

CYCLING

Bike MS returns to Western Oregon

Fundraiser hopes to raise \$750,000 toward MS research and support

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Some ride for pleasure. Others to get into shape. For those taking part in Bike MS, which takes place Friday through Sunday at Western Oregon University, they are riding for a purpose.

"A lot of bike events are just about getting on our bike and riding," Bike MS manager Amy Harris said. "More than that, this ride is about supporting people with multiple sclerosis (MS). Many of the people who ride with us either have MS or love someone who has MS or has a family member with MS."

MS is an often disabling disease that affects the central nervous system by disrupting the flow of information within the brain and between the brain and the body.

The disease affects more than 2.3 million people worldwide.

"The thing about MS is you don't know that someone has it," Harris said. "They're living a life that is comparable to anybody's so it's harder to tell. You might not know what the symptoms of MS are."

Bike MS Willamette Valley passes through natural wildlife preserves, historic towns, farmlands and back roads with rest stops every 10 to 15 miles.

Saturday and Sunday's rides range from 30 to 100 miles long.

Cost is \$65 and is open to riders ages 12 and older. Day of registration will be available.

You don't have to be a cy-



Bike MS attracts riders from throughout Oregon to help support MS research and support those with MS.
COURTESY OF FIREWORKS PHOTOGRAPHY/for the Itemizer-Observer

clist to take part in the festivities. Guests can purchase food and drink tickets at the registration desk for \$10 per meal, \$20 per day or \$50 for all meals and drinks for the weekend.

If you do ride, be pre-

pared for an experience unlike anything else, Harris said.

"I think first time riders are surprised by the sense of community," Harris said. "They truly become part of it."

There will be musical entertainment, massages and an evening program on Saturday night, along with breakfast on Sunday.

The annual event used to change locations each year, but decided on keeping it at

Western Oregon to save on time and money.

"We wanted the focus to be on funding MS research," Harris said. "We wanted our resources going in that direction. This is our fourth year here and it's been great.

Bike MS

- Bike MS raises money to support people living with MS and for MS research.
- Bike MS hopes to raise \$750,000.
- Bike MS offers cyclists rides ranging from 30 to 100 miles long.

We have amazing partners at Western (Oregon) and Monmouth and the surrounding area. We love being here."

Harris said they are expecting about 650 riders to take part, about 100 more than 2014.

Their goal is to raise \$750,000 for MS research and to support people living with MS.

So far, they've raised more than \$417,000.

Fundraising continues for two months after the event, Harris said, and anyone can donate whether they are participating or not.

As Bike MS prepares for what it hopes is a successful weekend, Harris said the event can be inspirational for everyone involved.

"This is designed to raise money for people living with MS and funding research," Harris said. "But the highlight of the event is the people. Just seeing the folks who, not always, but often face challenges that are hard to see are doing this ride."

For more information: www.main.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Bike/ORCBikeEvents?pg=entry&fr_id=24766.

PREP SWIMMING

Bemrose steps down as Dallas coach

North Marion hires former Dragons coach to take over Huskies' swim program

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The Dallas High swim team is in need of a new head coach.

Former coach Jeff Bemrose announced he accepted the head swim coach position at North Marion High School.

"Swim positions don't come open very often," Bemrose said. "People tend to hang on to them for a long time. I think we kind of reached our peak in 2014 and we needed more support from the schools."

The swim team is considered a club squad, meaning funding for costs associated with the team had to come from fundraising efforts.

"Funds have been really tight for the program," Bemrose said. "It's been more difficult to replenish supplies. This last year, I just felt they probably weren't going to do anything for a while and it would be best for me to look at some other options with other schools. I love coaching. It's probably a good thing for me to leave Dallas because Dallas needs to rethink how they fund

this program." The lack of funding took a toll on Bemrose.

"They have to fund themselves," Bemrose said. "These last two years our numbers have been down. Most of our funds come from the pay-to-play fee. We haven't been able to do as many meets and our fundraising hasn't been as successful."

Bemrose had a successful five-year tenure with the Dragons.

He helped numerous Dallas swimmers reach the Class 5A state swim meet.

In addition, Bemrose said he took pride in hosting some of the conference's best swim meets.

"I want to thank all the parent support and all the great support we had," Bemrose said. "We had, in my opinion, the best run swim meets in the league. Other teams loved coming to Dallas because we put on a good swim meet."

North Marion High School competes in the 4A level, where Bemrose hopes to avoid some of the difficulties faced during his tenure with Dallas.

"(North Marion has) all the elements of having a state championship team," Bemrose said. "It's harder for Dallas because they face more difficult competition and are more reliant upon club teams at state."

Corvallis and Albany have dominated the league for so long because they have a good club program, he added.

"We were able to break some of that barrier when my coaching staff and I came on. Before, we were hit or miss and could get a few kids to state, but now

we were consistently getting kids there, so that was nice."

As Bemrose prepares for his new endeavor, he said he hopes to bring North Marion to one of Dallas' meets.

As he steps away from the Dragons, Bemrose is grateful for his five years spent leading Dallas' high school squad.

"I'm very appreciative of Dallas High School and the opportunity they gave me," Bemrose said. "I think I've done as much as I can with Dallas and the current structure that's there."

Fellers to share story

Horse jumper to present on Saturday

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — From the moment he saw his first horse, Rich Fellers has been in love with horse riding.

Fellers, a champion jumper, is looking to give back, serving as a speaker at the Old Feed & Garden's Horse Owner's Workshop on Saturday.

Fellers' love of horses began early, when his father remarried.

"My riding days started at about 9 years old," Fellers said. "My stepmom had an Arabian show horse. We would go along to the shows to watch and support."

From the first shows he saw, Fellers fell in love with one discipline.

"The only competition that appeared to be fun was the Arabian Open Jumper class," Fellers said. "I decided at that point to focus on learning to jump if I was going to ride horses."

Horse Owner's Workshop

What: Old Mill Feed & Garden's Horse Owner's Workshop.
When: Saturday, starting at 11 a.m.
Where: Old Mill Feed & Garden, 1313 Main St., Dallas.
Cost: Free, but preregistration is required.
For more information: Old Mill Feed & Garden, 503-831-1222.

Since that moment, Fellers' career has taken off. Most recently, Fellers earned \$60,000 while competing at the California Grand Prix jumping competition in May, while riding his 19-year-old horse, Flexible.

Perhaps his crowning achievement came in 2012 when Fellers won the \$50,000 Rolex World Cup Jumping competition — the first American to win the title since 1987.

"It was the most amazing feeling," Fellers said. "It meant so much to me personally, my family, the horse owners and also the sport of Show Jumping."

Fellers is one of numerous scheduled presenters at the horse owner's work-

shop, which begins at 11 a.m. He will share what he's learned during his career so far.

"People will hear good, professional advice on horsemanship," Fellers said.

As Fellers prepares to give back to the sport he loves, he's hoping this is just another step in his life with horses.

"I have never thought of doing anything else," Fellers said. "I am truly passionate about the sport regardless of all the hard work and travel involved."

The event is free, but preregistration is required. For more information: Old Mill Feed & Garden, 503-831-1222.

Faxon: Has bowled eight perfect games

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But Faxon had numerous accomplishments when he hit the lanes as well.

"One of the reasons I'm here I guess is I've won five state championships, 20-something city championships, and I've won numerous other tournaments," Faxon said.

He's bowled eight perfect games, including one at a national Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) senior event in Portland.

"All of these PBA guys were there," Faxon said. "Pete Weber is about two lanes away. He didn't like us

amateurs. All of these professional guys sort of turned their noses up to me. They didn't say, 'nice game.' They were mad at me because they didn't want me to upstage them."

Faxon may no longer run Starlight, but he still plays on a regular basis — even if bowling that perfect game isn't quite as easy as it was before.

"You go through this process of getting 10 or 11 strikes and then you miss," Faxon said. "When you finally get 12 strikes, I told my kids I'm going to do that again. Once you get over the

mental hurdle, it's easy. Then you get older and your skills diminish and it's not as easy."

The ability to play, no matter what your age, is something that makes bowling a unique and special sport, Faxon said — one that he's dedicated much of his life toward improving.

"That's the thing, anyone can do it whether you're 6 or 80," Faxon said. "It's something you can do your whole life. The way the game is structured and with handicaps, everyone is equal when you get down on the lanes."

CLASS 5A PREP BOYS SOCCER

Central hires soccer coach

Itemizer-Observer staff report
INDEPENDENCE — Central Athletic Director Shane Hedrick announced the hir-

ing of Carlos Esquivel as the school's boys soccer coach on Friday.
Esquivel, a 2009 graduate

of Central High, takes over from Mike Lynch.

View next week's *Itemizer-Observer* for a longer story.