

Basic Information:

The 36th Original Merced Criterium, in Merced

Date: Sunday February 26, 2023

Times: Set Up: 6 a.m. to 8 a.m.
Street Closure: 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Events: 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Clean-Up: 3:30 pm to 5: 00 p.m.

Location: A 0.7 mile loop of Merced City streets including the loop behind the old Courthouse, with a start finish line on M at 19th.

Course: The course has been a fast paced circuit in the City, starting and finishing on M Street, and utilizing M, 18th, N, behind the Old Courthouse, and 21st Streets. There are several 90 degree turns and a chicane behind the old Courthouse. The Criterium has used the same course since 1987. (Though the event was not held in 2017 and 2018 or 2020). Velo Promo provides all needed barricades (including Type 3) and signage (including detour signs) for the event

Type of Event: The race is a "criterium", that is, a series of multi-lap races of varying lengths for various categories on a short closed loop. Riders sprint for prizes (Primes) on designated laps during the event, and for prizes at the finish. The total program will be seven hours in length.

Entrants: Riders will be licensed amateurs from USA Cycling and Professionals from the U.S. Professional Racing Organization. In the past, competitors have included members of the U.S. National Team and Olympic Team, foreign riders and U.S. National Champions. Seven separate categories of riders will have their own events, and some 200 riders can be expected to compete in 2023. There will also be a mentored training program for riders new to racing.

Covid-19 protocols: Registration will be encouraged online , several hand sanitizer and handwashing stations will be available, portable toilets will be cleaned regularly (with approved cleaners, gloves and adequate ventilation). Entrants will be informed of current CDC guidelines prior to arriving at the race site via race website, Facebook, Instagram and by email as they enter online (protocols regarding efforts at the race site, about coming individually, about not coming if sick or exposed to others with Coivd-19, etc) Protocols will be adjusted as guidance changes from health authorities.

History: The Criterium began in 1987, as a part of the San Joaquin Series, a set of races designed for the U.S. National Team (then at training camp near Fresno) as tune-up events before heading east to the big Spring races each year, and has developed into one of the most popular race weekends in the State, along with the previous day's Snelling Road Race. Many riders have come through the Merced Criterium over the years.

Insurance and Medical: Liability Insurance naming the City and County will be provided via the USA Cycling Organization (\$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 aggregate). The event has a first aid station staffed with EMTs. Riders are covered under medical insurance from the USAC.

Organizers: The race is being planned by Velo Promo, LLC, operating bicycle races as a company since 1979, and as individuals since 1972. Velo Promo has 25 race days on the 2023 Northern California/Nevada race schedule, and has conducted over 990 events in the past 30 years. Race Director for 2023 is again Robert Leibold, who has directed the Criterium since 1987.

Contact:

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