



Rochester Mountain Bike Team Handbook

2024

Team Orientation
and

Registration Information

<https://www.rasc-mn.org/rmbt>



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Rochester Mountain Bike Team (RMBT)

Program Overview

The Rochester Mountain Bike Team (RMBT) is part of the **Rochester Active Sports Club (RASC)** and participates in the **MN Cycling Association (MCA)**. RMBT abides by the regulations specified by the MCA.

RMBT is a youth development organization that uses bikes to teach lifelong lessons of **communication, respect, resilience, and stewardship**. Our goal is for participants to develop a love for biking. This is not an elite training program for those wishing to compete at the highest levels. Coaches help riders master basic mountain biking techniques as well as offering competitive and athletic approaches depending on the rider's ability and desire. Participants can choose to race in up to four season races, and if they are in the top 100 of their category, the season finale. Many students choose not to race at all and enjoy the learning and social aspects of team practices.

The RMBT program is a composite team open to all 6th – 12th grade students in Rochester and the surrounding areas, including homeschools.

Because the RMBT is hosted by RASC, registration fees include membership to RASC with full member benefits, including regular email updates, a club website, social media, and electronic trail reports. Members are also entitled to local bike store discounts.

Leadership and Contact Information

- Head Coach – Matt Blanshan (contact via info@rochmtb.org)
- Head Coach – Jessie Ekholm (contact via info@rochmtb.org)
- Head Coach – Caleb Nelson (contact via info@rochmtb.org)
- Team Director – Anissa Blanshan (contact via info@rochmtb.org)
- Team website – www.rasc-mn.org/rmbt
- General information: info@rochmtb.org
- Trail building/maintenance: Scott Hogen (scott.hogen@gmail.com)

- Parent's group: Contact Lynette Mullen (durandwood@proton.me) or Janice Pascoe (janicelynnpascoe@gmail.com)

Eligibility and Registration Information

Open to 6th – 12th Grade Students
Beginner through competitive riders
Practices: Monday/Tuesday/Thursday
5:30 – 7:00 pm Practice Time
Pre-rides and races on some weekends

The RMBT program is open to all 6th – 12th grade students in Rochester and the surrounding areas. This includes students attending private, charter, or home schools who live in Rochester and surrounding communities.

Practice locations: Eastwood Park and Gamehaven Park

See the "Practices" section for more details about practices.

Team "pre-ride" opportunities at race locations are typically scheduled on Saturdays. Races are held on Saturdays (middle school) and Sundays (high school) with some exceptions. Races are optional and have an extra fee, detailed below.

Online registration 2024 includes three steps and is outlined here:

<https://www.rasc-mn.org/rmbt>

- 1) Register with the MN Cycling Association League
- 2) Read and understand the participation waiver, eligibility standards, and lettering requirements
- 3) Register with the RMBT

Online registration opens May 13th – May 25th

To match our coaching staff to a safe number of riders, RMBT may limit registrations. Returning riders will get priority.

As we add coaches, the number of registrations allowed will increase accordingly and we will re-open registration. If you miss the registration window, please send an email to get on a waiting list. If you are interested in coaching (no experience required), please email info@rochmtb.com.

Getting Started

Parent and Rider Informational Meeting

05/07/2024 6:30-7:30 pm

Century High School Cafeteria

This is an opportunity for parents to meet the coaches, learn more about the team, and ask questions. It's a great resource if you're unsure about signing up your student or if you're unsure about racing. There is also always a need for coaches - information will be provided on what is necessary to be a coach.

Try-It Out Session

05/09/2024 6:00-7:00 pm

Eastwood Park

Coaches will be on hand to answer any questions you might have as you consider the Rochester Mountain Bike Team.

Riders and parents are encouraged to attend.

Equipment and Apparel

The bike stores in Rochester support the Rochester Mountain Bike Team. Let them know you are part of the team for discounts and priority repair turnaround.

Required Equipment and Apparel

- Mountain Bike
 - Considerations for a mountain bike:
 - Bikes range in price - an expensive bike is not required, but it should be an off-road style bike.
 - Beginner/Younger students may not require full suspension which adds extra weight.
 - Remove the following for safety reasons: kickstands, bells, racks, reflectors, and mirrors.
 - Handlebars require end caps (see coaches if you don't have end caps or are unsure).
 - There are loaner bikes available if needed or if there is a temporary issue with a student's bike.

- Helmet – Inspect for cracks and good fit.
- Water Bottle or Camelback – Required for practice, not required for racing; high school racers that ride multiple laps will likely need water.
- Team Jersey – Mandatory if racing, not required for practices.
- Eye protection

Optional Equipment and Apparel

- Camelback
- Pedals
 - Highly suggest flat pedals with grips. Clipless pedals are not recommended until student-athletes are competing at higher levels.
- Mountain Bike Shoes
 - If pedals have grips, they can ruin soft shoes. Mountain bike shoes have a more rigid bottom. One good example of MTB flats is: <https://a.co/d/aM7Z8s5>
- Tires
 - optional tubeless
- Multi-tool
- Bike shorts (padded)
- Gloves
- Bike computer

RMBT Loaner Bike program

RMBT has a small number of loaner bikes available for short-term use. Contact info@rochmtb.com and provide the rider's height for sizing.

The only cost to this program will be a basic tune-up and new chain at the end of the season.

Racing Equipment and Apparel Requirements

Please note that the MCA has some specific requirements to adhere to during races. The typical items that could cause riders to be ineligible to race are (1) handlebars without end caps, (2) large logos on shorts, and (3) missing a team jersey.

[MCA Team Apparel Policy](#)

Calendar – Dates to Know

05/07/2024 New and Returning Riders Informational Meeting – 7 pm

05/09/2024 Try it Out Session – 6 pm

05/13/2024 Team online registration begins for 2 weeks

05/27/2024 Team online registration closes (first wave) – contact coaches to be added or put on the waitlist.

07/22/2024 (Monday) **New Rider First Practice** – Eastwood

07/24/2024 (Tuesday) **New Rider Practice** – Gamehaven

07/25/2024 (Thursday) **New Rider Practice** – Gamehaven

07/29/2024 (Monday) **All Riders Time Trial for Group Placement** (new and returning riders) – Gamehaven

08/05/2024 (Tuesday) **All Riders First Practice with Group Assignments** – Gamehaven

08/09/2024–08/11/2024 Team Trip to Cuyuna

MM/DD/2024 Race Registration Closes – ALL RACES MUST BE REGISTERED; Note, 4-5 races required for lettering

MM/DD/2024 Deadline for Ordering Team Jerseys – MUST HAVE A TEAM JERSEY TO RACE

MM/DD/2024 Pre-Rides Saturdays

MM/DD/2024 Team picture day

MM/DD/2024 Race Prep Informational Meeting (practice before first race)

MM/DD/2024 Races (Saturday/Sundays) – [See team race summary](#) below.

Communication

All team communication for registered riders is via TeamSnap or email. TeamSnap may be downloaded on mobile devices or accessed at

www.teamsnap.com. TeamSnap includes a calendar that will be populated with all practices and races.

Also, consider downloading Trailforks. Trailforks may be downloaded on mobile or accessed at www.trailforks.com. Trailforks allows riders and coaches to know the name and location of the trail they are riding.

MCA uses Rainedout for day-of notifications of race weather changes or cancellations <https://www.rainedout.net>. Weather and refund policy as well as a link to sign up for weather alerts are found here:

<https://minnesotacycling.org/refund-policy/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RochesterActiveSportsClub>

Practices

Practices are scheduled from 5:30–7:00, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. We encourage coaches and riders to show up early so we can gather groups together and take attendance. The first week of practice is dedicated to those kids new to the team and is typically at the end of July. The second week of practice starts with a time trial for all riders to determine riding groups. As we get further into the season, we tend to run out of daylight and we may end 15 minutes early. The last practice leads up to the State Championships which is in mid-October. We will let parents know via TeamSnap of changes to the schedule.

Practice Locations

- Eastwood Park (Mondays).
 - [3330 Hwy 14 E Rochester, MN 55904](https://www.google.com/maps/place/3330+Hwy+14+E+Rochester,+MN+55904)
 - Parking at Eastwood will be in the west lot near the west pavilion. There is a grass area for kids to warm up and gather. Please do not ride on the baseball field or parking lot
- Gamehaven Park (Tuesdays and Thursdays). There are three parking lots for Gamehaven.
 - Scout Lot: [5015 Simpson Rd. SE, Rochester MN 55904](https://www.google.com/maps/place/5015+Simpson+Rd,+SE,+Rochester,+MN+55904) This is the main parking area for the team and the default unless communicated in TeamSnap. The scout lot is located off Simpson Road. RMBT has special permission to use this lot on our practice days. All vehicles

must be out by sunset or risk being locked in. Please use the other lots if not a scheduled practice.

- New City Lot: [1301 50th Street SE Rochester, MN 55904](#) The city lot is located off St. Bridget Rd SE and 50 St. SE, near the Olmsted County Public Works Service Center. It is the main lot used for the Gamehaven Disc Golf Course. Occasionally, the RMBT will meet at this lot.
- Old City Lot: The old lot is located off CR 101. The RMBT doesn't use this lot as it is too small to accommodate the team.
- More locations to come!

What to Bring / What to Wear to Practice

To participate in practice, you must have the following:

- Mountain bike in good working condition (ABC)
 - Air – check the air pressure, spin the wheels, and make sure the tires are not worn out.
 - Brake – check to make sure the brakes are working as expected.
 - Cranks/Chain/Cogs – the chain is lubed and tight and the bike can change gears as needed.
 - Also, ensure the quick release is tight and closed properly and the seat and handlebars are set to the proper height.
- Helmet. If you have a leg over the bike, you must have a helmet on. If you've forgotten your helmet, ask a coach for a spare.
- Water. Riders must bring water in a water bottle or camelback to all practices. There are water spigots at Gamehaven only for refills.
- Tools. Older riders should carry a multi-tool and whatever might be needed to repair their bike.
- Other. If you use an inhaler or an EpiPen, make sure to bring that along.
- Gloves and eye protection are recommended.

Make sure clothing is tight-fitting and cannot get caught on branches or in the bike spokes/gears. See other clothing recommendations in "Equipment and Apparel."

Attendance

PLEASE communicate your attendance! Within TeamSnap, you can select "Going, Not Going, or Maybe". Take a moment each week to select your intent on going to practice. This applies to both student-athletes and coaches.

- We need to maintain a 6-1 ratio of students to coaches. By understanding how many kids and how many coaches are planning to attend, we will know if we can hold practice or not.
- If you are in high school and want to achieve a Letter, you must attend 80% of practices.
- Your group coaches use this to set up training for the evening.

Riders are expected to be picked up at the end of practice. You are also welcome to stay at the park and talk to other parents during practice. Coaches must ensure all riders are picked up before they can leave the park, so being on time is appreciated.

Practice Cancellations

Multiple reasons can cause us to need to cancel practice. The head coaches will decide by 2:00 pm on the day of practice and send an email/TeamSnap alert if we need to cancel. Reasons practices may get canceled:

- MCA has a weather policy that we must adhere to (thunderstorms/lightning/severe weather, heat, air quality, heavy rain): [MCA Weather Policy](#)
- Not enough coaches to maintain the 6:1 required ratio
- Trails are too muddy, creating unsafe conditions or damage to the trails

Group Assignments

The initial time trial allows coaches to assign each rider to a group. The intent is to have riders and coaches matched with similar speeds and skills so that riders can enjoy riding and learning at the level they are at. Note that groups will typically have a mixture of grades 6th through 12th grade. Typically, there are 9-10 groups defined with 6-8 riders and 1-2 coaches. Throughout the first several weeks, coaches may elect to adjust riders from one group to another based on performance at practice. The goal is for all riders to be safe and comfortable with the pace and coaching provided. If a rider is struggling or is not being challenged, the coach will discuss the situation with the head coaches. Other factors may weigh into the decisions to move riders such as whether a group has too many riders.

Riders should not be concerned about group movement – this is a natural part of being on a team with a wide range of participants that are improving throughout the season.

Most importantly, being able to ride at a faster pace only sometimes ensures a rider will move to a higher group. If the rider can stay in a group and be challenged and appropriately coached to meet his/her goals, there's no need to move the rider.

Girl Rides

During the practice season, we will intersperse a few girl rides led by our women coaches. This is a great opportunity for the girls to ride and practice with other girls of all levels of abilities. Keep an eye out for notifications of when these will be scheduled.

Injuries or Mechanical Issues

Occasionally, riders may need to sit out due to injuries (for instance, overheating) or if their bike has a mechanical issue. A rider must notify their coach; if they can contact their parents, they may leave practice early. In the event of a more serious injury, many coaches are CPR/First Aid certified and will provide basic medical assistance. If needed, additional emergency services will be contacted. Injured students will always remain with a coach even if this means the whole group returns to the parking lot.

All coaches carry radios to aid in communication during injuries or mechanical issues. Multiple first-aid packs are also distributed during each practice and carried by coaches.

Races and Other Competitive Events

Pre-Season Riding/Racing Opportunities

- Pre-Season or Captain's Rides: Unofficial rides may be available before the start of the season. Please know that these are not team-sponsored events and coaches will not be riding with the kids. Communication will be made via TeamSnap.
- Trailbot.com: If you're looking for trails to ride, trailbot.com has a great list of off-road mountain bike and fat biking trail systems across Minnesota and Wisconsin
- Pre-season Racing Opportunities (non-sanctioned events by RMBT)

- [MN Mountain Bike Series](#) includes the Gamehaven Lakeside Grind and has events for all ages. Typically, the Gamehaven race is in May.
- [WORS Wisconsin Off-Road Series](#)
- [Buck Hill Thursday Night Mountain Bike Series](#)
- [Wirth on Wednesdays](#)
- [Tuesday Night Time-Trials \(Gamehaven\)](#)

Team Time Trials

As a team, we hold one or more time trials (TT) per season. The first TT is used to determine which group riders should practice in during the season. Riders are ranked 1-80+ based on the speed of their TT. If a rider is not present, coaches will do their best to place the rider in an appropriate group based on previous experience.

TTs are held at Gamehaven. Riders are lined up based on how they ranked the previous year. Typically, TTs take much less time than a practice so riders may choose to leave upon completion.

Pre-ride TT course maps will be communicated via TeamSnap.

MCA League Race Series

RMBS participates in the MN Cycling Association (<https://minnesotacycling.org/>) which is a statewide organization. The race series is posted here: (<https://minnesotacycling.org/racing-series/>).

You will need to transport yourself to races (no team transport). However, if there is a desire to carpool or if you need help getting a bike to a race, contact coaches or the parent support group.

RMBS typically participates in four races per season and all kids on the team are welcome to join. The final race of the season is the state championship of which the athletes will need to qualify to participate. **State Championship**

RMBS participates as 1-3 teams divided by their neighborhood high school. The number of teams registered and the division (1 or 2) is based on the number of kids we have signed up and their schools.

Racers compete within their category. The category determines the number of laps they race (see below). In rare circumstances, the league may recommend moving racers to a higher category based on their performance.

Please take a moment to read information about the races on the MCA website. There is a lot of great information to absorb. Also, because this is a statewide event, there may be hundreds of kids in each category. It can be intimidating but it is well run to keep all the riders safe. Racing has some beneficial aspects to building character including building confidence and self-esteem.

As a team, we are there to support the riders.

FAQs for reference: <https://minnesotacycling.org/race-weekend-faqs/>

It is also expected that each team will volunteer some hours to organize the race, especially for our home race. If you're able to volunteer, here is the link to provide more details: <https://minnesotacycling.org/how-to-volunteer>

Elapsed time and distance of races (ESTIMATES ONLY) are usually as follows:

*Race laps and times may be adjusted due to weather/trail conditions

| Category | Elapsed Race Time* | Approximate Miles* |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 6 th Grade Boys/Girls | 20 to 45 minutes (1 lap) | 4 miles |
| 7 th Grade Boys/Girls | 20 to 45 minutes (1 lap) | 4 miles |
| 8 th Grade Boys/Girls | 20 to 45 minutes (1 lap) | 4 miles |
| Fresh Boys | 40 to 60 minutes (2 laps) | 8 miles |
| Fresh Girls | 40 to 60 minutes (2 laps) | 8 miles |
| JV2 Girls | 40 to 60 minutes (2 laps) | 8 miles |
| JV2 Boys | 40 to 60 minutes (2 laps) | 8 miles |
| JV3 Girls | 60 to 90 minutes (3 laps) | 12 miles |
| JV3 Boys | 60 to 90 minutes (3 laps) | 12 miles |
| Varsity Girls | Under 90 minutes (4 laps) | 16 miles |
| Varsity Boys | Under 90 minutes (4 laps) | 16 miles |

Team Race Schedule

The RMBT will be assigned four races from the full racing series to compete in for the coming year. Coaches will communicate those races that RMBT is participating in as soon as they are posted.

2024 RMBT Race Schedule

Saturday: Middle School Races & Sunday: High School Races

August 24-25 [Brophy Park | Alexandria, MN](#)

September 21-22 [Gamehaven | Rochester, MN](#)

September 28-29 [Whitetail Ridge | River Falls, WI](#)

October 5-6 [Pine Valley | Cloquet, MN](#)

State Championship: October 12-13 [Redhead | Chisholm, MN](#) **Note that race times and days are different from previous races.

Reference for MN Cycling Association Race Destinations:

Race locations are described in detail at <https://minnesotacycling.org/racing-series/>

A few locations that are sometimes part of the series are listed below as examples. Please note that our team will only participate in 4-5 of the total races and this may change each year.

[Brophy Park, | Alexandria, MN](#)

[Lake Rebecca | Rockford, MN](#)

[Jail Trail | St. Cloud, MN](#)

[The Trailhead at Theodore Wirth Park | Minneapolis, MN](#)

[Gamehaven | Rochester, MN](#)

[Whitetail Ridge | River Falls, WI](#)

[Mount Kato | Mankato, MN](#)

[Pine Valley | Cloquet, MN](#)

[Redhead | Chisholm, MN](#)

Program Fees (2024)

- RMBT Team Fees: \$125 for each rider which includes the RASC membership for the student rider.
- MCA Registration Fee: \$100
- Races: \$50 each or \$150 (super pass) for all 5 races.
 - The super pass is well worth the value saved. First-year riders who ride their first race and decide it isn't for them may qualify for a refund. <https://minnesotacycling.org/refund-policy/>
- Team Jersey (required for racing): \$70-\$110

- The MCA Cycling League provides scholarship opportunities for the MCA program fees. Please complete the scholarship application form and submit it as instructed: [MCA Scholarship Application Form](#)
- Coaching Fee: \$40 (MCA registration as a coach) + \$11 (background check) + processing fees.

Team Conduct

MCA Cycling lists the sporting regulations and can be found in the General Documents section of the coach resources page: [MCA Coach Resources](#)

High School Lettering

Details on lettering requirements are available on the website:

Please see <https://www.rasc-mn.org/rmbt> and select Lettering Requirements for details.

Please note that there is a minimum number of races and practices. If interested in lettering, please inform a head coach at the start of the season via email (info@rochmtg.org) so you can schedule service hours.

Optional Team Trip

This year, the team trip will be from August 9th to August 11th (**Cuyuna Lakes MTB, located in the Crosby/Ironton area**). There are limited campsites reserved for the group at [Red Rider Resort Campground](#). Please email info@rochmtb.org if you are interested in joining this team for a fun weekend of mountain biking!

If you are not interested in camping but would still like to join the team there are many lodging options available in the Crosby/Ironton area.

<https://www.cuyuna.com/mountainbikeroutes/>

Trail Building/Maintenance

Throughout the year, volunteers from the RMBT work hard to build and maintain our mountain bike trails. This sport is only possible because of the hours put in by

volunteers to ensure the trails are safe and cared for so the bike club and community can enjoy them. Notice of trail days will be made through our social media and TeamSnap. It is encouraged for all members of the team to donate some time to caring for trails. Typical trail days are Wednesdays when there is no practice. For more information, contact Scott Hogen (scott.hogen@gmail.com).

If you are lettering, there is a requirement to put in hours towards trail maintenance. Please see <https://www.rasc-mn.org/rmbt> and select Lettering Requirements for details.

For the student putting in the most trail maintenance hours, there is a coveted "rake" award at the end of the season banquet.

Medical/Asthma/Concussions

RMBT does not collect physicals. We ask parents to work with their medical caregivers to determine if their child can participate without restriction. All RMBT coaches have concussion training. Asthma is a condition that can easily be exacerbated by exercise. Please carry an inhaler and inform your coach if you have asthma. Also, inform your coach if a medical situation arises during practice.

Coaching Volunteers

In order to create an 80+ student team, we need coaches! For every 6-8 student-athletes (groups), we need 2 coaches minimum. Coaches vary from more experienced level 3 coaches to level 1 coaches who act as rider assistants. Please contact our head coaches if interested at info@rochmtg.org! MCA has some great resources as well: <https://minnesotacycling.org/becoming-a-coach/>

Parent Volunteers

New for 2024, the RMBT has started a Parent Booster group. This group intends to support our student riders and parents. Ideas the parent booster group is discussing:

- Race Support
- Fundraisers

- Team Swag
- Team Swap/Sale
- Parent Support (carpooling, etc)
- Team Engagement Activities

If interested in joining, please contact Lynette Mullen (durandwood@proton.me) or Janice Pascoe (janicelynnpascoe@gmail.com)