

# BICYCLE PAPER



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## Expanded Opportunities for All Women Cyclists



Photo courtesy of Amara Boursaw / Wheels in Focus

The Category 4 women battled nasty weather conditions and stiff competition during the 2009 Mason Lake Road Race.

By MARTHA WALSH

Women's racing is one of the fastest growing dimensions of the sport of cycling. Over the last decade, grassroots organizations, teams, and individuals have taken on the challenge of finding ways not only to make bike racing more appealing and accessible to women, but to also nurture and mentor those riders as they grow from beginners to intermediate riders to elite racers at the national level. The Pacific Northwest is a national leader in promoting women's racing, and women here have many opportunities to develop their skills as they become more involved.



Photo courtesy of Amara Boursaw / Wheels in Focus

Foremost among those opportunities are road race series. Typically incorporating about a dozen races throughout the season (March-September), and combining several disciplines (time trial, road race, criterium), series help new racers gain a broad experience. The first series ever held in the Northwest was for beginner (Category 4) riders in Washington. In 2009, this series drew 239 participants. Now there is a similar Cat 4 series in Oregon, plus a separate one in Washington for intermediate (Cat 3) racers. The Cat 4 series help add excitement for new riders with the goal of raising their

experience level so they can later upgrade to Cat 3. The Cat 3 series is a marvelous tool for giving participants a mid-level experience before upgrading to the elite ranks of the sport.

In addition to these race series, there are other opportunities for women to practice and develop race skills and learn from experienced riders and coaches; many of them are free and women-specific. The goal is to lower the entry barrier for riders just starting out in bike racing by making it fun, challenging, and hopefully creating a lifetime love of competitive cycling.

This season, the Washington Cat 4 Series welcomes Marker, a company that designs and manufactures technical outerwear, as its title sponsor. The season starts off with time trials and road races, builds to a mid-season stage race at Enumclaw, Wash., and then finishes with criteriums and circuit races. Participants earn not only series points at specific series events, but also get participation points at any USA Cycling road race in Washington. As a result, the series is often won not by the woman with the most first place finishes, but by the most consistent racer throughout the season.

SEE WOMEN'S RACING ON PAGE 4

## ADVENTURE

### E.P.I.C. – Where the Fun Begins

By RYAN STAUDECKER

*Epic: (noun) a long series of events characterized by adventures or struggle. (adj.) of unusual size or extent.*

Much of the mountain biking community has at least heard about the wide variety of distant, out of state cycling destinations. Some of these are even referred to as "dream rides." Perhaps the greatest thing about mountain biking is the diversity of one trail to the next and how each trail has its own character — whether it's the climbs, descents, its flow, length, "explorability," the technical aspects or simply the destination itself. Each and every trail

has its own personality, which is what makes off-road cycling so enjoyable. In the Northwest, we have a wide variety of terrain and climates, with diverse trail networks to match. Realizing what exists in Washington State alone is all the reason needed to get out and do some epic trail riding.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Staudecker

Ryan Staudecker

It was early May when my work buddies and I gathered at our ritual dining spot for our lunch break. The conversation, perhaps better referred to by the non-biking onlooker as banter, was of the typical variety: what bikes we were building up, the weekend ride, bragging about training,

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## PARALYMPICS

### Cycling at a Different Level

Erik Moen PT

Paralympians are an emerging group of athletes. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and United States Olympic Committee (USOC) have recently made a change in their charter to support both Olympians and Paralympians. Called the Paralympics, they are organized by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), which was established in 1989. Still in its infancy, the first official event under the IPC was the Lillehammer Winter Games in 1994. Since then, the Paralympics has experienced rapid growth, in fact, there were more countries represented at the 2004 Athens Paralympics than

all countries represented at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games. This growth has been due to larger levels of support from National Governing Bodies (NGBs).



Photo courtesy of Eric Moen

Cerebral palsy class 1, 2 and 3 riders use an adult tricycle to compete on the road.

Who participates in Paralympic Cycling?

Bicycling events have different classifications that allow athletes with similar disabilities to compete against their peers. There are both men and women's categories and athletes are placed into appropriate groups using four main classifications: Locomotor Impairments (LC), Cerebral Palsy (CP), Blind and Visually Impaired (B&VI), and Handcycle

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### BICYCLE BENEFITS

Riding your bike and getting a discount for doing so, what could be better?

PG 6



### MECHANIC'S CORNER

A few tips from a pro to help you assess and adjust your brakes.

PG 9



### MAYNARD

On what it is like to end up being part of someone else's personal race on public roadways.

PG 15