

# Nation's first collegiate gravel racing team

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Contributor

BREVARD, N.C. – Brevard College has become the first collegiate cycling program in the United States to launch the discipline of Gravel Racing to its offerings for student-athletes. Gravel Racing, widely regarded as the fastest growing cycling niche in the U.S., will be added immediately to 10-time USA Cycling collegiate national champion Brevard College's current disciplines of Mountain Biking, Cyclocross and Road Cycling.

"Brevard College has always been one of the top cycling programs in the country," said Brevard College President David C. Joyce. "By enhancing the student-athlete experience with new opportunities in the fast growing sport of gravel racing, Brevard College once again is leading the way."

Gravel Racing is a relatively new cycling discipline that combines riding on surfaces such as asphalt, gravel, dirt, single-track and maintenance roads. The distances of the races typically range between 50 and 150 miles, yet can be even longer.

The Brevard College Tornados Cycling program, under the direction of Head Coach Brad Perley and Assistant Coach Cypress Gorry, will begin competing in the gravel discipline immediately. The team will train in nearby Pisgah National Forest and DuPont State Forest, two of the premier gravel racing locations in the nation.

"The addition of gravel as an officially recognized discipline here at BC Cycling is an exciting move for us," said Coach Perley. "We have the knowledge, ability and local resources in Brevard to excel in these events while providing team race support. Our primary focus has and always will be our students. This addition provides them with even more unique opportunities to progress in their training, racing careers and student experience."

Sixteen student-athletes will make up the nation's first collegiate gravel team, including several Brevard College cyclists – Hannah Arensman, Carson Beckett, Tyler Clark, Tyler Orschel and Rachel Pageau - that have competed at the UCI World Championships level in other disciplines.

"I believe this new gravel addition is going to be a great resource for the school and for a lot of the classes that are going to be up and coming,"

said Beckett. "It is only a matter of time before the sport of gravel becomes nationally recognized, so this will be unique to be a leader of that movement."

"Gravel racing is going to be a really fun addition," added Arensman. "I think it is going to bring the team even closer together. They are long, hard races but at the end everyone comes back and feels great. It will be great for team building among other benefits."

The Gravel Racing schedule will be spread across the academic calendar with the inaugural race for Brevard College taking place on Saturday, March 7 at the Southern Cross in Dahlonega, Georgia. The Tornados will also race this Spring at the Love Valley Roubaix Gravel Grinder Classic, March 21-22 in Love Valley, North Carolina. The 2020 Fall schedule will include local Western North Carolina events

such as the Pisgah Monster-Cross Challenge in Pisgah National Forest and the Dirt Diggler in DuPont State Forest.

"I applaud Head Coach Brad Perley and Assistant Coach Cypress Gorry for developing this game changing concept of adding the first-ever collegiate gravel racing team," said Brevard College Director of Athletics Miranda Nash. "We are excited to support this new endeavor which will provide exciting new experiences for our student-athletes."

To follow the latest news and updates surrounding Brevard College Athletics, follow the Tornados on Twitter and Instagram @bctornados, like 'Brevard College Athletics' on Facebook, and subscribe to 'Brevard College Tornados' on YouTube and SoundCloud. Also, follow 'brevardcollege' on Flickr for the latest photos from all Brevard College events.



Brevard College Cycling team practices together on gravel road.

Courtesy of Brevard.edu