

It's the Kids On Bikes issue!

FreeWheelin'

SEPTEMBER 2011 THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTHERN BICYCLE LEAGUE

the Frazier Cycling Team



WILD

HORSES

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**Cycling
Basics**

the road to minnesota



LINKING THE BICYCLE
COMMUNITY TOGETHER

**FREE RIDE
EVERY DAY!**

frazier cycling is the future

by Teresa Sylvester

I have been wanting to write about Frazier Cycling for a very long time. It seems that every time I research the junior champions of USA cycling, a name attached to Frazier Cycling appears. So, after speaking with Cathy Frazier and accepting an offer to join the team on a Wednesday night practice, I jumped in the car with gear and bike loaded to go see what this team is all about. I got to Duluth just before 6:30 p.m. and there were kids on bikes all over the place. I could feel the intimidation mounting as I found my way through the riders to Cathy and a safe spot off the road to park and get myself ready to ride. The welcoming sincerity of Cathy and everyone put me at ease right away, yet you could feel the intensity in the air. I had a few moments to speak with Cathy in regards to Frazier Cycling and what they are all about prior to venturing off into the night's training regimen.

Frazier Cycling is the largest Junior Development team in America with teams based in Suwanee, Georgia and Fairhope, Alabama. If you want to be on the Frazier Cycling team, you better have a tolerance for the wet and cold because the training is all year, regardless of dry or wet conditions. Just that one line made me realize one of the reasons I have so often seen the Frazier Cycling name in the top standings of the junior cycling competitions. The team focuses on helping juniors develop basic and advanced cycling skills, race strategy, and mental toughness while maintaining an element of fun. As I spoke to a number of the young riders, it was clear that the team camaraderie was the top consideration that kept them interested in riding, competing, and training at their level. Frazier Cycling focuses on developing young junior cyclists into elite cyclists by teaching the true team approach to competitive cycling. Frazier Cycling is proud to be able to say their cyclists can easily transition from juniors to college to pro levels. Their first girl graduating high school this year, Stephanie Cucuz, was awarded a scholarship to King College

in Tennessee. I thought I would make my way through the crowd of spandex clad kids to ride with Stephanie and get her story when Coach Ralph Frazier called her away to join her posse for the paceline drills he had up his sleeve for the evening. I was sent to the back of the pack to ride with the "old guys" who talked about half loop pulls versus full loop pulls and six laps or seven laps, blah, blah, blah. Really, I had no idea what they were talking about - I was just crashing the party for a night. All I knew was that it would soon be my time to "hang on" and then "pull through". As

I watched the youngsters pulling out in their perfect pacelines of six to eight deep, it was again obvious why Frazier Cycling is so prominent in the standings. These kids looked nothing short of professional in their grace and speed. They knew exactly how to fall in and keep the pace while maintaining a look of no exertion whatsoever. And then, I was off. I was thrilled to see an old friend of mine, Henry Zuber, in my pack of riders. Henry used to lead a pack of crazy in-line skaters through the dark streets of Atlanta many moons ago. I was one of those crazy skaters. I remember when he had his little girls and would bring them out on Monday night skates in the stroller - with a helmet of course! Now, his youngest daughter, Anna, was busy riding her trainer on the sidelines due to an unfortunate crash in an earlier bumping drill. Talk about feeling old! Henry was now setting a mean pace and I found myself back in the familiar territory of chasing him down and hanging on his wheel. At least these wheels are a lot bigger than skate wheels!

When it came to my turn to pull, I thought to myself, "well, I'm the only mom type on a bike tonight so I have to make a good showing", so I put in a serious effort. I could hear some heavy breathing behind me. I was feeling pretty proud of myself until the entire lead pack passed me....and, left us all behind.



I believe they lapped us right then and there. That hurt the ego a bit but it was pretty amazing to watch. I finished the exercise with grace and some ego still intact. When we finished, you could get a real sense of how much the kids enjoyed being with each other and being a part of the team. Everyone was lending encouragement to one another and throwing in a few jokes for those that were a little off their game that night but it was all light-hearted and a joy to be around.

As Ralph was cooking up his next skill exercise, I conversed again about why and when Frazier started and what makes it unique. Frazier Cycling was born in 1992 by Ralph Frazier, a guy who loved to ride his bike and, having left his Ohio home to come to Georgia, had no one to ride with. The adult program of Frazier Cycling now has about 60 members, many of which are parents of the juniors. The junior program did not start until 2003 with just a couple of kids, one of which was Ralph's son and one was the boy next door. The junior program really blossomed after Zoe Frazier came onto the team and became a 2-time national champion. However, Cathy was quick to point out that Zoe was not the driving force behind the team. Part of Frazier's approach is that their program does not rely on superstars. No one kid makes the program. Their entire program

is built on a team approach – in training and in racing. This becomes more evident in the night's next drill session. In this next session, we rode three abreast without hands. Riders of lesser ability were teamed up with those of higher ability. When Ralph asks me if I can ride without hands, with a great amount of hesitation I say "yes, but not that great" so he hooks me up with the 2011 national time trial champion and the college scholar. Now, I'm feeling a little old and inadequate but he sends us off and I quickly ride to the occasion and am once again feeling pretty proud of myself. Again, it was amazing to watch the kids, even six and eight years old, going through the drills with ease and determination. It was also obvious that there was a lot of respect for the Coach even though this became a perfect time for some tomfoolery by the oldest of the young! These guys and gals can most definitely handle a bike – no handlebars required.

The break before the next drill gave me a few more minutes to catch up on some of my biggest questions for Cathy. I wanted to know what exactly made Frazier unique from other teams, how Frazier had changed over the years and where they were headed in the future. According to Cathy, the program grew organically with the kids. As the kids grew older, the program was enhanced to meet their needs. Frazier used to be a very young juniors squad and could not enter 15 and over races because they didn't have any kids over 15 years old. Now, their older juniors are racing Pro 1 and 2 level. The girls are racing Cat 3 in the Pro 1/2/3 fields. Frazier is currently working on ways to give the kids a pathway to the next level after they are no longer junior racers. They had two older team members race in Europe, Canada and the Bahamas this past year. They are also making connections with U23 teams to look at the older racers as well. The last question of what makes Frazier unique really got to the soul of this squad. Frazier uses a true team approach to cycling. Their coaching philosophy is built around the team – not an individual rider. Frazier does not look for, nor do they want, the ready-made superstar. They look for kids outside of the cycling community because it involves educating the public, brings out fresh juniors, and brings their families into the sport which is at the foundation of their philosophy – growing the sport. Parent Involvement is key to their philosophy. They look for parents to

be participatory as well as supportive for their child. Cathy mentions that they have several parents who had never cycled before who are now riding for fitness and even racing. This again lends itself to the foundation of their program, which is to grow the sport. Finally, Cathy did not hesitate to state that this is their business. Frazier charges for their coaching and membership services. Much like joining a soccer or swim team or taking dancing lessons, there are fees associated with it. They do not have sponsors that pay for gear, entry fees, travel or other equipment nor do they use that to motivate kids to stay with the program. They simply offer a high quality program for a competitive price.

Just as she is finishing up, Ralph calls me to come ride with one arm around another rider. I'm feeling a little tired and shout out something like not having enough insurance for something like that. (Now, there's a line you will never hear from a junior racer who doesn't have to pay for their own insurance!) Nevertheless, I let him convince me that this will be a great skill enhancer and is really easy. I can see how he knows just the right amount of encouragement to get these kids to become confident in these drills. So, he hooks me up with the national time trial champion again. I think he figures she can basically catch me if I do something stupid. I think how awful it would be if I had to write that I took out the reigning champion riding like a squirrel or something along those lines. Oh yeah of little faith (as my mother would say under her breath). It was a breeze and I challenged that young girl to a quick sprint at the end. I must have left my fast twitch

muscles somewhere during the paceline session with Henry because they never even got engaged before little Abigail was already across the line.

This ended my very fun session with Frazier Cycling. It could easily be addicting. It had been a very long time since I had ridden with structure and it was made even more exciting with all the young exuberance and laughter. I stuck around to interview a few of the kids and get their take on riding with Frazier. Unanimously, they all commented that, number one - they are faster than their parents but all their parents ride in some form or fashion, and; number two - they love it for the team. They feel like the team cares about them as a person and cares about them getting better as a cyclist. Well, that says a lot about this program and the team can definitely stand behind their results. Oh, the power of youth. The Frazier's have it and they are on a roll.

Frazier Cycling Juniors have won six junior road national championship titles and 32 junior road national medals.

- * 2008 Time Trial Men 10-12
- * 2008 Time Trial Women 13-14
- * 2009 Road Race Women 13-14
- * 2010 Road Race Men 13-14
- * 2010 Criterium Men 13-14
- * 2011 Time Trial Women 13-14

For more information on Frazier Cycling, including becoming a member or a coach, visit Fraziercycling.com.



photos by Officer Sylvester



In addition to learning about the Frazier goals and team philosophy, I had the opportunity to interview several of the great team members. What follows is a series of brief encounters with some of these terrific young bike riders. - Editor

Abigail Aldridge

FW: How old are you?

AA: I'm 13 years old. I am in the eighth grade.

FW: When did you start riding a bike?

AA: I learned to ride a bike at age seven. I have been with Frazier Cycling for four years. [Abigail has logged 11,745 club miles with Frazier.]

FW: What got you interested in Frazier Cy-

cling?

AA: Before Frazier Cycling, I had tried gymnastics, softball, swimming, and just about any other sport you can imagine. None of these sports were a good fit for me. I just didn't really enjoy them. I became interested in cycling because my Dad rode but he didn't really have a lot of time to ride. This is when I came to Frazier Cycling. I started off on a rental bike.

FM: What has been your favorite cycling moment or race?

AA: My favorite moment cycling was winning the 2011 National Time Trial Champion jersey in Augusta with Frazier Cycling. The jersey really gives you some bragging rights. A lot of glory comes with winning a title.

FW: How do you have time for all your training with schoolwork?

AA: I am home schooled so I have more time to be on the bike and do afternoon training and riding sessions. Plus, I don't have homework and I can sleep in.

FW: Can Dad keep up with you now?

AA: Ah, he is a tad slower than me now. He can't average 25 mph yet so I take it easy on him. [laugh!]

FW: Do you have a long term cycling goal?

AA: I would like to go to the Olympics and be a pro cyclist.

FW: How does Frazier Cycling help you towards these goals?

AA: If it weren't for Frazier, I probably wouldn't be a cyclist. I wouldn't have a team to ride with. Being a part of the team is the most fun and what I enjoy. Other girls have a coach but no team. The team gives me a real feel for healthy competition.

FW: How many miles do you log on your bike when training?

AA: I get in about 150 to 200 miles a week normally. I was doing about 300 miles a week before Nationals.

FW: What happens in 2012 as far as racing is concerned?

AA: I'm moving up to age 15/16. There is more competition. Laurel's in this group and she is about 6'2" so I'm a little scared.



Last summer, Ed-in-chief, Teresa Sylvester met ace free-rider, Zach Miller and his father, photographer Guy Miller at the Blankets Creek Quehl Holler pump track. Blankets Creek has undergone many exciting upgrades to its trails and free ride sections in the last couple of years. It's located NW of Atlanta off of I-575 and Sixes Road and is well worth the drive for an exhilarating day of action.



photos by Guy Miller



Guy is a professional photographer as well as a rider himself. Zach can often be found on the track with a group of his cronies. Teresa, a shy retiring sort, was so impressed with Zach's riding expertise that she introduced herself and convinced Guy to share several of his pix with the readers of 'Freewheelin'. Make the drive up to Woodstock, treat yourself to a thrilling day of riding and maybe meet Zach and his pals.





Abigail Aldridge, mentoring younger riders

Caleigh Hebert

FW: How old are you?

CH: I'm 15. This is my second season with Frazier. [Caleigh has logged 1,966 club miles with Frazier.]

FW: What brought you to Frazier?

CH: My dad decided on Frazier. [Are you seeing a pattern here?] I was doing triathlons and someone said that I really looked good on the bike. So, Dad Googled 'junior cycling' in Atlanta and found Frazier.

FW: What has been your favorite part of joining Frazier Cycling?

CH: I really like the team work exercises and overall team building. I race Cat 4 women. I like the racing.

FW: What is your favorite race so far?

CH: I like all the races. The road race is my favorite. I like toeing the line with the older ladies. [ouch!]

FW: What are your goals for next year?

CH: I want to cat-up to Cat 3. I'm looking forward to winter training. That's when we train the hardest so I'm going to put in a lot of effort.

FW: What is your favorite thing about Frazier Cycling?

CH: I want to race long term. I love it so much. I love it too much. The team really

cares about you getting better.

FW: Who is faster – you or your dad?

CH: Well, my Dad still pushes me. He competes in Ironman events. And, my mom is doing Team in Training.

FW: Better watch out Dad. That answer might change in 2012!

Davis Branyon

Davis is the newest cyclist to Frazier. He is a very shy young man and one tough interview! He races Junior 10-12.

FW: How old are you?

DB: I'm eleven. I've been with Frazier for two months. [Davis has logged 183 miles with Frazier.]

FW: How did you come to ride with Frazier?

DB: My dad decided on Frazier. We were riding quite a bit in Gainesville. Dad wanted to ride with the kids and do some racing.

FW: What has been your favorite race this year?

DB: The Georgia Cycling Gran Prix. I entered two races. I came in 2nd in the criterium and 1st in the circuit race.

FW: What is your cycling goal?

DB: I hope to go to Nationals next year.

FW: Who is your biggest competitor?

DB: Football is my biggest competitor. I really like playing football, too.

FW: What's your favorite thing about Frazier Cycling?

DB: I really like the gear and I like riding in the mountains.

Better watch out for this football star on a bike!!

Fletcher Lydick

FW: How old are you?

FL: I'm 14 years old but I'm race age 15.

FW: How long have you been with Frazier?

FL: I've been with Frazier Cycling since I was nine years old. This is my 6th year. [Fletcher has 16,097 club miles in with Frazier.]

FW: What is your favorite thing about Frazier?

FL: The people. Everyone is great. I also really like the tactics of racing.

FW: Are you faster than your dad?

FL: Ah, yes, lately I've been faster than my dad.

FW: What is your favorite race?

FL: I liked the Columbus Crit. I got 4th. I really like crits. I'm more of a sprinter but I can also climb. I don't do any time trials. I had a slow season because I broke my leg in January skiing and was out for four months.

FW: What are your goals for next year?

FL: I'm not sure, yet. I know there won't be any more sports like there used to be. This is it for me.

