Royal Gorge Rumble: Air Academy Clinches the Crystal Region Division 1 Championship!



The Cañon City racecourse was in prime condition and running incredibly fast for the Royal Gorge Rumble, the final regular race of the 2026 season. The day offered a mix of conditions: our Freshman racers were treated to cool morning temperatures and calm skies, while our Varsity riders faced a hot, dusty finish as the wind picked up in the afternoon. Despite the challenging resistance from the wind, the Air Academy High School Mountain Bike Team put together an incredible day of racing. The team took a well-earned 2nd place on the day, but more importantly, locked in 1st place for the season. For the third consecutive year, Air Academy is the Division 1 Crystal Region Champion!

Freshman Boys



Aiden and Quincy Battling Together



Jaxon Focuses on the Corner

Taking advantage of the cool morning air, Quincy Reed and Aiden Nelson worked brilliantly together to set a solid, consistent pace. The teammates crossed the line within seconds of each other on both laps, with Quincy edging out Aiden by less than a second to take 23rd (59:19.25), while Aiden took 24th (59:20.18). Ransom Johnson pushed his limits, crossing the line in 38th place (1:02:09.59); unfortunately, he barely missed qualifying for States, finishing only 3 points behind the final qualifying position for the season with 917 points. Jaxon Macdonald wrapped up his season strong, battling hard to finish in 49th place (1:08:34.98).

Sophomore Boys



Steel Digs Deep on his way to a 2nd Place Finish



Luke Giving It Everything He Has

The Sophomore Boys brought the heat to Cañon City. After missing Race 2 due to illness, Steel Starkey needed a solid finish to ensure a high seed at States—and he absolutely delivered. Making up significant time on the leader during Lap 2 and throwing down the fastest lap of the Sophomore race, Steel took 2nd place (49:52.91), finishing just 20 seconds behind 1st, and claiming an impressive 3rd place overall for the region! Luke Quicksall worked relentlessly to move up the pack, pouring everything into both laps to push from 20th all the way to a 7th place finish (53:13.01)—his best of the season. Cody Judkins (24th, 57:38.75) and Jake Leigh (26th, 58:02.55) both rode fantastic races. The two teammates put in great efforts and will line up close to each other at the State Championship.

Senior Send-Off and Season Recognition

As this was the final regular race of the year, the League hosted its traditional Senior Singletrack Send-Off. This celebratory parade through the venue gave parents, teammates, and fans a wonderful opportunity to honor our graduating student-athletes with posters, flowers, and loud cheers. It was a memorable moment to see our seniors ride through the venue and be recognized for their years of hard work, leadership, and dedication to the team.



Air Academy Seniors Jackson Lorigan, Jacob Lane, and Nora Bots on the right

JV Girls



Elora working hard for her 2nd Place Finish

Elora Walkup put on a spectacular performance for the JV Girls. Crossing the line in 3rd place after Lap 1, Elora maintained a remarkably consistent pace, showcasing her technical skills and all the hard work from interval training. She dug deep on Lap 2 to make up a place and finish in 2nd (57:21.84). This marked her best finish of the season and secured her a fantastic 4th place overall in the region!

Freshman Girls

Our lone freshman girl, Sophia Ugarte, entered this race with high hopes and her eyes on a win. She started off perfectly, right on the wheel of the Leader's Jersey after the first mile. Unfortunately, a surprise collision 1.4 miles into the race resulted in a significant injury. In a display of true resilience, Sophia managed to finish the rest of the race. She later reconciled with the other rider involved, setting a great example of sportsmanship. While her injury will unfortunately keep her from the State Championship, her incredible performance throughout the season earned her 2nd place overall in the region.



Sophia ready to go

JV Boys

The JV Boys race delivered heart-pounding action. Junior Carsten Varcie went into the race defending his Leader's Jersey. After a tightly contested Lap 1, the race came down to an exhilarating sprint finish. Carsten pushed incredibly hard to finish in 3rd place (48:05.13), less than a quarter second behind 2nd! His effort was exactly what was needed to defend the jersey, officially crowning him the Crystal Region JV Champion (1st overall) by a single point! Jackson Wroten secured a State Championship start with a solid top-20 performance, finishing in 19th (53:54.92). Nico Vega Brautigam and Luke Pajak worked beautifully as a team, posting identical Lap 1 times and finishing just two seconds apart in 37th (57:21.73) and 38th (57:23.77) to lock in their own State Championship bids. Chase Moody put in a strong ride for 48th, followed by Senior Jackson Lorigan in 51st. Junior Keegan Foster was involved in a tough collision during the finishing sprint, but fought through to finish in 70th position.



Keegan rails the corner



Legacy Rider Jackson Lorigan Focuses on theTerrain



Chase Moody Pushes Up the Singletrack

Varsity Boys

In the Varsity Boys race, the winds began to pick up, adding to the challenge of the 3-lap course. Junior Justin Tremblay threw down another phenomenal ride, earning a podium spot with a 5th place finish (1:10:14.50). Legacy Rider Jacob Lane put in a solid, consistent effort, navigating the dusty conditions to finish 25th (1:20:31.10). Teammate Dylan Hudson crossed the line right on his heels just 45 seconds later in 26th.



Justin chases another rider



Dylan battles through the dust



Jake Lane pushes through the corner

Varsity Girls

The Varsity Girls closed out the race day facing the strongest afternoon winds and heat. Ruby Harris fought through the tough conditions to secure a 3rd place finish (1:24:37.89). She carried incredible energy all the way through her third lap, exuberantly interacting with those cheering her on towards the finish line, and claiming 3rd place overall in the region! Senior Legacy Rider Nora Bots rode a very consistent and mentally tough race. Despite finding herself riding in "no man's land" without a pack to ride and chat with, she powered through to claim 8th place on the day and 8th place overall for the season.



Ruby leads out another rider



Nora having fun on her way to a Top 10 Finish

Summary

As we wrap up the regular season, we are incredibly proud of the depth, sportsmanship, and tenacity of the Air Academy Mountain Bike Team. From our seniors riding in their final regular season race to our freshmen setting new benchmarks, every rider dug deep to help secure the Division 1 Regional Championship. A huge thank you to our phenomenal coaches, parents, and volunteers who supported the team through the dust, heat, and sprints, and a special thank you to Shae Lorigan for providing fantastic photos. Next stop: Glenwood Springs for the State Championship!



Congratulations JV Division 1 Regional Champion Carsten Varcie