

SPORTS AND LEISURE

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Special pullout section

Tour de Terra Cotta expected to attract nearly 200 cyclists

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Close to 200 cyclists are expected to compete in this Saturday's third-annual Tour de Terra Cotta Road Race, which is on the verge of becoming part of the Ontario Cycling Association's series schedule as soon as next year.

The 108-km European-style race has its start/finish line in the village of Terra Cotta and riders will reach speeds of 75 km/h in sections of the 9-km loop, providing a scenic yet challenging route for the competitors.

A shorter-distance youth race (ages 10-16) is slated for 8 a.m., with the elite riders set to start at 10 a.m. The women's and masters race begins at 10:10 a.m. Road closures will be in effect for that area until about 1 p.m.

Terra Cotta resident Ted Webb and fellow Brampton Cycling Club member Brian Smith decided a couple of years ago to organize the event and have seen it grow from 81 riders in the inaugural run to 131 in 2006. The weather forecast for Saturday promises to draw even more competitors this year.

"Cycling's my passion and I just love to get people out on the sideroads and show them things that they haven't seen before, and it's just in our backyard," said the 74-year-old Webb, who will also be amongst the race field again this year.

"We're very fortunate to live in the area we do. I was in the U.K. this summer to watch the first two stages of the Tour de France and I couldn't ride at all. It was too dangerous out on the roads."

Webb began cycling competitively at the age of 16 in England and had his interest in racing rekindled about 20 years ago when he joined the Brampton

club, which now boasts about 320 members. He has earned medals at U.S. Senior Olympics and can be found on most Wednesdays and Saturday mornings in the spring, summer and fall leading backroads two-wheel tours of north Halton Hills.

This year's Tour de Terra Cotta is an OCA-sanctioned citizens' race and is also open to novice or young riders, who can get a \$5 one-day permit and don't necessarily have to own a road licence. Webb says the feedback from the first two years was mostly positive and the organizers have tried to allay traffic concerns by arranging for local residents to get in and out of their homes during the race if needed. He's hopeful that Terra Cotta may one day host the OCA provincial road championships, as Milton's Rattlesnake Point did last month.

"We've definitely got to look at that and next year we're looking at staging an OCA series race," Webb added. "The riders really seem to like the course because with the dozen nine-kilometre laps, they can come back to their entourage fairly quickly if they need something. And it's enjoyable for spectators because there are riders constantly coming through the start/finish area."

Continental breakfast, lunch on the grill and other delectables will be available at The Forge. Proceeds from the food sales will go to the Terra Cotta Community Centre, which just received a grant of \$100,000 from the Trillium Foundation.

Free parking will be available at King St. & Heritage Rd. Approach from the King St. & Mississauga Rd. intersection.

For more info visit the website www.bramptoncyclingclub.com.

(Eamonn Maher can be reached at emaher@independentfreepress.com).



Ted Webb, of Terra Cotta, will be one of the close to 200 cyclists who will take part in tomorrow's (Saturday's) Tour de Terra Cotta. The 74-year-old says the European-style race will cover 108 kilometres.

Submitted photo

Raiders open season Saturday

The Georgetown Raiders will open their 2007-08 OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League campaign against the West Division-champion Hamilton Red Wings at Alcott Arena tomorrow night (Saturday).

While the Raiders do have some superb offensive prospects in rookies Andy Bathgate and Lukas Ciotti, nine of their

top 10 scorers from 2006-07 have moved on, leaving 20-year-old sniper Matt Carter as one of only four possible returnees

There is also some question about whether Carter will be back as he has had an excellent camp with the OHL's Owen Sound Attack.

Game time is 7:30 p.m.

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