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**2009 SoCal High School Mountain Bike Racing Series**

**ROUND THREE– Lake Arrowhead, CA**

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Full results available at: <http://www.socaldirt.org/race/results.htm>

Photo highlights available at: [http://socaldirt.org/img/2009\\_race\\_3/index.html](http://socaldirt.org/img/2009_race_3/index.html)

LAKE ARROWHEAD, Calif. – The SoCal series went to 6,000 feet above sea level for Round Three, the Lake Arrowhead Challenge, on Sunday, April 5. With sunny skies, warm temperatures and low winds, the setting was just about perfect for another great day in this young league's fledgling year.

“I am ecstatic, the turnout here was really great, and once again we had a heap of enthusiasm. These kids and their parents and the coaches are so great. The parking lot was filled, and people hiked out to all parts of the course to cheer on the riders, but what always gets me is how much fun and enjoyment there is at these races. It's unlike any kind of cycling event I've known before. I guess it's the magic of a kids-only race.” said Quintin Easton, president of the SoCal League.

The SoCal series, which is funded primarily by the Easton Sports Development Foundation, drew 73 young riders from approximately 20 high schools on Sunday, in Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Fresh/Soph combined categories.

**Course**

The 5.3 mile loop in the San Bernardino National Forest was initially thought by some to be potentially too difficult for some of the riders, but those with lots of experience loved the course while others found they were up to its many challenges. “Everybody left smiling,” said SoCal League president Quintin Easton. The track included long climbs, very steep, hike-a-bike climbs, challenging descents, and fast, rolling singletrack with berms and whoops. “This was my favorite course of the three so far. The downhills were technical, the climbs were more difficult,” said JV winner Tucker Trotter.

**Teams**

Thanks to a very strong presence in the Varsity Boys, Junior Varsity girls and Frosh/Soph Boys categories, Hemet High School won the day with 1585 points. Rim of the World High School accumulated 1492, with Newport Beach Composite and Yucaipa High School very close, with 1466 and 1463 respectively.

Newport Beach keeps a solid lead in the series, with 4470. Hemet is next with 4156 and Rim High lies third with 3920.

In the SoCal League, the top three results drawn from both genders (one boy and two girls, or two boys and one girl) are used to calculate the team results at each round.

### **Varsity Boys**

Another big win for Zachary Valdez (Hemet) marked him as the outstanding Varsity talent in SoCal High School mountain biking. For the second consecutive time, Valdez got the best of Eric Landman (Independent), who finished 12:51 back in the four lap race. Valdez explained his surge of form thus: "I've been training a lot more in the past few weeks. In the first race, at Vail Lake, I was third. I didn't expect to have so much competition, and that pushed me to train more," he said. Valdez followed Landman for the first half lap. A former mountain bike downhill racer, he took off on a descent and didn't see any of his rivals until the finish.

The win puts Valdez a scant 10 points ahead of Landman in the series standings, with one race to go.

### **JV Boys**

Tucker Trotter (Yucaipa) was pushed all the way to the final climb by the relentless counter moves of Round One winner Quint Berkemeier (Rim High). "We were neck and neck for the whole race. I was taking off on the downhills, but then he was coming back on the climbs." Trotter has ridden a BMX bike on ramps since the age of 10, and thinks this has fine-tuned his bike handling on the descents. "It felt like I could relax a little bit on the descents and recover," said Trotter. But Berkemeier was pulling back time on the climbs, right to the final climb. "On the last climb of the last lap, I looked back and he was gone. I'm not sure what happened," said Trotter. Berkemeier said, "I gave out a really hard effort trying to bridge the 20-second gap at the beginning of the third lap. After I caught him on the first long climb, I was too exhausted to launch the attack that could win me the race."

Trotter finished 1:18 ahead of Berkemeier in the three-lap race, which had 24 starters. David Pretzinger (Rim High) was third at 4:53.

The series competition between Trotter and Berkemeier is poised on a knife-edge. With one win each, they are separated by only nine points. The series final will be decisive.

### **Frosh/Soph Boys**

Brady Kiss (Yucaipa) found his form on the Lake Arrowhead all-rounder's course and held onto an early lead he opened over Ricky Riedl (Palos Verdes), finally crossing the line 1:14 clear of the Round One winner. "It feels excellent! I am super-excited!" Effused Kiss, still on a high two days after the race. Justin Brewer came in third at 3:35, and series Leader Peter Morris (Newport Beach) placed fourth. Kiss followed a lead group of three in the first lap of two, went into the lead on the final climb of the lap, and then rode clear on lap two. "On the last climb I was 'Oh my gosh! I'm alone, I've gotta win this thing!'" Said Kiss. 32 riders started the race. Kiss rode BMX bikes for four years prior to taking up mountain biking, which he did fairly recently. His first time on a mountain bike was a week before Christmas, 2008. "When the league started, I did not think I'd be coming in first place," he said.

In the series overall race, Morris relinquished the Series Leader's jersey to Riedl who has 1471 points. With one race remaining, Kiss and Morris are on 1462, and the result of one round can be thrown out. There is still everything to race for in this ultra-competitive category.

### **Varsity Girls**

Once again, Tiana Row (Independent) was the sole Varsity competitor. All girls started in one wave. Row was followed by a group of four, but soon after they got into the big hills she was alone. Finishing her first lap more than three minutes clear of Frosh/Soph rider Leila Carillo, Row made sure she rode laps two and three alone with only the trails and the wildlife of the San Bernardino National Forest... and the roving course marshals. Row completed the 15.9 miles in a time of 1:45:45.

### **JV Girls**

Jasce Goldsmith (Hemet) rode with the lead group of girls, from all categories, until the big climbs began and then she let them drift away from her to ride the remainder of her two-lap race alone. "Actually winning has been very motivating for me," she said two days after the race. "At first I was just doing this for fun, but now I want to win the next race so will be training super hard." She finished with a time of 1:28:53, putting her 16:26 clear of her Hemet High team-mate, Kelsey Johnson. Johnson rode a very consistent race and passed Shaylee Quezada (Channel Islands) for second place. Quezada came in just 24 seconds behind Johnson.

This win puts Goldsmith close to series leader Amanda Duarte, and finishing all races in the series makes her eligible for a 25-point bonus at the final. The JV Girls series is set for an exciting climax as it reaches its final round.

### **Frosh/Soph Girls**

Another victory for Leila Carillo (Newport Beach) gave her three for three this series. After two laps on the 5.3-mile course she finished 6:00 clear of Rachael Somerville (Newport Beach). DANica Bates (Rim High) came in third, at 23:00 to record her best result so far in the series.

Going into the final race, Carillo has a commanding lead, but Somerville is not far behind. Should Carillo have an off day or mechanical problems, Somerville will be right there.

### **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 3, 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](mailto:quintin@socaldirt.org) and 949.285.0316.