

Central Susquehanna Hammers Mountain Bike Team

Mission:

We exist to encourage and empower youth through mountain biking by developing strong bodies, minds, character, and community. Our goals include:

- Introducing kids to a potential lifetime sport
- Developing a love for the outdoors
- Fostering stewardship of our trails
- Helping kids accomplish more than they thought possible

Governing Body and Structure:

NICA (National Interscholastic Cycling Association) is the national governing body over all the state leagues. We compete in PICL

(Pennsylvania Interscholastic Cycling League) and are one of over 40 teams from around the State of Pennsylvania. Core values of NICA include:

- Inclusivity-There are no tryouts
- Equity-There are no bench warmers
- Strong Body, Mind, and Character

Team Structure: The Hammers are a Co-ed, regional team open to students in 6th through 12th grade. We have members from several school districts in the area, including homeschooled riders, on our school-based and composite teams. We practice together and race together. While team members do not have to race, many students enjoy the experience of participating in our camping / race weekends.



TeamSnap is used for all team related scheduling and communication. Please indicate your athlete's availability for each event so we can plan accordingly and have the appropriate number of coaches present.

Season Structure: The season officially begins on July 1 with regular practices on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Early on in the season, we focus heavily on the foundational skills of mountain biking, preparing newer riders to be able to safely ride mountain bike trails. Saturday practices are generally longer group rides.

After the first few weeks of the season, we focus more on trail riding and fitness, geared toward the race season. While we continue to work on technical skills, we also schedule a lot of fun trail rides and "time trials" to gauge progression in fitness on a standard course.

Practice locations vary, but in general our practices are held at Hopewell Park, Geisinger Stewardship Forest Trails, and on the property of some of the coaches.

Practice Times: When the season starts July 1 and through at least the beginning of the races, practices are held from 6-7:30 pm. As the season progresses, starting and ending times will be shifted appropriately to accommodate the earlier sunsets. Practice times during the season can be found on Team Snap. Weekend ride times are in the morning and will range from about 2-3 hours.

Racing: Riders are encouraged to participate in races, but they are not required to. Races are held on Saturdays (usually middle school) and Sundays (usually high school) with opportunities for pre-riding the course and supporting teammates both days. Riders race against others of their same grade and gender. In general, our team will camp together at a campground near the race on race weekends. Those who do not wish to camp are welcome to stay in nearby hotels.

2022 Event Schedule:

- 9/10-11 Granite Hill Campground, Gettysburg, PA
- 9/17-18 Boyce Park, Pittsburgh, PA
- 9/24-25 Johnstown, PA
- 10/1-2 Blue Mountain, Palmerton, PA
- 10/15-16 Fair Hill, MD
- 10/21-23 Raystown, PA (not a race)

Cost:

-\$220-320 League Registration depending on which registration option you choose (season fees with or without state level events.)

-\$40 Hammers Team fees which may be defrayed by fundraising.

-Approx. \$55 Jersey costs

We understand that this is a hefty sign up fee. For this money riders are getting four months of coaching, race fees (if you choose), adventure weekend fees, insurance coverage, etc. **We do not want cost to be a barrier to anyone who wants to join the team and give it a try.** If you need financial assistance to make it happen, that is okay. Just contact one of the coaches at the bottom of this information sheet and we can work it out. Our sponsors have been generous, allowing us to have need-based scholarship funds available. **No rider or family will be turned away due to cost or inability to obtain an appropriate mountain bike.**

What Kind of Bike do I Need?

All riders need to have a “bike shop” quality bike to participate. A “bike shop” quality bike is one that can be fixed on the trail with a standard mountain biking multi-tool. Most department store bikes do not fit this requirement including some from large sports-specific stores such as Dick’s Sporting Goods. If you plan to buy your son/daughter a bike to participate with the Hammers, please reach out to one of the coaches for help before you do so, or visit with our local bike shop and supporter Ski Valley for assistance. **NICA riders can often receive a substantial discount on Kona, Jamis, and Trek bikes.** It is **HIGHLY ENCOURAGED** that the bike have front suspension, reputable components (shifters, derailleurs, cogs, cassette, etc.), and hydraulic disc brakes. **BIKE CHECKS ARE REQUIRED** prior to

participation. Ski Valley has offered to perform this service to our riders for free.

What if I have no bike and/or I can’t afford this sport. . . but I want to participate?

A suitable quality bike will be made available to any family who does not currently have a bike or ability to purchase one prior to the season. This will most likely be a Danville Area School District mountain bike. In situations where none of the above is a workable solution, the Hammers will help sponsor the cost of getting an appropriate mountain bike. *No racer or family will be turned away due to cost or inability to obtain an appropriate mountain bike.*

Teen Trail Corps

In addition to riding and racing, you’ll have the chance to give back to your local trails. Earn individual and team points by helping maintain trails and even become a Teen Trail Corps Captain by giving your time towards bike-related advocacy activities.

How Do I Join the Team?

To join the team or to become a coach, simply go to the Hammers webpage at www.hammersmtb.com and click on “Get Involved.” Just enter your information there and we will send you invitation emails to join two websites:

- NICA Pitzzone (Database for all NICA Leagues and Insurance)
- TeamSnap (App used to coordinate team schedule and communications)

Want More Information?

- **Website:** www.hammersmtb.com
- **Facebook:** Central Susquehanna Scholastic Mountain Bike Team
- **Call:** Dave Decoteau (570) 854-2437
Matt McElroy (570) 854-7898