



October 31, 2009

## FSU's Derstine races at mountain bike championships in the high Sierras

Florida State Cycling's president Bryan Derstine knew full well that his mission to race at USA Cycling's collegiate national mountain bike championships in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains was a long shot.

"I expected to get my teeth kicked in by the neo-pros at nationals; and I did." said native Tallahasseean Derstine who will graduate in the summer of 2010 with a marketing degree. "Even though I knew I didn't have a chance (at a high finish), I went because it was my last year in college. I wanted to ride in a place I'd never ridden before – the awesome mountains around Lake Tahoe."

Derstine valiantly represented the Seminoles as one of only two Florida racers to compete at the Rose Bowl of college off-road racing, held at the Northstar at Tahoe resort near Truckee, California on October 16-18. The other Floridian, Peter Vastyian from the University of Florida, crashed out of the downhill race with a broken collarbone.

As soon as Derstine stepped off the plane from Jacksonville and started to ride his bike, he realized that the biggest handicap would be the elevation. "Oxygen was the problem." he said. "There wasn't any."

The pain began with the cross-country contest that took riders on four trips around a 7.5 mile loop that ascended from 6300 ft to 7100 ft and tortured the legs with 800 ft of uphill grind per lap.

Predictably, riders from the dominant schools of the Appalachians, Rockies and Sierras sped ahead of the gasping flat landers.

Derstine held on for as long as possible but eventually was lapped and pulled from the race. Only 30 riders in the field of sixty finished.

The short track event started in Northstar's ski village at 6300 ft and went straight up a fire road. The climb got steeper as racers entered single track then descended through a technical cornucopia of bermed corners, jumps and rocks.

Derstine persisted and finished in 56th place in a race won by Israeli phenom Rotem Ishay of Ft. Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, who also won the cross-country contest.

In Division I, Ft. Lewis won its fourth consecutive title; Colorado University at Boulder was second and Southeast Conference school Lees-McRae – against which FSU and UF compete – finished a close third.

Division II was dominated by the Southeast Conference's Appalachian mountain colleges, Brevard, Union-Kentucky and Warren-Wilson which placed 1-3, respectively.

Two weeks before nationals, FSU's cycling team ended the Division I Southeast Conference mountain bike season in fifth place after a final race at Clemson. At the conference championship race, Derstine finished 25th out of 46 in the Men's A cross-country race despite a face-first crash that left him trailing blood. Jack Tomassetti and Chris Carhart both placed seventh in Mens B and C, respectively.

Because the team is weighted with more road cyclists, Derstine and Tomassetti are hopeful that the

spring road-racing season will be better in terms of numbers of riders and results.

Fifth annual Tandem Ability Ride for sight-impaired riders today at St. Mark's Wildlife Refuge

Dozens of tandems with blind cyclists stoking on the rear seats will pedal from Newport Park on Highway 98 into the St. Mark's Wildlife Refuge today from 8:00 am to noon. The 22- mile ride is organized and sponsored by Roger Hawkes of Higher Ground bike Shops and Mycell Armington of the Tallahassee Counsel of the Blind with help from the Capital City Cyclists.

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