



Pan-American Championships, Santiago Chile.

I remember years ago when I first heard of the Pan-American games, the first thing I thought was: I want to be there to represent my country. I made a few phone calls to the National Cycling Federation in Costa Rica asking them to send me, but the reply was *“you need to get faster before we can send you there”* I understood that since at the time I was racing Semi-Pro and the Pan-Am games are only for Pro-Elite and Master riders. I kept working hard each year and in 2008 after moving to the Pro-Elite Class I decided to collect some UCI points to be able to get a decent start position at the 2009 Pan-Am games. Early this year I started to call the Federation again and sooner than later I got a letter with the invitation, when I got it I could not believe it, for years I had wanted to be there and now I was going to be able to wear the National uniform and fly the Costa Rica colors for the first time in Santiago Chile.

I was very amazed with how advance Chile is: great roads, very clean city, huge buildings and very good infrastructure. Chile is also very famous for its wine; in fact the race track was right next to a grape vine.

I've heard that in the past the race courses for the Continental Championships were not very technical, but with each passing year they keep getting better and better, this year according to some of the USA team riders the course was very technical, off camber loose turns, knife-sharp rocks, river-bridge crossings and lots of steep singletrack climbing.

I was hoping for a better call up but my 41 UCI points were only good enough for 7th row, right at the start of the race there was a big crash were I had to come to a complete stop and start again, despite this I was able to get into the singletrack in the top 20. You have to remember that each and every rider competing at the Pan-Am games are the best from their Country, in fact I swapped places several times at the race and catching the riders in front took forever, all this riders are very talented and very fast, it also helps the South American riders to be in the end of Summer down here so they are all in good peak form. Most of the Colombian riders race Professionally in Europe, so this riders are no joke and the best thing is that they can all climb just as fast as they can go downhill.

My race went well, I was able to finish unofficially in 13th Place, the other Costa Rica Elite rider Paolo Montoya Finished 12th and Alberto Coto “Guma” finished 5th in the Masters category, Fabio Castañeda took Gold for Colombia, while Sam Schults and Jeremy Horgan Kobelsky took home the Silver and Bronze. Now I have some good UCI points to be able to start near the front at next weekend's Fontana National.

Special thanks to all my friends and family specially team Sho-Air for all the help and support, huge thanks to Alberto Coto for helping me with transportation and for feeding me at the race, also thanks to Claudia Moreno for helping with first class hotel accommodations in Santiago. Once again I was able to conquer a dream. Thank you all!



