

Antoine's Belgium Racing Experience - Week 1

The first ride in Belgium was confusing as I had to ride on the other side of the road and ended up on the wrong side a couple times. On my first ride unfortunately I snapped my derailleur hanger while out on a ride.

That was fixed the next day as there are many different stores. In Belgium there is a bike path on nearly every single street and you are obliged to ride on it. They are really narrow and bumpy, it's not different to riding on a footpath at around 40+kmph. You can go anywhere on these bike paths which make it really good for riding around Belgium.



My first race was Dikkebus. I was quite nervous going into this race as I was not really sure what to expect. From the gun the pace was high and there was a medium sized bunch of 80 riders. The roads were narrow farm roads with tight corners. Most Belgium races are like this. A breakaway went from the start but I missed it. The bunch started chasing but there was a split in the bunch and I got stuck in that. I worked hard to chase back but cramped and dropped out of the race.



During the week we went riding on the bike bath out to Ypres where the Battle of Paschendale unfolded. There was a large cemetery for all the Anzac soldiers that fought in World War 1. It was really cool to ride on the bike path that goes through the old trenches from the battle.



My next race was much better. Desselgem was on a tight course in the center of town. It got really narrow at times and the course had many tight corners. This was apparently one of the hardest races of the season. The field was packed with 90 riders participating, this made for tight racing on this course. Many junior teams were present for this race and the pace was high averaging 42kmph on the very technical course for 90kms. I ended up finishing in the bunch in 38th place and even getting prize money for that as they paid down to 40th. This was a massive improvement for me as I had started to get the feeling for Belgium racing.





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We had a race the next day in Oostkerke – Dam. The course was on flat open course with a couple of corners in it. The race started hard but not as full on as the last two races. The bunch stayed together for the first lap then a break went. After 3 laps in the main bunch I decided to bridge to the breakaway. I brought 3 riders with me and I was pulling most of the turns to catch the break. After one hard lap I made it to the break, I didn't have much time to recover as I started rolling turns to keep the gap up. We stayed away for the rest of the race and coming into the last people started attacking. There were 2 people up the road that I did not know about, I came 11th which I am happy with as it is a massive improvement from the last two races. Hopefully the next race I will do much better. The results were posted in the newspaper the next day.

26. Emile Brouwers 2'38"; 27. Milan Fretin 2'41"; 28. Toon Clynhens 2'38"; 29. Milan Fretin 2'41"; 30. Michael Bervoets 2'43".
MONTENAKEN - 80 DEELNEMERS: 1. Floris VAN TRICHT (Boutersem) 82.6 km in 1u57'19" (gem.: 42.245 km/u); 2. Jarne Barns; 3. David Williams (GBr); 4. Tomac Soenen; 5. Robbe Thielemans; 6. William Moloney-Morton (Aus); 7. Kasper Viberg (Den); 8. Jordan Habets (Ned); 9. Yannick Vos; 10. Emerson Fontaine; 11. Lennert Van Eetvelt; 12. Siebe Van Olmen; 13. Lars Craps 20"; 14. Joris Haex; 15. Antoine Cloux.
OOSTKERKE-DAMME - 47 DEELNEMERS: 1. Jarne VAN DE PAAR 82.0 km in 1u53'30" (gem.: 43.348 km/u); 2. Maxim Dewulf; 3. Lian Aucamp (Zaf) 37"; 4. Ruben Lefevre; 5. Mathias Vandendorpe; 6. Tom Portsmouth (GBr); 7. Steffen Duym; 8. Matteo Rouse; 9. Sam Walsham (GBr); 10. Liebert Michiels; 11. Antoine Richard Gizardin-Pradeau (Aus); 12. Birger Rosseeuw; 13. Pieter-Jan De Lange; 14. Jurgen Timperman 46"; 15. Arvin Jansen (Vst) 55".
NIEUWELINGEN
ZATERDAG
LANGEMARK-SINT-JULIAAN - 38 DEELNEMERS: 1. Daan STEVENS (Geel) 63.0 km in 1u39'17" (gem.: 38.073 km/u); 2. Wannes Dewulf 1'49"; 3. Gerben Dewinter 1'51"; 4. Milan De Meester 1'55"; 5. Stijn De Sutter 1'56"; 6. Elias Wynant; 7. Ian Lewille; 8. Brent Denaeghel; 9. Jelle Harteel; 10. Devin
ROESLARE-BEVEREN - 40 DEELNEMERS: 1. Dany...

