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Thursday August 9, 2007

Mountain Biking

Racing at the Rim

By KATHY PORTIE

When Kerry Brown and his wife, Bev, first opened Rim Nordic in 1991 it was strictly a cross country ski area. The Browns' background is in snow. Bev's parents ran Snow Valley Resort for many years. Kerry was a member of the Snow Valley Ski Patrol.



Rene Pulido (328) and Jeff Dotterweich pedal out of the shadows and into the sun during the Rim Nordic series race on July 15. (KATHY PORTIE/Big Bear Grizzly)

Located across from Snow Valley Ski Resort in Running Springs, Rim Nordic is the only area in Southern California to provide groomed cross country trails.

The venue didn't become a mecca for cross country mountain bikers until 1994. Brown, who became involved in mountain biking after selling his motorcycle in 1985, figured the sport was a natural fit for Rim Nordic's summer down time. "We have a very good product here," Brown says. "We think we have some of the best racing around."

But in the 13 years Rim Nordic has sponsored a mountain bike series, it often took a back seat to its more famous cousin, Team Big Bear. With the troubles Team Big Bear has had in recent years finding a place to stage mountain bike races in Big Bear Valley, Brown said he was hopeful cyclists would finally notice Rim Nordic. However, the 2006 season proved to be a disappointment. "We were down last year," Brown says. "I don't know why."

The 2007 season has been a turnaround year for Rim Nordic. "This year our business is up about 20 percent," Brown says. "Part of that is because we're part of the California series this year. A little bit of press is always helpful, too."

That's good news as Rim Nordic is about to host its biggest event of the season. The Rim Nordic leg of the 2007 Southern California Mountain Stage Race is Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 4 and 5. The event consists of three events during a two-day period including a two-mile hill climb, a cross country race and a dirt criterium. Registration is on Saturday from 7 to 8:45 a.m. Competitors must be a member of USA Cycling to compete.

The hill climb, which features a 600-foot elevation gain, begins at 9 a.m. Saturday. The criterium is a high intensity race on a half-mile lap beginning at 11 a.m. The cross country event on Sunday also counts toward the Rim Nordic series race.

The Southern California Mountain Stage Race benefits the Mark J. Reynolds Foundation, which purchases bicycles to give to less fortunate children. Reynolds lost his life when he was attacked by a mountain lion while mountain biking near his California home. During his life, Reynolds raised money from fellow cyclists to purchase bicycles for children whose families couldn't afford a bike. During the holiday season, Reynolds personally purchased and delivered bikes for children. After his death, the family established the foundation to continue the tradition. For more information on the Mark J. Reynolds Fund, visit the Web site www.markreynoldsfund.org.

"Mark used to race with us," Brown says. "We've always contributed to his fund."

Rim Nordic mountain biking is part of the Rim Nordic Ski Area in the San Bernardino Mountains between Running Springs and Big Bear. The facility operates under a special use permit from the United States Forest Service.

Racing at the Rim

By KATHY PORTIE

Wednesday, August 1, 2007 12:48 PM PDT

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