

Two three-day stage races in two weeks, and the Ford Cycling Team has had a fantastic start to their 2004 season. Lisa and Dara kicked off the National Championship Series in Waco, Texas, on March 12-14, and did their first of many “PreRide with a Pro” women’s events. Lisa, Dara, and Melanie continued the racing at the Nova Desert Classic in Phoenix, Arizona, on March 19-21 and capped it off with a cross country win and multiple podium appearances!

The Nova Desert Classic is a special event in Arizona as it benefits the youth cycling team, Team Nova. The blazing heat in Fountain Hills was a real challenge to everyone involved, days reached temps of 95+. Racing began on Friday with an 8 mile time trial. All three of the Ford cyclists rode their K2 Razorback SLs on the bumpy desert loop. Melanie had the misfortune of discovering the sharpness of desert rocks with her rear tire, and flatted. Lisa and Dara both had strong time trials, with Dara nabbing a podium spot in 5th. Day 2 of the Classic was the short track: an excellent loop including some technical single-track and tough corners. Melanie blazed off the front to a strong lead, and ultimately placed second, with Dara moving into fourth on the GC and Lisa maintaining her overall position. Day 3 was the fast and twisty cross country event. Melanie again jumped to an early lead, and held onto it for the big win! Lisa finished a strong 10th, and Dara was close behind in 13th. In the end, Melanie overcame her time trial mishap to finish 4th in the GC, Dara held in for 9th, and Lisa rounded it out in 12th.

The previous week was the first of 8 National Championship races for Lisa and Dara. Like Nova, it also had a time trial, short track, and cross country event. The girls had a great time in Waco; the trails were rippin’ and twisty, the crowds excited, and the venue fun. Their “PreRide with a Pro” was definitely the big success of the weekend, 15 women turned out for this first clinic! Since the group was large they split into two: one for more experienced riders and one for less experienced riders, which worked out great. The women learned some tricks of the trade (passing, drinking, braking, descending) and everyone felt like they were much more prepared for their races. But the best benefit of it all was that in the Pro cross country event, Lisa and Dara had an extra 15 fans cheering for them and gracious hand-ups from PedalMasher.com in the feedzone! Dara took 13th place overall for a good start to the 2004 NORBA series and Lisa finished 28th overall.

