

Marshall hopes to cycle his way to the top of the mountain

Race strategy and rigorous training paid off for mountain bike racer

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Sports Editor

Dan Marshall likes to tackle the ski hills. But unlike most people who take to the slopes, the 24-year-old Markham resident goes when the hills are barren of snow during the spring and summer months.

And he does it with fervor on a mountain bike.

A mountain bike racer for the last seven years who turned professional two seasons ago, Marshall is experiencing a smooth ascent up the hill and shows no signs of going downhill just yet.

Since turning pro, Marshall has been a top-30 competitor.

But this season on the Ontario Cup circuit has the makings of being his best yet. In two races this season, Marshall came away with two strong showings, a 14th and seventh-place effort.

Satisfied with those two performances, Marshall revealed he's done nothing out of the ordinary to account for his improvement.

"I developed a race strategy and it's worked very well," he said. "And I've done a lot of offseason preparation."

Part of that offseason training, which took place from November to April, involved losing weight and increasing his physical strength.

With the current season well under way, Marshall notes he logs anywhere from 14 to 24 hours a week.

The hours, intensity and focus of training, he said, change all through the year, from week to week and day to day.

"I have five different bikes for different training. Some only get used during certain parts of the year," he pointed out.

A DEMANDING SPORT

A physically and mentally demanding sport where each event lasts anywhere from two to three hours, the races conducted on ski hills where the riders go up and down hills and encounter obstacles that challenge their technical skill to varying degrees.

Some courses, Marshall cited, are more difficult than others.

"Horseshoe Valley, where I raced on May 7, consisted of climbing and descending the ski hill three times per lap, with a brief flat section most of the way through the lap," he recalled.

The climbs at Horseshoe were long and sometimes steep, but the descents were fast and technical.

"For example, at the next race there is a five- to 10-foot drop off during the second half of the lap. There are a lot of roots and drop offs and very tight, steep descents on most courses."

"As far as intensity goes, my heart rate monitor usually reads in the high 170s (beats per minute) to the high 190s during a race of 2-1/2 hours. For anyone who knows their heart rate



Markham mountain bike racer Dan Marshall, 24, is off to a good start this season in the Ontario Cup circuit, finishing 14th and seventh in his first two outings.

when they exercise, they know that's very high. It's been said that what distinguishes a pro from an expert-level rider is pain tolerance. I don't know about that. But it does hurt a lot sometimes."

Acknowledging that mountain bike racing is not exactly a high profile sport in terms of earning prize money, Marshall has support from two companies including Chain Reaction Bicycles and The Works Fitness and Aerobics Centre.

However, he says there's never enough to truly offset the major costs of racing.

Marshall cites that he goes through a bike every year, each one worth more than \$2,500.

Other costs incurred include race entry fees, which get as high as \$55 per race, replacing bike parts, racing equipment, hotels, meals and transportation to races.

"What I'd like to do is to get \$10,000 in sponsors next season to be able to continue to race and not go into debt. Mountain bike racing is not a sport for those wanting to get rich," he said.

A personal trainer when he's not racing or teaching aspiring mountain bike racers, Marshall has a busy summer racing schedule lined up as he will be in Quebec next week to race in a Canada Cup series and then return to Ontario before going to the national championships in Hull, Quebec.

Bantams win Oshawa tourney

SPORTS DIGEST

Keith Hubley drove in two runs and scored twice while Kevin Hayward scored two runs to propel the Stouffville Jones Pools bantams to a 9-4 win over North Fredericksberg in the title game of last weekend's Oshawa fastball tournament.

Greg Dalgarno was the winning pitcher. Stouffville reached the final with a 7-2 win over the Scarborough Wolverines in their first game.

Mike Wilson drove in two runs and scored twice while Dalgarno picked up the win.

Facing Chelsey in their second game, Stouffville got a two-run seventh-inning homer from Rod Assinck and got runs from Mike Dambrosio in the eighth inning and Nick Dambrosio in the ninth to emerge with a 4-3 win.

Stouffville then advanced to the final with a 7-2 win over Central Frontenac.

Andrew Frank scored once and had two RBIs while Dale Boardway scored twice. Assinck picked up the win.

Cougars tame opposition in London

Exploding for seven runs in the first inning, the

Markham Cougars girls defeated Forest City London 13-1 in the novice tier one division final of the recent Dorothy Hill London Lightning Fastball Tournament.

In its first game against the Windsor Lady Expos, the Cougars rode the arm of Joanna Kyriazis as she tossed a one-hitter to lead Markham to a 12-1 win.

A timely two-run double by Meghan Sullivan and run-scoring triple by Christina Campoli propelled the Cougars to a 3-1 win over the third-ranked Kitchener Classics in their second game.

Facing the London Lightning in their third game, the Cougars trailed 3-2 in the fifth inning before exploding for six runs in their half of the



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