

Published September 17, 2008

Leading the Pack

By Toby Wendtland



Colin McKenna Photo Toby Wendtland

Racing against other cyclists, some nearly half his age, Colin McKenna pushes himself to stay with the pack over 20 miles of rolling road courses. Having raced competitively for only a year, the 61-year-old Lafayette resident is new to the world of amateur cycling and the Taleo Racing Team; however, he is already moving up in the national rankings and is currently ranked fourth in Category 5 (first-year racers) in the 60-plus age group. McKenna is also ranked in the top third of all amateur riders nationally regardless of age group. Despite this initial success, McKenna considers each race a new learning experience and a chance to help him achieve his best. On Sept. 6 he took part in the Warnerville Time Trial, finishing third in the race - his first podium finish. He views his achievements humbly. "For me, (cycling) is more like the talking dog. It isn't a matter of how well it talks, but the wonder that it talks at all," he says. For McKenna and his family, being active is a way of life. McKenna recalls that when he started dating his wife, "All of our first dates were bike rides." All four of their children, ages 28, 25, 9 and 6, have been active in competitive sports. Beginning as a swimmer, McKenna was also a serious runner and skydived at 18. Knee injuries and subsequent surgeries over the years led him to cycling and mountain bike riding at age 40. McKenna is a doctor specializing in addiction medicine at the Vallejo Medical Center. A flexible work schedule allows him to keep up with rigorous weekly training while keeping family time a top priority. McKenna and his coach have devised a workout schedule that calls for rides during the week ranging from one to six hours as well as workout time in the gym. Like other sports, cycling has its inherent dangers. Four years ago, McKenna's son Andrew was riding his bike home from work when he was involved in a hit and run accident with a vehicle. Andrew is recovering but still needs physical therapy. McKenna himself broke his neck three years ago while mountain biking. Riding with the pack in road races is fraught with challenges: "It's sort of like playing chess at 30 miles per hour. You're all playing on the same board," McKenna says. On the horizon for McKenna is the Beat the Clock Time Trial on Sept. 20 and the Mount Diablo Challenge on Oct. 5. McKenna would like to remind the Lamorinda community to be mindful of cyclists on the road.



Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA