

Over 2100 entries for Spur's mountain bike finals

Spur's 2010 School Mountain bike league had more than 2100 participants, with over 115 riders from 18 schools across five provinces competing in the finals on Saturday, 16 October, 2010, during the annual Dirt Festival at the Rietmei Farm, near Alberton.



The Sub Junior start - won by Stephan Senekal No 11.

Participation was up by 100% on the inaugural event in 2009 and the competition was fierce in this inter-schools competition. All participating schools started the day on equal footing as all points accumulated in the regional phases of the competition were discarded. Although schools could field as many riders as they wanted, final scores were calculated based on the top six results from each school.

Eventually, Howick High from KZN was crowned champion with a total scored of 50 points, winning the Spur Steak Ranches National High School MTB League floating trophy by a single point. Lydenburg High from Mpumalanga finished a close second with 49 points and Paul Roos finished third with 42 points, despite the fact that it is a school for boys and could, therefore, only compete in half of the competition. The team from Montana High School in Worcester finished fourth with 38 points, followed by Uplands with 37 points.

The strong team from Parel Vallei managed 29 points despite only fielding four riders, while the Anatomic Series Champion Waterkloof showed it was Gauteng's strongest mountain bike team by finishing seventh. Nelspruit and Penryn finished eighth and ninth respectively, while Grey College from Bloemfontein completed the top 10.

Mpumalanga best province

The Gauteng North Floating trophy for the best province on the day was awarded to the riders from Mpumalanga for the second year running, followed closely by the Western Cape.

While the emphasis of the day was on inter-schools competition, individual riders were also rewarded for their efforts. In the Sub Junior Boys (13/14) Stephan Senekal from Paul Roos Gymnasium fended off strong competition from Trinity House's Joel Hieber and Parel Vallei's Ivan Venter to take the win by just over a minute. Montana High in Worcester also performed strongly with Nicol Carstens and Stefan de Bod rounding out the top five.

Howick's Emily Chambers put in a convincing performance in the Sub Junior Girls (13/14) category to finish seven minutes clear of Danielle Rheeder of Waterkloof, with Tamryn Sparrow from Nelspruit High finishing in third place.



Competition was keen.

Most exciting race of the day

The Youth Men (15/16) category was responsible for the most exciting race of the day with Patrick Belton of Howick winning by half a wheel after an epic battle of an hour and 10 minutes with Parel Vallei's Paul Rodenbach and Dylan Hattingh, who finished third by only a few bike lengths. With Paul Roos' Stian Venter and Johan de Bod of Montana High a mere minute behind, the Western Cape continued to show its force in the boys' categories.

In the Youth Women (15/16), Jada Lindstrom scored valuable points for Lydenburg High with a dominant 10-minute victory over Howick riders Robyn Ryan and Kerry Exelby. With Holly Mclelland (Uplands) in fourth and another Lydenburger, Wendy Holiday, in fifth, the Lowvelders scooped a lot of points in this category.

Started off fiercely

The Junior Men's (17/18) race started off fiercely in what was to become fairly hot conditions. The race was staged over five laps of the 5.8km course, which included some very technical climbs as well as various single-track sections that required sustained focus from the riders. For Luc de Marigny from Paul Roos, the sight of Herlu Smith's Grey College jersey was more than enough motivation to show both Herlu and Willie Smit (Lydenburg) a clean set of wheels. After an hour and 27 minutes of hard racing, De Marigny finished just under two minutes ahead of Smit, who managed to fend off the Grey rider's efforts by 20 seconds. Howick's David de Backer stayed clear of two more Lydenburgers, Albert Myburgh and Jan-Harm Steenkamp, to finish fourth. Paul Roos collected valuable points with riders Justin Pictor (seventh), Johannes Scribante (ninth), Hanno Lategan (10th) and Wayne v.d.Westhuizen (11th) giving it their best. In the middle of the Paul Roos juggernaut was Montana's Alec Smook with a strong eighth place.



Nicholas Popich on a roll.

A league of its own

Uplands College was in a league of its own in the Junior Women (17/18) category with Emily Clarke and Simone Vosloo finishing first and second, respectively, leaving the rest of the field in their dust to battle it out. It was up to Renthea Boshoff (Gerrit Maritz) who came in third, Pia Carstens (Montana) in fifth and Waterkloof's Elmarie de Wet in sixth to wrestle back some pride from the Lowvelders as a string of Lydenburg riders filled up the placings with a fourth place for Lucy Munro, a seventh for Natasha van Tonder and an eighth for Maria van der Merwe.

According to Spur Group MD Pierre van Tonder, he was highly impressed by the enthusiasm with which schools and riders rose to the challenge of this year's exhilarating competition. "Now in only its second year, the Spur School Mountain Bike League attracted over 2100 entries this season and judging by the excitement and atmosphere that the representative final format created, an explosion of interest can be expected in 2011", he said.

Only scratched the surface

League co-ordinator Meurant Botha of Amarider concluded that all in attendance agreed that the events held this season has only scratched the surface of the potential participation in the Spur High School MTB League. "The challenge is now to involve more regions and identify new teams in order not only to increase numbers, but also to broaden the footprint of the sport across the country with the ongoing support of our sponsors: Spur Steak Ranches, Falke and Sportsman's Warehouse," said Botha.

For more information, league calendar and results, go to [\[\www.spur.co.za/mtb or contact Amarider on +27 (0)21 884 4752.

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