



Information You Need to Know about the SRV Mountain Bike Club For Parents and Athletes

Introduction

Purpose of this document

This document is meant to provide background information for parents and students about the San Ramon Valley Mountain Bike Club. We are a recreational club at San Ramon Valley High School. The 2018-2019 school year is the 12th season for the San Ramon Valley Mountain Bike Club (www.srvmtb.org).

Mission Statement

Our team's mission is **“The positive development and mentoring of young men and women through Mountain Biking with a focus on Health, Fitness, Leadership and Active Community Service.”**

Overview:

We are considered a club sport at San Ramon Valley High School. We encourage participation in the club for all levels of rider fitness and skill. Students can participate in the club at several different levels of commitment. You can choose to just attend the on-campus club meetings, or you can join us for the training rides, or you can train and race with the team. The team competes in the NorCal High School Cycling League (www.norcalmtb.org), which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association's state leagues (www.nationalmtb.org).

We don't have tryouts. If you try, and keep trying, you're on our team. We have a proven history of creating capable and confident riders out of timid, out-of-shape beginners, year after year. Athletes who are already in good condition (like cross-country runners, soccer players, swimmers) adapt quickly and do very well.

We value and promote excellence, believing that ordinary athletes can attain big results through setting goals, mapping a strategy, and giving the task disciplined effort. Our SRV students will really work hard and are transformed by the process.

Safety

Is Participating Dangerous?

If you are new to mountain biking, forget what you have seen on television with the X-Games or soft drink commercials. In cross-country bike races, the average speed is usually around ten to twelve miles per hour. This is an endurance sport where the fittest athletes win. Each year, the League collects data on injuries from every team. Typically, for the whole League combined (more than 500 athletes), there will be one or two broken bones, some sprains, a few cuts, some bruises, lots of nicks and scrapes, but little else. Statistically, we suffer fewer serious injuries than most other mainstream sports, especially contact sports.

We take rider safety very seriously. Our coaches and ride leaders do their best to minimize the risks to every athlete. Certain risky behaviors are discouraged or forbidden on every ride and the League helmet rule is strictly enforced. We teach each athlete bike-control skills early in the season to minimize the risk of an accident. However, even with our best efforts, crashes and injuries can occur. All of our coaches are licensed by NorCal High School Cycling League and are trained in Wilderness First Aid (WFA). Many of our Ride Leaders and Student Riders are also WFA trained.

Riders, coaches, and ride leaders are covered by supplemental accident insurance provided by NICA. Consequently, each must register with the league and pay a small fee. Everyone who rides with our team must sign a waiver that indemnifies the coaches and the league.

Policies/Code of Conduct

Our team policies emphasize bike safety and trail etiquette, both on the trail and while riding on pavement. Our goal is always to be able to make it to the next practice!

Code of Conduct:

We are committed to safety. We think about safety, teach safety and require each rider to always ride in a safe and controlled manner. Riders who repeatedly flaunt our safety rules or engage in behaviors that present unnecessary risk to themselves or others will be dropped from the program. As visible representatives of San Ramon Valley and ambassadors of cycling, athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with that status and follow the SRV rules of behavior at all times.

If a team member is seen riding without a helmet at any time during the season, the rider will be removed from the team – no excuses.

Coaching, Leadership

Coaches and Ride Leaders

The team's Head Coach is Ken Mozek. There are about 12 Assistant Coaches. All of the coaches are volunteers. All are experienced mountain bikers and are licensed to coach high school mountain biking by the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA). This means that they have received training in teaching mountain biking skills, have experience coaching mountain biking, hold a current 3-yr certificate in Wilderness First Aid and 2-yr certificate in CPR, have passed a background check, and regularly receive additional training. In addition to the coaches, we have several Ride Leaders with a little less training, and about eight General Volunteers who also help lead training rides.

Each coach and ride leader is equipped with a first aid kit and cell phone on every ride. Typically each ride group is led by a coach and swept by one or more adults. Occasionally, circumstances arise where this is not possible. In this instance, we will designate a student/athlete who we believe is adequately mature, responsible and capable in the ride leader role.

Adult Guest Riders

Coaches and ride leaders coach while riding with the student-athletes. Parents who are interested in participating with the team are encouraged to join their athletes in training as adult guest riders. If you are an experienced rider and would like to be formally designated as a mentor in some specific

area, let the coaches know. You do not have to be a talented rider or racer to function effectively in this role, you learn as you go, and it's a lot of fun. If you want to keep riding with the club, we will ask you to register with the League and get you started on a coach certification program.

For those of us on the brink of sending their kids away to college and adult life, this is a special time to share. Each of these families who were introduced to the sport in this way in 2007 described the experience as incredible, eye-opening, and lifestyle-changing.

We ride on some of the most beautiful trails in California. Mt Diablo is AMAZING! We see lots of wild animals along with the spectacular wildflowers of spring. On the hilltops and ridges you can see the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Delta and Sierra foothills to the east.

Parent Involvement

We need lots of help from team parents and volunteers. Our Parent Board is composed of parents who have volunteered to use their time and talents to help make the club a success. The Parent Board coordinates help with food, transportation, logistics, race logistics, etc. But parents can also help beginning riders to learn to keep their bikes in top mechanical shape, provide additional advice on training and racing, and give lots of encouragement and reassurance from those who were beginners not very long ago. And successful racers need a lot of good nutrition and rest.

The club relies on the Parent Board to organize many club events: picnics, pre-race pasta feeds, and food and equipment at the races. The list of volunteer positions include Race Day Director, Equipment Manager, Team Communications, Team Photographer, Sponsorship Liaison, Picnic Coordinator, Pasta Feed Director, "Honor the Sponsors" Event Leader, End of Season Party Leader, and Spirit Wear Coordinator.

Training and Riding

Season timing and nominal schedule

Club season is from late September through June. Registration usually commences a month after Club Day and extends through mid-November. Club meetings are held monthly at the school during lunch in the faculty advisor's classroom.

Our active biking season is from January through May. Usually starting the first week of January, we practice three days per week: after-school rides on Wednesday and Friday, and a longer Sunday afternoon ride. Training rides usually take place on the dirt roads and trails surrounding Mount Diablo.

January practices will consist of skills training, core body strengthening and building aerobic endurance. The first two weeks' weekday rides are held at the spin room at the San Ramon 24 HR Fitness. New athletes will be required to attend 2 spin classes each week. The first Sunday ride is a skills clinic combined with a short ride. The second Sunday will be our first big trail ride. Every Wednesday and Friday after that we will meet at 3:30 pm at Rolling Hill Church. Most rides will be on Mount Diablo State Park, Shell Ridge Open Space, or Diablo Foothills Regional Park. Rides will be finished before dusk, usually 5:30 - 6:00pm, depending on the time of year (tail lights on bikes will be required).

Practice/Training

The training scheme is a carefully planned schedule of training rides that gradually increase in distance and difficulty over a four to six month timeframe. The timeframe must be long to ensure that the athlete progresses at a rate gradual enough to avoid injury, and long enough to achieve peak fitness by season's end and the championship final race. The "periodization" based training scheme cannot be artificially compressed into the normal sports season timeframe without diminishing its effectiveness.

The training is choreographed in three basic phases so that everyone is adequately prepared once the racing begins. The first phase is the "Base" or endurance phase where we ride at low speeds, teach handling skills (for safety) and gradually increase the ride duration to build a solid foundation of cardiovascular fitness. The second is the "Build" phase to add strength and power by increasing the amount of hill climbing. The last phase is the "Peak" phase where we add fast-paced race simulation.

Once the actual riding starts, we split the team workouts into fitness and experience-based ride groups since our goal is to challenge but not overwhelm each rider. All groups do a similar type of ride, albeit at different paces or distances. We do our best to design a training scheme for each rider appropriate for his/her level of experience, fitness, and personal ambitions. Groups are coed where practical, but the girls and lady coaches often get together for a girls-only training ride.

New riders and parents will be surprised when we tell them that by season's end they will be able to easily ride a full four hours in hilly terrain, or do a hundred-mile road "century," but it's true! Riders who make it to practice regularly, that is. Athletes who follow our progressive training schedule will steadily gain fitness and those who skip practice will soon find themselves struggling to keep up.

We ride three days per week. We don't practice every weekday like some sports because recovery between rides is important. But if your athlete ignores our schedule and trains intermittently on their own, he/she will likely fall short of potential. Also, three one-hour rides do not equal one three-hour ride. Longer rides are much more effective in creating the endurance and fitness we need. Accordingly, we do our most essential training ride on Sunday afternoons at 12:45pm. This allows time for morning breakfast, family time, church, and homework prior to our ride, with more family time in the evening. Combined with two shorter weekday workouts, including core body strengthening, yoga, running, spin bike rides at the 24Hr Fitness, and rides during the week, this schedule is designed to get us fit in a time-efficient way, minimize time on the bike, avoid injury, fatigue, and mental burnout.

Regular attendance at training is important to keep the riders progressing. As their fitness and bike handling skills improve the rides become faster and more difficult. Riders that don't attend regularly may not be able to keep up with their peers and find themselves held back while their peers move up to faster ride groups. Even if the riders are fit, their bike skills may not be equal to their peers and may risk an injury if they attempt a maneuver beyond their skill.

Athletes will need to continually monitor his/her own fatigue level and discuss it with the coaches. Rest and recovery, hydration and fueling are critical parts of any training plan. It is important that your athlete avoids the temptation to do extra workouts beyond what is recommended.

Training for bike racing is hard work. Fortunately, it's also a lot of fun and rides often end with a little social time.

Norcal High School Cycling League Racing

We participate in races sponsored by the NorCal High School Cycling League (www.norcalmtb.org). Like other NorCal League high schools, our program seeks to strike a balance between being a competitive individual and team sport while retaining fun recreation club qualities. For athletes new to cycling, immediate immersion into training, racing, and the pressure to perform may be intimidating. This is the reason the League has carefully designed individual racing classes so beginners, intermediate and advanced riders are pitted only against peers of similar ability and experience. Each school's coach does their best to carefully place riders in the following categories: freshmen, sophomore, junior varsity, and varsity.

We will race against approximately 30 other high school teams in the South Conference of the NorCal League. At the end of the season in late April or early May, the League Championship pits our team against all 70 North and South Conference NorCal teams. The State Championship in mid-May offers our riders the chance to compete against an additional 62 SoCal teams. Road trips to the races (camping if weather allows) are the best of all. You will discover that the other teams in the League are full of delightful kids, with encouraging coaches and wonderfully supportive parents. At the races, the whole gallery of spectators' cheers and rings cowbells, not just for their own kids, but yours too! This is a very friendly sport.

The five NorCal races are all in Northern California, most a 2-3 hour drive away. Riders are scored individually and on a team basis, similar to cross country running. Girls' scores and boys' scores are added together in the team computation.

The NorCal League also puts on four weekend rider camps held in November, December, and January. These are fun, very instructive, remarkably inexpensive and strongly encouraged for newer riders.

Last season (2018) we had 67 registered riders on the team: 6 girls and 61 boys. About half of our riders were middle schoolers. About 23 of our high school riders raced, and 12 competed in the State Championships. About 17 of our middle schoolers raced in local public races. Four of our high school riders (1 girl and 3 boys) regularly made the podium. Most importantly all of our riders had a great healthy experience. We are planning for an enjoyable and successful season for each student.

The club is a not race team, but each participant is strongly encouraged to try at least one race. If, after this experience, the rider determines that he/she doesn't enjoy racing, they can continue to ride and train with the team. Riders that want to pursue racing at a high level will be encouraged to seek additional training outside our regular practices.

Bike Racing is Girl-Friendly:

There are lots of girls racing in the League. In fact, girl participation is the fastest growing demographic in mountain biking. We are looking to bring beginner young ladies into the sport and help develop more advanced riders. We already have 4-5 women ride leaders who are great role models for the girls.

In the 1992 classic movie "A League of Their Own" Tom Hanks (as coach Jimmy Dugan) exclaims with surprise and dismay: "There's no crying in baseball!" echoing the old-school world-view from the no-pain, no gain masculine perspective. In fact, there is too crying in cycling, also pre-race

makeup, hair, nails, and other surprises! The captain of the elite women's VeloBella cycling team explained: "We girls sometimes cry. It's not because we're sad, it's an emotional release. We might cry when the training is hard and we're struggling a little, or during a stressful race, and we definitely might cry when we win. It's ok! Don't feel bad about it like you've done something to upset us. We want to be here (training and racing) and yes, we also like to feel pretty on race-day." We haven't said any of this to frighten you or indicate that our girls will be doing lots of crying...they won't be; but rather to make the point that the League and our own SRV team culture is truly co-ed, and plan to work hard to provide an experience that encourages and celebrates girls' different needs and tastes.

About Commitment:

If your athlete regularly misses workouts, especially the Sunday rides; he/she will not progress at the same rate as their fellow athletes. We guarantee that this will become a source of frustration for your student once they start having difficulty keeping up and will send a clear signal to others that they are not committed to the team.

We promise to treat your athlete like a responsible young adult. Accordingly, we will interpret a habit of missed practices and a pattern of disinterest as a signal to be dropped from the team and email communication. If your athlete is unable to attend any of the agreed-upon practice rides because of school homework, job schedules, family commitments or other concerns, it is really important that they consult with a coach so we can create an alternate plan to keep their season on track.

Some athletes may want to try and do two sports at once. We recognize that our long training timeframe may create an unavoidable overlap for part of the season. This is ok. We believe however, that once the season really gets going that trying to do two sports at once is a recipe for frustration and failure at both, may lead to exhaustion and sickness, and can impact academic performance. **We discourage this idea.**

What to Eat:

Athletes are expected to be informed and responsible with their eating habits. While this is not a weight-loss program, fat loss and increased lean muscle-mass are typical results of training you should expect. Your athlete will need more high quality calories from complex carbohydrates and will also need more protein than is required for a non-exercising lifestyle. An inadequate or junk food diet will put your athlete at a disadvantage against those who are eating to win. Do not use any of the popular "high this, low that" fad-of-the-month diets. Eating a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, lean meats and staying hydrated with water will be emphasized. Most important is that your student comes to practices and races properly fueled. This is an endurance sport. Nutrition will be discussed more as the season progresses.

How Communication Happens:

We primarily use email to communicate with parents and athletes. The team is managed through a web-based application called TeamSnap. TeamSnap also supports a free Android and iOS smartphone app that accesses the online database. TeamSnap contains our team roster, training schedule, race schedule, shared photos, and team documents. The emails we send through TeamSnap go automatically to every team member and parent, coaches and ride leaders. Frequent

email from coaches offer feedback about rides completed, include team news, tips, motivation and encouragement, recognition, strategic planning for races, travel planning, and fun tidbits, bike culture and more. Please check your email daily and the team page on TeamSnap (<https://go.teamsnap.com/805213/home>) or the team website (<http://www.srvmtb.org>) periodically!

All team members, riders, coaches, ride leaders, and parents can easily send emails to other team members about events or announcements using the TeamSnap email addresses. You must be registered with TeamSnap, i.e., on our roster somewhere for anyone to send or receive emails using TeamSnap. When your student registers with the team, you will receive an invitation to fill out the roster on TeamSnap. Please see the Overview/Home tab for emailing instructions.

Tentative Race Schedule

Race # 1 late February or early March

Race # 2 mid-March

Race # 3 late March or early April

Race # 4 mid to late April

Race # 5 early to mid-May

State Championships (Riders must qualify) usually late May

Nationals for those who qualify mid-July (location TBD)

Active Community Service:

This year we are planning to organize active community service with Save Mt Diablo and Bay Area Trail Counsel as well as a community and bike safety, maintenance & fit check event. Every rider should plan to participate in at least one community service event during the season. Because our training and racing schedule is so busy during the riding season, it is best to focus on participation during October through December.

About Academics:

The goal for SRV is to help develop our students physically, socially, and academically into mature young adults. To qualify to participate in SRV Cycling, each athlete must be achieving academically in a manner satisfactory to wishes of his/her parents and the standards of the school. **Failure to maintain satisfactory academics during the cycling season is grounds to be dropped from the team.**

You'll Need Some Equipment:

Your athlete will need an appropriate bike, cycling clothing and other items. Please consult with one of the coaches before you buy anything so we can help you get the right gear and minimize the cost. Bicycles and helmets must be inspected and approved for function and safety, then re-inspected at regular intervals. Our textbook is Mountain Bike Magazine's *Mountain Biking Skills* available at Borders or Amazon.

Getting all the equipment can be challenging. Prices vary widely and much is available both new and used on the internet at discount prices. We also have free gear people have given the team, and other things available to loan. Let us help you find what you need.

A Word About Bikes. When buying a new mountain bike, please explain to the bike shop that you are buying a bike for a cross-country mountain bike team. There is a wide variety of mountain bikes available, which can be quite confusing to the consumer: recreational bikes, trail bikes, XC race bikes, all-mountain bikes, Enduro bikes, downhill bikes, and free-ride or gravity bikes. Aim for something in the trail to XC bike, at least for a first bike. Full suspension is not really necessary and can penalize the rider with extra weight. Recreational, downhill, and free-ride bikes are not suitable bikes for riding with our team. Please don't buy a bike at a department store. Those are recreational bikes that are extra heavy and if your athlete isn't discouraged, it will be worn out and dangerous to ride by the end of February.

Danville Bike and 6Fifteen Cyclery are our sponsor bike shops and they offer our registered team riders and families a variety of discounts and service. Stix & Stones is our sponsoring mobile bike shop and will come to your home for your bike service needs. Jake Otsuka, owner of Stix & Stones, regularly services bikes for free before our training rides and trains with the team. We encourage everyone in the club to frequent these businesses. (A copy of the team sponsor agreement will be provided to all registered riders)

Cost of Participating:

1. NICA Registration (\$25)
2. NorCal High School League registration (\$50). Middle schoolers also need to pay this to participate in our training rides.
3. Entry fees to each of the six (6) races and travel costs (each race is \$50, w/ discounts if you register for all 5 races). Middle schoolers don't pay this because NorCal doesn't offer middle school racing at this time.
4. Each rider's team registration donation is \$150, which covers club costs that can't be covered by tax deductible sponsor donations collected by the school such as team league registration, scholarships, swag, etc.
5. A spirit wear team kit (team jersey, shorts, windbreaker vest, and arm warmers) is available as an additional purchase.
6. We offer need-based scholarships with the goal that no student is denied participation due to lack of resources.
7. A cross-country mountain bike (varies considerably but think in the \$900-\$2000 range).

Required Forms:

Team registration is handled through TeamSnap. There are four steps.

- 1) Once we have your correct email address, new riders will receive an invitation email with a link to register with the team in TeamSnap. Fill out your TeamSnap roster entry with all of the requested information, especially medical and emergency contact details. We encourage you to enter your mobile phone number so that text alerts can be sent (handy for last minute schedule changes).
- 2) Pay the team registration donation on the Payment tab in TeamSnap. This money is used to pay for items that tax-deductible sponsor donations can not cover, such as team league registration, scholarships, swag, etc.
- 3) Order your club spirit wear (aka, team kit, bike clothing) from Voler.

- 4) Register with the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) and the NorCal League when you receive an email invitation from the Pit Zone in mid to late October. This pays for insurance and other great benefits. If you intend to race in the NorCal league, you can pre-pay for races on the Pit Zone. Middle Schoolers should not register for NorCal or races but should register with NICA and pay the fee. Remember, if you ride with the club, you must sign the NICA waiver and pay the registration fee.

The club also encourages additional medical evacuation insurance, which is not usually covered by health insurance. CalStar/AirMedCare offers a group coverage for \$65-\$85/family/yr. It covers helicopter evacuation if CalStar is called to rescue an injured family member from the trail (a \$25,000 cost). The NorCal league may be able to offer us a discount. Contact Coach Bruce if you'd like to participate (bbilodeaubjbi@yahoo.com). Most of the coaches have already signed up.

Team Sponsorship:

As part of our sponsorship, team members are able to purchase parts from the Danville Bike and 6Fifteen at a 20% discount. GIANT bicycles are also available at discount prices. The team is also able to purchase sports nutrition products from Hammer and Cliff Bar at a discount. The league also offers significant discounts on league sponsor bike and nutrition products. Occasionally, other offers may become available and they will be relayed to the team. These discounts are ONLY available to registered riders in good standing) and their immediate family members.

The team is also fortunate to receive support from a number of local businesses, individuals and organizations, including **Chevron, Danville Bike, Martial Arts America, Stephen Wells M.D., Blackhawk Medical Walk-In Clinic, Tim Leach M.D., Nowell Steel & Supply Co., San Ramon Presbyterian Church, Hammer Nutrition, Cliff Bar, GIANT Bike, 24 Hr Fitness, Ann & Dave Dimaggio, Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay, Lifetouch, Pepsi/Gatorade, SQUIRT LUBE.** Additional sponsors are always welcome.

Please be sure to let us know if you have any questions. We ask that riders planning to be on the team have all forms completed before Friday November 16th

Sincerely, Coach Ken Mozek
(925) 989-2892 cell
ken.mozek@gmail.com
Team website: <http://www.srvmtb.org>
League website: www.norcalmtb.org

PS. A personal thank you to all those parents that have provided us with words of encouragement as we have moved forward with creating and growing our Mountain Bike Team. Thanks for entrusting us with your young men and women.