brewster, 2:45.73; 5.

Ibarra, Greeley County, 2:50.11; Juenemann, Golden Plains, 2:52.15.

4x400 meter relay - 1. Wallace County, 4:26.45; 2. Greeley County, 4:34.63; 3. Grinnell, 4:37.74; 4. Golden Plains, 4:45.78; 5. Cheylin, 4:40.2; 6. Weskan, 4:50.82.

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Area Schedule

Monday, May 21
Class 4A State Golf at Bonner Springs.
Colby High School Sports Awards

Banquet at the High School Auditorium at 7 p.m.

Class 1A State Golf Meet at Garden City.



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