

SPORTS & LEISURE

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Pineview power

The Halton District School Board's elementary Junior Zone Track & Field meet was held at Milton District High School last week for students in Grades 3-6. At left, Pineview Grade 3 student Brett Bayley (centre) powers past Robert Baldwin's Adam Kain for the race victory in this boys' 200m heat. In the photo at right, Grade 5 Pineview student Emmersen Toone blows by the competition to win her heat in the 75m event.

Photos by Graham Paine
Metroland West Media Group



Major road cycling race planned for downtown

By EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Downtown Georgetown will take on the look of a stage on the Tour de France on Sunday, June 26 when a major cycling race takes over the streets for a few hours.

The Canadian Road Cycling Championships & Festival are running a series of races in Halton Region June 23-July 3, organized by the Toronto-based Midweek Cycling Club, and two will take place in Halton Hills.

It's estimated that 5,000 to 10,000 spectators will attend the Georgetown Criterium, a 1.1-km course that will head right up Main St. and include a punishing 13-degree grade hill climb on Park Ave.

Some of Canada's top riders are expected to participate and a number of age group races are on the schedule. Streets in the downtown core will be closed from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and a festival featuring BMX demos, a safety clinic, various vendors, a youth cycling skills challenge and buskers are planned for the enclosed area in the Back St. parking lot.

Admission is free, although youths must have parental permission to participate in festival cycling events.

"There's been a lot of interest in this race from the cycling community because this really resembles a European-style course," said Regional Wards 3&4 Councillor Jane Fogal.

"The national championships is a qualifier for the Olympics and the national

team and it will be a great opportunity for the town because it obviously fits in well with our cycling master plan to get more people active and understand the rules of the road. There's a safety aspect to it as well and we just thought, why don't we do a festival to go along with it?"

Town staff and the Halton Regional Police have been working closely with race organizers with respect to road closures and course safety measures and the event will run rain or shine.

Downtown residents will be able to drive to or away from their homes between races and pedestrian traffic wait times to cross closed streets are expected to be no longer than a minute.

The Midweek Cycling Club has indicated it would like to run the race again here next year, but Frank Prospero, the Town's recreation supervisor, community development, said that a thorough review of the inaugural event will be made before committing to another one.

"It's similar to the Olympic Torch in December of '09 coming to town at set times and we've started to build a program around that," Prospero said.

"This is the first time we've done something like this, so to some degree we're treading water and just waiting to see how it plays out. I've walked the course and I'm excited to see how they're going to do coming up Park Avenue. It'll be a tough climb and it's a really neat course and I think this has tremendous potential for the town to bring a lot of people into the downtown for the day. We're encour-

aging people to cycle to the event—they can park their vehicle at the Civic Centre and bike downtown."

A "stop-and-lock" service—like a coat check—will be provided by local service clubs to allow attendees to walk around the festival site and race course.

Criterium races are usually held on a short course and the duration is determined by a number of laps or total time as the race progresses. The winner is the first competitor to cross the finish line without

having been lapped.

The Georgetown course was vetted by Denise Kelly, a Glen Williams resident who is the national women's team development coach with the Canadian Cycling Association.

As well as the criterium race in Georgetown, a para-cyclists' road race that is also part of the national championships will take place Saturday, July 2 in Limehouse, with a nine-kilometre loop of the area serving as the course.

Warning: Road closures will occur June 26

You can't say you weren't warned well in advance.

When the Canadian Road Cycling Championships & Festival come to Georgetown later this month, the downtown core will not be an automobile-friendly place from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, June 26, with a few roads closed completely to traffic and others having limited access.

Between races, residents will be permitted by police to get in and out of their homes. Organizers are expecting between 5,000 and 10,000 people to attend the free event, with walking or cycling the suggested methods of transportation.

Town officials have already contacted most residents in the area, but with the Big Daddy Festival set for the Father's Day weekend, Town of Halton Hills Councillor Jane Fogal surmised the cycling races will garner more attention in the days leading up to the event.

"We've had one public meeting to in-

form people what this is about and what to expect and we didn't get a lot of response," she said.

"We want to let people know that the roads will be closed so they're not caught by surprise. We'll be sending out letters and advertising in the newspaper as well. There's been no pushback and all that we've heard from businesses downtown is that yes, they'll be open and they plan to take advantage of the increased traffic."

The 1.1-km course will cover a loop that heads westbound on Main St. South, turns right onto Back St. and around to the steep Park Ave. climb back to the downtown core.

A festival featuring vendors, interactive demos and buskers where the Saturday's Farmers' Market is usually held will run in conjunction with the races.

"Stop-and-lock" bike drop areas will be managed by local service clubs so that attendees can store their bikes for the day.



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