



Published: 02.14.2008

24 hrs. on a bike: Are you up to it?

> Well, find out Saturday at Oracle race <

By Andrea Rivera

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

A 24-hour mountain bike race outside Oracle is expected to attract more than 3,000 participants, volunteers and spectators this weekend.

Participants in the Kona 24 Hours in the Old Pueblo race — which starts noon Saturday and ends at noon Sunday — will tackle the 17-mile mountain bike course as members of a team or as solo riders. Riders attempt to complete as many laps around the course as possible during the 24 hours.

To accommodate the influx of people, organizers erect a 24-Hour Town complete with campsites, food, massages, a late-night fire-theatrics show and a mountain bike expo.

"It's over the top. What you would hope you would find at a place like this to make it the most fun experience ever," said race director Todd Sadow.

Sadow is president of Epic Rides, which puts on the 24-hour race and several other races in Arizona.

The race benefits several organizations, including the Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition — which promotes the economic development of old mining towns in eastern Pinal County — the Tri-Community Food Bank in Mammoth, the Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists and the Arizona Trail, an 800-mile trail from Mexico to Utah.

Upward of \$16,000 to \$18,000 will be donated to the organizations, Sadow said. The food bank should receive about a ton of food.

>> Five questions with race director Todd Sadow

Q Why did you start a 24-hour mountain bike race?

A This whole thing started just because this was the next fun thing to do for mountain biking. I think, partially on the side, I wanted to get into the mountain bike industry. I just finished college. I was working in corporate America. I really felt like this might be a foot in the door. I realized as it grew that this is actually not just a foot in the door. It's a job.

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Q. What will riders encounter out on the trails?

A. The trail has a really good flow to it. It's not a very technically demanding trail. However, the faster you go the more technical it becomes because it's lined with cactus. As far as what they should expect, there's one sustained climb. There's a lot of little, short grunts — smaller climbs. And there's a really groovy single trek

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There's a great descent into the finish. The ultimate end point. It cuts right through the camping area. As far as riding goes, it's quality riding.

Q. Why is this event one of the most exciting mountain biking events today?

A. It is the biggest 24-hour mountain bike race in America and one of the biggest in the world. With an event of that size and caliber, it tends to be one of the more exciting.

Q. Are solo riders crazy?

A. They are so talented and probably a little left of center. There's going to be 200 soloists. We are not forcing anyone to ride, and not everyone is riding non-stop. The people that win the solo category will indeed go out there and race for 24 hours non-stop.

They'll have a crew. They'll have second bicycles so they can drop one off and have it (serviced) while they're riding another lap on another bike. Depending on what their strategy is, they might go lap after lap after lap non-stop and they will stop for 10 minutes between each lap.

If you go

What: Kona 24 Hours in the Old Pueblo mountain bike race.

Directions as provided by race organizers: From Interstate 10, exit at Ina Road. Travel east five miles to North Oracle Road (Arizona 77). Keep right to stay on 77 toward Biosphere 2 and the town of Oracle. At milepost 96, turn left on Willow Springs Road. Go about 9.3 miles on the dirt road to the left turn. The left turn will cut back and downward continuing toward power lines. From the left turn, go about 1.6 miles to the Start/Finish line.

Directions also can be found online at www.epicrides.com.

When: The race is from noon Saturday to noon Sunday. The 24-hour Town is open all day Friday.

Cost: \$5 plus two cans of food.

● Contact reporter Andrea Rivera at 806-7737 or arivera@azstarnet.com.

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