

## **SoCal Interscholastic Cycling League Launched with Backing from Easton Sports Development Foundation II**

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OAKLAND , CA — The Northern California High School Mountain Bike Racing League (NorCal League) will launch the Southern California Interscholastic Cycling League (SoCal League), in the 2009 academic year, with grant support from the Easton Sports Development Foundation II (ESDF II).

The new league is based on the successful model of the NorCal League, now in its eighth year, which currently has reached a membership of over 400 high schoolers, 150 coaches, and 35 schools from within the region.

Matt Fritzingler, executive director of both the NorCal and SoCal leagues, said, “We are tremendously grateful for the generosity of Mr. Easton and his foundation. The grant allows us to launch a new league, and that has been a dream of ours for several years. With the SoCal League, we’ll be fostering the same values of life-long physical fitness, community, and self-confidence combined with athletic competition that has been so successful in Northern California.”

The NorCal League has developed methods and curriculum for introducing young riders to the world of mountain bike racing, as well as recruiting and training coaches that are committed to producing amateur athletes who are gracious in both victory and defeat, and are respectful of their environment and community.

Jim Easton, President of Easton Sports Development Foundation II, which provides grant support to a range of youth sports, said, “Sports have been very good to me throughout my life, and my hope is to help provide sporting opportunities to young people everywhere. We feel that a great place to start creating those opportunities is right here in Southern California.”

The ESDFII was set up in 2006 and plans to give back to the development of the four sports for which the Easton Companies developed innovative equipment: archery, softball and baseball, hockey and cycling.

The SoCal League is one of the first few recipients of an ESDF II grant in part because of the proposal’s emphasis on coaching, community, and making cycling a main-stream high school sport. Fritzingler said, “We know that good coaching means working closely with families, and helping athletes create a balanced life perspective. We aim to take the SoCal high school mountain bike teams in the same direction as we have in

Northern California –working to make cycling as important as baseball, football and soccer in the fabric of our high schools.”

The NorCal League’s considerable pool of experience, human resources, equipment and technology will be available to the SoCal League, both while it lays its foundations and after it establishes itself.

The year-round cycle of events organized by the SoCal League is scheduled to include: a Winter-Spring five-race series, including participation with NorCal riders in the May state championships; a Fall coaching conference; rider training camps; an annual benefit gala (tentatively planned for November 22 at Ca Del Sole and hosted by mountain bike pioneer Gary Fisher); and promotional outreach events at bicycle stores and pre-existing cycling events.

For more information about the big picture of high school mountain biking contact, Matt Fritzinger [fritz@norcalmtb.org](mailto:fritz@norcalmtb.org) Tel: 510-653-2453. The NorCal League website url is: [www.norcalmtb.org](http://www.norcalmtb.org)

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For further information about the Easton Sports Development Foundation II write to Caren Sawyer, Easton Sports Development Foundation, 7855 Haskell Avenue, Suite 350, Van Nuys, CA 91406; or [csawyer@esdf.org](mailto:csawyer@esdf.org).

The NorCal High School Mountain Bike League is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. It is open to students from both public and private schools. The NorCal League provides coaching and camaraderie to assist students achieve both competitive and non-competitive cross-country mountain biking goals in a safe and enjoyable manner. The calendar of events begins in Fall and includes weekend riding camps, summer riding camps, a 6-race series, and a coaches’ conference. League registration opens in December.