

# Air Academy Finishes Third in Division 1 Colorado High School Mountain Bike League State Championships



*Air Academy Mountain Bike Team 2024*

The Air Academy Mountain Bike Team travelled to Glenwood Springs Colorado for two days of racing in the final race of the season: The Colorado State Championships. And what a weekend it was! 85 Teams and 932 qualified racers from not just Colorado, but New Mexico, Wyoming, and South Dakota converged for a full weekend of racing and fun. When all racing was done and the dust had settled, Air Academy stood on the podium in third place with three racers, Ruby Harris, Justin Tremblay, and Austin Leigh finishing on the podium in their individual category.

The Glenwood Springs course consisted of a 5.6-mile loop that was easily the roughest and most technical of the year. The course started with a one-mile climb at an average grade of 5% that funneled into single track, followed by rocky twisty descents and climbs. As with all the high school races, Freshmen, Sophomore, and JV raced two laps, and Varsity raced three.

**Freshman Boys:** The action got underway Saturday morning with 154 Freshman boys getting off to a fast and furious start. Dylan Hudson and Chase McAfee led things off for Air Academy. Competition was tight right from the start, sprinting up the mile long climb to the singletrack. Position was everything. Riders from Chatfield and Rocky Mountain High School open a 30 second gap on a chasing pack of 17 that included Dylan Hudson at the end of the first lap. The race continued at a feverish pace with the pack trading places throughout the second lap. Dylan took 16<sup>th</sup> in a sprint finish overtaking a Fruita rider by only a second. Chase had a great start but crashed in one of the technical sections losing dozens of places but still went on to finish 75<sup>th</sup>.



*Dylan (6104) in the front group on the climb*



*Chase Digging Deep!*

**Freshman Girls:** The freshman girls were next with Ruby Harris, Katelyn Markley, and Elora Walkup representing AAHS in a field of 87. Like the Freshman Boys the start was fast and furious. Riders from Evergreen, Durango, and Steamboat Springs led at the end of the first lap, opening a gap of 30 seconds on the chase group of six that included Ruby Harris. Ruby poured on the power in the second lap with a rider from Lake County and put approximately 15 seconds on the chase group finishing in 5<sup>th</sup> place and a spot on the podium! Katelyn Markley, as she has throughout the year continued to improve finishing in a very impressive 23<sup>rd</sup> place as did Elora Walkup finishing just behind her in 28<sup>th</sup>.



*Elora on the Descent*



*Ruby Almost Over the Handlebar!*



*Katelyn Ripping a Corner*

**JV Boys:** The JV Boys, like the freshman boys, saw 154 racers wheel up to the starting line. Justin Tremblay, the only freshman in the entire field scorched the first lap coming around in a lead pack of seven, all within 2 seconds of each other. Things started to spread out on the second lap and Justin found himself in an all-out sprint for the 5<sup>th</sup> podium spot, overtaking a Durango rider by just 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a second! Creed Anderson also had a great race. Creed started in 86<sup>th</sup> position and overcame 11 riders to finish in 75<sup>th</sup>.



*Justin Sprinting for 5th Place*



*Creed Ripping a Corner*

**JV Girls:** 115 JV Girls lined up for a super exciting mountain bike race that did not disappoint. Yes, you read that right, 115 JV Girls! Sandrine Tremblay, AAHS's lone JV girl was in the heat of competition at the front. The first lap saw a lead group of seven open a small gap on a chasing group of seven that included Sandrine. Sandrine pushed hard with a strong second lap to finish 12<sup>th</sup> overall. With Sandrine's finish, combined with the JV boys, Freshman boys and girls, Air Academy finished the day in 7<sup>th</sup> place overall. A great position to be in with the Sophomore and Varsity racers scheduled to race the following day.



*Sandrine Leading through a corner*



*Getting Air!*



*Leading a group up a climb*

**Sophomore Boys:** The action continued Sunday morning with the sophomore boys leading things off. Jackson Lorigan and Jacob Lane lined up for AAHS with Jackson in starting position 42 and Jacob 61 of 146 starters. The race took off with an all-out sprint up the hill and unfortunately Jackson got caught in a massive crash going around the first corner. The crash resulted in a broken suspension cable and a misaligned handlebar. Taking the time to straighten his handlebar and recover from the crash put Jackson at the back of the pack. With his suspension cable broken, Jackson was forced to ride the entire race with his suspension locked out. A huge disadvantage on such a rough, rocky course. He persevered and worked his way from the back of the pack to 81<sup>st</sup>. Jacob Lane was able to avoid the crash and had an awesome race overtaking 30 spots to finish 30<sup>th</sup>.



*Jacob Negotiating one of the Rocky Sections*



*Jackson Chasing after a Crash*



*Jackson Digging Deep through the Dust*

**Sophomore Girls:** The sophomore girls were next with Nora Bots and Georgia Swanson representing AAHS in a field of 75. Nora crossed the line at 37<sup>th</sup> in an exciting three-way sprint finish with two Durango riders. Georgia crossed the line in 50<sup>th</sup> place closing out her first ever mountain bike season with her unfailing infectious smile.



*Georgia Always with a Smile*



*Nora in the Heat of Battle*



*Nora Putting on the Pressure!*

**Varsity Boys:** The sophomore boys and girls did a great job holding 7<sup>th</sup> place for the team. Now it was up to the varsity boys and girls to up the ante and see if they could move the team up a couple ranks. Air Academy fielded eight varsity boys in a field of 149: Seniors Kegan Hale and Trevor Kornmesser. Juniors Austin Leigh, Zim Reichart, Jacob Weber, Cooper Markley and Keenan Swanson. And Sophomore Alex Snider. All of them ready to leave it all out on the course.

The start was blistering fast up the mile long climb with Austin Leigh leading the way. Austin and two Durango riders rode an incredible 22-minute first lap to open almost a full minute gap on the rest of the field. The Durango riders worked together and at the end of the second lap Austin had fell off the pace by about 20 seconds. Austin held on to that position through the third lap finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> overall a little over 30 seconds ahead of 4<sup>th</sup> place. Alex Snider was next with an incredible race starting in 86 position and passing 67 riders to finish 18<sup>th</sup>. Zim Reichart came in just behind him, despite an “over the handlebar crash” at 20<sup>th</sup>, placing three Air Academy riders in the top 20. Jacob Weber was next at 41<sup>st</sup> with Keegan Hale at 44 in an all-out sprint finishing 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a second ahead of a CRMS rider. Trevor Kornmesser followed, taking the top spot in a three-way sprint across the finish line at 61<sup>st</sup>. In yet another three-way sprint Cooper Markley crossed the finish line in 103<sup>rd</sup>, and Keenan Swanson rounded out the Air Academy varsity boys at 120<sup>th</sup>. The varsity boys accomplished what they had set out to do and moved the team from 7<sup>th</sup> to a podium 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Now it was up to the varsity girls to hold that spot!



*Jacob having a little Fun*



*Zim Hangin with the Durango Boys*





*Austin Leading off the Start*



*Alex on His way to passing 67 Riders*



*Keegan Takes the Sprint!*



*Trevor Leading through the Corners*



*Coop through the Sage*



*Keenan Pushing Hard*

**Varsity Girls:** Last but certainly not least, and with 3<sup>rd</sup> place on the line, Senior Avery Harris, Juniors Kylie Moerk and Maddie Mager took their places along with 54 varsity girls at the starting line. Like the varsity boys, the start was a rocket blast up the climb. A lead pack of four from Chatfield, Golden, Columbine, and Rocky Mountain High Schools opened a 30 second gap on a chasing field of three. Thirty seconds behind them was a large group of 11 riders that included Kylie and Avery. Kylie and Avery worked together, focused and laying everything on the line, continued through the second and third laps together finishing 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> respectively. Maddie, who spent the season riding in “no women’s” land, riding alone between groups, got to mix it up with a large group about 3 minutes back, finishing 41<sup>st</sup> to help score enough team points to hold down 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall!



*Kylie on the Descent*



*Avery Liftoff!*



*Maddie Flying on the Descent*

**Summary:** In just four years, the Air Academy Mountain Bike Team has evolved from an idea with five Air Academy students and a coach, to a full fledged competitive Division 1 team in the Colorado High School Mountain Bike League. This amazing season has been a culmination of four years of hard consistent training, teamwork, friendship, inclusiveness, sportsmanship, respect, and dedicated coaches, parents, and students. Although mountain biking is considered an individual sport, the Air Academy Mountain Bike Team is a TEAM in every sense of the word, proud to represent Air Academy High School and the Air Academy District. Thanks to everyone who supports the Air Academy Mountain Bike Team, and we can't wait to step it up even more in 2025!

A special thank-you to our sponsors. This program would not be what it is without your support: **Criterion Bike Shop, Bailey Orthodontics, Cost Plus Anesthesia, Rocky Mountain Properties, My Dental Company, T2 Leadership, Mountainside Builders, Ostroy, and AllAboutEndurance.**