

MOUNTAIN BIKE RACING TEAM



PARENT & ATHLETE HANDBOOK

2024

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I. Overview

A. National Interscholastic Cycling Association



Founded in 2009, the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) (see <http://www.nationalmtb.org/>) is the National Governing Body for grades 9-12 interscholastic mountain biking and fosters the development of high quality competitive cross-country mountain biking programming for high school aged athletes. NICA provides leadership, governance and program support to promote the development of interscholastic Mountain Biking Leagues throughout the United States.

B. The Arizona Cycling Association



Formed in 2012, the Arizona Cycling Association (see <http://www.arizonacycling.org/>) promotes personal development and teamwork through mountain biking, and encourages the formation of teams at public, charter and private high schools. With the cooperation of local race promoters and our sponsors, the League has organized first class series of races since 2013, designed for high school aged student-athletes. The League makes high school racing the easiest route for youth to get involved in the challenging and exciting world of competitive cycling.

C. The Casa Grande Area Jr. High / High School Mountain Bike Teams



Created in 2013, the Casa Grande Area Jr. High / High School Mountain Bike Team (see www.facebook.com/youthontrackcycling) is a composite co-ed mountain biking group for Jr. High / high school age students in the Casa Grande and surrounding areas. Students are welcome from any Pinal County public, private, homeschool or independent study programs.

Like other Arizona League schools, our program seeks to strike a balance between being a competitive individual and team sport while retaining some gentler 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.

The coaches do their best to carefully place riders in the following categories: Jr High, freshmen, sophomore, junior varsity, and varsity. Riders are scored individually and on a team basis. Girl's scores and boy's scores are added together in the team computation.



1. Mission Statement

To foster strong character attributes in athletes, by promoting positive Social, Mental, and Physical development, leading to their full potential as responsible citizens and leaders.

2. Team Goal

To teach student-athletes safe riding practice, an understanding of our sport and to give them a fun challenging cycling experience while advancing in racing categories.

II. Why Mountain Biking?

A. Cycling Builds Self Esteem.

The opportunity to practice and gain competency in a physical skill contributes to young people's self-esteem and sense of self-worth.



B. Health Related, Academic and Social Benefits

Student-athletes often become more interested in a healthy lifestyle: one that includes regular exercise, healthy eating habits and smart decisions regarding drug and alcohol use.

C. Skill Development

The sport of mountain biking calls for a wide variety of physical and mental skills, such as agility, balance, determination and focus. The physical demands of cycling require both upper and lower body strength, agility and cardiovascular fitness. Navigating the bicycle through technical terrain and in competition also demands a strong mind, as well as critical thinking and decision-making skills. Moreover, responsible riding also develops an ethic of self-discipline and self-care. Learning how to maintain your bicycle, repair flat tires and broken chains builds confidence and problem solving skills that lend themselves to a wide variety of challenges and needs faced during life.



D. It's About the Team *AND* the Individual

Jr. High /High school mountain bike clubs/teams allow young people to participate in a sport in which they are an integral part of a team and experience the corresponding benefits, such as working with a coach, interacting with and supporting teammates, representing their school and team supporters (and learning to respect the natural environments in which they ride). Mountain biking is also an individual sport where a key goal is to become a better, stronger student-athlete.



III. Is Mountain Biking Dangerous?

A. Forget What You've Seen on TV and In Magazines

Mountain biking is not all about daredevils careening down hills and jumping off cliffs. The average speed attained on a mountain bike ride is typically 10-12 miles per hour. Mountain biking is a sport that gets young people onto trails and away from the dangers of automobile traffic associated with road cycling.

B. Yes, There Are Some Risks

We do our best to minimize the risks to your athlete. Certain risky behaviors are discouraged or forbidden and the League helmet rule is strictly enforced. We teach each athlete

bike-control skills early in the season to minimize the risk of crashing. Statistically, we suffer fewer serious injuries than most other mainstream sports, especially contact sports.

IV. Team Building, Training and Obligations

A. No Tryouts

We don't have tryouts. If you try, and keep trying, you're on our team. The League has 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) adapt quickly and do very well.



While the League has enjoyed some elite results, we are not elitist. Instead, 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 student-athletes will really work hard and, if dedicated, will be transformed by the process.

B. Training

The training scheme is a carefully planned schedule of training rides that gradually increase in distance and difficulty over time. The training is choreographed in three basic phases so that everyone is adequately prepared once the racing begins. The first 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 is the "Peak" phase where we add fast-paced race simulation.

Formal practices will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:00 – 7:30 pm and Saturdays 6:00 – 8:00 am. Student-athletes will need to continually monitor his/her own fatigue level and discuss it with the coaches. It is imperative that athletes bring enough water and snacks to practices. Rest and recovery are a critical part of any training plan. It is important that your

athlete avoids the temptation to do extra workouts beyond what is recommended by their coach.



C. Code of Conduct

We are committed to safety. We think about safety, teach safety and require each student athlete to always ride in a safe and controlled manner. Student-

athletes 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 the Casa Grande area high schools and ambassadors of cycling, athletes are ex-

pected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with that status and follow the YOTC MTB Team rules of behavior at all times. **If a team member is seen riding without a helmet at any time during the season, the student-athlete will have time penalties and may be disqualified from a race – no excuses, no exceptions.**

The Team does not allow any type of physical affection or relationships during the season within the team.

D. Commitment

If your student-athlete regularly misses practice workouts, especially the Saturday rides; he/she will not progress at the same rate as fellow athletes. This will become a source of frustration for your student-athlete 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 student-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. If your student-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 their coach so we can create an alternate plan to keep the season on track. **Three (3) unexcused absences could result in a rider being removed from the team.**

Some student-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.

The club is a race team and, as such, each participant is encouraged to try at least one race. If, after this experience, the rider determines that he/she is not into racing, then they are not forced to continue racing. However, this is strongly discouraged and students who join the team must be open to experience racing.

E. Academics

The goal for the YOTC MTB Team is to help develop our student-athletes academically, physically and socially into mature young adults. To qualify to participate on the YOTC MTB Team, each student-athlete must be achieving academically in a manner satisfactory to the 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.**



V. CGHSMTB Team Rules of Behavior

A. Wear a helmet at all times.

Under no circumstances should a student be on their bike without a helmet fastened to their head. While other riders may be seen cruising around before and after races, or elsewhere, without a helmet, YOTC MTB Team members will receive time penalties and may be disqualified from a race for violating this rule.

B. Never take risks.

Athletes that have a risk taking attitude or are witnessed taking risks will not be tolerated. A risk is defined as willingly attempting anything which is beyond one's ability to control in a safe manner.



C. Ride predictably.

When riding with others, always ride in a straight, steady, and predictable manner. Swerving onto sidewalks, berms, or jumps is unacceptable and will result in consequences.

During race weekend, please stay off the pump tracks & riding without permission.

D. Always yield.

Even if at times it seems inconvenient, being sensitive to how others perceive you will assure a positive image for your sport and minimize the confrontations and negative encounters that can occur. *Remember* that bicycles in the backcountry can be an unwelcome experience for horses and hikers. Always announce yourself when approaching other trail users.

E. Pass with care.

Let others know of your presence well in advance. Use a chime or audible greeting to avoid startling others. Be especially careful when passing a horse, as each will react differently; stop and ask the rider for instructions.



F. Minimize impact.

Riding off-trail damages meadows and other fragile ecosystems. Never cut switchbacks as this accelerates erosion. The practice of minimum impact wilderness use is the philosophy of responsible off-road cyclists. Take only pictures.

G. Control your speed.

Safe speeds are relative to terrain and your experience as a rider. Be able to stop safely without skidding. Approach switchbacks and turns in anticipation of someone coming around the bend.

H. Respect wildlife and live stock.

Do not frighten animals. Close gates as you pass through, unless it appears obvious that they have been intentionally left open.



I. Do not litter.

Pack out what you pack in, and if possible, carry out more than your share.

J. Ride only on authorized trails.

Check with local authorities regarding open trails and conditions, and with landowners regarding private land access. Stay off trails that are closed to bicycles.

K. Plan ahead.

The off-road bicycle will open new horizons to you. Some of these should be approached with respect. If distances are involved, do not ride solo and always leave word where you plan to go and when you plan to return. It is imperative to take plenty of water, snacks and supplies because the weather may change and situations may arise. **Always be prepared!**



VI. Important Dates

A. Practice

Tuesdays and Thursdays : 6:30 – 7:30 pm at various locations

First practice: Tuesday August 1st 6:30 pm

- Villago Park - 3368 North Pinal Ave

B. Races

Sept. 8 Race #1 – Fort Tuthill County Park – Flagstaff

Sept. 21 Race #2 – Pioneer Park-Prescott

Oct. 6 Race #3—Secret Trails Snowflake Taylor

Oct. 19 Race #4 – White Tank Mountain Regional Park-Waddel

Nov. 2-3—State Championships—Wren Arena –Fort Huachuca

** Middle school athletes race on Saturday afternoons.*

VII. Required Participation Fees

A. NICA and Arizona Interscholastic Cycling League Registration

\$125.00 League Membership Fee (Deadline Sept. 4th)

B. Race Fee Packages —Deadline Aug. 31st

High School—\$150.00 (Includes all five races) - in addition to league registration

Middle School—\$150.00 (Includes all five races) “In addition to league registration”

C. Race Fees—Starting Aug. 22nd

High School—\$60.00 per race

Middle School—\$60.00 per race



Approved Helmet

\$50.00—\$75.00

Team Jersey and Shorts

Approximately \$100.00

for both



Hydration System:

Pictured is the Camelback hydration system. (more expensive). You can carry water/tools/tubes/snacks. Racers can also purchase a water bottle cage system with water bottle to mount on their bike for \$15.00.

Mountain Bike:

\$800.00 and up.

Multi Tool and Tube Repair kit:

Approximately \$25.00-\$35.00 and up.
Positioned under the seat.

VIII. Mandatory Equipment

Please note the equipment costs listed above are estimated. The YOTC MTB Team is working on making scholarships available for athletes that need assistance. (Recipients of a scholarship may need to participate in community service hours.) However, we want parents and student-athletes to understand the potential costs associated with participation.

IX. Optional Equipment

Please note the items listed below make the riding experience more optimal and enjoyable, but are not required.

A. Eyewear

Strongly recommended for eye protection.

B. Gloves

C. Training Jersey/Shorts (Kit)

(NOT the same as the team jersey and shorts.) Student-athletes may practice in standard P.E.-type clothing, but cycling specific clothes are more functional and comfortable.

D. Clipless Pedal System (Shoes and Pedals)

Bikes will usually have platform style pedals standard. Clipless pedals are potentially more efficient and provide a better connection to the bike.

E. Light System

Official practice sessions will never require the use of lights, but a student-athlete may want to have a good light system if they want to ride at times when natural light is not sufficient.

(We have the league's ok to run lights. Our team is the only known team that must practice at night due to the heat and availability of coaching staff)

F. Transportation Rack for Vehicle

Makes getting the mountain bike to races and practice easier; more convenient.

G. Nutritional Products (caffeine free)

Caffeine is an addictive substance that enhances performance. The League deems caffeinated products as inappropriate for young student-athletes. Caffeinated sport products such as bars, gels, and sport drinks, are banned from League races, practices, and other activities. The consumption of soda and coffee products containing caffeine by student-athletes at NICA and League races and camps is banned. Creatine, Guaraná Root, and Taurine are also substances banned from consumption at NICA and League races and camps. Students need to be very careful as many energy drinks contain these substances. Students are responsible for knowing the ingredients of the products they consume. Pleading ignorance will not constitute a defensible position.



X. Requirements For All Team Members

A. Complete the Sign Up Form

This form will give your coach the information needed to enter you into the Pit Zone.

B. Register through the Pit Zone

You should receive an invitation email from the Pit Zone, which occurs once your coach has added you to their team. If you could not find this email or did not receive it, first check with your coach to make sure they invited you. Once you have clicked on the invitation link, follow the registration process, filling in all information. **Make sure to print off the waivers at the end of the process and pay your league fee. You will not be Race Ready until your waivers are submitted and league fee is paid.** Contact your coach if you need assistance with this process.

C. Bike and Equipment Checked

You must have your bike and equipment checked off by one of the coaches.

D. Attend Practice Sessions and Team Meetings

In addition to the weekly practice sessions, coaches may schedule periodic team meetings to discuss rules and safety.

XI. Contact Information

A. Head Coach

Phil Mumme (520) 705-7603 youthontrackcycling@gmail.com

B. Team Coordinator

Brian Hartsfield (678-231-6870) youthontrackcycling@gmail.com



XII. Other Helpful Information

A. NICA's Official 2016-2017 Rules and Guidelines:

<http://www.nationalmtb.org/wp-content/uploads/NICA-Rulebook.pdf>

B. Quick Start Guide to Attending High School Mountain Bike Races:

(To help you get started with the basics of organizing for the race season, NICA has assembled this Quick Start Guide. It's based on 10 years of parents and kids asking coaches, "What am I supposed to bring?" "Where am I supposed to go?" "When do I need to be there?") <http://www.nationalmtb.org/wp-content/uploads/NICA-Quick-Start-Guide.pdf>

C. Equipment Checklist for Student-Athletes:

http://www.nationalmtb.org/wp-content/uploads/Equipment-Checklist_Athletes1.19.11.pdf

D. Websites

1. **CGHSMTB Team:** <https://www.facebook.com/Cghsmtb>
2. **Arizona Cycling Association:** <http://www.arizonacycling.org/>
3. **National Interscholastic Cycling Assoc.:** <http://www.nationalmtb.org/>
4. **The Pit Zone (Registration):** <https://pitzone.nationalmtb.org/>

