



National Interscholastic Cycling Association

“A League of Their Own”

Gary Boulanger, board president

National Bike Summit

March 10, 2010

VISION



Improve the mental, emotional and physical health of teenagers, while promoting sustainable transportation by sharing the power and joy of competitive mountain biking.



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MISSION



Bring organized mountain bike racing to student athletes from coast to coast by 2020.



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HISTORY



In 1998, Berkeley High School math teacher and avid cyclist Matt Fritzing started a cycling club. An avid roadie, Fritz thought the students would follow suit. Turns out they wanted to go off road. Five students joined, and a movement began.



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HISTORY



By 2001, Fritz formed a high school mountain bike racing league so his team could compete against other student athletes. That year, 30 students from five regional teams raced.

NORCAL



In 2009, 38 teams of more than 400 Northern California high school students, including teams from every public and private school in Marin County, competed in five sanctioned races.

Momentum is still building...



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NORCAL



Marin County powerhouse Sir Francis Drake High School has nearly 60 students racing NorCal in 2010, a much larger roster than the football team. Mountain bike pioneers Joe Breeze and Charlie Kelly have children participating; Joe wrenches as well!



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NORCAL



This past Sunday, nearly 500 students competed in the NorCal season opener in Monterey, California, with 70 volunteers helping throughout the weekend.

The state championships are scheduled for Grass Valley on May 16, near the first stage of the Tour of California.



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GOING NATIONAL!



Specialized partnered with Fritzing and the NorCal League's board of directors to expand high school mountain biking coast to coast, committing as a Founding Sponsor in September 2008.



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SOCAL



In 2009, 100 student athletes from 16 teams in the newly-formed SoCal League competed under the guidance of Quintin Reich and Matt Gunnell. This year, 20 teams will compete, as most teams have grown 30 – 50 percent.

The first official California state championships were held in May.



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COLORADO



Reflecting the symbiosis of mountain biking's California-Colorado roots, a Colorado League committee was formed in 2009, led by Kate Rau.

The first Colorado League season begins this September.



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WASHINGTON



The State of Washington has also formed a committee to explore the creation of a League in 2011, led by Kat Sweet of the Cascade Bicycle Club.

Wisconsin, led by Chad Warren, is also moving forward with plans for 2011, as is Michigan.



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TEXAS



As media coverage began fanning the flames of high school mountain biking, Lance Armstrong's home state of Texas – where nothing is done in a small way – has also formed a committee, lead by Vance McMurry.



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NEIGHBORHOOD



Supporters of high school mountain biking across the country as of March 2010.



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STUDENTS



One of NICA's primary goals is to develop *student* athletes; the NorCal League mandates a 3.0 GPA for its athletes.



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TEAM SPIRIT



Mountain biking the NICA way is safe, fun cross-country riding that emphasizes a supportive team spirit.



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INCLUSIVE



NICA is inclusive: Leagues are co-ed, and there's a no-bench policy for dedicated participants. Everyone races!



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FAMILIES



NICA is good for families: 50% of parents of NorCal league students report that one or both parents started riding again. NICA race weekends are family weekends, with attendance of 1,200 spectators at many NICA races.



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SAFETY



NICA provides safe riding and safe practices for students. All ride leaders are required to attend a NICA-developed, MTB-specific first-aid course. All coaches get background checks and must attend a NICA coaching session to become certified.

STARTING OFF



Where to begin?



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Chapter 11: Competition & Racing

Section 1: Our Philosophy on Competition

The NorCal High School Mountain Bike League believes that sports and competition offer many opportunities for youth to experience positive character education and essential life lessons. The experience of competition provides young people with fundamental lessons such as coping with successes and failures, winning and losing gracefully, ethics, trying one's hardest, and working diligently



towards a goal. These lessons, among others, present the true value of competition, beyond "winning" or how one places in a race.

Mountain bike racing presents a very different sporting competition than

most traditional sports in which one team returns home the "winner" and one team the "loser." While there is only one, first place "winner" in each category in mountain bike racing, there are myriad goals, accomplishments, and successes a racer can put in their sights. For some, a goal may be to finish the race and have a good time, others will aim to place in the top 20, and others will strive to stay with the lead pack and finish in the top five. The possibilities for personal, unique goal-setting are abundant and this is where you, the coach, come in. You must help your riders set specific, realistic, and achievable goals for each race.

Racing can cause a great deal of stress and anxiety for your high school riders. While some element of stress helps us perform and excel, it is important to monitor your riders to make sure they are not putting undue pressure on themselves for results and therefore

carrying around a great deal of anxiety about their performance. You must balance the "go out there and have fun" message with the "try your hardest" message. It is important that, as adults, we help kids keep competition in perspective and not allow it to become all-consuming.



Mountain Bike racing is not a team sport in the traditional sense yet presents great opportunities for binding athletes together. Unlike many sports with a field, court, or pool, it exists as a rolling venue. Riders depend upon each other for the constant support essential for safe riding and training. Preparation, coordination, commitment, and a helping hand are key regardless of athlete's abilities. Further, no one sits on the bench or competes against each other for spots on a starting roster. Competition then becomes inclusive and not exclusive, an integral feature of how teammates view each other and competitors from other teams.

Finally, a word about positive sporting behavior (also known as sportsmanship). You must expect riders to display an excellent sporting attitude—and yes, you must model this as a coach—during competitive events and everyday practice. Riders should treat all other riders, coaches, spectators, and officials with respect. Make it clear that you expect, and demand, fair play and respectful, kind, supportive behavior. Teach riders to win graciously and "lose" with dignity—keeping in mind that in mountain bike racing there is no such thing as "losing" if one has set specific and realistic goals. For more information on helping youth set goals, please see Chapter 10 on Coaching Core Mental Skills.

NICA'S 100-page Leader's Manual provides all the insight a committee needs to get started.



PARTNERSHIPS



NICA racing is held together by the glue of several communities, including:

- Students
- Coaches
- Ride leaders
- Parents
- Volunteers
- Sponsors
- Bike shops
- IMBA
- Media
- School administrators
- Cycling celebrities



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Nat Lopes



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TAKE HOME

NICA believes high school mountain biking can:

- Empower a student athlete to engage in life
- Inspire a student and his or her family to ride together
- Change the way 'fringe'sports are viewed on campus
- Create lifelong cyclists
- Unify communities
- Steer students to a healthy lifestyle, and end the cycle of obesity

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www.nationalmtb.org

