

## Air Academy Mountain Bike Team is the Colorado High School League Division 1 Regional Champions

The Air Academy Mountain Bike Team traveled to Nathrop Colorado to compete in the “Chalk Creek Stampede”, the fourth and final race of the Colorado High School League regional series. The Stampede proved to be a challenging course. The 6.7-mile lap climbed out of the valley to the top of a ridge on a double track dirt road that turned to single track with tight switchbacks. The course continued along the ridge on rocky single track lined with cactus for approximately three miles. A technical descent led to a lush valley with fast flowing singletrack along Chalk Creek. Another climb out of the valley then a mix of single track and dirt road that gradually descended to a drag race finish. As with all the league races, freshmen, sophomore, and JV raced two laps, and varsity three.



*Air Academy - Colorado High School League Crystal Region Champions*

**JV Girls:** The morning got off to a great start with Air Academy's lone JV girl, Sandrine Tremblay setting the momentum that the team would carry throughout the day. Maddy Elliott of Cheyenne Mountain opened a gap on the first lap with Sandrine and riders from Crested Butte and Manitou Springs in a chase group close behind. On the second lap, Sandrine attacked on the main climb and gradually opened a gap on the Crested Butte and Manitou Springs riders and continued to increase her lead, finishing second overall and 21 seconds ahead of third place.



*Start of the JV Girls Race with Sandrine on the front*



*Sandrine in the Chase*

**Sophomore Girls:** The momentum continued for Air Academy with Nora Bots and Georgia Swanson. Nora trailed just behind a group of three riders while staying just ahead three riders from Cheyenne Mountain, Evergreen and Salida. She held this position and finished 4<sup>th</sup>. Georgia Swanson came around the first lap in 12<sup>th</sup> place and dug deep to reel in a Salida rider to take the 11<sup>th</sup> spot. Independent racer Evann Strange who trains with Air Academy had her best race of the season finishing 9<sup>th</sup>.



*Nora Climbing the Switchbacks*



*Georgia Giving Her All*



*Evann on the way to Her Best Finish*

**Freshmen Girls:** The freshmen girls continued to pile on the points with all three finishing in the top 10. Ruby Harris came through on the first lap in a tight group that included riders from Evergreen, Conifer, and Gunnison. Things spread out over the second lap as Ruby chased the Evergreen rider and opened over a minute gap on the Conifer and Crested Butte riders to finish second. Elora Walkup and Katelyn Markley followed close behind with riders from Taos Composite and Salida. Elora finished 7<sup>th</sup> and Katelyn with her best race of the season, finished 8<sup>th</sup>.



*Ruby Chasing 1st Place and Opening a Gap on 3rd*



*Elora and Katelyn in the Heat of Battle*

**Freshmen Boys:** The momentum continued with the Freshmen Boys. Dylan Hudson led a tightly packed lead group with riders from Salida, Crested Butte, Taos, and Palmer Ridge. Chase McAfee was also in the action tucked in the third position. In probably one of the “longest sprint finishes in history” Dylan edged out Taos Composite rider Col Cassily by one second in almost a mile long drag race to the finish. Chase led the second group through the second lap but crashed on the technical descent. He recovered quickly and finished 5<sup>th</sup>, approximately 50 seconds behind Dylan.



*Dylan Leading with Chase in third*



*Still tight up the climb*

**Sophomore Boys:** The Sophomore boys were up next with a field of 65 at the start. Jacob Lane and Alex Winslow had their best race of the season, with Jacob finishing 13<sup>th</sup> and Alex taking a huge leap from previous races, coming in at 18<sup>th</sup>. Jackson Lorigan did not have his best race but still came in at respectable 27<sup>th</sup>. Luke Pajak rounded out the Air Academy sophomore boys after being out for a week with suspected COVID at 45<sup>th</sup>.



*Jacob Shredding the Singletrack*



*Alex Digging Deep with a Phenomenal Race*



*Jackson Passing a Cheyenne Mountain Rider*



*Luke Looking for a Spot to Pass*

**JV Boys:** The JV Boys, with 110 racers on starting line, was by far the biggest field of the day. Right from the start, Air Academy's Justin Tremblay and Crested Butte's Temple Robertson led the way. Justin and Temple came through the first lap together 20 seconds ahead of the rest of the pack. They stayed together throughout the second lap which came down to an exciting all-out fight to the finish with Justin taking the sprint and winning by just over a second. Creed Anderson had a strong second lap moving from 25<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>. Conner Petrzak had his best finish of the year coming in 62<sup>nd</sup> and Charley Weitz rounded out the team at 70<sup>th</sup>.



*Justin Ripping the Climb*



*Conner Making his Way through the Crowd*



*Creed Fighting for Position*



*Charlie Making a Pass*



*Justin Takes the Win*

**Varsity Boys:** Air Academy has one of the highest if not the highest team percentage of racers in the varsity boy's category. Over 1/3 of the team and 11 of the 21 boys race varsity. This is a category that one must qualify for by being among the fastest in the league. There are no slow racers in the varsity category. The varsity boys' race, as always got off to an incredibly fast start. A tight lead pack of five rounded the first lap with Air Academy's Austin Leigh in the mix. All were within hundredths of a second of each other. The situation was the same at the end of the second lap. On the third lap, Austin attacked and the only one that could go with him was Thunder Ridge's Jack Higley. In the end, it was an all-out sprint over the last mile with Jack Higley taking the checkered flag and Austin, for the first time this year, settling for second. Alex Snyder started in 37<sup>th</sup> position and raced three very fast and consistent laps making up 30 spots to finish 7<sup>th</sup>. Zim Reichart finished just behind at 12<sup>th</sup> with Keegan Hale coming in at 14<sup>th</sup> placing four Air Academy riders in the top 15. Trevor Kornmesser and Jacob Weber worked together to come in at 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Keenan Swanson and Cooper Markley finished in 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> giving them the points they needed to qualify for the state championships. Lawrence (Eli) Rawe was close behind at 39<sup>th</sup> with Simeon Scheid 41<sup>st</sup> and Braun Deighton 43<sup>rd</sup>.



*Austin Leading through the Feed Zone*



*Alex Making his way from 37th to 7th*



*Eli and Braun Closing the Gap*



*Keenan and Coop Working Together*





*Simeon Crossing the Finish Line*



*Zim in a Crowd*



*Trevor and Jacob Hammering the Singletrack*



*Keegan Digging Deep*

**Varsity Girls:** The last race of the day, the varsity girls started fast and furious. Like the boys' varsity, these girls must qualify by being among the fastest in the state. Laura Carlin of Highlands Ranch completed the first lap in just under 29 minutes with a chase group including Air Academy's Kylie Moerk and Avery Harris just 24 seconds behind. The chase group stood wheel to wheel coming around on the second lap. The third lap saw the group break up with Kylie holding on to third place and Avery 4<sup>th</sup>. Maddie Mager again rode the race alone, caught between two groups. On a course as tough and rough as the Chalk Creek Stampede, this can pose a huge mental challenge pushing at race effort alone for over 90 minutes. Maddie held tough, dug deep, and finished 11<sup>th</sup>, securing valuable team points.



*Air Academy Varsity Girls Ready to "Gitter Done"*



*Kylie and Avery Battling their way to 3rd and 4th*



*Maddie Soloing a Tough Course*

**Summary:** There are no words to describe the hard work, drive, and team spirit of the Air Academy Mountain Bike Team. In only its fourth year Air Academy rose from a division 2 team to division 1. With 30 riders, Air Academy may be the smallest division 1 team in the region. The Crystal Region consists of 30 high school teams and almost 500 individual racers. After completing the four race regional series, Air Academy came out number 1. With that come the following statistics:

**8 individual overall regional series podiums and 3 individual regional champions:**

- Varsity Girls: Avery Harris 3<sup>rd</sup>, Kylie Moerk 4<sup>th</sup>
- Varsity Boys: Austin Leigh 1<sup>st</sup>, (Regional Champion)
- JV Girls: Sandrine Trembley 2<sup>nd</sup>
- JV Boys: Justin Tembley 1<sup>st</sup>, (Regional Champion)
- Sophomore Girls: Nora Bots 5<sup>th</sup>
- Freshmen Girls: Ruby Harris 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Freshmen Boys: Dylan Hudson 1<sup>st</sup>, (Regional Champion)

**33 individual podiums throughout the series**

**10 individual Race wins**

**3 Yeti Skills Winners**

**4 Team Race Wins**

**24 of 30 Racers qualified for the State Championships**

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