

City of Prescott to conduct two-day prescribed pile burn operation State lawmakers vot

The Daily Courier

Trusted local news leader for Prescott, Arizona communities since 1882

e-Edition

TV Listings

Newsletters

Top Jobs

Across The Street

[View All 3 Credit Scores For Free](#) [Get Pre-Approved. Apply Online.](#) [0% Down VA Home Loans: Get Quote](#)

FRIDAY, FEB. 23	WEATHER	SUBSCRIBER SERVICES	CONTACT US	NEWS TIPS	PUBLIC NOTICES	PUZZLES	COMICS
-----------------	---------	---------------------	------------	-----------	----------------	---------	--------

Middle school mountain bikers end of racing season



(Scott Bideau/Courtesy Photo)

JON HOLDSWORTH, For the Courier

Originally Published: November 22, 2023 6:05 p.m.

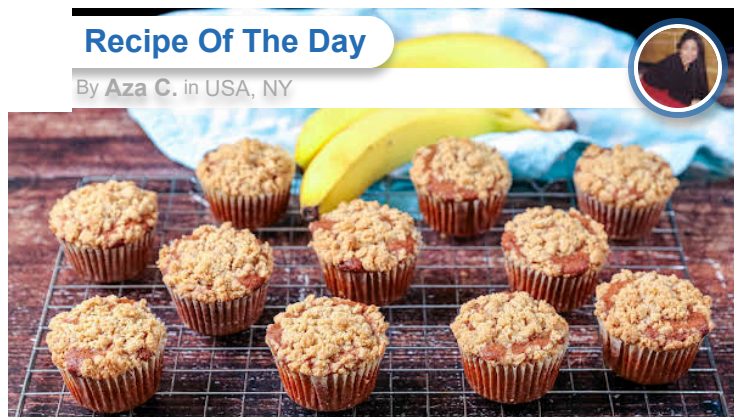
Share Post  

In Northern Arizona, where the stunning landscapes beckon hundreds of outdoor enthusiasts, a passionate community of young mountain bikers thrives among the hills

and mountains of Prescott. The Mile High Middle School mountain biking team, under the guidance of Head Coach Scott Bideau, recently celebrated the culmination of their season with a recognition and close-out event.

With 36 riders, the team's rapid growth since its inception is a testament to its inclusive approach and commitment to fostering a lifelong love for mountain biking.

Bideau, a dedicated coach with five years of coaching experience, founded the Mile High Middle School mountain biking team just a year ago. As part of the Mile High athletics program, the team is open to students of all skill levels and does not require tryouts, making it an ideal platform for young riders to explore and develop their love for the sport. The team consists of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students, providing an opportunity to bond and support one another.



Banana Muffins

The team's philosophy is rooted in the belief that mountain biking is not just a sport but a lifelong passion. Bideau said, "I've done a lot of youth development programs, and my vision stays the same. Basically, you want to let the kids have fun."

Unlike traditional sports where not everyone gets to participate, the Mile High mountain biking team ensures that every student and volunteer coach can be actively involved.

The emphasis is on challenging the riders: physically, due to the athletic aspect of the sport; mentally, due to the strategy needed to make it through a race against other riders; and mechanically, because of the skills developed in learning bike maintenance and repair, creating a unique experience for today's youth.

Bideau's goal is not to achieve podium placements but to instill a deep love for biking that endures for a lifetime.

A remarkable feature of the team is the active involvement of parents and community. They go beyond being mere spectators, often helping with logistics and, in some cases, taking up mountain biking themselves, the coach said. Since the team is part of Mile High's athletics program, it doesn't have official sponsorship – meaning most of the support comes from the families of the riders, individuals and small businesses who generously donate what they can - supplies such as loaner bikes, spare tubes and provisions for team events.

“One of the unique things about our mountain biking team is that the parents like to become involved as well,” Bideau said. “It’s more than just dropping the kid off; many parents volunteer to coach and they’ve even taken up mountain biking on their own because they see how much fun their kid has being on the team.” Despite this level of support, he acknowledges the need for additional donations “to help grow our team and see these kids thrive.”

Bideau exemplifies the inclusivity of mountain biking as a sport. He emphasizes that it's a sport for everyone, regardless of their previous athletic experiences. "I was absolutely horrible at every sport I tried in junior high and gave them up because I knew it wouldn't be fun for me," he said. "Then, I stumbled on mountain biking."

The appeal of mountain biking lies in its individual nature – riders can go at their own pace, but they can also enjoy several opportunities for group rides and other activities.

The Mile High Middle School mountain biking team provides a platform for young students to develop skills in mountain biking, trail repair techniques, and bike maintenance. Kids are encouraged to use their own bikes that supports a variety of riding conditions without being too niche or expensive.

“Our most common bike is a 1x-drivetrain hardtail for easy shifting (only in the rear) that encourages good line choice (no rear suspension). We are also fortunate enough to have loaner bikes in each size from XXS through to Large,” Bideau added.

While it is officially a cross-country racing team, he elaborated that the team embraces various types of riding, including pump track sessions, jump progression and downhill shuttles.

“We try to introduce the kids, and even the coaches, to a variety of riding types. This has included downhill shuttles, jump clinics, BMX and pump tracks, and some enduro concepts. While we can't cover it all, we are fortunate enough to live in a community with a huge diversity of riding opportunities. Many of our kids have done things like visit the Telluride downhill bike park, race in the MBAA Enduro series, ride the rowdy trails at Sunrise bike park, and so much more.”

2023 SEASON

This season was the culmination of hard work, dedication and a lot of fun. The team celebrated its achievements at a recognition and close-out event on Oct. 25, where stories were shared, and riders were recognized for their accomplishments. One notable achievement was the collective 20,000 miles ridden between all riders at all practices and races over the entire season. From Fort Tuthill in Flagstaff to Pioneer Park in Prescott, to Secret Trails in Snowflake, then McDowell in Fountain Hills, the team went far and wide to ride a diverse set of trails this season.

The team's motto, "Flat Tires instead of Broken Bones," symbolizes their focus on safety and responsible riding. Remarkably, the team experienced no serious accidents throughout the season, revealing the vigilance of the students and the dedication of the volunteer coaches who ensure that safety is a top priority.

The team's success is not just measured in miles ridden but also in the personal growth and determination of its young riders. Luke, a sixth-grade rider, showcased exceptionalism during one race when he lost a pedal but continued to finish in 18th place, impressively ranking eighth in the Northern Arizona region for the overall season. Grace, a seventh-grade racer, demonstrated her resilience by competing in the Snowflake race despite a crash and still managing to secure seventh place.

Brigitte Farnsworth, an eighth-grade racer, was recognized for her outstanding performance, achieving second place among all eighth-grade girl racers in Arizona. These individual accomplishments exemplify the spirit and enthusiasm that characterizes the Mile High mountain biking team.

Chad Stillion, a sixth grader who joined the team this year, summed up his experience by saying: "I didn't like it. I LOVED it." Chad's journey into mountain biking began when a friend gave him his first mountain bike. He found a sense of community, excitement and the joy of racing that had been missing from his life. His enthusiasm is yet another element showcasing the welcoming nature of the biking team.

Volunteer coaches Ty Workman and Laura Anderson shared their experiences coaching the team during the season. Ty, a seasoned biker since 2016, said it was a period of "growth." The team not only developed its athletic skills but also learned how to overcome fears and handle the challenges of trail riding. Laura, who has been a volunteer coach since the team's inception, said she finds the team inspiring. Anyone with a passion for cycling who wants to help kids foster their riding skills can volunteer to support the team through <http://www.milehighcycling.com>.

MENTORS

In addition to the volunteer coaches, the team benefits from mountain biking mentors from Prescott High School – Claire and Lucy Villanueva. Both have been riding casually since sixth grade and were involved as junior high riders on the Mile High mountain biking club – back before it was officially part of the athletics program. Their continued involvement shows both have developed a deep affection for the sport. Claire emphasized she has a love for the mountain biking community, but also the thrill of competition, saying, “It’s a little bit of both for me.” Lucy, on the other hand, highlighted her love for the social aspects of the sport. Looking to the future, Claire and Lucy aim to continue mountain biking but are uncertain about pursuing it competitively. However, they do plan to compete locally if the opportunity arises.

The twins agreed that mountain biking is an activity that can be pursued for the sheer enjoyment of it, regardless of the competitive aspect. Their message to aspiring riders is to focus on having fun, as mountain biking is a sport that can be enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for many years to come.

Jillian Binder, the eighth-grade team captain, played a crucial role in rallying and supporting her teammates throughout practices and races. Bideau praised how she would always be there to cheer on and mentor other riders whenever they faced a challenge. For her, “It’s a lot of fun.” Jillian’s dedication to the team, from the younger riders to the coaches and parents, reflects the sense of togetherness that defines the Mile High mountain biking team.

As an accomplished rider, amateur bikers can definitely take Jillian’s guidance to heart. Her achievements in mountain biking include four podium finishes, including a fourth-place finish, showing off her skill and discipline. She plans to continue her biking journey with the Prescott High School mountain biking team once she reaches ninth grade. Her love for biking goes beyond competition; it is about the friendships and the

shared experiences. As Jillian emphasized, the friendships forged within the team are a testament to the positive impact of the sport. The team is more than just a group of riders; it is a tight-knit society of like-minded individuals who share a passion for mountain biking.

For those considering getting into mountain biking, Jillian has some advice: "Personally, I think biking is so much fun. Whether it's super-fast, racing, and passing all these people - or slow in the back, cruising and having fun – no one really cares." She envisions herself returning to Mile High as a mentor, just like Claire and Lucy, to continue to mentor and support young riders.

As the recognition event drew to a close, Jillian presented Bideau with a memorable team T-shirt, signed by all of the students on the team.

Under the guidance of Coach Bideau, the team has fostered an inclusive and supportive environment where every rider has the opportunity to shine, regardless of their experience level. The 2023 season was a resounding success, and the future looks even brighter for these young mountain bikers as they continue to pursue their passion for biking, both competitively and for the sheer joy of it.

Around The Web



New High Paying Savings Accounts You'll Wish You Knew About Sooner

Savings Pro

Arizona Launches New Policy for Cars Used Less Than 50 Miles/day

Smart Lifestyle Trends

Dermatologists Stunned: This Removes Wrinkles Like Crazy! Try It!

Neotonics

1 Simple Trick to Cut Your Electric Bill by 90% (Try Tonight)

GadgetVanguard

Never Eat This Fish (It's Bad for Your Heart)

PhysioTru

Put a Toilet Paper Roll Under the Toilet Seat at Night if Alone, Here's Why

Sogoodly

Ad 1 of 1 (0:13)



Sign up for our e-News Alerts