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Brothers Harold and Kevin Ridge and members of their 32-person all-ages team of BMX racers from the Portland area. As they continue to see success with their current team, they are looking to start up an offshoot for inner-city youth and kids of color called Kidz on Da Track.

Kidz On Da Track

Coaches look to push appeal of BMX further

BY DONOVAN M. SMITH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

California dirt ramps turned out to be the launch pad to a bit of a dream for Harold Ridge. He heads a BMX racing team in the Portland area.

As a kid in San Francisco, Ridge and his older brother Kevin would often find themselves fashioning their own dirt ramps and racing around their Hunters Point neighborhood.

"BMX was really big in the early 80s, it got bigger. But that's what we did to have fun," he says.

Now an adult, and a Portlander for well over a decade,

Ridge has pedaled BMX racing into the hearts of many in the city. His 32-person squad has racers as young as 3-year-old all the way up to 48.

Ridge says it's almost unbelievable the growth this team has seen. Originally the unit was almost completely fraternal, the players included his son and daughter, a nephew, two nieces, and two of his son's friends.

Since then his daughters and nieces have left, but the team continues to prosper. In a recent state tournament, it placed 3rd overall.

As the team continues to elevate, Ridge is reaching out to

other members of the community, especially people of color, and explaining how the sport is one that is financially accessible.

It doesn't take top-of-the line equipment to get involved; in fact the first race is free.

"These bikes have a lot of different styles and sizes. Just to get started you don't have to spend a lot of money on a bike to get on the track," he says.

Once a bike's been acquired, Ridge says you just head

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