

27th Cascade Cycling Classic Just Around the Bend

by K_Guice

On the mark. Get set. Go! See what is happening at the 27th annual Bend Memorial Clinic Cascade Cycling Classic.

The event takes place through July 16 and benefits The Mount Bachelor Sports Education Foundation.

It is the longest consecutively run elite stage race in the country that brings the crème de le crème of the racing world to Bend.

“It attracts people from all over the world,” said Molly Cogswell-Kelley, the events director for The Mount Bachelor Sports Education Foundation. “Lance Armstrong won the whole event about seven or eight years ago.”

The quality of the race courses, beauty of Central Oregon and the enjoyable atmosphere of the races has made it an ongoing favorite event and has the competitors returning year after year.

Things kicked off Wednesday, July 12 with the Ironhorse-Brooks Resources Prineville Road Race. The Elite Pro 1/2 Men raced 92 miles. “These are the best in the country,” Cogswell-Kelley said.

Thursday, July 13th there will be two different road races. The Center-McKenzie Pass Road Race will showcase the second stage of the Elite Pro 1/2 Men, racing 81 miles.

Elite Pro 1/2/3 Women will begin stage one of the competition also racing 81 miles. The races start at Cascade Middle School in Bend and finishes atop the McKenzie Pass west of Sisters.

Friday, July 14 will have three races going on during the Pacific Power Cascade Lakes Road Race. Stage three kicks off for Elite Pro 1/2 Men at 10 a.m. They will be riding 87 miles.

Stage two begins for the Elite Pro 1/2/3 Women at 10 a.m. They will be riding 87 miles. Stage one for both the Master's 35 /45 and Category 3 racers begins at 10 a.m. They will be traveling 75 miles.

“July 15 is when all the magic happens,” Cogswell-Kelley said. This is when the people come out in droves.

The morning starts off with time trials. “These are really fast races,” she said. “There are four time trails, so everyone will be racing.”

Arnold Market Time Trials begin at 8:30 a.m. The 6.6 mile races begins and ends on Arnold Market Road.

That afternoon is the Desert Orthopedics/Rebound Physical Therapy Downtown Twilight Criterium. “That is when cyclist go round and round in a circle around downtown,” Cogswell-Kelley said.

The race starts with the third stage for Category 3 racers at 3 p.m. The Master's 35 /45 kick off stage three of their race at 4 p.m. Followed by the fourth stage race for the Elite Pro 1/2/3 Women at 4:15.

“We have 15 to 20,000 people come down for it,” she said. Onlookers can see the high-speed action on Wall, Franklin, Bond, Minnesota, Lava and Oregon Streets of downtown Bend.

Afterwards, everyone is invited to participate in the Townie Bike Race at 6:15 p.m. “This is the first time we have done it,” Cogswell-Kelley said. “Open to everyone, but their bike must be at least 30 pounds and no more than five gears.”

Then, there is the Lovelien and Jarvis Kid™s Race that begins at 6:30 p.m. “Kids two-four, five-seven, eight-10 and 11-13 in their respective categories will ride around downtown in a loop,” she said. “The best part is it is free.”

The final event of the night is the fifth stage for the Elite Pro 1/2 Men. Starting at 7 p.m. cyclist will loop around downtown for 90 minutes.

“These are the races that everyone comes out to see,” Cogswell-Kelley said. “It’s really fast, you are seeing the best riders in the country and it’s more accessible.”

The event winds down with the final races on Sunday, July 16 with the Deschutes Brewery-Awbrey Butte Circuit Race.

Photos by Cloud 9 It is a challenging 17-mile loop that starts at the Central Oregon Community College parking lot off of Regency Street. The finish is at mile 13 on the loop, on O.B. Riley Road before the intersection with Empire Road.

Things kick off with the final race for Master's 35 /45 at 8:30 a.m. They will make four laps and complete a total of 63 miles. At 8:35 a.m. Category 3 racers take off on the same route. They will be followed by Elite Pro 1/2/3 Women at 8:40 a.m.

At 12:30 the Elite Pro 1/2 Men race five laps for a total of 80 miles in the sixth and final stage of the race. At the end, Cogswell-Kelley says the overall trophy will go to the overall pro one and two winner and the overall female racer.

Winners will also receive cash prizes. This year's total prize purse has been increased to \$34,725. Elite Pro 1/2 Men will receive \$17,000. Elite Pro 1/2/3 Women are allotted \$10,000. Master's 35 /45 can win a combined total of \$6,000. Last but not least, \$1,725 is up for grabs for the Category 3 racers.

“We have been able to increase the prize purse every year thanks to the generous support of our sponsors,” Cogswell-Kelley said.

The title sponsor for the next three years is the Bend Memorial Clinic. “It’s a fabulous representation of Central Oregon and what this community is about; being healthy and fit and the good things in life,” said Kim Barnes, director of marketing and business development for Bend Memorial Clinic. “So, it was a natural fit for us to get involved in such a big event.”

In fact, several Bend Memorial Clinic staff members are avid cyclist. “We have several physicians who are riding in the event,” she said.

“Bend Memorial Clinic considers themselves to be part of the community,” Barnes said. “Not only will we help provide the best possible care, we also want to give back to the community by sponsoring these types of events and it is great for the economy.”

Cogswell-Kelley says the event is a win-win for everyone. However, the biggest winners are the kids who benefit from this fund raising event for Mt. Bachelor Sports Education Foundation.

“All of the proceeds from the Cascade Cycling Classic help us subsidize kids who are competitive in Alpine and Nordic skiing, snowboarding and cycling,” she said.

“Our mission is to be the Northwest’s leading youth sports training organization promoting the positive values of competitive sport,” Cogswell-Kelley added.

The foundation not only trains the youth they help them strive to be more by setting certain standards like making good grades and volunteerism.

“We have had people say their kids were going down the wrong path and getting them started in our program turned things around,” she said. “They are taught self discipline, self actualization and how to respect themselves.”

For more information visit the Bend Memorial Clinic Cascade Cycling Classic website: www.cascade-classic.org.