

Published May 13th, 2009

Miramonte's New Cycling Team Builds Momentum

By Robin Schoettler Fox and Joel O'Camb





Senior Clara Tsao competing in the March Central Coast Invitational at Fort Ord Photo Paul Gory

At the Miramonte Cycling Club's organizational meeting in October, a small squad of enthusiastic recruits, including two senior girls, joined veteran bike racer Ben Sukys to form the new team. Sukys, a sophomore, competed in NorCal's 2008 season as a Contra Costa Composite JV rider. The Miramonte Cycling Club's inaugural season goals were pretty basic -- get established and figure out the processes and organizational details. The team, though, has achieved much more.

Reflecting on this first season, Coach Alex Smith now says, "I was very pleased... to not only be showing up, but for our team to be consistently ranking in the top 8 of the 22 Division II high schools out there."

Most recently, at the Granite Bay Invitational at Folsom Lake on April 26, the Mats competed with nearly 450 racers from 33 clubs and placed within the top eight Division II schools. Next up is the end of season league championship race on May 17th at Bogg's Mountain near Clear Lake.

The Miramonte Cycling Club is open to any Miramonte student interested in riding or racing a mountain bike. Recruiting continues throughout the off-season, as does training.

In the fall, winter and early spring, Miramonte Cycling Club members get free access to the Moraga-Rheem 24-Hour Fitness Club to participate in indoor studio cycling and stretching sessions. "These work out really well for new riders to learn what we do in a safe, warm, dry, environment," says Coach Smith. "An added bonus of the early season indoor workouts: no one gets dropped and new riders can show up without a bike."

Senior Clara Tsao joined the inaugural team as a newcomer to the sport. She's a four-year varsity track and cross-county athlete who found a welcome challenge in JV bike racing. At first, she took the narrow trails and other course hazards slowly. "The hardest part of biking is overcoming the fear of crashing and learning to bike fast downhill on rocky terrain," says Tsao, adding that she's been taking bigger spills now that her speed has increased. Facing these dangers, though, has offered a big pay-off: increased self-confidence. And there's more. Says Tsao: "The best part of biking is the adrenaline rush you feel after completing a 12 mile race."

With graduation looming, Tsao is making UCLA bike riding connections. "I already joined the cycling club," says Tsao.

For more information about the Miramonte Cycling Club go to www.miramontecyclingclub.org.

Reach the reporter at: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[back to top](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA