

Peddle to the podium

Colleen Winter, SPECIAL

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BARRIE - When Peter Disera started his race at the Ontario High School Mountain Bike Championship at Hardwood Hills last week he immediately took the lead and didn't look back. "It was a full throttle kind of race," said Disera, who is a grade ten student at Eastview Secondary. "It was nice and open and flowing." That full throttle race translated into a win where the next place finisher, Aaron Thomas of DunBarton, finished three minutes behind on the two-lap, 12-kilometre course.

Disera rides with Team Hardwood and while he said it was good to get out for a ride, his real competition comes during the Ontario and Canada Cup races he participates in throughout the year.

It's early in the season but at his most recent Canada Cup held at Mont Tremblant, Quebec he placed third.

Nationals are held in Canmore, Alberta in mid-July and Disera plans to be there and expects it to be a very competitive field.

"There are two really fast guys from out West, two from Quebec, and two from Ontario," he said, including himself in the two from Ontario. Disera began riding four years ago at the Wednesday night race series at Hardwood. When he consistently placed second and third, someone suggested he try racing an Ontario Cup. He placed fourth, three seconds off of third, and has been racing ever since.

"As long as I continue to be successful I'll keep doing it."

Disera's younger brother Quinton, who attends W.R. Best Public School, won the elementary race and placed tenth at the Canada Cup. An exceptional result considering as a twelve year old he races in the under fifteen category.

"I like the adrenaline rush," said Quinton. "And it's fun."

That fun comes partly from the social aspect of the sport. Riders train together, help each other out on the trail, and always check whether a rider is okay when stopped on the trail.

"There's a lot of camaraderie out there," said John Sustersic, Marking and Events Manager at Hardwood Hills who is a lifelong mountain biker. "It's very refreshing."

Mountain biking also allows riders to explore greater distances of forest and experience the outdoors in a way that doesn't always happen in our heavily technological society.

"When you're biking, you're unplugged," said Sustersic. "You're out there in the forest just enjoying it. It's almost effortless at the same time as it's fun and challenging."

Trails exist for riders of all abilities and it is part of the reason that mountain biking has become a popular family activity. It's what got the Disera family started and has kept them going.

"It was a good family activity," said their mother Pamela Disera, of why they got started. "Now we're all hooked."

For full results of the Ontario High School Mountain Bike Championships held May 27, visit www.barrieadvance.com.



Peddle to the podium. Peter Disera of Eastview takes air during the Pearl Izumi Ontario Mountain Bike Championship held at Hardwood Hills on Friday. Disera, who also races in Ontario and Canada Cups, won the Junior "A" race by three minutes. *Colleen Winter photo*