

## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

### **CLOSE COMPETITION EXPECTED AT SCHOOLS MOUNTAIN BIKE CHAMPIONSHIPS Fourth Season of High School Mountain Bike Racing League Most Successful Yet**

**April 28, 2004. For Immediate Release**

BERKELEY, California – High school mountain bike athletes around the state of California are completing preparations for the fourth High School State Championships Mountain Bike Races, May 2, at Walker Creek Ranch, West Marin, almost in sight of Mount Tamalpais, the birthplace of mountain biking.

The state championships are also the finals of the six-event NorCal High School Mountain Bike Racing Series Presented by Clif Bar, so for the 200 students expected to attend a lot is at stake. High school mountain bike racing is confined to the Olympic discipline of cross country, and with little organized activity in southern California high school mountain bike racing, northern California schools are expected to dominate these championships.

NorCal High School Mountain Biking League director, Matt Fritzing, is delighted with the way the championships are shaping up. "So far it is going really well, I couldn't be happier. As a presenting sponsor, Clif Bar has made a huge contribution to the series, and we have a great relationship with them. There is more participation from schools and individuals who don't have a school team, and participation from members of the community is also up. We have been running four years now as a league, and it really has the look and feel of interscholastic competition."

The battle for supremacy among the schools, is expected to be a closely-contested three-way contest between series leaders Sir Francis Drake High, who go into the championship with 5063 points, less than 100 points clear of Redwood High on 4966, which is closely followed by three-time state champions Nevada Union High on 4905. Normally a race win is worth 220 points, and the top five place-getters from each school contribute to their school's tally for each race. The championships carry double series points.

Nevada Union High has proved itself the team to beat since 2001, and they are expected to do very well in the State Championships. "Should Nevada Union High win the state championships by a large margin, they could take the entire series too," says Fritzing, a math teacher at Berkeley High, who is affectionately referred to by participants in the league as "Mr Fritz."

Berkeley High lies fourth in the series, on 4016 points, and while they are out of the running for the series, according to Fritzing, "Berkeley High has been gaining momentum and is hungry for the state championship."

Among the riders to look out for are:

Freshman/Sophomore Girls (16 and under, Beginner/Sport level) – Sarah Ely of Nevada Union High carried good fitness into the start of the season from cross country running, and early on took three wins in a row. But recently Katelyn Calvelli of Sir Francis Drake High has surged, winning the past two league races.

Freshman/Sophomore Boys (16 and under, Beginner/Sport level) – Kevin Bernotas of Sir Francis Drake High is coming to the end of a steamroller season, having won all five of the league races so far. A win at the final would be a historic first: six for six. Bernotas's classmate Daniel Novak and Nick Kintz of Calvary Chapel High are the most likely to foil his ambitions.

Junior Varsity Girls (18 and under, Beginner/Sport level) – Laren Willis of Redwood High is expected to make a come-back at the championships. After dominating in the early rounds of the league, she was sidelined with an injury but if fit she will could produce an upset championships win. Mira Radosevich of El Cerrito High has a comfortable league lead and is expected to claim at least that title.

Junior Varsity Boys (18 and under, Beginner/Sport level) – Nathan Sowle of McQueen High in Reno, Nevada, won the first four rounds of the series, but at the Sea Otter Classic round, Nate Roter of Berkeley High took line honors. Look out for come-back rider Josh Estrella of Salinas High, who was hospitalized recently with a lethal virus, but he bounced back and is racing to win at the championships.

Varsity Boys (Expert level) – Nick Agate, of Albany High, was sidelined last year by a broken wrist. This season he has been a dominant force and holds a comfortable lead in the league. However, on-form rider Garret Gibson of Gallileo High was the one to beat at the Sea Otter Classic, and this unpredictable talent may produce another of his amazing victories to claim the championship.

Directions and event info are at [www.norcalhighracing.org](http://www.norcalhighracing.org) Racing on Sunday begins at 9 a.m., with a post-race BBQ at 10.30 a.m, and the awards ceremony at 12.30 p.m. There is a \$5 a car parking fee, but with limited parking space carpooling is encouraged.

For additional information, contact race director Meaghan Kay at 510 541 4955, or league director Matt Fritzingler at 510 325 6502.

### **About Nor Cal High Schools Mountain Bike Racing League**

The Nor Cal High School Mountain Bike League is a non-profit organization open to students from both public and private schools. The league provides coaching and camaraderie to assist students achieve both competitive and non-competitive cross-country mountain biking goals in a safe and enjoyable manner. The calendar of 2004 events begins January 31st and includes weekend riding camps, summer riding camps, a 6-race series, and a coaches' conference. League registration opens in December every year.

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