

## **Team Tortuga/Big Brothers**

Newsletter Volume 3

By Bob Brooks

Communications Director

November 8, 2005

Bloomington, Indiana

**[www.teamtortuga.org](http://www.teamtortuga.org)**

## **Merger Creates Elite Squad**

The winds of change have ushered in a new era for Team Tortuga. Former and current team directors Tim Heffner and Chris Kroll have long sought the re-creation of an elite squad to provide maximum exposure for our loyal sponsors. In mid-October, the team came full circle, returning to its origins as a premiere elite Indiana squad, when members of the former Duke/Big Brothers team joined forces with Tortuga.

Bloomington resident, Karim Abdelkader, was a founding member of Team Tortuga and spearheaded the Big Brothers side of the merger. Karim brings many years of experience, including collegiate national championships, to the team. In 2005 Karim led the Big Brothers squad to a tie for first place in the team competition of the Metro Grand Prix series with a fabulous sprint win at the Major Taylor Velodrome Criterium in July.

Five other members of the Big Brothers squad have also joined Team Tortuga. Vic Emond has raced with Karim since his collegiate days at Marian College, sharing in some of the national titles the school earned during their collegiate career. Emond is a track specialist and regularly places in sprint events at the Major Taylor Velodrome.

Matt Riggs is one of the most aggressive racers in the 1,2 Indiana peloton (see my August 2004 article

about hammers and nails at <http://www.indianaraceseries.com>) and won the Snake Alley 30+ race last May. Patrick Delisle is an IU Grad who says the merger is a sort of homecoming for him. A workhorse of a road racer, Patrick never hesitates to do whatever necessary to land a podium spot for a teammate. Delisle won a Cat. 1,2 Points race at Major Taylor Velodrome in June, proving he also has the speed to finish on the podium himself.

Sixteen-year-old Joe Kukolla brings a world of potential to Team Tortuga. Joe placed in several Category 3 events in 2005 and also placed well at select junior races throughout the season. Kukolla intends to upgrade to Category 2 for 2006 and also has the opportunity to race with a national level junior squad for part of the season.

John Kelly has been the most consistent, hardest-working man in the Kentuckiana peloton for the past several seasons. Period. The man is tough as nails and probably eats shredded glass for breakfast. Kelly always manages to make the break. In late July, Kelly slapped Chris Kroll and Bob Brooks around like rag dolls at the Masters race in Zionsville. Kelly says he is scaling back his racing for 2006, but will be available for select events. Team Tortuga members are honored to have the opportunity to race with Kelly, even on a limited basis.

Bike racing aside, these young men are outstanding citizens with positive, pro-active attitudes. Their successes and leadership add unlimited potential to an already outstanding squad.

The new squad members also bring affiliation with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Indiana to Team Tortuga. The team will support the organization

with marketing exposure and volunteer opportunities. Additional support will be discussed in coming weeks.

### **Season Re-cap**

Picking up where he left off in July when he won the Cat. 3 races at Madison Cycling Regatta and Major Taylor Velodrome, Sean Bauer (Power) finished the season with a flurry. Bauer placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the Bloomington Crit, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Batesville and won both the Ft. Ben and Fairgrounds Crits to solidify a fine overall Indy Stage Race win. Bauer's winning sprint at the Fairgrounds even made the Velonews weekly photo contest. Sean's excellent season in Category 3 has led to an upgrade to Category 2 where he'll be expected to play a prominent role with the newly formed elite squad. Congratulations to Sean on a fine 2005.

Tim Heffner earned a 5<sup>th</sup> place finish in the Masters 35+ Ft. Ben Circuit Race. Heff followed up with a 10:01 at the Fall Creek TT later that day, placing him 2<sup>nd</sup> in category and 3<sup>rd</sup> overall.

Chris Kroll and Bob Brooks finished the long season with hard earned rewards. Kroll made the break in the hotly contested Masters 35+ race in Batesville where he finished 6<sup>th</sup> after attacking the group on the final lap. The feisty Badger finished 7<sup>th</sup> at Ft. Ben and

then came back to clock a 10:02 at the Fall Creek TT. Kroll unselfishly led out the final sprint at the Fairgrounds and still notched a 4<sup>th</sup> place finish. Chris capped his fine season by winning the Morgan Monroe State Forest Time Trial by a wide margin, solidifying a hard-earned 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall in the season long Indiana Race Series Masters 35+ competition. Chris punctuated the end of the season by lapping the field to win the Sherwood Oaks Criterium. Great job Badger.

After Kroll's break was safely up the road, Brooks broke away from the rest of the Batesville field with one other rider and took 'best of the rest' honors for 9<sup>th</sup> place. Countering Kroll's early race break, Brooks made the break of the race at Ft. Ben and finished 3<sup>rd</sup> before coming back to equal the Badger's 10:02 in the afternoon's Fall Creek TT. Brooks was the beneficiary of Kroll's lead out at the Fairgrounds, where he finished 3<sup>rd</sup> on the day and garnered 2<sup>nd</sup> overall for the Indy Stage Race. Bob finished the season by placing ahead of his nearest competitor in both the Morgan Monroe State Forest TT and the Mooresville Fall Finale to claim 1<sup>st</sup> place overall for the season long IRS championship. Kroll and Brooks will join Bauer in playing prominent roles on the elite squad in 2006.

2006 is shaping up as a banner year for Team Tortuga/Big Brothers. As we near Mid-November, thoughts return to preparing for the season ahead. Now is the time to lay the groundwork for success in 2006. If you need assistance in planning your season, Tim Heffner, Chris Kroll and myself are available to help you reach the podium. Enjoy Thanksgiving and look for training tips in the December issue of this newsletter.