

BMX: DIRTY THRILLS

BMX. Bike racing, dirt tracks, sharp turns, spills, the sound of roaring engines. Hey, wait... these bikes don't have engines. These are bicycles and this is bicycle motocross.

About 100 boys compete for trophies and peer respect every Thursday and Saturday on a dirt track adjacent to Autzen Stadium.

The racing classes run from age five-and-under to 17-and-over with three moto (or qualifying) races, and one main (or final) race.

Each racer pays \$5 (\$3 on Thursday) to compete and must wear a helmet, long-sleeve shirt, long pants and be insured through the American Bicycle Association, a national organization which sanctions all the Eugene races.

The Eugene track was built in June 1982 by the Emerald Valley BMX association with private donations and volunteer work. The Emerald Valley BMX is made up of parents of the racers and they maintain the track as well as supervise the twice weekly races. The track is open to public use during the week.

Bob Broten, president of the Emerald Valley BMX, says the track is one of the top five tracks of the West Coast.

The racing is year round, beginning in January and ending in the middle of December with a two-week break to allow officials to tabulate the annual ranking of competitors.

There are three classes of racers: novice, expert and professional. A novice must win five races in their birthday year in order to become an ex-

pert, but only has to declare themselves professional to become professional. Professionals cannot run in amateur races.

Broten says the top BMX professional last year earned over \$50,000 and won a car. Most professionals are in their mid- to late-20s, he adds.

The Emerald Valley BMX will have a booth at the Lane County Fair and will host the Oregon State Championships here August 27th and 28th.



Story and Photos
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