



Image_Carson Blume

SCOTT NYDAM



WHAT DOES SCOTT NYDAM HAVE IN COMMON WITH BOTH LANCE ARMSTRONG AND GREG LEMOND?

All three made lists of what they wanted to accomplish and when. Nydam made his goals list just prior to the Amgen Tour of California. With goals in hand, BMC Racing was the most aggressive team every time the road went skyward. With a bold move on stage 2 Nydam showed that those goals weren't just words on a blank piece of paper, but actions.





Image: Jonathan Devich

Talk about the list you made with three goals before the Amgen Tour of California.

Scott Nydam: I have a junior rider I ride with every once in a while send out a mass-email to all his supporters and sponsors. He was articulate with listing his goals. I thought, 'Shoot, I should make some goals myself.' I put them on paper and wrote them down for the Tour of California: KOM, podium on a stage, or top 10 in GC. I was hoping to get one out of three of those. I looked at it and thought it was ambitious because any of the names that end up on that list are big names, so I thought I was shooting too high, but it worked out. It worked out for our entire team. It was a team effort.

Stage 2 you were away on a 90-mile break. Did you expect to be out there that long?

Nydam: I don't know what I was expecting. I didn't expect to be alone. I didn't expect to be out there that long. My intention for the first half of the race was to get through the first two KOMs and lock that up for our team. I didn't expect them to let me out and get that much of a leash. I don't think you can ever expect something like that.

Was winning the Climber's Jersey a team goal before the Tour of California or was it something that was decided once the race was going?

Nydam: It wasn't articulated as a team goal. We definitely included getting KOM points on the stages, including the first stage that Jackson [Stewart - BMC teammate] went up the road. We knew that there was one KOM available and that would be an easy way to get on the podium and start the race off with a jersey. For the most part it was a result of some of the attributes we wanted in our race. We wanted to be on the offensive and be aggressive. The KOM was a result of that as opposed to a specific goal we were trying to achieve.

Was there a time you thought you would lose the Climber's Jersey?

Nydam: The stage from Santa Barbara to Santa Clarita. Over the first KOM climb it was pretty tenuous. Guys who were in contention for the KOM were up the road going for it. You kind of hope that everyone will lay over and give it to you, but it was obvious after that KOM guys were still

going for it. I never felt we would lose it. We had a strong collective effort to get points for either Jackson or myself and my other teammates would gobble them up. I never felt we would lose it, but there were times that I realized it would be a tough battle. It definitely got my attention.

When did you know you had the jersey for good?

Nydam: Not until the finishing circuits [in Pasadena] and in the last three kilometers because you never know if something could happen. I could crash out on the last stage and not finish with the jersey. It was tenuous all the way to the end. I was able to smile about it on the stage going into Santa Clarita because I found out there were just six points on the road and I had a seven point lead, so I knew that I could defend the jersey and the team was doing everything to make sure I saw the finish line.

Which was the hardest stage for you?

Nydam: Certainly stage 3 with Mount Hamilton and getting over those climbs was no small effort. For me that was probably the toughest day to get

to the finish line. I felt pretty smoked after having used up a lot of my matches earlier on in the break. Then negotiating over Sierra Road was tough. It was tough just stay in the group at that point. Heading down to Seaside to San Luis Obispo [stage 4] is a difficulty that is hard to explain. It was a slow arduous march through an ocean squall. Just to get your mind over the matter of how cold you were and how much further we had to go took a certain amount of mental bravery to make it through that day. On a picture perfect day that would still be an epic ride.

Did the stomach virus that was making its way through the peloton affect your team?

Nydam: Darren Lill came down with it first. After Mount Hamilton he suffered through the cold. He was the first to go down. Tony [Cruz – BMC teammate] was next on the Santa Clarita stage 6. Beside those two guys going out from sickness and Jackson from hypothermia the rest of the team was full gas. Our team doctors did a great job of taking care of us and making sure we were doing simple things like washing our hands after we went through the buffet line and during our team meals to lessen the chances of getting sick.

If you could eliminate a stage would you? Which one would you lose?

Nydam: [Long pause] If I could I wouldn't. I think part of the whole obstacle of winning the Tour of California is getting through the entire week and handling each stage. There were some stages I prefer more than others but each has its own epic element and beauty. Going through the wine country and over Mount Hamilton, heading down Highway 1, riding over the climbs in Santa Clarita and finishing with the huge crowds in Pasadena, the race has an awesome flow to it and is epic. It is worth naming a champion over.

If you could add something to the Amgen Tour of California would you?

Nydam: If I could add a stage I would add something that was more of a climber's finish. Levi and I spend time in Sonoma and Napa County day dreaming about the number of different stages we could create on the road between the two counties. You could spend another week of epic racing here. But if I could add anything to the race I would add an extra day in Sonoma County and put in some epic climbs. Maybe have a finish that would end with a handful of riders like the San Jose finish.

BMC was constantly on the attack. Was that the game plan or was it spontaneous?

Nydam: It was more of recognition of the individual riders understanding their job on a certain stage. We were very specific in team meetings on who we were going to protect, which guys we were looking to have at the finishes and the left over batch of guys that would get into a breakaway and establish something



Image: Jonathan Devich

early on in the race. We had some strong GC riders which emboldened a lot of the other guys and gave us chances later on in the race because we knew that the other guys had it covered at the end of the stage.

Your director, Gavin Chilcott, brought a lot of insight to the press conferences. Describe Gavin Chilcott.


Nydam: I have a great deal of respect for Gavin. He has a very precise way of narrowing things down to the essential elements and he does a very good job. Because of that he is able to understand the workings of building a cycling program from the ground up with the help of others and with an endless amount of effort and hours of work on his part. He is able to give due recognition to the various organizations that make things happen. We are sitting here a year after the inception of Team BMC. Our first pro race a year ago was Tour of California and AEG and Medalist took a gamble with us. Last year we had to work out some kinks. A year later, because of some opportunities, we were able to achieve our goals so far and bring the team to a different level in 2008. It's not just because of this year, but opportunities of last year. Gavin has the ability to distinguish that. He is able to distinguish the different abilities and characteristics of riders in not only their technical performance, but


their character as a person. He has tried to mold the team after a high standard of professionalism and high character. He holds everyone to a high standard and I think we've benefited from that from being around him. You can see a year later that the team has stepped into its own because of that.

Did anyone's performance on the team surprise you?

Nydam: I was really impressed with Danilo Wyss, a young Swiss rider who, on a handful of stages, mixed it up with the world's top sprinters. That was real encouraging to see. He is still really young and still growing into his own. He has a good nose for finding the finish line.

Other possible European races that you hope the team is selected for?

Nydam: There are a number of them. The big ones on the calendar are a number of races in Belgium; I believe Paris-Roubaix is an option for our team, Tour de Picardy, of course make a representation at Tour de Romandie [BMC was selected to participate as a wildcard entry] and Tour d' Swiss and finishing up in the mid summer to late season racing in North America with Tour of Utah, Tour of Colorado, Tour of Missouri and then U.S. Pro Nationals. 

 **ON THE ATOC ROUTE:** There were some stages I prefer more than others, but each has its own epic element and beauty.