

## Air Academy High School Mountain Bike Team Takes First Place Division 1 at the Frisco Invitational

The AAHS Mountain Bike Team started the 2025 season where they left off last year by taking first place in the first regional race in the Colorado High School League Series. Despite crashes and mechanicals by some of the senior riders, the team dug deep, stepped up, and filled in the holes to take the win. Truly a complete team effort!



Air Academy travelled to Frisco Colorado to race the Frisco Bay Invitational. The Frisco Bay Invitational course includes a mix of singletrack, doubletrack, and dirt roads at the Frisco Peninsula Recreation Area. The course is a 5.9-mile loop with 552 feet of climbing per lap to include rolling singletrack peppered with short rocky climbs and descents. Freshmen, Sophomore, and JV riders raced two laps, while Varsity raced three.

**JV Boys:** The JV Boys started the day off with Jacob Lane, Creed Anderson, Dylan Hudson, Alex Winslow, Luke Pajak, Jackson Lorigan, Charlie Weitz, and Merrick Mattix in his first race ever. Seventy JV boys toed the line and as expected the start was fast and furious. The first lap Creed, Jacob, and Dylan came through together approximately 20 seconds behind second and third place. Jacob made a significant move in the second lap and closed the gap to within a second coming in 4<sup>th</sup> in a three-way sprint to finish. Creed and Dylan were right behind finishing in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Alex Winslow and Luke Pajak worked together to finish

in the top 20 taking 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> place. Jackson Lorigan was not far behind coming in at 25, while Merrick Mattix, in his first ever race finished 46, with Charlie Weitz not far behind in 50<sup>th</sup>. With three riders in the top 10 and five in the top twenty, Air Academy was off to a very strong start.



*Jackson Lorigan & Creed Anderson Get Front Row Seats*



*Jacob Lane in a Close finish for 4th*



*Luke & Alex Working the Singletrack*



*Dillion Making up Lost Time*



*Charlie Railing the Corner*



*Charlie Weitz Heading out on Second Lap*

The Varsity Boys and Varsity Girls were next, with the girls starting 5 minutes after the boys. Almost 18 miles and over 1,600 feet of climbing makes for a tough day at the office. But AA was up for the task.

**Varsity Boys:** The Varsity Boys race looked to be a dog fight right from the start. Upon completion of the first lap, just seconds separated the top 10 riders. Austin Leigh and Thunder Ridge rider Jack Higley had a small gap on a chasing field of eight that included Air Academy riders Jacob Weber, Justin Tremblay, and Zim Reichart. The Thunder Ridge rider unleashed a fierce attack in the second lap and opened a 30 second gap on Austin. Zim was having a good race until he broke his chain and crashed hard. He finished the second lap running with his bike, bloody and bruised. He fixed his chain and was and back in the race. He had yet another crash when a spectator crossed in front of him on the course. Zim still hung on to finish 34<sup>th</sup>. Up front Austin had a gap of about 70 seconds on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place, which happened to be Air Academy riders Jacob Weber and Justin Tremblay. Jacob and Justin worked together and closed the gap to within 20 seconds to take third and fourth place respectively. Cooper (Coop) Markley was next at 24<sup>th</sup> and Keenan Swanson after a serious bonk rounded out Air Academy's varsity boys at 40<sup>th</sup>.



*Austin Leigh, Jacob Weber, Justin Tremblay, Zim Reichart in the Lead Group of Ten*



*Zim Battered and Bloody Keeps the Hammer Down*



*Keenan Swanson Gettin er Done*



*"Coop" Battling for Team Points*

**Varsity Girls:** The Varsity Girls continued where the boys left off. Right after the first climb Kylie Moerk and Hazel Lazar from Colorado Rocky Mountain School (CRMS) opened a gap on the rest of the field, scorching the first lap at 29:07. A large chase group including Air Academy's Sandrine Tremblay and Maddie Mager followed at less than a minute behind. Kylie turned on the afterburners in the second lap dropping the CRMS rider by almost a minute. Kylie continued to pour on the speed in the third lap increasing her lead by almost another minute, finishing solo with over 2 minutes on second place. Sandrine finished ninth in a sprint finish with a Canon City rider, and Maddie Mager scored valuable points finishing eleventh.



*Kylie Second Wheel on the First Climb*



*Sandrine in the Chase Group*



*Maddie Mager Focused on the Descent*

**Sophomore Boys:** For two of the three Sophomore boys, Carsten Varcie and Jackson Wroten, this was their first ever race. Returning rider Chase McAfee led the way off the start, however crashed hard and suffered several mechanicals, but still managed to finish in the top half at 23<sup>rd</sup>. Carsten and Jackson started at the back of the field but were able to sort through dozens of riders to finish 13<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup>. Very impressive for their first ever race!



*Chase in the Chase after a Crash*



*Jackson Railing the Descent*



*Carsten Finishes his First Race*

**JV Girls:** The JV Girls kept up the momentum with all three riders; Ruby Harris, Nora Bots, and Georgia Swanson finishing in the top 20. Ruby led right from the start already putting a minute on the field through the first lap. She didn't let up on the second lap and went on to win by almost three minutes. Nora Bots had a phenomenal race finishing 4<sup>th</sup> only 20 seconds behind second place. Georgia as always, finished with a big smile in 18<sup>th</sup> as she was clearly enjoying herself.



*Ruby Rides Solo to the Win*



*Nora Having a Phenomenal Race*



*Georgia Always a big Smile*

**Sophomore Girls:** Air Academy's Sophomore Girls Elora Walkup and Katelyn Markley were up next. The first three riders opened a small gap on the chasing riders which included Elora and Katelyn. Elora and Katelyn in turn opened a gap on the rest of the field. They went on to hold their position, both making the podium in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> place.



*Elora Chasing the Lead Group*



*Katelyn Railing the Corners to 5th Place*

**Freshmen Boys:** Finally, the Freshmen Boys were on the line. Both freshmen boys, Steel Starkey and Jake Leigh were entering their first ever race. The freshmen race was conducted as an individual time trial vs a mass start. Racers were started at 30 second intervals. Their placing from today's race will determine their starting position in race number two. Steel and Jake were the first to go. This has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is they won't be held up in the single track. The disadvantage is being out front, they have no one to catch or gauge off. Despite this, both finished in the top twenty with Steel taking 8<sup>th</sup> and Jake 19<sup>th</sup>. Steel's placing was high enough to score within the team's top 15 riders determining Air Academy's overall score.



*Steel Flying Down the Descent*



*Jake Focused and Hammering*

**Freshmen Girls:** Air Academy unfortunately has no freshmen girls this year.

**Summary:** The Air Academy High School Mountain Bike Team, like last year, showed their true spirit, guts, and determination. Despite several setbacks with key riders, the depth of the team came through. Riders dug deep and left everything on the course. From varsity to freshman, every category contributed to make this victory possible. Coaches and parents were phenomenal volunteering and keeping things running smoothly. Our riders are proud to represent their school, district and sponsors and they show it with their work ethic, teamwork, and sportsmanship. We are looking forward to the Haymaker Classic in Eagle Colorado on September 7<sup>th</sup>. **Dig Deep!**

**And finally,** this team could not exist without its generous sponsors: Criterium Bike Shop, My Dental Co, Ostroy, Rocky Mountain Properties, Mountainside Builders, Cost Plus Anesthesia, T2 Leadership, Bailey Orthodontics, AllAboutEndurance

Thank you!