



BMX national champion attends Clackamas

SHELBI WESCOTT

Feature Editor

If you ask Tyler Hersel about his two national championship titles in BMX bike racing, you will likely get an 'it's not that big of a deal' look. But don't let his humble nature or coy responses fool you. Beneath the shy exterior lies a driven determination to succeed and a wealth of talent.

In six short months, Hersel accomplished what takes most racers two or three years to achieve: he moved from novice to expert in BMX competitions, winning two national titles along the way.

Hersel attributes the sudden success to his rigorous training in mountain biking.

"One of my advantages," said Hersel, "is that I've had a lot of strength building through mountain biking. So, I was a lot stronger than most of my competitors."

Hersel started biking seriously six years ago at age 14. Cross-country riding, which consists of racing through varied terrains, up and down trails for 10 or more miles, was his sole focus and he was motivated to take his talent to the highest level: riding professionally across America.

However, life took a different turn.

One day Hersel was riding his

Name: Tyler Hersel

Claim to fame: 2 national championship titles in BMX bike racing

Years at CCC: 2 years

Hometown: Molalla

Hobbies: Choir (CCC's chamber singers), skiing, jogging

mountain bike around a BMX track in order to improve his skill for an upcoming competition. Eventually, he began to beat people on the track, despite the fact that he had no formal training or experience.

"I thought to myself, I'm going to buy a BMX bike. I could be really good at this," Hersel commented. "There is a lot more skill involved in BMX racing than in cross-country racing."

And it didn't take long for Hersel to learn and utilize that skill. In his first race as a novice rider he won the first place spot. It was at that moment that he turned his attention to BMX racing.

"I didn't expect to win. It was a total surprise," Hersel said with a smile on his face.

The bigger surprise came when six months later Hersel won again, but this time as an expert. "That was

the most rewarding moment in my life," he noted.

BMX racers start training and competing from the age of three on up. Most racers in the Expert rank have spent years in training, which makes Hersel's rise to first place winner an extraordinary feat. As much as he would like to play down his accomplishments, it takes a talented individual to reach those heights.

"I have always been driven to be a cross-country pro racer, which I still have plans to do," Hersel said. "People don't stay in BMX for too long due to injuries."

Hersel himself hasn't escaped injury. This past summer he broke both of his arms when he missed a double jump while practicing for state. The injury provided a minor set back, but he feels confident for his next race.

On Nov. 26, Hersel will travel to Utah to participate in the Race of Champions, and if he walks away a winner then he'll be qualified for the Grand Nationals. The winner of the Grand Nationals is the top BMX



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED BY TYLER HERSEL

Tyler Hersel makes a jump at the national competition in Utah. He walked away the national champion and will take his talent to the 'Race of Champions' later this month.

racer in the nation. So, Hersel is only two races away from being number one.

With the sponsors lining up and his name becoming recognized,

Tyler Hersel is ready to show the world he has what it takes to be top in the nation.

And there is no doubt in anyone's mind that he will be just that.

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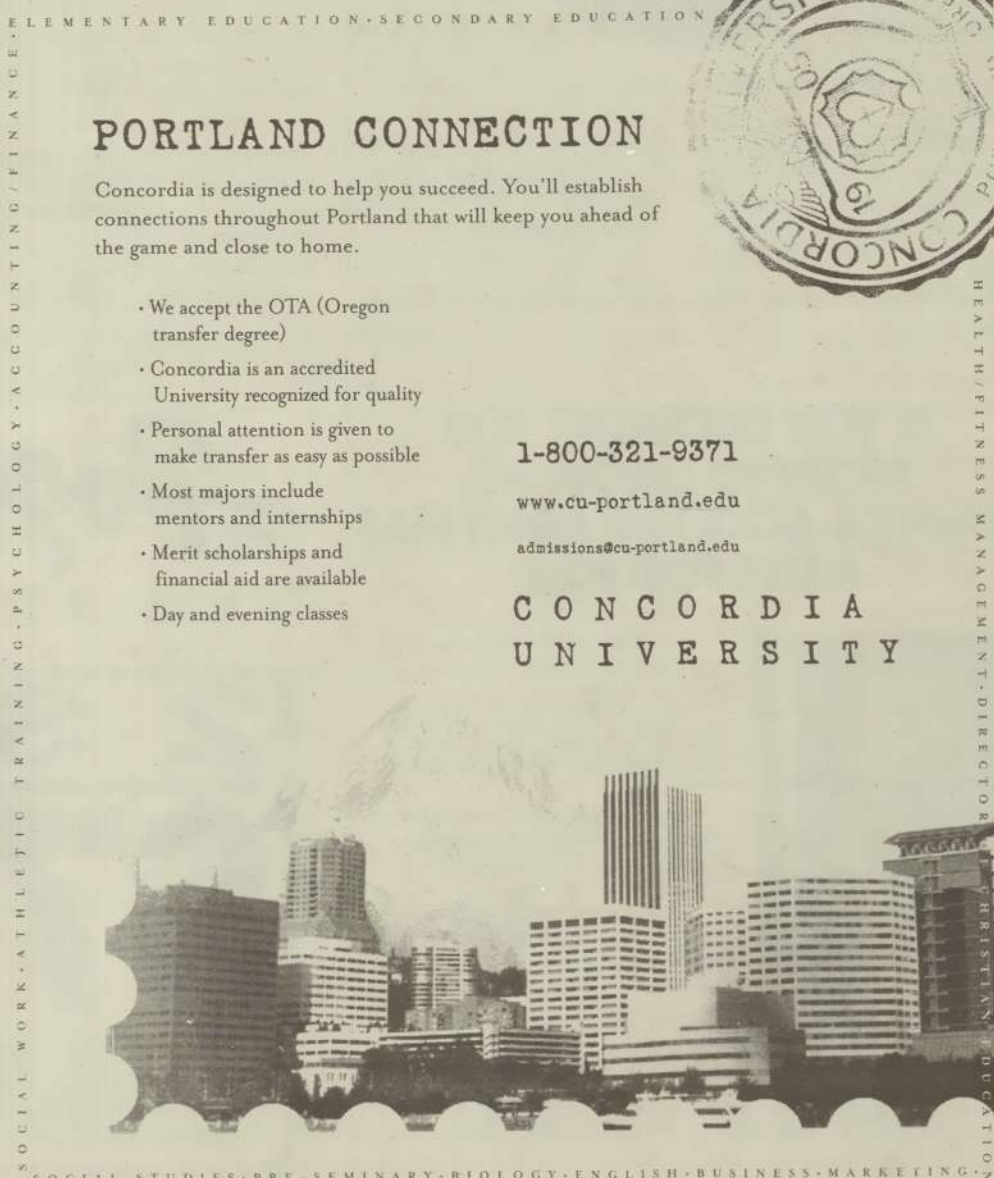
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