

Basic Information:

The 29th Original Merced Criterium, in Merced

Date: Sunday February 21, 2016

Times: Set Up: 6 a.m. to 8 a.m.
Street Closure: 7 a.m. to 3 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 or 0.9 mile loop of Merced City streets in front of the old Courthouse

Course: The course has been a fast paced circuit in the City, starting and finishing on M Street, and utilizing M, Main, 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, with an additional block since 2009, (using M, Main and N, extending one block into downtown). This block of Main has few (if any) open businesses on Sunday morning/midday, and has worked well the in the past. (though it was rerouted in 2011 to avoid road construction)

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 300 riders can be expected to compete in 2016.

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.

Promoters: The race is being planned by Velo Promo, operating bicycle races as a company since 1979, and as individuals since 1972. Velo Promo has 32 race days on the 2016 Northern California/Nevada race schedule, and has conducted over 800 events in the past 30 years. Race Director for 2016 is again Robert Leibold, who has directed the Criterium since 1987.

Contact:

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