

Intermountain Cup

By Kevin Day

The State of Utah is arguably one of the best places available to those with a passion for mountain biking. From the rolling sandstone of southern Utah to the high alpine singletrack of the Wasatch Mountains, Utah has a vast variety of trails for all riders. One way to experience these trails is through the sport of mountain biking. Utah is known for its wide array of venues available to host world-class events, including mountain bike races. Every year hundreds of cycling enthusiasts participate in one or more of the mountain west's most challenging, the Intermountain Cup mountain bike race series.

The Intermountain Cup consists of twelve races that start in early March and last through the middle of August. Ed Chauner, who has been the series promoter since 1992, says that the average attendance is around 300 racers in many categories of age groups and abilities each weekend. Each event in this the series is unique in its location and technical demand on cyclists. Utah offers a great variety of cycling venues and many of the races are held at Utah's most famous ski resorts. The Intermountain Cup race held in June at Deer Valley Resort in Park City utilizes the same racecourse that is used in the NORBA National mountain bike race series in July. This methodical race schedule, created and promoted by Chauner, gives Utah riders who compete on the national level a great "home court" advantage.

A runner since his high school days, Chauner began cycling in '85 as a means to rehab following knee surgery and was immediately addicted to the sport. He promoted his first race in 1988, the Annual Mountain Bout at Snowbird that still remains in the series today. Ed took up racing himself and went on to compete in the mountain bike World Championships in '93 in Metabief, France and '94 in Vail. With plenty of experience under his belt, Chauner and his wife Sue started promoting and continued to successfully host the Intermountain Cup Series since 1992.

Over the years Chauner continues to modify the series to meet the ever-changing physical demands, skills and ages of the racers. When the series started, mountain biking was primarily a sport for younger racers. Few older riders were aware of the opportunity to challenge their skills against local competition of similar ages. As the racer population grew older, Chauner added age categories to include: 35+, 40+ and now 50+ and 57+. Since the start of the series he has also added 9 & Under, Clydesdale, Single-Speed Pro Women, Sport Men 30-34 and Sport Men 35-39. At all Intermountain Cup events registration provides racers a variety of choices in age range and skill levels in which to compete.

Many of the cyclists that race in the series have been competing for years. After starting as non-competitive riders, like Chauner, they quickly became addicted to the sport. From their emerging enthusiasm for mountain biking grew the desire to test their skill and stamina against others that share the same passion. "Not only is it a terrific sport to be involved in, it's a wonderful atmosphere" professional racer Kevin Day states. "The people that stage and compete in the Intermountain Cup are as good as it gets. Ed Chauner runs a great race and the competition in every category is top notch." Day, 28, has been racing mountain bikes for 15 years and credits most of his success throughout his cycling career to the experience he gained while racing in the Intermountain Cup. "It's easy to get to know people when I'm at the races. I socialize with my competition before and after the race and that's where racer can gain a great amount of knowledge about equipment, nutrition, training and tactics."

Ed and Sue Chauner continue to demonstrate the ability to promote family oriented events that test the strength and will of local racers. With the increased level of awareness of Intermountain Cup Races, the participation in the beginner category is always growing and racers are rapidly progressing through the competitive race scene. The Intermountain Cup race series is a great place to spend your Saturdays with the family enjoying the beautiful backdrop and fresh air of the Utah mountains. For more information including a schedule of events please visit www.intermountaincup.com.