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## criterium is Aug. 22: Bike race headed for downtown

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Bicyclists spinning along at breakneck speed is on tap for downtown Milford, when the village hosts its first criterium on Aug. 22.

"It's going to be a hoot," said Joe Dolan, race director and member of the Milford Athletic Club, a non-profit organization which is hosting the event.

The criterium, or crit as it's commonly called, is a multi-lap bike race held on a short course. Milford's crit will be a .93-mile course, running along Main Street, W. Commerce, Cabinet and Liberty streets, through Central Park and back to Main Street.

"This is a very spectator-friendly race, and the goal is to bring this excitement to town," Dolan said. "And Milford is a good town to do this."

There will be several races in the event, with each lasting about an hour. More than \$5,000 in cash prizes are at stake.

Announcing the crit will be Frankie Andreu, a nine-time Tour de France participant and two-time Olympian.

Adding to the thrill will be several "primes" called out randomly, where the next person who crosses the finish line gets an award. Riders — and spectators — will be alerted by the sound of a bell.

"It's really like a burst of excitement," Dolan said.

Though he's managed his share of challenging bicycle events since seriously taking up the sport 11 years ago, Dolan said he's no match for the 200-some racers expected to compete in the Milford event. Participants must have already earned official status, as indicated by their licenses, to be entered in a particular race.

The criterium has categories for kids through adults, which are divided into gender. After racing for a specified period of time, bicyclists then finish up with additional laps, ranging from two to five, depending on the event.

Except for the Junior Boys, Junior Girls and Kids Fun Race events, participants must have already earned the qualifying license to compete in a particular race.

The Kids Fun Race, held at 1:15 p.m., is free. Fees for the other events range from \$5 to \$40.

Dolan said he has wanted to bring a criterium to the village streets for the past several years. He has witnessed bike races in Kensington Metropark, but saw few spectators.

Yet watching a crit can be as fun as riding in one, Dolan said, which people will discover for themselves during the Milford race. Those living along the race route will be inconvenienced during the eight to 10 hours the streets on the route will be shut down, but they have a decent trade-off — front row seats to what promises to be an awesome spectacle, Dolan said.

"Overwhelmingly, the feedback we've gotten from people says this is going to be great. People who

live on the route say they are going to invite friends over, get out the lawn chairs and barbecue, and just watch from their front yards,” he said.

Of course, spectators can also line up on the street along the route and bring along their lawn chairs, too. There’s no charge to watch.

Milford is ripe for a crit, Dolan said, especially with new the new hike-bike paths that have been drawing plenty of visitors since opening earlier this year. “The trails are a catalyst for this type of thing,” he said.

During the race, a section of downtown near Main and Commerce streets will serve as an expo area, featuring vendors and organizations involved in bicycling.

“When you come to the crit, you can watch, shop, meet people, go to the expo area. There will be activities for everyone, young and old,” he said. “It’s going to be extremely exciting.”

For more information on the Milford criterium including registration information, contact [info@milfordcrit.org](mailto:info@milfordcrit.org).

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