

Sciandra Triumphs in NICA Series; Groby Secures Second in Dramatic Tiebreaker

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EDWARDSVILLE – In an exhilarating conclusion to the 2023 Missouri NICA Mountain Bike Race Series, Aesa Sciandra emerged victorious in the 9th Grade Girls B category, showcasing her consistency and dedication in a highly competitive field. Alongside Sciandra's achievement, her Metro East Phoenix teammate, Trueman Groby, was tied for first place by the season's fourth race in the 8th Grade Boys B category. However, inclement weather resulted in the final race being canceled, prompting a

tiebreaker decision that resulted in a well-fought second place for Groby, adding a dramatic twist to the conclusion of their team's season.

Sciandra's ascent to the top of the podium not only exemplifies her individual prowess but also underscores the Metro East Phoenix Composite Team's commitment to fostering young talent. Her triumph is particularly significant in light of the NICA GRiT (Girls Riding Together) initiative, which is aimed at increasing female participation in the sport. Her success is a testament to the nurturing environment fostered by the Metro East Phoenix Team, notably under the direction of their female Team Director, Brianna Overbey.

At the helm of Edwardsville's thriving Interscholastic Mountain Biking Team is Head Coach Justin Allen, whose leadership and strategic training are fundamental to the team's success. Under Coach Allen's guidance, sportsmanship, discipline, and resilience are deeply instilled in the student-athletes. Groby's narrative, in particular, is a testament to his and the team's embodiment of these philosophies, especially in the face of uncontrollable elements.

The team's ability to nurture such talent is enhanced by the support of a local network, including a dedicated group of parent volunteers and coaches, and organizations like Gateway Offroad Cyclists (GORC) and the Litchfield Area Mountain Biking Organization (Lambo), which maintain the training grounds at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) and the Route 66 Hike & Bike Trail at Lake Lou Yaeger, respectively. These partnerships have been integral to the team's training program and success. As a result, the team stands as a testament to what can be achieved through a shared commitment to excellence and the cultivation of individual talent.

The Metro East Phoenix continues to invite student-athletes interested in mountain biking to join their ranks for the 2024 season. All skill levels are welcome! For more information on the team, please contact: Head Coach: Justin Allen, Email: juaallen@thecyclerys.com Team Director: Brianna Overbey, Email: brianna@missourimtb.org