

Bobcats Poised For Strong Run at Nationals

Written by Whitney Noble
Friday, 25 October 2013 07:22

The Lees-McRae College cycling team is in the midst of its final preparations for this year's USA Cycling Collegiate Mountain Bike nationals this weekend on Beech Mountain, fresh off a dominating win at the

Division I Southeastern Collegiate Cycling Conference Championships on the campus of Brevard College this past weekend.

"We have a lot of good momentum coming into nationals," said head coach Tim Hall. "We won quite a few races the final two weekends of the season at Clemson and Brevard, which is always a good sign of fitness. Going head-to-head every week with other top ranked teams in the SECCC has pushed us to become our best."

The Bobcats have enjoyed an impressive mountain bike this season, piling up both team and individual wins in nearly every race. Kerry Werner (Birdsboro, Pa.) and Luke Vrouwenvelder have each racked up multiple cross country and short track cross country wins this season, with Cody Phillips (Altadena, Calif.) and Hailey Sarausky (Littleton, N.H.) added several dual slalom and downhill victories of their own.

"Kerry and Luke are proven winners and Davis Bentley (Mill Valley, Calif.) is consistently in the top 10 in endurance, while Emily Shields (Salisbury, N.C.), Emma Klingaman and Katherine Shields (Salisbury, N.C.) have been top 10 riders all season long as well," praised Hall. "They all have the ability to battle for the victory or medals. On the gravity side Cody and Hailey have really shined all season."

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Lees-McRae enjoys an additional benefit to being the host team for this year's nationals, having the option of entering as many as six riders in each race. A new event has been added to the schedule this year in the team relay, a four-lap race with two men and two women each completing one lap for each squad.

"We feel we've got solid balance and depth within our starting roster for nationals," added Hall. "If everyone races to their potential then we have a shot at winning the team championship. It will be tough to knock off Fort Lewis, UC-Boulder and Marian, but we have the strength to make it happen. Whatever happens, I know our kids will race their hearts out."

Racing gets underway at 9 a.m. on Friday, October 25 with the men's division I short track. Werner, Vrouwenvelder, Phillips, Bentley, Gunnar Bergey (Harleysville, Pa.), and Brian Jorgensen (Bend, Ore.) will line up for the Bobcats in short track, with Emily and Katherine Shields, Klingaman, Sarausky, Mackenzie Filippi (Cary, N.C.), and Erin Donohue (Norwich, Vt.) comprising the field for the Bobcats in the women's race at 11 a.m.

Qualifying for Saturday's downhill finals will take place on Friday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. Werner, Phillips, Bergey, Jorgensen, Matthew Clements (Frederick, Md.), and Eric Bercume (Barre, Mass.) will run both the downhill and dual slalom for the Bobcats, with Sarausky and Laura Wright (Greensboro, N.C.) comprising the women's team for both events.

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Saturday's action gets underway at 8:30 a.m. with the men's cross country featuring the same lineup as the short track for the Bobcats. The women's race will start at 11:30 a.m. with an identical lineup to Friday's short track as well. Downhill finals will take place at 4 p.m.

The newly added team relay will lead off Sunday's racing slate with a lineup of Werner, Vrouwenvelder, Donohue, and Emily Shields for Lees-McRae. The dual slalom will follow at 12:30 p.m. to round out the weekend's action.

For complete schedules and results from this weekend's event, log on to the event page on USA Cycling's website, available [here](#). Fans can also follow along with the Bobcats on Twitter @LMCcyclingteam for updates throughout the weekend.

Photo Courtesy: LMC Cycling Team, LMC Athletics

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