

Summary of the All Sport/East Coasters Virginia Championship Mountain Bike Series Final - The Trek Escape, October 1, 1995, New Castle, Virginia

By Kyle S. Inman

Paul Bell didn't wait to hear ringing to mount a convincing drive towards victory in the All Sport/East Coasters Virginia Championship Series' grueling final event— The Trek Escape. But Chris Scott (Schwinn) would not be denied — taking the larger prize of 1995 Virginia Champion — while also turning in an inspired ride on Potts Mountain near New Castle, Virginia, surely one of the premier, mountain bike venues anywhere. Sheila Eaheart completed a perfect hat trick, snaring her third victory along with the 1995 women's championship mantle.

This out-and-back course was anything but subtle, with the first climb arriving just at the start, and jutting up 1200 feet in one mile. By the finish, riders will have tacked on an additional 3000' vertical feet. Dry course conditions, 70 degree highs, and cobalt blue skies combined to make this race's 9th edition perhaps the best yet.

A tandem of Mark Smith and Steve Nevins attacked immediately, with exceptional climber Edward Dickenson (Redline) in tow. Dickenson took over about midway up, but Paul Bell poured it on over the top, and with Mark Smith tagging along, would not look back until it was over some two hours later.

"I couldn't *believe* the pace, for such a long race, right off the bat," remarked Dickenson.

Meanwhile, Chris Scott had his victory hopes dampened with a puncture, frantically re-tubing in what had to be record time. Bell and Smith increased their lead to 30 seconds across the rocky moonscape of the Potts ridge, with a furious pace being set in the second group of Dickenson, Nevins, Thomas Jenkins (Breezer), and Jakob Helmboldt.

When the field emerged from the woods and onto a forest dirt road, Helmboldt charged, trailed by his former group. The Cove Trail, an impeccable single track descent, saw Helmboldt's luck deflate with a puncture, letting the second group by for the remainder of the two-fisted, rock plagued Potts Arm Trail. On the return trip up, Mark Smith blew a gasket, losing contact not only with the leader Bell, but most of the riders in the field. Dickenson, Jenkins, and Nevins all remained welded together, until reaching the ridge, where Helmboldt came by like a renegade express. Then, in like fashion and from out of nowhere, Scott appeared, shaking off all remnants of a poor performance one week earlier at Maggie Valley, and careening towards the finish. And while Bell was untouchable to the end, had Scott and Helmboldt gone flat-free, the final assault on the rocky ridge would have played differently. Dickenson, riding with great form and carefree abandon, eventually shook free of Jenkins and Nevins. Bell, Helmboldt, and Scott preceded, with Scott earning points enough to secure the 1995 Virginia champion's trophy.

In the women's race, Sheila Eaheart displayed the dominant form that took her to two previous series victories, easily winning both the race and the championship. On a perfect day in Craig County, Eaheart completed the perfect season.

Rocky mountain-based races enjoy the reputation for climbs; the Trek Escape proves that racing in the much older Appalachians of the east provide big climbs, and big

courses, as well. The All Sport/East Coasters Virginia Championship Mountain Bike Series also proves that great races happen in the eastern mountains.

THE TREK ESCAPE, New Castle, VA. October 1, 1995.

Pro-expert Men: 1. Paul Bell, 24.6 miles in 2:45:42; 2. Jakob Helmboldt, at 3:20; 3. Chris Scott (Schwinn) at 3:50; 4. Edward Dickenson (Redline), at 5:23; 5. Daniel Miller at 7:11; 6. Steve Nevins, at 11:11; 7. Thomas Jenkins (Breezer), at 12:15; 8. Ray Clark, at 13:21; 9. Chad Davis, at 14:23; 10. Kevin Wetzel, at 19:30

Women: 1: Sheila Eaheart, 24.6 miles in 4:28:14; 2. Teresa Martinez, @ 32:13; 3. Crystal Richardson, @ 1:01:13.