



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Redden aims to climb that mountain



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Chrissy Redden is chasing some lofty goals in mountain biking. Among them is a trip to the 2000 Summer Olympics in Australia.

By **STEVE LeBLANC***The Champion*

Reaching the top of the mountain is just a figure of speech for most elite level athletes.

For Campbellville's Chrissy Redden though, it's as much a regular routine as an ultimate dream.

The 32-year-old is a professional mountain biker — one of the best female cyclists around, both nationally and across the globe.

However, Redden won't be completely content until she's earned the top prize in her field — namely, a trip to the Olympics.

In all likelihood this honour will be forthcoming for the local racer, who sits second on the Canadian team and has more than met the criteria to go to the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney, Australia.

But in the world of sports, where guarantees are unheard of and surprises run rampant, things can and do change in a year.

Redden, who trains up to 25 hours a week, is working hard to make sure that doesn't happen.

"Currently, I'm on the team going to Sydney but the final trials won't be until a month or two before (the Olympics) so this is a big year coming up," she said, during a brief layoff from international competition. "In fact, it's the biggest of my life."

So far it's also been her most successful.

With just three of eight World Cup series events remaining, Redden ranks eighth on the global circuit. This is the highest placing ever for the local racer, one of few mountain bikers in Canada who enjoy full-time sponsorship. Her financial backing comes from Ritchey and Yahoo! — a bicycle manufacturer and Internet search business respectively.

Combined, they're the benefactors of Team Ritchey Yahoo!

Redden — among their brightest stars — started off with a bang this season, placing fourth in Napa, California and then fifth on the Olympic course in Sydney.

She recalled, "It's kind of a rolling course that's technical and physically demanding. The event pretty much included just those riders with hopes for the Olympics, so I was really happy to do that well in such a strong field."

Subsequent efforts have been impressive, though not quite so spectacular. A number of variables — including a flat tire and loose terrain — kept her out of the top 10 during stops in Spain, Germany and England.

Redden has a bit of a break now before resuming the world tour next month, at which time she'll look to move up the rankings and hopefully close the gap between herself and series leader Alison Sydor of Vancouver.

The West Coast cyclist remains Canada's best hope for an Olympic medal next year — followed closely by Redden.

"Because Canada is so strong in mountain biking, we'll likely send three competitors to the Olympics, the most allowed by any country," said Redden.

"I'd really like to do more than just go to Olympics. I'd love to medal. This may seem too big of a dream, but then seven years ago when I first started racing I never thought I'd get this far.

"If there's one thing I've learned, it's that anything is possible if you're willing to pay the price."

Redden has done just that and seems intent on upping her payments as the 2000 Olympics grow closer.

Until then she has her sights set on finishing top five on the World Cup series and earning a similar placing at the World Championships, slated for September in Sweden.

Who's who camp list

Draft Choice will be the first choice for Milton's hockey stars this summer.

The summer camp program's instructors list will read like a who's who of the local scene.

Darren "Mini" Haydar, Scott Bertoli and Doug Janjevich will all be offering insight and experience to aspiring players.

The NCAA Division I trio will join coaches Wayne Gagne and Joey Pedulla. The latter was with a German professional team and toiled with both the Merchants and Brampton Capitals in his junior years.

Draft Choice is one of the more inten-

sive developmental programs around. Among other things, the camp utilizes spring boards and parallel bars to teach some of the finer points of the game such as balance and positioning.

There are a dozen one-week camps in a handful of communities between July 12 to September 3.

The Milton camp, for seven to 14-year-olds, runs from August 16 to 20 and still has a few spaces available.

The \$450 per player cost includes 30 hours of on-ice training. To register, or for more information, call (905) 452-7205.



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