

Milford: Closed circuit cycling returns Aug. 1

By Aileen Wingblad • STAFF WRITER • July 22, 2010

The criterium is spinning back into Milford.

The second annual closed circuit cycling event will be held on the streets of downtown Milford on Aug. 1. Organizer Joe Dolan expects about 400 cyclists — double the number at last year's event — to participate in the multi-lap race. More than \$5,000 in prizes will be awarded.

“The event is a great way to promote cycling, promote health and fitness, promote the community and promote a family event,” Dolan said.

The races will run 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Criteriums, which originated in Europe, feature cyclists cruising at break-neck speed through short courses in urban areas. Milford's crit is a .93-mile course that runs along Main, Commerce, Cabinet and Liberty streets, and through Central Park. Bells are rung throughout the events to announce the final two laps of a particular race, as well as opportunities to earn interval prizes.

To participate in all but the beginner level contest, cyclists must have already earned official qualifying status based on points accrued in prior races. Those new to the sport can enter the crit's beginner category.

Cyclists ages 3-14 can participate in one of three separate races especially for kids, beginning at 3:30 p.m. There's no fee to enter these races, but registration is required. Registration will run 1:30-2:30 p.m. Kids must be accompanied by an adult.

All racers, including adults, must supply and wear a CPSC-approved cycling helmet.

Dolan said watching the crit is a blast, and even the kids' races are great to see.

“The kids race is so exciting, If you only see one race, come and see the kids race,” Dolan said. “And the kids who come will get bit by the cycling bug. I got bit when I was 40 years old — and wish it had

been a lot sooner.”

Dolan said feedback from last year's Milford crit was overwhelmingly positive.

“To see the faces on the spectators is just so thrilling. It was really neat to watch, and to hear people cheering on the racers as they ride into downtown. Everybody just loved it,” he said.

Crit announcers will be Brad Sohner and Evan Schmitt, who both have an extensive cycling background, Dolan said.

Last year's crit was held on a Saturday. In response to feedback from local merchants, the event was moved to Sunday for this year. Other changes from last year include the addition of golf carts to shuttle spectators who have trouble walking from parking lots to the crit route, and the expo area has been moved to the Milford Auto parking lot, off Main street just north of Liberty Street. The expo will feature a variety of vendors, the Carls Family YMCA, Huron Valley Pools and Fitness, and other sponsors.

Dolan said word of the Milford event has spread, and the race is now part of the Michigan Challenge Series so participants can earn points to be applied to their qualifying status. Milford crit's downtown location for a crit is rare — and special — he said.

“Most crits are in industrial parks, out of the way where most people can't see and have very few s

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pectators,” Dolan said. “A lot of towns don't like to have their roads closed, but I have lived in Milford 15 years and I feel very strongly that this is a good thing. It embraces the spirit and image of this town.”

Registration is required for all crit participants, which is available on the web at www.milfordcrit.org. Fees range from \$5 to \$35 per event, and \$10 to \$45 per event for those who register after July 25.

For more information, check the website or contact Dolan at racedirector@milfordcrit.org.

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The Milford Criterium returns to downtown Milford Sunday, Aug. 1. The all-day event is expected to bring 400 cyclists to town. (File Photo)

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