

STATE CHAMPS AND SERIES FINAL HIGHLIGHTS

2008 NorCal High School Mountain Bike Racing Series

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Oakland, CA – It was a bittersweet day on Sunday for the NorCal High School Mountain Bike League as racers embarked upon the last race of the season. After the intense six race series, racers are looking forward to their well-deserved break, however, the camaraderie and fun that comes with the teams and races will be dearly missed. The State Championship race held at Boggs Mountain brought out the most spectators yet. With the heat and amount of dust that day, all had challenges to endure, but the shade, a “super-soaker zone”, and helpful volunteers provided some relief that allowed spectators and racers alike to beat the heat.

The racecourse at Boggs Mountain is said to be the best course of the series. With the tight single track, technical climbs, fast windy descents, and beautiful scenery there’s something out there for everyone. As the last race of the series, overall series placements were on the line for many racers.

In Freshman/Sophomore girls, Victoria Yoham of Marin Catholic took first place once again. Lauren McQuinn (San Marin) and Ruth Winder (Contra Costa Composite) had their best finishes yet, taking second and third, respectively. “The fun made up for the heat,” reported Winder. Yoham said, “It was pretty technical, but the downhill was so much fun.”

In Freshman boys Division I, Chris Bennett (El Cerrito) beat out his competition to take first place over Jimmy Winne (Woodcreek) and Scott Roycroft (Redwood) who took second and third, respectively. “I did the best I could. I just tried to save myself for the climbs because that’s where Chris has the advantage on me,” stated Winne. Roycroft reported, “It was definitely the best course yet, and I just rode my bike as hard as I could.” Bennett’s win this race gave him enough points to take hold of the leaders jersey in the overall. Marin Catholic dominated the Freshman boys Division II race, taking the top four spots. Tony Smith led the team across the finish line, with Max Rehkopf, Alex Smith, and Bobby Zidek taking the next three spots (respectively).

Will Patterson (Branson) was the first place winner in Sophomore Boys Division II. Patterson said of his win, “It wasn’t exactly the way I wanted it to happen. Ryan Potter flatted out on the course and we usually battle it out all the way to the finish. It just didn’t seem right to win this way, but I’ll definitely still take the win.” Patterson’s win secured him first place in overall standings, while Ryan Potter’s (Oakland Composite) ninth place finish gave him third overall. Mac Hart (Woodside) had his best finish yet taking second place, and Jonathan Weeks (Marin Catholic) took third. In Sophomore Boys Division I, Quinlan Brow (San Rafael) proved once again that he’s a natural on the bike with his first place finish. Teammate Bart Carrade came in second place, which won him first place in the overall series. “The heat was definitely a factor, which really spaced out the riders. I was alone for most of the race, but overall it was a great race,” reported Carrade. Alex Wild came in third place, his best finish yet and thanked his mother “for trusting me that I’d stick with biking and buying me a new bike to race on.”

Carolina Gomez-Villafane (Los Gatos) took first place once again in JV Girls. “It was pretty intense. I definitely felt the pain this time,” reported Gomez-Villafane. Lauren Catlin (Drake) took second place, and Raina Beck (Berkeley) took third place, her best finish of the season. “I’ve never raced before this year, but I want to keep riding and racing as much as I can,” said Beck.

JV riders Clayton Herrick and Niko Kaplanis provided the emotional highlight of the day when they crossed the finish line in first place simultaneously, their hands clasped high in a sign of unity and mutual respect. Herrick's wheel rolled over the finish line first, to give him the win, but it was Kaplanis who took the overall lead. "The whole season Clay and I worked together, drafting off each other, so we decided that we both worked hard enough to ride in together," reported Kaplanis. Riley Howard (Casa Grande) came in less than a minute after the other two to take third. Ben Sukys (Contra Costa) is the star Freshman in JV boys Division II, taking first place this race and overall. Marcelo Quiroz (Independent), a graduating Senior, placed second, while Matt Dion (Foothill) placed third.

Christine Weir (Nevada Union) soloed through the finish line for the sixth time in a row this race. "The course was sweaty, hot, dry, dusty... it was everything. But the last downhill single track was super fun," stated Weir. Lainey Aldridge (Harbor High) came in second place, and Haley Woodruff (Drake) had her best finish yet taking third place. Woodruff reported, "I've probably never worked so hard. I just kept pedaling."

John Bennett from El Cerrito raced the day before the State Champs in St. Ynez, and his first place finish secured him a spot on the national team. The varsity rider will be making League history by representing the United States at the World championships in Italy. Nate Byrom's (Nevada Union) third place in St. Ynez, first place at the Fontana National Series, and other exploits make him another good candidate to also represent the U.S. in Italy this June – USA Cycling will announce the other team picks on May 23rd.

On Sunday, however, Daniel Boyes (Marin Academy) was the rider that had the legs to win the State Championships. The graduating senior reported, "John and I broke off from the group in the second lap, but we both started cramping." John Bennett (El Cerrito) came in second, an outstanding follow up to his victory the day before, which also gave him the overall series title. Will Curtis (San Rafael) took third place. Nate Byrom missed this race as he stayed in St. Ynez to represent Team Devo in the short track event.

Marin Catholic took first place this race in Division II, which solidified their top spot in the overall series. Marin Catholic coach John Vipiana stated, "I'm just blown away by the growth and success of these young adults. I am so proud of their commitment to training and each other. We've never focused on results. We have focused on the importance of consistent effort in whatever one does. We've focused on riding as a team. We have focused on racing a good tactical and nutritional race & crossing the finish line totally spent. If one does this, one wins regardless of where they place." Salinas High took second this race, placing them second overall, and Sierra Foothill Composite took third. Contra Costa Composite took third overall.

The San Rafael Bulldogs beat out Division I competition making them the overall state champions. Dave Curtis, coach of the young Bulldogs team, stated, "Seeing Niko and Clay hold hands as they crossed the finish just says it all. These kids represent what NorCal is all about - they've worked so hard at supporting each other, it's been a gratifying experience. Brooks, John and I just feel fortunate to have discovered this community- we've learned so much from everyone. We especially thank Dan Freeman, Paul Chourre (both from Drake) and Mark Kintz (Calvary High) for helping us get this team off the ground." The Drake Pirates took second this race and overall, while the Nevada Union Miners took third this race and overall as well.

The League activities don't end when the series ends. There is much more fun to come between now and the next race series. The second annual Chileno Valley Cycling Classic will be held on Sunday, September 28, 2008 as an impeccably supported ride. It will offer both recreational and competitive cyclists the opportunity to participate in a challenging and meticulously organized road ride. For more info go to <http://www.norcalmtb.org/events/chileno/index.htm>. The CycleFest Benefit Dinner has been turned into a weekend extravaganza. CycleFest will be held the weekend of November 7-9, where there will be a Friday night cocktail party, a Saturday night benefit dinner, and a Sunday morning ride. Don't miss out. Check out the details at http://www.norcalmtb.org/spon/benefit_dinner_2007/index.htm

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.

Overall Team Results:

Division I:

1. San Rafael Bulldogs
2. Drake Pirates
3. Nevada Union Miners
4. Los Gatos High
5. Woodcreek High

Division II:

1. Marin Catholic
2. Salinas High
3. Contra Costa Composite
4. Albany High
5. San Ramon Valley

Overall Individual Results:

Freshman Boys, Division I:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Tony Smith | Marin Catholic |
| 2. Max Rehkopf | Marin Catholic |
| 3. Alex Smith | Marin Catholic |
| 4. Jeff Shen | Salinas High |
| 5. Bobby Zidek | Marin Catholic |

Freshman Boys, Division II:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Chris Bennett | El Cerrito |
| 2. Jimmy Winne | Woodcreek High |
| 3. Scott Roycroft | Redwood High |
| 4. Bjorn Fox | Redwood High |
| 5. John Dickerson | Woodcreek High |

Freshman/Sophomore Girls:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Victoria Yoham | Marin Catholic |
| 2. Katherine Pollard | Roseville High |
| 3. Lauren McQuinn | San Marin High |
| 4. Ruth Winder | Contra Costa Composite |
| 5. Lauren Freudman | San Rafael High |

Sophomore Boys, Division I:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Bart Carrade | San Rafael High |
| 2. Jack Ketcham | Drake High |
| 3. Matt Mazzuca | Woodcreek High |

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 4. Alex Nemoede | Casa Grande |
| 5. Riley Predum | Drake High |

Sophomore Boys, Division II:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Will Patterson | Branson |
| 2. Ryan Potter | Oakland Composite |
| 3. Jonathan Weeks | Marin Catholic |
| 4. Cody Reed | San Ramon |
| 5. Mac Hart | Woodside High |

JV Girls:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Carolina Gomez-Villafane | Los Gatos High |
| 2. Lauren Catlin | Drake High |
| 3. Charlotte Perry-Houts | Albany High |
| 4. Alison Osgood | Salinas High |
| 5. Alexis Dougherty | San Ramon High |

JV Boys, Division I:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Niko Kaplanis | San Rafael High |
| 2. Clayton Herrick | San Rafael High |
| 3. Riley Howard | Casa Grande |
| 4. Gavin Albertoli | San Rafael High |
| 5. Daniel Rotheram | Woodcreek High |

JV Boys, Division II:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Ben Sukys | Contra Costa Composite |
| 2. Tylor Giger | Salinas High |
| 3. Marcelo Quiroz | Independent |
| 4. Matt Dion | Foothill High |
| 5. Joseph Yoham | Marin Catholic |

Varsity Girls:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Christine Weir | Nevada Union |
| 2. Lainey Aldridge | Harbor High |
| 3. Susanna Nordrum | Redwood High |
| 4. Haley Woodruff | Drake High |
| 5. Jenn Stein | Sierra Foothill Composite |

Varsity Boys:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. John Bennett | El Cerrito |
| 2. Daniel Boyes | Marin Academy |
| 3. Nate Byrom | Nevada Union |
| 4. Will Curtis | San Rafael High |
| 5. Tyler Brandt | Drake High |