

2009 SoCal High School Mountain Bike Racing Series ROUND ONE – Southern California – Vail Lake Resort, Temecula

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Full results at: Full results available at:

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http://socaldirt.org/img/2009_opener/index.html

TEMECULA, Calif. – Clear blue skies and jubilant crowds greeted the historic first race of the SoCal High School Mountain Bike Racing Series – a four-race series that is an expansion of the NorCal High School Mountain Bike League. The new SoCal League is funded primarily by the Easton Sports Development Foundation II.

“I couldn’t be any happier right now,” said SoCal League President Quintin Easton. “Parents, coaches and kids left the venue today with a real sense of how magical it is to have a league of their own. Many came and thanked me personally for bringing the NorCal formula into our region, and it was clear they want more. There was a great deal of talent out there on the course today. Some of the kids in Varsity really know how to ride, and many of them are already champing at the bit to race against the NorCal League!”

Close to 100 riders competing on 14 teams – representing 16 schools - heralded this dawn of a new era for mountain biking in Southern California. It was fitting, then, that the race was held at one of SoCal’s finest mountain biking venues, the picturesque Vail Lake Mountain Resort.

A six-mile course winding through Temecula chaparral contained a little of everything, and was described by Sophomore Ricky Riedl: “This is the most fun course ever! There’s great singletrack, lots of drops and technical descents, good climbs, it’s really great.” All other riders asked, agreed with him.

Teams

Using the same scoring formula as in northern California – the top three results drawn from both genders – the Newport Beach Composite team set the early pace for the series, ahead of Channel Islands High School and Hemet High School. With three races remaining, and the expectation that many more riders will come to this party, there is the sense that much could still change.

Varsity Boys

Three riders mixed it up in a lead group that remained together until Garrett

Garcia (Independent) created the moment of truth on the last lap with a withering attack. "I got a gap and I stuck with it until the finish," he said. Garcia rode away from Eric Landman (Independent) and Zachary Valdez (Hemet), who remained together to the finish, where Landman beat Valdez by a wheel in a sprint. Garcia, who trains up to 14 hours a week and is self-coached, does a little road and time trial racing but says he's mainly a mountain biker.

JV Boys

Quint Berkemeier (Rim High) set his objective early in the race, which was nothing less than the win. "I needed a win badly," he said, although acknowledging the stiff competition from riders in his race and riders yet to join the League, he is not taking anything for granted. "There are a lot of good guys out there," he said. One such rider is Nicolas Avellaneda (Independent), who had a mechanical on lap one, and rode his way back into the top ten by posting the fastest times on laps two and three of the three-lap race. Avellaneda finished seventh, but should be challenging for the win at the next round. Tucker Trotter (Yucaipa), finished second, 49 seconds back, with Ryan Matter (RHS Racing) third at 2:47.

Frosh/Soph Boys

"That was my dream right there, I gave it all I had," said a delighted Ricky Riedl (Palos Verdes Composite) about his win. He had been in a breakaway of three, but that went down to two as they braked hard for a sandy, sharp corner. "The guy behind me ate it hard, I hope he's OK. I want to find him and apologize for that," said Riedl about an incident that's very much part of the game. 2-3 miles from the finish, Riedl went to the front on an open downhill, and then started hammering the climbs. "I just kinda drifted away, didn't see him again," he said. Having raced since 7th grade, and a road and track racer too, Riedl, coached by Dave Armitage, is clear about his priorities, saying: "Mountain biking is by far the most fun."

Girls' Races

Six girls today blazed the trail for all girls in Southern California who will take up mountain bike racing – Tiana Plow, Amanda Duarte, Shaylee Quezada, Leila Carrillo, Rachael Somerville and Pamela Bogust. Varsity girls raced three six-mile laps, and Junior Varsity, Sophomore and Freshman categories raced two.

Varsity Girls

After riding away from the entire field at the start line, Tiana Row just kept it going and completed her 18-mile race with a time of 1:31:28.

JV Girls

Amanda Duarte (Independent) completed the 2 laps in a time of 1:08:04. She remained comfortably ahead of Shaylee Quezada (Channel Islands), who took second place.

Frosh/Soph Girls

Leila Carrilo (Newport Beach) was the only Freshman racing, and with a time of 1:04:50, for the 12 mile race, she outpaced everybody except the sole Varsity rider, Tiana Row. Carrilo, whose passion for cycling began at age four, simply followed the leader (Row). "I went out and was in second place. There was a chick ahead of me, I didn't know she was Varsity," said Leila, who rode her entire race alone.

What students say about high school mountain bike racing (by cellphone from the race venue)

Ricky Riedl (Palos Verdes HS)

"I didn't even know of the SoCal League until less than a month ago. It's the best idea ever! The atmosphere is really good, it's very positive. There's a good crowd here and we're all having a lot of fun. Can you hear the cheering and cowbells?"

Garrett Garcia (Indepent)

"It's a great idea. It's really cool. I'm glad I was able to come out and race here."

Quint Berkemeier (Rim of the World HS)

"Mountain biking is really friendly. I play soccer and do XC running too. The individual sports seem to be very friendly, the people and the atmosphere are very nice. I hope by the time I'm a senior this league will be huge!"

The SoCal racing program:

March 8, Vail Lake Challenge, Vail Lake Resort, Temecula, California

March 22, Warner Ranch Roundup, Warner Springs, California

April 5, Arrowhead Challenge, Lake Arrowhead, California

May 17, Cow Pie Invitational, Santa Ynez, California

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About the Southern California Interscholastic Cycling League

The SoCal Interscholastic Cycling League was organized to provide a well-defined race season for junior racers and to promote the formation of teams at public and private high schools. With the cooperation of local race promoters and our sponsors, the League organizes a first class series of races designed for high school aged riders. The League is working to make high school racing the easiest way for juniors to get involved in the challenging and exciting world of competitive cycling. The SoCal League was founded with a generous grant from the Easton Sports Development Foundation II (ESDF II) and is supported by other generous sponsors such as founding national sponsor Specialized Bicycle Components, Shimano, Bike Magazine, CLIF Bar, Crank Brothers, Hincapie Sportswear, Tifosi, Trek, and WTB. For more information on the League, visit <http://www.socaldirt.org> or contact Quintin Easton at quintin@socaldirt.org or 949.285.0316.