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## For Immediate Release

### 2008 USA CRITS *Speed Week*—7 races...7 cities...7 days.

Atlanta, Ga. (April 25, 2008) – More than \$100,000 in prize money is up for grabs as professional cyclists go head to head in 7 races, in 7 cities in 7 days of racing, in a rush of excitement known as USA CRITS *Speed Week*.

Athens Twilight Criterium	Athens, GA	Saturday	26-Apr-08
Beaufort Memorial Classic	Beaufort, SC	Tuesday	29-Apr-08
Walterboro Cycling Classic	Walterboro, SC	Wednesday	30-Apr-08
Uptown Greenwood Cycling Challenge	Greenwood, SC	Thursday	01-May-08
Steadman Hawkins Cycling Classic	Spartanburg, SC	Friday	02-May-08
Historic Dilworth Criterium	Charlotte, NC	Saturday	03-May-08
Sandy Springs Cycling Challenge	Sandy Springs, GA	Sunday	04-May-08

The first race in *Speed Week* is on April 26 at the famed Twilight Criterium in Athens, Georgia, where 30,000 loyal fans are expected to make their presence felt. All that energy concentrated in a few city blocks makes criterium racing the sport of choice for many cities interested in health and fitness initiatives. Unlike stage races, criteriums are held on city streets in conjunction with other community events, and *Speed Week* does a great job of helping enthusiasts shake off the winter doldrums and get outdoors with their families and friends. Music group R.E.M. and their just-released album “Accelerate” are supporting the Twilight too. R.E.M. Accelerate is sponsoring prizes for the winners of the first lap of the men’s and women’s pro races, when the most acceleration is likely to take place.

Mark Hekman knows all about accelerating. Last year he won both the Twilight and *Speed Week*, and he says he is hoping for repeat success this time around. “I won because I was consistent, raced hard the whole time, and didn’t crash.” Hekman says that might sound funny, but there were a lot of crashes that took racers out of contention. When he won the Twilight and Speed Week, last year, Hekman was a member of Team Inferno Racing, but since then he has joined the TOSHIBA-Santo Pro Cycling Team presented by Herbalife. This is sure to increase the rivalry between those two teams during *Speed Week* and that is good overall for the USA CRITS National Series.

Joining USA CRITS Speed Week for the first time and anchoring as the series Finals is Sandy Springs, GA. As one of the USA’s newest municipalities, Sandy Springs is defining itself as a bike and sports community, and Council Member Dianne Fries says the criterium’s entertainment cycling format fits perfectly with the city’s vision for itself. “We’re looking forward to hosting the *Speed Week* finale because crit racing is fast-paced and exhilarating.” The Historic Dilworth area of Charlotte, NC has a legacy of great races in the past and is also a new addition to the 2008 *Speed Week*.

The South Carolina cities of Beaufort, Walterboro, Greenwood and Spartanburg, have hosted USA CRITS *Speed Week* before, and sizeable crowds are expected to be on hand to cheer the racers on to victory on the types of challenging courses that only urban settings can provide.

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**About USA CRITS**

USA CRITS National Criterium Series has been developed to feature a brand of cycling unique to the United States, the criterium. Criteriums are historically run on short laps through city streets. They offer spectators the opportunity to watch Olympians, world and national champions up-close as they ride at top speed. This has made the criterium format the most spectator-friendly form of cycling entertainment. Events on the USA CRITS series have the ideals that have made criterium racing an American legacy: Challenging courses that showcase arts and entertainment districts; a large and energized base of spectators; broad community support; and strong marketing opportunities for sponsors. For more information visit [www.usacrits.com](http://www.usacrits.com)