



National Criterium Champion Brandon Feehery Wins Pro Category 1/2/3, Has Been Champion Racer Throughout His Career

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EDWARDSVILLE - National criterium racing champion Brandon Feehery won the feature race, the Pro Category 1/2/3, in a stirring finale to the 13th edition of the Edwardsville Rotary Criterium festival, presented by Busey Bank, in a great race held on Saturday in downtown Edwardsville as a great climax to the racing program.

Feehery, a native of Chicagoland but now racing out of Knoxville, Tenn., won the race, which was held in a prime time slot for the first time instead of the late-night slot the race had been held in previously. He was very much in favor of the time change.

"Yeah, I love racing at nighttime," Feehery said in an interview held that afternoon before the race. "It's a little bit different having it at 6:30 this year, but hopefully, it's going to bring a lot more people out. This event is huge for the town and everything, so thankful for all the people that come out."

Feehery became involved in cycling as a part of an active cycling family, starting with his father when he was a young age.

"So I started racing when I was 10," Feehery said, "but I grew up going to my dad's races. He started racing when he was 26, so I just grew up, kinda the family sport. We would all travel in a van together, go to his races and then, from there, I just fell in love with the sport and fell in love with the speed, being able to corner as fast as I can and kind of, almost say, take risks and enjoy the sport."

His love for cycling and his hard work has indeed paid off, as he's the defending National Champion in criterium racing, representing himself and his family very well.

"This year was my first, actually, non-collegiate national championship," Feehery said, "so I was super stoked. I've been racing at the professional level for the last 10 years and being able to win the national championship has been a dream of mine. So winning it this year has been just an amazing dream."

Feehery agreed that winning the championship was a big thrill for him.

"Overall, like a great race," Feehery said. "The team rode well; I race for the Miami Blazers. We're based out of Miami, Fla. and we had a really strong showing this year. And being able to take first was just an amazing experience."

As far as his future, Feehery thinks that he's starting to get up in years in his career, but still has many ambitions and goals he'd like to achieve.

"I'm starting to get up there in my racing career," Feehery said. "I'm 31 years old now, so I just, hopefully, can keep developing, keep racing at the top level as long as I can."

Feehery's style of racing is more of short course version, while the style of racing in the Tour de France is much different than that.

"My style of racing is at short circuit racing," Feehery said. "Like today, anything from an hour-and-a-half to two hours racing fast, explosive speed is kind of my style. The long distance, with my explosive power, kind of goes away. So I've kind of focused on criterium racing."

It's a decision that's paid off handsomely for Feehery over the years in a genre of racing that has grown across the country in recent years.

"Yeah, it has," Feehery said. "And especially like, in the United States, criterium racing is really growing over the last three or four years. It's honestly almost taken two, three, four leaps in bounds to that level. So you have to really focus on your training, dialing everything in. In the past, you could be almost using some smarts, but you really have to kind of develop that power to stay in the field these years."

Feehery also thanked the City of Edwardsville and the fans for their support of the festival over the years.

"Just want to thank Edwardsville for having this race," Feehery said. "I flew in from Knoxville, Tenn., so I try to come back every year when I can. And it's just an amazing experience out here."