

FSU Cycling resists well-funded foes at local conference races



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CYCLING

It was a week of wild rides for Florida State sophomore bicycle racer Jack Tomassetti. As vice-president of the FSU Cycling team, he co-produced a Southeast Collegiate Cycling Conference mountain bike race in Tallahassee for 75 riders from seven schools and competed in three events. Two days after the September 5-6 conference competition, he was hit by a car while cycling home from a training ride.

The back story is that an unfunded and non-staffed FSU team is holding its own against schools with 20-30 all-expense-paid riders, a few pros, paid coaches and budgets that include full and partial tuition scholarships for talented bike racers.

"We got zero money this year from the FSU Sports Club Program,"

said Tomassetti before the Saturday dirt time trial on the Cadillac Trail in Tom Brown Park in which he finished 12th among men's B riders.

In his first mountain bike race in five months, "Roadie Cody" Johnson stormed to first place for FSU over a non-technical course that favored his sheer power and endurance. FSU's Aaron Isom slotted into ninth place; Rickards' grad Beck Frydenborg (Florida) rode himself back into shape for a 13th place result.

Union College's Zach Winn, a Canadian who said he chose the remote 1300-student Kentucky mountain school for its excellent cycling program and scholarships, won the men's A time trial with a blistering time of 11:57, more than half a minute ahead of teammate German Bermudez. Warren Wilson College's Linden Blaisus, whose head coach is Cannondale professional rider Cass Perkins, was third.

FSU's club president



Special to the Democrat

FSU Cycling's vice-president Jack Tomassetti, who co-produced the third of eight Southeast Collegiate Cycling Conference mountain bike races for 75 riders from seven schools, leads a Union College rider in the short track event in Tom Brown Park on Sept. 5.

Bryan Derstine, after working miracles to promote the event, finished 10th; teammate Clayton Anderson was 18th.

"You've got to hand it to the FSU kids for organizing this race," said Union's head coach

Chuck Coffey who later scouted 16-year-old local cycling prodigy David Berg with Union jerseys and invitations to visit. "Considering they're completely on their own, they're doing an amazing job."

The afternoon's short track dirt criterium circuted a small part of the Magnolia Trail, and the pecking order remained largely the same. Winn won the men's A; Derstine came in 11th and Anderson 18th.

In the Men's B race, Johnson drilled it to get ahead in the first two laps. He maintained a steady rhythm to keep a relentlessly chasing swarm of Union, Warren Wilson and Florida riders at bay and won his second race of the day for the Seminoles. Frydenborg persisted for sixth place followed by Tomassetti in seventh, Chip Young in 11th and Isom in 12th.

Three beginner FSU men's C racers — Sean Smith, Chris Carhart and Nat King — rode their hearts out to finish fourth through sixth, respectively.

In her racing debut, Savannah Sil, the only FSU woman to compete after A-rider Kristen

Baker broke her ankle on a training ride a few days earlier, placed fifth in women's B. Warren Wilson's effervescent star Nina Otter cheerfully dominated the Women's A fields and won every event.

Seconds into Sunday's men's B cross-country race on the Red Bug Trail off Meridian Rd, FSU sprinter Chris Mojock's bike jammed to an abrupt halt from the dreaded "chain suck." The crash took down two other riders, destroyed Mojock's front wheel and ended his race.

Tomassetti maintained third position for most of the hour-plus race with Union's Sean Trinqué locked on his wheel. As they accelerated for the sprint in the narrow finishing straight, Trinqué tried to pass the FSU rider. Although he crashed spectacularly, Trinqué was uninjured and crossed the finish line in third. Tomassetti gladly accepted fourth place instead of a crash.