

Air Academy High School MTB Team Snowmass Highlights



Another incredible weekend with the Air Academy High School Mountain Bike Team! September 25th kicked off race two of the Colorado High School Mountain Bike League Series; the “Snowmass Chase”.

The course was at the Snowmass Ski resort, Snowmass, Colorado. It started with a steep climb of 2.6 miles topping out at 9239 feet then a screaming single track that plunged back down to the start finish area, only to climb the mountain again and again, depending on category. Being our second race, and for many, their second race ever, we squeezed out a third place in the region despite some of our top riders experiencing mechanicals that cost them dozens of places.

The day started off with the Freshman Boys storming the course. Keegan Hale, Lawrence (Eli) Rawe, Boaz Galliard, Sim Scheid, Noa Winder, and Colin Grunwell tackled this challenging course along with 97 freshmen from 29 teams. Freshman Keegan Hale experienced a mechanical issue that saw him drop from approximately 9th place to around 40th. He fought back and managed to finish in 25th. Eli and Boaz came in not far behind to be among the top ten team scorers to help secure the team’s place on the podium.



First Wave Freshman Boys Coming Through

The next to go off were the varsity girls. Sequoia Harris who was bumped to the varsity category after Leadville is our lone varsity rider. This was an exciting race as she battled among the top three, going back and forth between second and third, finishing a very close third and the team's top scorer. Not bad for her second mountain bike race ever!



Varsity Racer Sequoia Harris Railing the Single-track

The JV boys followed with Daniel Harris and Willem Dodd representing Air Academy. This was an incredibly fast race with 96 finishers. Daniel finished 21st to make him one of the team's top scorers and Willem finished 92nd earning enough points to factor into the team's overall placing.



Daniel Harris Chasing Down a Cheyenne Mountain Rider

Next came the Sophomore and Freshman Girls. Our lone sophomore girl, Raegan Agrimson, blasted off the start, immediately opening a gap on the steep climb. This was an exciting race as the top five girls were all within seconds of each other. In the end there was only 1 minute between first and fifth place, with Raegan finishing third. This race, along with her second-place finish at Leadville makes her the top scorer among the Sophomore girls and she is currently the series leader. She was awarded the “Regional Race Leader” Jersey which she will wear at the next race in Eagle, CO.



Raegan Agrimson in a tight race among the top five

Freshman Avery Harris followed in another exciting race, again, less than a minute separated the top three. Avery was also awarded the “Regional Race Leader” Jersey after her third place in Snowmass and first place in Leadville.



Another tight race with Avery Harris among the top three Freshman Girls

Finally, the Sophomore boys finished up the day with Reed McAfee, JT Graybeal, and Carson Pevoteaux representing AAHS among the 29 high schools within the Crystal region.

Sophomore Reed McAfee broke a chain on the first lap while riding in the top 10. He pushed, ran, and descended to the start/finish area where he then descended even further to the neutral support mechanic station to get it fixed. Upon getting his chain replaced he had to climb back up to the course, jump back into the race, then climb the 2.6 miles to the top again. Reed showed true grit and determination by not giving up and continued to give it his all, clawing his way back to 29th place. However, he was assessed a 5-minute penalty for receiving assistance to get his chain fixed, which dropped him back to 53rd. Reed was the inspirational rider of the week hands down!



Reed McAfee Making up for Lost Time

TJ Graybeal also experienced a mechanical when his seat came loose. After stopping in the feed zone to adjust it, he was penalized 5 minutes for assistance when the coach (me) held his bike while he made the adjustment. He finished 8th, however the 5-minute penalty knocked him back to 35th place.



JT Graybeal Flying down the Mountain!

With the mechanicals and penalties assessed to Reed and JT, Carson Pevoteaux came through to score enough points to help the team squeeze in a third place and podium spot.



Carson Pevoteaux ripping the corners

In the end it was a great weekend. A show of great sportsmanship, focus, determination, and teamwork. Several of our riders experienced adversity and frustration with mechanicals and penalties, but they reacted by staying focused, not giving up, and accepting the results. I am truly proud of the way our riders handled these situations. In the end our riders came through, gaps were filled, and we still pulled off a podium spot. Not to mention we have two series leaders! All this with a first-year team. Thanks to all that have supported the Air Academy High School Mountain Bike Team and helped it get up and rolling. The best is yet to come!



Two Series Leaders Sporting their Race Leader Jerseys