

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



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### **Zapata Climbs to Decisive Stage 3 Win**

#### **Peloton fights war of attrition in the mountains**

**Covington, VA** (April 25, 2007) - Columbian climber Javier Zapata (CAICO) crushed the mountains to win Tour of Virginia's 107-mile stage 3 in 4:33:21 (all times unofficial).

An enthusiastic crowd gathered along several blocks of Main Street to cheer Zapata, 37, as he finished all alone and almost a minute ahead of the next racer.

The stage began at noon amidst the serene and solemn National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, a community that proportionately suffered the nation's severest loss during the Allied Armed Forces invasion of Normandy during World War II.

It was a prescient backdrop: temperatures that climbed into the mid-80s, two category three mountains and one excruciatingly long category-1 climb steadily exacted a D-Day-like toll on the peloton.

After the dust settled, 22 riders failed to meet the time requirements and more of the exhausted abandoned the race on their own. After three stages, 116 riders remain from an yesterday's stage 1 starting field of almost 180 cyclists.

A 20-rider breakaway formed about halfway through the stage, including Zapata and his climbing specialist teammates in search of King of the Mountain points.

Aggressive racing eventually sliced the breakaway to about 10 riders. But it was Zapata who left the rest gasping on the 7-mile-long, cat-1 Warm Springs Mountain near the end of the stage and never looked back.

Zapata's stage win put him atop the general classification in 4:33:21 and put him in the Natural Bridge Leader Jersey for the first time this week.

After a two-stage GC reign, Russ Langley (Battley Harley-Davidson/Hudson Trail) fell to 81 st GC in 5:02:39.

Zapata described the stage as harder than almost anything he was used to racing in his South American homeland and comparable to tough European races.

"I had cramps the last 10K," Zapata admitted to pain. "But I hope that tomorrow I'll be ready to fight another day," he added.

Zapata's manager Romero Jorge confirmed that his team hopes to defend Zapata's GC lead for the rest of the week. "Our goal is to hold on to that jersey," he said.

Yesterday's stage 2 criterium winner, Alejandro Borrajo (Ride Aid Pro Cycling) of Argentina, placed 2 nd in 4:34:12.

Borrajo pipped 3 rd place Christopher Jones (VMG Racing), 27, at the line by a mere second.

"The Columbians attacked too much on the hills," Jones said referring to Zapata and CAICO. "That was easily the hardest climb I've ever done," he said.

Evidently the suffering was not terrible enough to take in the scenery. "There was a beautiful waterfall as we came into town," exclaimed Jones.

Ryan Baumann (Abd Cycling Team), 19, of Green Bay, WI finished 22 nd in 4:38:45 to take control of the Bicyclepowermeters.com Under-23 Jersey.

Baumann, a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin at Madison looked surprisingly fresh despite the grueling afternoon of racing in the Allegheny Mountains—and noticeably surprised.

"I was actually coming over to the finish area to see how I stood in the GC when they called my name over the speaker for the U-23," Baumann described his post-race serendipity.

"On the last climb, things broke apart," Baumann said. "I was just trying to survive."

Mark Hardman (UVA Composite), a second-year law student at the University of Virginia, finished 11 th in 4:35:57.

Considered a favorite from the start of the Tour, Kodak Gallery/Sierra Nevada missed the podiums again. Mark Walters, 31, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada led the Kodak Gallery squad by finishing 15 th in 4:35:57.

"The climb was a bit steep for me, especially with the Columbians up there," said Walters, a five-time Canadian National Championship title winner. "I'm not used to the heat, either," he added.

Still, Walters indicated that he laid off a bit. "I'm not going to expend my energy when our GC guys are back," said Walters.

Canada-based Team RACE rider Buck Miller, 24, finished 50 th in 4:45:55 expressed dismay shared by many further back in the peloton.

"I missed a pretty important split and then went into hibernation," said Miller.

Miller, a Tour of Virginia (formerly Shenandoah) veteran, said the Warm Springs Mountain was the race's toughest climb so far and the event's NRC status has attracted stronger riders.

Team RACE manager Steve Bauer offered a few pieces of praise for his riders, but he was quick to offer that his team needs some polishing.

"Our guys definitely need some extra training," said Bauer, a former Tour de France star. "But that's why we're here," he added.

Recalling the grand stages of Tour du Pont, Bauer described today's stage at Tour of Virginia as "awesome, very tough—you never get an easy moment."

Covington city manager, Claire Collins presented the podium ceremony. She congratulated the winners and expressed her community's pleasure in hosting a Tour of Virginia stage for the first time.

"We're excited to host a world class event like Tour of Virginia—an event that really showcases the wonderful outdoor sports and recreation opportunities in and around Covington," said Collins.

"Today's stage is perhaps the hardest stage we've put on in our five years of existence," said race director Matthew Butterman. "I'd like to thank Bedford and Covington for helping us create the kind of challenging course that has attracted such a strong group of cyclists," Butterman said. "I'd also like to thank the Water Works Company, for quenching our thirst in the hot sun today," he added.

### **Up Next: Stage Four: Douthat State Park (New venue)- Waynesboro Road Race, April 26, 2007**

Thursday's Stage 4 is the "Queen Stage" of the Tour of Virginia, and any pretender to the overall victory will have to prove himself in this most difficult of all stages. Leaving from beautiful Douthat State Park, the course threads the beautiful Maury River gorge before tackling the Blue Ridge twice: first at the Category 1 climb of Montebello, then descending into scenic Nelson County and crossing the viciously steep east slope of Reed's Gap, scene of much drama during the now-defunct Tour DuPont race of the 1990s. The course descends the final few miles to the City of Waynesboro, first sponsor and venue of the Tour of Shenandoah, and the only venue to host all 5 editions of the race.

Local information: [www.discoverbath.com](http://www.discoverbath.com) & [www.waynesboro.va.us](http://www.waynesboro.va.us)

### **Stage 3 Results**

#### **The Bedford - Covington Road Race, 110 miles**

\* = U-23

**Place**  
**First**  
**Last**  
**Team**  
**Time**

1

Javier  
Zapata (Col)  
CAICO

4:33:21

	2	
Alejandro Borrajo (Col) CAICO		4:34:12
	3	
Christopher Jones (USA) VMG Racing		4:34:12

### General Classification After Stage 3

**135 miles completed**

\* = U-23

**Place**  
**First**  
**Last**  
**Team**  
**Time/Time Back**

	1	
Javier Zapata (Col) CAICO		5:31:13/0:00:00
	2	
Alejandro Borrajo (Col) CAICO		5:32:05/0:00:52
	3	
Dan Bowman (USA) VMG Racing		5:32:20/0:01:07

Complete, official results are posted [here](#).

**About the Tour of Virginia:**

The Tour of Virginia showcases North America's rising stars, and has a tradition of attracting the sport's up and coming talent. 2007 marks the fifth edition of this race, which was formerly known as the Tour of Shenandoah. The event comprises seven stages over six days and is held on some of the nation's most quiet and scenic roads amidst the beautiful landscapes of Virginia . An important mission of the Tour of Virginia is to inform the public about diabetes: how to control - and prevent the onset of - the disease and reduce complications through exercise and a healthy lifestyle. Stage details, maps, and sponsor information can be found at the official website, [www.tourofvirginia.com](http://www.tourofvirginia.com)

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