

OAKLAND COMPOSITE TEAM EXCELS

2008 NorCal High School Mountain Bike Racing Series

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, May 7, 2008

Contact: Katie DeClercq katie@norcalmtb.org Tel: (510) 653-2453 www.norcalmtb.org

PDF Version available at: www.norcalmtb.org/about/press.htm

Photos available at [www.norcalmtb.org/img/2008 Oakland Composite](http://www.norcalmtb.org/img/2008_Oakland_Composite)

Oakland, CA – The new Oakland Composite team of the NorCal High School Mountain Bike League continues to surprise the crowd race after race. Although they are a brand new team this year with a mere three riders, all three just happen to be stand out athletes. The three boys, Ryan Potter, Ian Hacker, and Timothy Hunt, all race in Division II Sophomore boys, where competition is far from light. Potter is the founder of the team – he is obviously not your average high school teenager.

“The reason I wanted to start this team is because I knew Oakland didn't have a team and we needed one. I love this sport and I thought if I was going to compete it would be better to include as many other people as possible. I guess my main source of inspiration was the BHS team. I spent time with them at Boggs last year and everyone was really dedicated to the sport. The team was successful, supportive, and most importantly it was fun for everyone,” stated Potter.

Longtime Oakland resident and League Director, Matt Fritzinger, played a part in starting the team as well, and joins the team for most of their Sunday practice rides. “With over a dozen public and private high schools here in Oakland I was beginning to refer to the lack of an Oakland team as ‘the shame of the League’ . But the League doesn't start teams, motivated individuals like Ryan Potter start teams and we do what we can to help. Ryan's a phenomenal athlete and student and he's done a great job of getting this team started -- he's really on top of things, even calls to remind me when there's a meeting or a special ride,” reported Fritzinger. Hacker appreciates the forming of the new team as well. “I really admire Ryan for really getting the ball rolling with this team. He started with nothing except a desire for an Oakland team, and has done an amazing job, getting gear to each race, and placing really well,” stated Hacker.

The first race of the season started the team's momentum as Potter took first place, giving him the leaders jersey, and Hacker took sixth. Race 3, however, was the big turning point for the boys as this was Hunt's first race of the season. Potter took second, Hunt took fifth, and Hacker took sixth. “On race day it's good to know that you have allies out there who will support you and help you if something goes wrong,” reported Potter. Hacker added, “Tim and I are both really close in our skill range, and are always together during the races supporting each other. It is really key to have another team mate who can push you and help you, strategically.”

The team is new and small, but the effort and relationships behind the scene make them a tight crew that can have fun while riding and competing. Potter had the following to say about his teammates, “Tim and Ian are both great cyclists and it's a privilege to be able to ride with them. Tim and I go way back, we went to elementary and middle school together and he was one of the people who I rode with since I started riding in 2003 and we've been riding together ever since. He's one of the people I credit with initially getting me interested in cycling. I met Ian at our first Oakland Composite team meeting at Montano Velo bike shop last fall. He joined us after racing with Fremont Composite last season and is a very valuable member of the team.”

Fritzinger has benefited from the team as well. “I'll never forget our first team ride in January. I thought I was in shape, but on this ride I suffered just trying to preserve some degree of respectability. I didn't expect them to be so fast and just trying to keep up with them was a wake-up call for me.” Team Oakland Cycling, a local adult racing team, has also really gotten involved offering their own team jerseys, gear, and most importantly needed

coaching and race support; “It’s a natural extension of our club’s charter, and it’s also been a pleasure to be involved” stated Geoff Gunderson, Team Oakland Cycling President.

Potter is currently in the leaders spot after five races. This hasn’t been an easy feat for him, however, as he has many other riders nipping at his heels. “My experience racing during this season has been a challenge, and it’s also very enjoyable. My performance at the first race caused me to underestimate the other racers in my division, I found out later that I’m very evenly matched with the other front runners in the division, and the intense competition makes things even more fun. I’ve been riding nearly identical times with Will Patterson (Branson) and during the races we’ve managed to work together to make a pretty big gap between us and everyone else. I’m really looking forward to racing against him at Boggs,” said Potter. Hacker’s strong finishes has put him at sixth place overall. With one race to go, he still has a chance to move up into the top five.

State Champs at Boggs Mountain is less than two weeks away for the trailblazing trio. Potter’s hope is that he can have a great race to solidify his overall win in the series. When asked what his strategy is to beat Will Patterson, Potter replied, “I can’t really share any details about how I plan to win the race right now.” Everyone will just have to wait and see what Potter has up his sleeve.

The racing doesn’t stop here. As Sophomores, the boys have two solid years of racing left. “The team is well positioned for growth in the next season, we just need to get the word out to more kids here in Oakland,” stated Fritzinger. Hacker noted, “I’m really happy at the amount of growth the League has been undergoing, and can’t wait to see more faces on the Oakland team next year.”

The NorCal High School Mountain Bike League is a non-profit organization open to students from both public and private schools. The League exists because of generous donors and sponsors such as Clif Bar, Inc., CamelBak, Fox Racing Shox, Trek Bicycles, Ritchey Bicycle Components, Creation Engine, Galaxy Granola, Mike’s Bikes, The Pedaler, Paradigm Cycles, HappyGoFun, REI, Mountain Hardwear, WTB, Tecnu Extreme, Touchstone Climbing Gyms, Vanderkitten, Whole Athlete, Maxxis, BTC, Dream Works, and NCNCA. The League provides coaching and camaraderie to help students achieve both competitive and non-competitive cross-country mountain biking goals in a safe and enjoyable manner. Each season includes a Coaches Training Conference, winter riding camps, the six-race series, and a variety of summer camps. For more information visit www.norcalmtb.org or call (510) 653-2453.