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Friday, July 29, 2011

EAST EDITION



A STEEP DECLINE:

Esterhazy's Terry Zack starts his descent down a steep hill at the Cactus Cup July 24. For a story about the inaugural event and more photos, turn to Page 8.

Photo by Chris Jaster

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Photos by Chris Jaster

Regina's Jeremy Trask grabs a bottle of water while competing in the Cactus Cup July 24.

Cactus Cup course challenges provincial cyclists

BY CHRIS JASTER — cjaster@prairiepost.com

Ryan Chamberlin learned first-hand just how difficult it is to conquer his creation.

Chamberlin created the mountain biking course south of Swift Current that was used for the inaugural Cactus Cup July 24. An avid mountain biker, Chamberlin couldn't help but register for the event in the senior expert men's class.

After going around the 6.6-kilometre course four times, Chamberlin admitted it was much tougher than he expected.

"(It was easier) building the course," he said after finishing the race in two hours, three minutes and 34 seconds. "The amount of hours we spent is tiring, but this is tough. Now that I've raced it, I don't envy any of these guys."

The trail has been designed for a few years, but it was tweaked before organizers decided to host the event.

Cyclists who aren't used to racing, such as Chamberlin, found it to be challenging with all the uphill components followed by quick, technical downhill parts. The multi-terrain course changed the

workout from being anaerobic to aerobic in a matter of seconds.

It even caught some of the more experienced riders off guard.

Nathan Rhodes, who competed in the men's sport class that only required three laps of the course, tries to compete in all five of Saskatchewan's mountain biking events.

He found the course challenged him technically and with the steepness of the hills. Out of the five Saskatchewan races, he ranked the Cactus Cup as being the second or third toughest course in the province.

Despite the degree of difficulty, he said he'd travel from Saskatoon to do it again next year.

"I love it," said Rhodes, who finished in 1:35:26 despite flipping over his handlebars during the race. "It's great that they finally had a race down here because we need one in the southwest corner."

Although Rhodes said he would come back, Swift Current's Matthew Gottselig said the only way he would race the course again is if he trained more for it.

Gottselig entered the senior expert men's class, which requires four laps, courtesy of his wife. She

asked him to compete since he wasn't able to run in the Father's Day half marathon.

After three laps, Gottselig was ready to give up, but was convinced to finish the race he started, which took him 2:12:55.

"I don't usually give up like that. My body said to stop and I should have listened to it, but my head said to go, so I just finished it up," he said.

Gottselig had never raced before and found the course to be way over his head. It was too technical for him, but he was happy he didn't wipe out.

Despite barely making it across the finish line, Gottselig said he would come back to the course. He knows it's too tough for a race for him, but he believes it would be perfect for recreational use.

"If you're a rookie, don't do three laps. Do one lap and you'll be good," he said. "Anybody can do the hill and the trail, you just shouldn't do three laps. Do one and take care of yourself."

"(I'd do one lap for fun) if I have time and stuff like that. I know some of the guys who come out and they're a good bunch of guys. It would be more of a social aspect than anything."

2011 Cactus Cup Results held south of Swift Current July 24

Senior Elite Men — 5 laps

- 1 — Jeremy Trask, 1:53:03, Regina
- 2 — Jeremy Erdman, 1:55:02, Regina
- 3 — Neil Clarke, 1:57.42, Saskatoon

Senior Elite Women — 4 laps

- 1 — Erica Musjy, 1:46.23, Saskatoon
- 2 — Susan Clarke, 1:55.47, Saskatoon

Senior Expert Men — 4 laps

- 1 — Albie Malan, 1:34.58, Saskatoon
- 2 — Trevor Hopkin, 1:38.14, Regina
- 3 — Barret Dunbar, 1:41.09, Saskatoon

Sport Men — 3 laps

- 1 — Chris Yeo, 1:21.39, Saskatoon
- 2 — Blair Drader, 1:25.43, Esterhazy
- 3 — Mike Powder, 1:28.13, Saskatoon

Sport Women — 2 laps

- 1 — Natasha Weninger, 1:14.19, Saskatoon
- 2 — Kathryn Theede, 1:16.31, Saskatoon
- 3 — Donna Shire, 1:30.29, Regina

Novice Men — 2 laps

- 1 — Cal Martens, 1:06.27, Moose Jaw
- 2 — Kim Wall, 1:08.13, Regina
- 3 — Jon Horn, 1:13.45, Prince Albert

Beginner Men — 1 lap

- 1 — Chase Busse, 34.45, Swift Current
- 2 — Ryan Hunter, 36.12, Swift Current

Beginner Women — 1 lap

- 1 — Angela Schindel, 41.10, Swift Current
- 2 — Vanessa Rhodes, 51.12, Regina

Novice Youth Men — 1 lap

- 1 — Ben Tombs, 32.25, Swift Current
- 2 — Ryan Schmiess, 36.22, Swift Current
- 3 — Noah Schindel, 1:30.52, Swift Current



Above, Saskatoon's Mike Powers cycles along one of two-way paths. Below, Regina's Kris Abrahamson climbs one of the gentle inclines.



Swift Current's Daniel Marchand comes down a single-path steep hill along the course.