

INTRODUCTION TO OUR HIGH SCHOOL CYCLING PROGRAM

Our junior cycling team is based out of Bicycles Inc. (in Bedford, Texas). As of July 2006, we have 30 active juniors who are from approximately six different schools in the DFW/Mid-Cities area. The program is open to students between the ages of 10-18 who are interested in learning competitive bicycle racing. We even have one student eligible for Special Olympics, one student who is visually impaired that enjoys riding a tandem, and a few students from L.D. Bell's Triathlon team. The greatest percentage of the students from Mid-Cities schools race for Team Bicycles Inc., but all juniors interested in racing and riding are welcome. There is no initial cost to join the group and attend practices.

Our team has now grown to a point that starting this September there are enough schools to begin League competition. We are calling ourselves the NorTex High School Cycling League. There are currently 6 schools which are members of the League which include: Birdville High School, Colleyville Heritage High School, Haltom High School, Jesuit High School, LD Bell High School, and Richland High School. *The Racing Post* sponsored the first High School State Championship competition last May for the 2005-06 school year which was won by Richland High School.

The Fall High School League Schedule will include one or maybe two high school specific race days, while the Spring Schedule will contain between 6-8 high school specific events. Students are encouraged to race for their regular club teams during Texas Cup Competition, but then race for their High Schools during the High School Specific competitions. The High school specific competition will include a 3 (or 2) person team time trial with an approximate length of 5 miles. The riders from each school are encouraged to have similar uniforms which represent their High School. An actual High School jersey is not required nor is official recognition of your team by your High School. The 2nd Annual High School State Championship will take place in May at the end of the spring season.

Since we began the program two years ago, we have had approximately 25 bikes donated to the program from the Texas cycling community. However, the biggest gift so far has been from Bicycle's Inc. in Bedford who worked with Trek to donate ten brand new bikes to the kids at our team's Christmas party. With the addition of the new bikes, the program has doubled in size and enthusiasm.

Our junior team, and now our League, has been a joint effort between several High Schools, Team Bicycles Inc. and the Texas Cycling community. Our first year, we received a donation from Moritz cycling team which allowed us to purchase two new bikes. At our three races that we put on at Birdville High School last year, we received an amazing amount of donations and support from the cycling community. It has been exciting for our adult members to see their old shoes, jerseys, bicycles and even their old shorts being used by our junior team. One thing we have learned from the program is that every time a bicycle is donated, we very shortly get a new kid who is interested in learning to race.

Our Junior Racing Schedule is divided into a fall and spring schedule and when we are in season the students practice two or three times per week. Our complete Fall 2006 schedule is posted and updated on www.teambicyclesinc.com. Practices are typically one hour and 15 minutes long and are held at 4:15 on Sundays at North East Tarrant County College and other weekdays depending on the student's ability level. A curriculum emphasizing bicycle safety, bicycle handling, and speed was put into place this past spring with the help of Coach Pierre Kerkhof.

The Mid-Cities group is presently being coached by Scott Eager (Moritz coach for BHS), Michael Talifero (Team Bicycles Inc), Pierre Kerkhof (Kerkhof Coaching) and Chris Moore (TBI coach for RHS). On any typical practice, there are approximately 3-5 other adults assisting the coaching staff. The President of the parent's cycling booster club is Chris Baab. We are especially excited that Jesuit High School is leading the way in the Dallas region. The coach of Jesuit High School, Andrew Armstrong, is taking on a strong leadership role regarding setting up the NorTex High School Cycling League and also promoted the Jesuit Round-up race for area High School students last spring.

Each year we typically have orientation and "tryouts" in mid August and then again in January. However, we have never turned away a kid yet, who was persistent and enthusiastic enough about racing bicycles. So if you miss the tryout dates, but really want to join us, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will try to accommodate you. Any juniors that are interested in joining the group for training sessions or adults who would like to assist with the training should call Mike Talifero (Coach T.) at 817-577-9900. Also, donations of bicycles, shoes, shorts, and pedals are continually being accepted and can be brought to any of the Junior Events or dropped off at Bicycles Inc. in Bedford.