

The East Coast got me. All my sticky-outy parts have bruises or cuts. I can't rest my left elbow on anything because I think I may have bruised the bone. If anyone ever tells you that mountain bike race courses are all fire road and easy trail, you will know you are talking with someone who hasn't actually raced.

After Vermont I spent the nicest week in Connecticut. I stayed with Bill and Lynette, friends of our team manager David Myers. All week I rode beautiful roads with Bill and his neighbors, Charlie and Pete. Charlie and Pete are crazy ultra-endurance cyclists, so they knew all the best places to ride. Pete had just finished a 400 km brevet on Sunday, but on Tuesday he was back out with us for a 3 hour ride, and on Wednesday he even went and did intervals with me! Bill grilled up delicious dinners and Lynette even did reiche on me. So by the time I got up to Mont Ste. Anne, Quebec, I felt very revitalized and ready to race. To top it off, the day before the race Kerry Barnholt and my teammate Sara Bresnick and I went to these beautiful cascading waterfalls with pools that were the perfect depth and temperature for soaking in (much more enjoyable than an ice bath).

Given that this was my first World Cup of the year, and the course is king-gnarl, my main goal was to ride a smooth first lap. I figured if I could do that the rest of the laps would be no problem because we would have spread out by then. I did ride a very smooth lap, and went into lap two in about 12th place. Exactly where I wanted to be, and moving forward up the climbs! That is about when it all fell apart for me. I reverted back to my crashing ways and lost spot after spot. I was hitting trees, sliding off of roots like they were covered in ice, and missing lines. I even grabbed a tree, did a 180 degree turn, landed upright and still on my bike but facing up the hill and rolling backwards before I got a foot down. At some point I realized that I felt like one of those kickboxers that Lisa and I had been watching on television in Big Bear: they take hit after hit, fall to the ground and get back up to take some more abuse. Frustration turned to laughter at the silliness of it all, and somehow I pulled it back together for the fourth lap. I finished 19th, which is definitely below what I know I can do, and yet it is my best World Cup finish yet. I can ride with the best; now I just have to figure out how to do that while keeping the rubber side down.

I have higher hopes for next weekend in Calgary. The terrain should be more familiar and predictable, and I know my fitness is good, so hopefully it will come together. Top ten is my goal, anything less and the World Championships may be out of reach for me this year. Five girls are now qualified to go, and we only have seven spots. It is up to me to do it, and there is no reason I can't, so no excuses!