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Team of the Month: Mesa State College

## Mesa State College Cycling

Essay by Nate Keck, Head Coach

The Mesa State Cycling Team may not be a new team to the Rocky Mountain Conference or to the Nationals start list but there are lots of new things going on within the team. To begin with the team is enjoying their first full year functioning under the athletics department much like any other varsity sport. The team has now begun to recruit new riders and offer scholarships to past riders who have been deserving of some financial assistance. They have also become more prominent within the community as the team has received the support of several new sponsors. In addition to this the team is also starting to reap the benefits of more physiological testing and better training since the debut of Mesa State College's recently constructed state of the art human performance lab.



However, all of this change has not come easy or without a price. For example, when the team was thinking about making the jump from a club sport to a "varsity" program many people didn't see the need for such a change and understandably so, as the team had been former national champions in 2000 and produced some great riders such as Ross Schnell. Nevertheless, when the dust settled it was decided that the benefits of functioning under the athletics department far outweighed the cons. With this change to the athletics department the team has become more credible within the community and as a



result they have received much more local support and sponsorships.



Furthermore, the team was also able to bring on a dedicated past racer to act as not only a coach but also to fulfill the rolls of a director sportif for the team. This has allowed the athletes to focus on their individual educational obligations as well as training. This has also helped to take the stress off of the athletes financially as they no longer have to drive personal vehicles, pay for gas, lodging or entry fees out of their own pockets.

With all of these changes going on the team has risen back to the top of the collegiate standings once again as the team was able to race at Track Nationals for the first time ever and placed a respectable 2nd. Mesa State was also able to race at Mountain Bike Nationals and take a worthy 6th place without any women racers on the team. Additionally the team also plans on racing at both Collegiate Cyclo-cross and Road Nationals later this year where they will be looking to flex some muscle and post some great results! For more information on the team please see their web site

[here](#) or [contact Nate Keck](#).

*Every month we select a team to highlight in this section, either randomly or as recognition for recent outstanding achievements.*

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