

Outdoor recreation



LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

The Ruth Bascomb Riverbanks trail is one of the bike and running trails in the Eugene area where bicyclists can ride next to the Willamette River.

Getting into gear

Bikers can travel on several paths in and around the Eugene area to help them attain their goals of fun and a more healthy lifestyle

BY ASHLEY GRIFFIN
OUTDOOR RECREATION REPORTER

Bicycles were introduced more than a century ago as a novelty item used by the upper class in Paris and London.

Today, bicycles have evolved and are used for entertainment, competitive racing, efficient transportation and for a fresh-air cardiovascular workout. Armed with Schwinn and Specialized, banana boat seats and Avatar Gel Saddles, Eugene area bikers have the sport at their fingertips — should they wish to pedal.

Local and school-associated biking clubs provide plenty of opportunities for introductory biking. The University of Oregon's Club Sports Cycling team has group rides on Saturdays at 10 a.m. that last two to three hours.

"During most of the school year, we ride

together on Saturdays and Sundays and a lot of us ride together on weekdays too," club coordinator Jason Thorpe said. "We also have a women's-only ride that meets on the weekends. It is pretty informal except during the racing season, which is the first five weeks of spring term."

The team welcomes riders of all skill levels, but newcomers won't be able to compete with the club until next season. To officially join the club, students must have the appropriate gear and a medical release form on file at the Club Sports office.

If joining a competitive team sounds a bit daunting, other groups such as Eugene Gears organize weekly group rides. Another option is taking to the trails by yourself. Either approach will allow students to learn about and practice the sport while gaining a good deal of

physical benefits.

"Spending 20 hours on the bike every week is sure to improve your fitness level," Thorpe said. "When you are training to race you can't just focus on riding your bike, you have to learn a lot of other things too, like how to eat right and how important sleep really is. You become more aware of what it takes to be healthy and the urge to be the first to the top of a hill on a weekly ride or to win a sprint finish in a race provides the motivation to make healthy choices."

University instructor and long-time cyclist Annie Dochnahl said Eugene's mild climate makes it possible to reap health benefits year-round.

"(Biking is) excellent for cardio conditioning and endurance," she said. "In this climate, you can bike year-round and maintain a baseline fitness in the winter by cycling."

Eugene and the surrounding areas have some great bike trails to help students reap physical benefits. Many of the city's bike

paths, like the Ruth Bascomb Riverbanks trail system, are flat, paved trails perfect for beginners and recreationalists. Beyond these paths and city limits lie several more unique rides.

"I would have to say that my favorite route here in Eugene would have to be Wolf Creek, which is about 60 miles long and has a few good climbs," Thorpe said. "My favorite route ever would definitely be riding over McKenzie Pass from McKenzie Bridge to Sisters. The views are amazing and the ride is epic."

Dochnahl enjoys biking southwest of Eugene in the Lorraine Valley's rolling green landscapes. Cycling Club Women's Team Coordinator Ashley Thrower has found local rides to suit her tastes.

"The best places to ride around Eugene are in Crow, McKenzie and in Coburg," she said. "The roads in these little towns are away from the city and traffic and are surrounded by farmlands and forests."

To access these trails, students will need to

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Duck football

Binns' departure leaves hole in Oregon defense

Oregon cornerback Marques Binns has decided to transfer from the University, citing personal reasons behind the decision

BY JON ROETMAN
SENIOR SPORTS REPORTER

Cornerback Marques Binns has left the Oregon football team for personal reasons with the intent to transfer to another school, according to the Ducks' head football coach Mike Bellotti.

A rising senior, Binns amassed 61 tackles, one interception and one fumble recovery in 26 games during his previous three seasons. He appeared in five games during his junior season, recording 12 tackles and one fumble recovery. He also accumulated 30 tackles as a true freshman, when he was thrust into the

starting lineup on two occasions.

Listed at 5-foot-11 and 175 pounds, Binns was set to enter the fall as one of Oregon's more experienced defensive backs.

"(Losing Binns) effects us a lot because he had a lot of experience," senior cornerback Aaron Gipson said after practice Tuesday. "He came in with me and we played as true freshmen. He was a good, solid player, so somebody has to pick up the slack."

When asked why Binns decided to transfer, Gipson said, "I assume he made the best decision for him."

While Binns gained experience during his

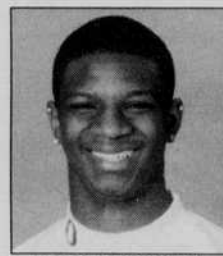
three years at Oregon, it didn't always translate into more playing time. The Los Angeles native often struggled in man-to-man coverage and spent most of his time in a reserve role.

During a start last season at Washington State, Binns was burned for two first-quarter touch-down passes before being removed from the game.

Oregon secondary coach John Neal didn't share Gipson's opinion when asked how the loss of Binns would effect the secondary.

"It's his loss, not ours," Neal said. "It's pretty obvious to people (why he left)."

Binns' best game as a Duck came during his freshman season when he amassed eight



MARQUES BINNS
CORNERBACK

tackles and a forced fumble against Southern California.

SuperPrep magazine rated Binns as one of the top prep defensive back prospects coming out of Dorsey High School, when he was credited with 35 tackles and three interceptions as a senior. He also accumulated 30 receptions for 590 yards as a wide receiver.

Oregon still has plenty of depth at cornerback, including Gipson, senior Justin Phinisee, sophomore Jackie Bates, true freshman Willie Glasper and redshirt freshman Sharrod Davis.

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