

Big Bear GRIZZLY

Three stages of Rim

By KATHY PORTIE

In 2000, Bev Brown decided to bring a little Tour de France-style bicycle racing to the San Bernardino Mountains. And so, Rim Nordic's SoCal Mountain Stage Race was born.

Four years later, the race evolved into a memorial event for mountain biker Mark Reynolds after the Orange County resident was killed in a mountain lion attack while on a ride in Whiting Ranch. "Mark won his category (in the stage race) the year before, and we decided it would be good to be able to give something to his charity," Brown said.

The Mark Reynolds Memorial Children's First Bike Fund promotes safe bicycling for children. Donations are used to purchase new bikes and helmets for less fortunate children. Reynolds was an avid cyclist who raised money to purchase bicycles and helmets for children. He worked with local churches to find children whose families couldn't afford the equipment without assistance.

"Mark felt it was important to get kids started early," Brown said. Rim Nordic doesn't charge a high entry fee for the race. The amount donated to the fund depends on how many riders sign up for the event. "I don't make a set amount," Brown said. "I donated what I feel we are able to give each year."

Brown isn't sure how much Rim Nordic can donate this year because of the ailing economy. There were 80 competitors in the event in 2007. "We have a couple of dozen riders signed up so far," she said. "We usually get a lot of same-day registrations since we don't charge a late fee. I hope we aren't below 60 for the stage race."

The SoCal Mountain Stage Race is Saturday and Sunday, July 12-13, at Rim Nordic near Running Springs. The race includes three events over two days—a hill climb and dirt criterium on Saturday, and cross country on Sunday.

Finishes in the SoCal Mountain Stage Race are determined on a point system. Entry fee is \$70. Riders must have a NORBA (National Off-Road Bicycle Association) license. This year, the Mark J. Reynolds Fund is donating commemorative medals for the first-place finishers in each division.

For more information, visit www.rimnordic.com or call 909-867-2600.



Cyclists get ready for the start at a recent Rim Nordic event. (KATHY PORTIE/Big Bear Grizzly)