

Ralston Valley High School Mountain Bike Team

Rider/Parent Handbook



2020 Season*

**The one that looked different during the COVID-19 pandemic*

Mountain Bike Team at RVHS – The Program at a Glance

Ralston Valley High School provides the opportunity for riders to compete and/or ride in mountain biking as a team/club through the Colorado High School Cycling League (CHSCL.) The league (coloradomtb.org) features a race series from August to October with over 2000 athletes from Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico competing. This is different from Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) sanctioned sports or activities, such as football and soccer. The Ralston Valley Mountain Bike Team ([RVMTB](#)) offers multiple levels of opportunity to participate from the novice rider to the highly competitive experienced racer. We are a “no cut” sport and offer opportunities for kids of all skill levels. Riders can choose the level of participation they are comfortable with. Coaches will work with riders to place them in an appropriate riding category based on their skill, riding ability and commitment level. Riders from other high schools in the area that do not have their own team may join RV MTB. Racing in the CHSCL is not a requirement but is highly encouraged. Finally, the RVMTB Team at its core is a race team. We are registered as a club at the school, but we function as a race team with the hope of racing competitively with other schools in the region.

The typical mountain biking season is in the Fall with four races (on every other weekend) and a State Championship race that riders must qualify to participate in. Team training may start in April with 8 training events allowed through July 31. August 1 is the opening to the regular season. Beginning in August we hold training rides up to 3 times per week on Monday and Wednesday, with optional Saturday training rides in between race weekends.

To participate with [RVMTB](#) you will need to complete the team registration form, pay the team fee, register and pay the league fee in NICA Pit Zone, complete the CHSCL waiver, complete the Jeffco School District release form and then turn them into the Head Coach. The Ralston Valley Mountain Bike Team (RVMTB) receives no funding from the school or the district. All funding comes from the riders, parents/guardians and fundraising efforts by the Ralston Valley Mountain Bike Team Booster Club. If you plan to participate and race in the league events, you must also register with the league and pay the annual non-refundable fee.

Coaches’ Mission, Philosophy and Vision

Coaches for RVMTB consist of teachers, parents, and friends - all who share a common love for mountain biking and working with kids to develop strong minds, bodies, and character. Every coach who works with your child has been highly trained and background checked. EVERY COACH POSITION IS VOLUNTEER - why all caps? Why the big deal? Please realize that every individual has put in at a minimum 100 hours during the season, including 10 hours of training to become a Level 1 Coach to up to 50 hours to become a Level 3 Coach. Coaches pay all their own costs for transportation to practices and races, including lodging. All coaches are trained in CPR and first aid. Coaches are also trained in child abuse, safety, etc. In other words your kids are in good hands. *A final note about coaches as volunteers - our coaches have full time jobs and we do our best to handle the sometimes overwhelming job of running this organization but we are all human and at times miss an email or struggle to get back to a parent in a timely manner. Please have patience and show kindness. Riders reading this please thank your coach every ride for being there for you and dedicating their time to your development; it really does make it worthwhile when we see your smiles and experience the excitement with you.* - Coach Pfitzer

Expectations

As a member of RVMTB, riders at all levels are held to high standards and expectations of conduct both on and off the trail/dirt.

Riders:

- Should be active in attending team rides and other team events such as team dinners and trail maintenance days. Attendance goes a long way in providing a team atmosphere!
- Provide their own bike, helmet, hydration system (water bottle or Camelback) and other racing gear.
- Should show up “ready to ride” meaning their bike is in proper working condition, they have eaten something before, and have brought food and water for the ride. They also have the appropriate tools and supplies to do basic trail repairs, ie: change a flat, break and repair a chain, suspension adjustment.
- Follow the instructions of coaches and ride leaders in order to maintain a safe environment.
- Follow all trail and road riding etiquette.
- Maintain solid grades. We are not a CHSAA sanctioned sport, but the expectations remain that riders have no more than (1) D or F grade to compete. If a rider becomes ineligible for racing, the coach will work with the rider to get back on track for grades and racing.

Parents:

- Will support their rider and the team by providing encouragement and generally positive energy.
- Will show respect for other riders, families, coaches and race facilities.
- Will not have unprofessional and/or inappropriate interactions with coaches or riders.

RV MTB Team Communications

Starting this year, official RV MTB communications will come through Team App. Please make sure you have Team App downloaded to you and your rider’s phones. Go to “Find your Team/Club” and search for RVMTB, then join the team. Notifications should remain ON. Booster Club newsletters, fundraising, volunteer opportunities and team dinners will primarily be communicated via email and posted to our Facebook page at Ralston Valley MTB. Events, rides, practices, and team meetings can be found on the team calendar and posted in Team App. For rider communications, changes in practice information, race information and/or any last-minute communications Team App will be used by the coaches. All documents also get posted to the team’s website at rvmtb.com.

Rider Training

Spring/Summer Pre-Season Training – During a typical season, the league allows for 8 training rides during the spring and summer up until August 1st. Attendance is voluntary, but encouraged based on the rider’s availability. Meeting times and places for rides will be emailed to riders and families. Rides may be rescheduled depending on weather and coaches’ availability. Parent riders are welcome!

In addition, any rider planning on competing, should be riding (road and mountain), running, or cross-training 4-6 days a week throughout the summer months. You can talk to the coaches if you need help with developing your own schedule. Get together with your teammates or family to stay fit and work on riding skills over the summer. Fitness doesn’t happen overnight!

Race Season Training – During a typical season, official practice and training begins August 1. The RV MTB trains 2 times per week on Mondays and Wednesdays, with additional practice opportunities during non-race weeks.

Off-Season Training – Off-Season training is neither considered official practice nor is required. Mountain Bike,

Road, and Cyclocross (CX) races occur throughout the year and any rider can sign up to race as long as they meet the basic racing requirements (USA Cycling License and Junior Road gearing restrictions). Multiple rides will occur in the off-season that are organized by riders for either fun or training. These rides will be advertised through text or the RVMTB Social Media pages (Instagram, Facebook, etc.)

Riding Levels

Riding level is based on a combination of the rider's fitness level and bike handling/skills. The coaches determine each rider's level to maintain safety and group cohesiveness during group training rides. Riders may move up to a faster level squad or down to a more mellow squad based primarily on fitness. Coaches will work with riders to determine if you need to move. If a rider wishes to move up or down, please have that conversation with your coach after practice. The coach and rider will develop a plan together to address the move. Due to Covid 19, there will be very little movement between riding groups once the season starts (2020 season).

Pegasus: The Pegasus Group is the squad with the highest level of speed, skill, and fitness. Many of these riders compete in other types of racing such as enduro or road racing/gravel racing. These riders should be working hard to maintain fitness and improve their skills in order to compete at the highest level. Pegasus riders should also be leaders in helping their peers develop the skills and fitness necessary to compete. Finally, riders at this level should expect difficult and strenuous workouts as the norm. Skills will be part of the training but the emphasis will be on fitness and speed development.

Mustangs: The Mustangs Group are riders who have advanced through the Colts and Ponies. Most in this group are working toward becoming Pegasus. This is a competitive squad where most members are racing throughout the season. Rides at this level will be quite strenuous with the hope of developing fitness and speed. In addition, technique will be emphasized throughout the season.

Colts: The Colts Group is made up of riders looking to have fun while developing their skills and fitness in order to become more competitive as they advance as riders. The hope with this group, as with all the different levels, is that riders are becoming more fit and finding a passion for racing with the team.

Pony Posse: The Pony Posse consists of mostly novice riders who are looking to have fun while learning more about the sport as they develop their fitness and skills. New riders joining the team often start here until coaches get a better understanding of skills and fitness.

Team Engagement Opportunities for Riders/Families

- **Pre-season Team Meeting/Dinner** - This meeting is typically in the spring. Riders and families come together to learn more about the team, get the spring and summer riding schedule, talk about team expectations and learn about the Booster Club and volunteer opportunities.
- **Opening Season Team Meeting** - This meeting for riders is typically the Wednesday before school starts after regular season practice.
- **Team Dinners** – RVMTB riders and parents gather together to support our riders during the racing season. All riders and families are welcome whether they are racing that weekend or not. Team dinners are potlucks and are hosted by a team family the week between races. The team also tries to plan dinners at designated restaurants (local to the race venue) the evening before the race. Communication for sign-ups and race dinner locations will be sent via Team App/email. Team dinners are not mandatory, but they are a great way to get to know the riders and their families. Coaches also use the potluck dinners to recognize riders from the previous race and to talk about the upcoming race weekend. If you are interested in hosting a team dinner, please contact the Booster Club President.
- **Trail Maintenance** - As members of the mountain bike community we also want to be good trail

stewards. One of the best ways to give back while learning more about trail stewardship is to volunteer on trail maintenance days.

- **Hauling the Team Trailer** - Coaches will be looking for volunteers to tow the team trailer back and forth from each race venue. It requires you to be the first car there for the weekend and the last to leave after tear-down. Contact the Head Coach or Booster Club President if you are willing and able to haul the team trailer (approx 1300 pounds.)
- **Race Weekend Volunteers for the League** - All the teams in the CHSCL are required to provide parent and rider* volunteers to sign up and help during the race weekend. For each race weekend, the League will designate a group of teams to be the “hosts” for that race. It is particularly important for the RVMTB parents to volunteer when we are one of the “host” teams, however volunteer opportunities will be available at each race. There are also plenty of different shifts so you don’t have to miss your rider’s race. You will receive emails from CHSCL with info, times, dates, locations, and requests for volunteers. (*In order to earn a Letter, riders must volunteer for at least one 4-hour shift at any division race during the season.)
- **Race Weekend Volunteers for the Team** - Each race we set up pop-up tents to create the “RVMTB Team Pit Zone.” We will need parents to help set-up, tear-down, and replenish rider and family snack tables. The week before the race, we will have sign-ups to bring healthy snacks and beverages to our team pit zone. Food and beverages for the riders must comply with current [NICA rules](#) For example: *caffeine, in any form, is not allowed before or during races.*
- **Post-season Team and Family Picnic** - This family picnic is in the Fall following the racing season, typically in early November. This is a time to celebrate all the riders and their accomplishments for the season.

Colorado High School Cycling League (CHSCL) and National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA)

The CHSCL is the governing body for high school mountain biking. Please visit www.coloradomtb.org for complete information. CHSCL sets the race schedule and locations. The [National Interscholastic Cycling Association](#) (NICA) is the national body which coordinates all the leagues around the country and sets the rules and regulations for high school mountain bike competition. They also administer rider and race registration. Once you have paid your team application fee, the Head Coach will include you with the RV MTB Team registration and you will receive an invitation to join the NICA Pit Zone. All riders will need to become a member and register with NICA Pit Zone. You will register and pay race fees in the NICA Pit Zone. Each rider or rider’s parent must register him/herself for each race. If you know you are going to race the full season, you can do that all at one time, but please make note of the race fee refund policy on the NICA site.

Gold Standard of MTB Rider Behavior for CHSCL-

RESPECT:

- * Race Host Communities & Private Property Owners
- * Other Trail Users: Courtesy Counts
- * Members of Local Communities & Business Owners
- * All Staff & Volunteers
- * Teammates & Competitors
- * Land: No Littering On or Off Trail, Only Ride Open Trails

OBEY:

- * All Posted Signs & Rules at Race Venues
- * All Traffic Laws
- * Come prepared & informed about every event: Read Race Flyers
- * Know the [Colorado League Rulebook](#)

ACT WITH:

- * Humility
- * Kindness
- * Gratitude

Race Schedule

Due to the significant increase in number of riders and rapid growth of the Colorado High School Cycling League (CHSCL), there is a change starting with the 2020 season. There are now two conferences and each conference is broken into two divisions. RV MTB Team is in the North Conference and Platte Division of the CHSCL. In a typical race season, the complete race schedule can be found at <http://coloradomt.org/events/#races>.

Riders are welcome to race in all or none of the racing events. Registration and payment for races is required by Monday at 11:59pm the week of the race. This is done online individually by each rider or rider's family through [NICA Pit Zone](#).

Optional lodging information is typically provided by the CHSCL. Each racer and family are responsible for their own transportation and lodging during race weekends (making reservations early is a good idea). Many racers and families camp or drive up the day of the race. Race flyers are sent out separately for each event by the league and have detailed information about the race course, lodging, timelines, etc. Included in this flyer are the times the race course will be open for a "pre-ride" by the races. Typically the late afternoon/early evening prior to a race day, the course will be open for coaches and registered riders only to take an easy pre-ride on the course to be better prepared for the race, especially important for new riders.

For the 2020 Season during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the CHSCL has put together a program called Singletrack Solidarity, providing riders and coaches to train with their own teams and compete virtually with other teams in the league. There will be no in-person race weekends. More details to follow.

At the Race

What riders need to know:

Safety: Any person whether racer, parent, sibling, or grandma putting a leg over a bike at a race venue must have on a helmet with a clipped strap. Failure to do so can result in team penalties by referees.

- **Prepare:** Eat well (no caffeine), sleep well, and hydrate. Bring all the things you might possibly need (ie. Jersey, bibs, baggies, socks, shoes, sunglasses, helmet, bike gloves, race plate, tool kit, hydration system including an extra bottle, spare tire or tube, arm warmers or fitted shirt for layering, mask or buff, extra dry clothes.) Take good care of your bike. Keep it tuned and race ready; if you don't know how, ask the coaches or other experienced riders.
- **Mechanical Issues:** Neutral Support mechanics are provided at each race by the league. Important to note however, mechanics at races are not there to tune your bike or accommodate shop type repairs. The volunteer mechanics job is to do emergency fixes so kids do not miss their race. Rider's bikes should be in a high state of tune on race day. Make sure the rider understands the rules and potential penalties of getting support during the race. The team can also provide limited mechanical support if needed. Coach Bonhert who is a teacher at RV and also owns our sponsor shop RhinoVelo is often available for bike questions and fixes before and after the races.
- **Warm up:** Team pre-rides will be the day before a race. Try to make the pre-rides, it will help you get familiar with the race course. Times will be announced on Team App and through social media. Ask experienced riders questions. Ask your coaches questions. The day of the race, the coaches will

provide each of the groups directions on how to best warm-up, but it's up to each rider to make sure they are ready to race.

- **Race Staging:** Each group (Varsity, JV, Fresh, Soph, both Boys and Girls, will race at different times and in different waves in order to spread the riders out along the course.)The race announcers are good about announcing times to get staged for the start of each race. Don't stress, listen to their instructions, they'll get you into the right place. Returning racers will be staged based on their ranking from the previous season. For new racers, you are staged based on your race plate number (by random draw each season.) You will ride with the same #/race plate all season.
- **During the Race:** Drink water while racing, each rider is required to have at least half a bottle of water with them during the race . Use gels or blocks for energy (but remember you can't have caffeine and you shouldn't leave any trash behind on the race course.) Support the other riders on your team. Show good sportsmanship to riders from other teams. Remember the rules and etiquette for mountain bike racing. Ride hard! Have fun!
- **After the Race:** High five your teammates, hug your parents, immediately eat some protein and other snacks from the RVMTB pit and then relax before heading back out to the course to cheer on whoever is racing next. Make sure to get your race results printout after you race. Wait until the race is complete so you can get your actual standings in race, especially when there are multiple waves. Show good sportsmanship to riders from other teams. Eat and drink for recovery in the team pit zone. Clean up your bike, if needed. Help cleanup and break down the pit zone, load the team trailer, and remove any trash, according to instructions from the race venue.

What parents and families need to know:

At each race venue, RVMTB is assigned an area near the racecourse to set up the "RV team pit zone" - this is where the team trailer will be parked, the bike mechanics station set up, feeding and hydrating stations available for the riders and a place for team families to hang out between the races. Come ready for changes in weather and quite a bit of walking. Bring portable chairs, water, snacks, and sunscreen. Supporting and cheering for all the riders is highly encouraged. Make some noise with your cowbells. Encourage your rider with their race preparation and routine. Parents may be required to volunteer at the race. Sign up to volunteer through the emails sent by CHSCL. Parents cannot be in the racer staging area. You can be anywhere along the course, at the start or at the finish line to cheer on your racer. Talk to other parents about good places to view and take photos of the race.

Earning a Letter

The Ralston Valley Mountain Bike Team is an all-inclusive team, including riders from other schools that do not have a MTB Club/Team and we want all members to be active participants! To encourage more team camaraderie we are also offering the opportunity to letter in the sport based on how active a rider has been in team activities. In the end, to earn a letter, each rider needs to show a commitment to the team through exceptional effort, sportsmanship, and team spirit!

To letter in Mountain Biking at Ralston Valley High School a rider needs to accomplish the following:

1. Be in **good academic standing**, that is, meets athletic eligibility standards (as previously discussed no more than (1) D or F) throughout the entire season.
2. Consistently **attend team meetings/rides** (80% of the Monday & Wednesday practices) and other team functions, and participates with a positive, team minded spirit. Missed practice can also be made up by attending a Jeffco trail maintenance day. (Saturday rides are optional, but may replace an absence from

Monday or Wednesday.)

3. **ALWAYS follow team, CO League and NICA rules and safety guidelines.**
4. **Volunteer** at least one-half day at one of the 4 regular season league races (Any conference or division).
5. Races in at least **4 league races** within a single season as a Varsity or Junior Varsity competitor **OR races at least 3 regular season league races and finishes the season as a top 25% within their division;** Freshman, Sophomore, Junior Varsity or Varsity. Season points are based on a rider's three best race finishes. See league rules for specific details.

Rider Volunteering

As a member of the RVMTB, riders will have the opportunity to give back to their bike and school communities. These hours are good for earning a letter and for National Honor Society. All riders are encouraged to volunteer and opportunities will be shared by the coaches or Booster Club as they become available.

Ralston Valley Mountain Bike Team Booster Club

Ralston Valley Mountain Bike Team Booster Club (RVMTB Booster Club) is the parent booster program and fundraising arm of the RVMTB Team. The RVMTB Booster Club coordinates the fundraisers, team dinners, healthy food for the team pit zone and much more. All parents/guardians become members when their rider gets registered for the season whether they chose to race or just ride with the team. We encourage all parents to get involved and volunteer. The RVMTB Booster Club meets seasonally, both in the spring pre-season, in the fall prior to the start of racing season and as needed to coordinate fundraising and volunteer efforts. All of our coaches volunteer their time. Parents are welcome to continue with the Booster Club after your rider graduates.

The RVMTB Booster Club Board consists of a minimum of 2 parents, 2 coaches and up to 4 riders. Our current Booster Club Board includes:

Todd Morin - President
Ronald Said - Treasurer
Tracy Pfitzer - Secretary
Tim Pesce - Webmaster
Kathy Roboff - New Rider Advocate/Handbook
Troy Pfitzer - Head Coach
Chris Oster - Head Coach
Christine Neff - Coach/Merchandising
Daniel Morin - Senior Rider
Jonas Kahila - Senior Rider

Fundraising Efforts that Benefit the RV Mountain Bike Team

Fundraising for high school activities and sports has become a critical component for the success of any high school team and/or athletic program. We continue to be open to suggestions for low effort/high yield fundraisers. The Booster Club needs your ideas, effort and energy! We hope to have a couple restaurant nights out and one time volunteer events. (Chipotle Night, passive fundraising i.e. recycle ink cartridges. Please share your ideas!)

Ralston Valley Sticker Store – Coach Troy Pfitzer is selling RV stickers and socks to help support the team.

King Sooper Community Reward Program

The RV MTB Bike Team participates in the King Sooper Community Reward Program. This program makes fundraising easy by donating to local organizations based on the shopping you do every day. Once you link your Card to an organization, all you have to do is shop at King Soopers and swipe your Shopper's Card. Here's how it works:

1. Create a digital account

A digital account is needed to participate in King Soopers Community Rewards. If you already have a digital account, simply link your Shopper's Card to your account so that all transactions apply toward the organization you choose.

2. Link your Card to the Ralston Valley Mountain Bike Team

Selecting the organization that you wish to support is as simple as updating the King Soopers Community Rewards selection on your digital account.

1. Sign in to your digital account.
2. Search for your organization [here](#).
3. Name is "RV Mountain Bike Team Booster Club"

Restaurant Nights Out

Riders and families will be given sufficient notice of nights out where a percentage of the proceeds from the evening's sales at a local restaurant will directly benefit the RVMTB Booster Club. Please attend these events and be sure to invite your friends and family.

Benefit Mobile

Benefit Mobile Inc. provides a mobile fundraising platform that enables schools and nonprofits to raise funds. It allows schools and nonprofits to create campaigns; invite individuals to support them by downloading the Benefit mobile application; and get a portion of the transaction when the application is used at checkout at the participating retailers. Go to www.benefit-mobile.com or download the app online. Please ask the Booster Club President for more information on this easy-to-use program.

Sponsorships

Sponsors are organizations or individuals that donate funds directly to the RVMTB Booster Club/Team in return for the right to advertise during the activity or event via an agreed upon medium (i.e. logo on the jersey or banner in the team pit zone). Parents are encouraged to help cultivate sponsorships from organizations or individuals that align with the sport of mountain biking and/or the team's philosophy.

Partnerships

Partners are organizations or individuals that provide an in-kind service, product, or discount to the RVMTB Booster Club and team and it's families/riders. Parents are encouraged to help cultivate partnerships with organizations or individuals that align with the sport of mountain biking and/or the team's philosophy.

RVMTB Team Merchandise

The team will be offering RVMTB logo merchandise for riders/parents/families throughout the season. Items include but are not limited to: t-shirts, hoodies, hats, socks, and stickers. For riders these are items outside the RVMTB jersey/kit required for racing.