

ECCLESTONE CYCLE MOUNTAIN BIKE TEAM WINS SEVEN PROVINCIAL MEDALS

Allison Dawes

The Muskoka mountain biking event of the year came and went this past weekend at the Buckwallow Cycling Centre. Approximately 530 racers took to the trails at Buckwallow near Gravenhurst to compete in Chico Racing's Ontario Cup Provincial Race #5. With ideal weather and perfect race conditions, spectators and racers alike were treated to a fabulous event. For all of you that missed this spectacular time, we have our fingers crossed that Buckwallow will become an annual stop for the provincial race circuit.

The 8.5 kilometre course was touted by many racers, local and abroad, as being the most lively and entertaining track in the series. With only small climbs in comparison to other provincial courses, Buckwallow proved less challenging on the physical scale, but kept riders on their toes technically with loads of Canadian Shield and rugged roots cropping up at nearly every corner. There were more than a few thrilling spills and tumbles, leaving some racers with souvenirs of their provincial challenge at Buckwallow.

Racers who sprinted right off the start-line were rewarded for their efforts by staying out of the traffic that entailed in the technical single track. Without doubt, local riders were at a distinct advantage. With intimate knowledge of the trails, and ample opportunity to pre-ride the course, local technically superior riders took to the provincial podium more often than not. In fact local racers brought home a total of 14 medals, 7 of those riders racing for team Ecclestone Cycle.

A total of 15 riders from Team Ecclestone Cycle took to the provincial race course, and a fantastic day was had by all. With numerous personal bests, smiles all around, and bringing home heaps of hardware, Team and Shop owner Ian Dawes couldn't be more proud. "It was a truly excellent day. Perfect weather, a great course, a super event, and all right here in our own backyard. With an outstanding performance by all our racers, we couldn't have hoped for a better day!"

Ecclestone Cycle medal winners include: Nancy Kemp (Beginner Women, 15km, 2nd), Jen Rowe (Try-an-O-Cup women, 17km, 1st), Jeff Lemon (Junior Sport Men, 25.5 km, 3rd), Allison Dawes (Senior Sport Women, 17km, 1st), Lisa Johnson (Master Sport Women, 17km 1st), Scott Josiak (Master Sport Men 30-39, 25.5km, 3rd), Bob Philp (Master Sport Men 55-59, 25.5km, 1st).

An Ecclestone Cycle Team honourable mention goes out to Andrew Luks. Between moving to Bracebridge, and starting a new dental practice from scratch along with teammate Lisa Johnson, Andrew has managed to squeeze countless hours of training into his busy schedule. Andrew captured a person best on Sunday with an 8th place finish in the Master Expert Men 30-39 category, racing a gruelling 4 laps of the course, a total of 34 kilometres. Congratulations Andrew!

Other Ecclestone Cycle Team honourable mentions go out to Ian Dawes and Jeff Lemon. To those of you who have visited the purple bike shop, you have probably met both of these mountain biking characters. Ian and Jeff are responsible for keeping Muskoka's bicycles in fine tune, and in their spare time enjoy the extra challenge of racing single-speed bikes. During the provincials at Buckwallow, Jeff spun his single-speed into 3rd place, while Ian pulled through with a personal best for the season of 10th place in the Master Sport 30-39 division.

Tip your caps for other local riders: Greg Edgar of Parry Sound who won the Short Track event on Saturday, as well as a podium finish in the prestigious category of Senior Elite Men, Shannon Everest of Huntsville took top honours in her category of Junior Cadet/Expert Women, and siblings Michelle and Chris Everest stood atop the podium in their respective categories.

In closing, the Ontario Cup Provincial Race at the Buckwallow Cycling Centre was an absolute success! Many thanks to all the volunteers who donated their time and skills to make this event possible. Thank you to Mike McLaughlin of Buckwallow for hosting the event, and to Adam and Sean Ruppel of Chico Racing who brought the event to Muskoka. We hope to see you all again next year. Until then...happy spins.