

BC's cycling team travels cross-country to defend national title

By Park Baker
Staff Writer

Last fall, the cycling team brought home BC's first varsity national championship from the Collegiate Mountain Bike National race in Truckee, CA. The cycling team travels returns to Truckee this weekend to defend their title.

Throughout the fall season the Tornados mountain bike team racked up points at each of its races against top schools in the SAC. After qualifying for a spot at the collegiate national championships, the teams' A-riders traveled and competed in the Sierra Nevada's.

Each rider competed in one of four disciplines. Cross country riders climb up the mountain and then descend racing their competitors in a pack sprint for almost two hours. Contrasting it is the downhill race, where each racer speeds down a steep twisting trail with jumps, drops and rock gardens while the clock ticks off each rider individually at 30 second intervals. The short track race features minimal climbing, instead the racers turn over a huge gear at a sweating pace until the slackers get lapped and pulled from the race leaving the first few to battle it out until the

buzzer sounds.

The last event of the weekend was the Four Cross race. Riders assemble on a gate and hold steady until the gun goes off. Usually the first rider off the gate has the clear advantage, but the trail crew at Northstar Bike Park had built a challenging track that was steep and riddled with rocks and colossal jumps. Four-X racers must also contend with their opponents, elbows and knees get thrown around mercilessly, all while contending with the jumps and high speeds attained while sprinting down the course.

At the end of the weekend, the Brevard athletes had worked hard and earned the most points collectively and earned the Division II National Championship title. The team lost a few key riders in the spring 2010 graduation, but Senior and 2008 XC Champion Tristan Cowie remains optimistic.

"Yeah, we lost a few strong girls last year, but we have fresh talent this year and they have the right attitudes about it, and they'll only get stronger. We have a really solid Men's AXC team, and our gravity boys have stepped it up this year. We had a few injuries this season but those guys are ready for nationals," said Cowie

about the team trip this year.

The team will again travel to Northstar Ski Resort in Lake Tahoe, California this weekend where temperatures have been in the low 20's overnight and reports of snow above 7000 feet are coming in more and more. This is the second year the resort has hosted Collegiate Mountain Bike Nationals, and the high altitude will favor Brevard freshman, Lewis Gaffney.

"I'm from New Mexico, yet the team's 2009 accomplishment definitely confirmed my decision about where I wanted to go to college. I didn't have a lot of expectations for this season, I knew we had a really strong program and we would do the best we could," said Gaffney.

Gaffney's acclimation to the high altitude will help the team's chances out immensely. He says breathing the air in Pisgah is like breathing underwater due to the humidity and lower altitude.

If the team does well again this year, the Brevard cycling program will have laid more foundation for creating a competitive program, attracting talent abroad, and concreting the Southern Appalachians as a place that breeds high caliber athletes.

Volleyball plays tough fought loss against Lenoir-Rhyne

Kortney Conner placed five of her 11 kills in the Tornados victory in the third set and Rebecca Schoonover led all players with 20 digs, but Brevard was unable to overcome Brooke Christenbury's double-double of 17 kills, 16 digs in the 25-17, 25-17, 25-27, 25-14 loss to Lenoir-Rhyne on Tuesday afternoon.

Conner recorded more than 10 kills for her eighth time this season to lead Brevard (2-16, 0-12 SAC) on the evening. Jamie Atkinson added eight kills and three total blocks, while Jordei Osby led the Tornados at the net with seven blocks.

Christenbury led Lenoir-Rhyne (8-9, 5-7 SAC) with her 17 kills as the Bears hit 17.9 percent on the evening in the victory. Chelsea Hill added 11

kills and five blocks, while Kaitlyn Burton had a match-high 40 set assists. Marris Church led the Bears defensive efforts with 18 digs on the evening as Lenoir-Rhyne completed the season sweep against Brevard.



Church led the Bears in the first two sets as the junior libero served a pair of runs in each of the sets to give Lenoir-Rhyne the 2-0 lead heading into the third set.

Both sides battled back and forth in the third set as the teams

were tied at 16 after a kill by Brevard's Erin Cox. Brevard went up 24-20 late in the set after a kill by Conner, but the Bears rallied to score the

next four points, capped by a kill by Cheyenne Cash to tie the set up at 24. After Conner and Christenbury traded kills to keep the set tied at 25, Atkinson found a gap in the Bears defense to put the set at 26-25 and the Tornados closed it out on a Lenoir-Rhyne attack error.

The fourth and final set was tied at 11 after a Conner service error and the Bears went on a 10-1 run following the error. Cayla Crawley placed in a pair of service aces during the run to put Lenoir-Rhyne up 21-12 and the Bears closed out the set on a kill by Hill and a BC attack error to take the win.

The Tornados continue their conference home stand on Friday, October 15th, as Brevard hosts Anderson University. First serve in Boshamer Gymnasium between the Tornados and the Trojans is set for 6:30 p.m.



TORNADO SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL

BC 21, Catawba 31 L Oct. 9

VOLLEYBALL

Tusculum 3, BC 0 L Oct. 8

Mars Hill 3, BC 0 L Oct. 9

Lenoir-Rhyne 3, BC 1 L Oct. 12

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Wingate 5, BC 0 L Oct. 9

Anderson 2, BC 1 L Oct. 12

MEN'S SOCCER

Wingate 6, BC 1 L Oct. 9

Anderson 8, BC 0 L Oct. 12