

SPORTS & OUTDOORS

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Report scores to Shelby Reardon, sports editor, at 970-871-4253 or sreardon@SteamboatPilot.com

19

Solace on singletrack

Let me start by telling you the shortest possible version of my story: I'm Australian/American. I skied with Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club as a teen before moving here and coaching from 1999 to 2004.

SPOKE TALK



I then spent a couple of years in Vail before going back to my home country in late 2006. I thoroughly enjoyed my

13 years back in Australia, but I constantly dreamt of being permanently back in Steamboat.

In 2017, I finally succumbed to the Yampa Valley curse and made plans to return. In March this year, I gently coaxed my Australian cattle dog into her travel crate, and now — here we are. We literally arrived in town the same evening things shut down from COVID19.

For a decade, I had dreamt of moving back here where I could ride my bike onto incredible trails right out of my front door and not have to drive for 30 minutes or more every time I wanted to ride somewhere great. Upon my arrival, I promptly joined Routt County Riders as a trail ambassador. I was super keen to get involved in the biking community in any way possible, and this seemed like a great place to start.

In April and May, I went crazy — riding every day on road or gravel — whether it was sunny or snowing. I waved at a lot of fellow cyclists on the roads, mostly on the sunny days, but a few other crazies were out there in the adverse weather with me.

Once June rolled around, it was time to get out onto some awesome singletrack. I donned my ambassador jersey as much as possible. I rode every day — so some days I had to forego the jersey in favor of throwing it in the washing machine.

On the trails, I met local riders and hikers and dozens of friendly dogs. Later in the summer, I met visitors on the trails as well. It felt great to be back in the valley and sharing my love of riding with so many others.

I answered questions from all kinds of friendly people, but maybe the most commonly asked question came each time I was about halfway up Spring Creek: "how much farther is it to the top?" That trail certainly kicks my butt, especially on hot days, and it seems I wasn't the only one.

I know this summer has been far from normal, but every time I hit the trails this summer, it was like the whole COVID-19 world disappeared. People on the trails were having a great time, being social (in small safe pairs or groups), learning new skills, seeing new (as well as much-loved old) favorite places. The trails felt like an oasis in a world of chaos and confusion. This is why I moved back here.

If you're looking for a great way to contribute some positivity to the community next summer and want to get out and about while doing it, I highly recommend becoming a Routt County Rider trail ambassador. I can imagine it only gets better as things become more normal.

Kirra Dyer is a Steamboat Springs local and Routt County Rider trail ambassador.

NO PEDALING REQUIRED



SHELBY REARDON/STAFF

The NPR — No Pedaling Required — trail extension on Howelsen Hill is complete. The extension, designed and completed by FlowRide Concepts, runs all the way to the base of Howelsen Hill, near Mile Run.

Fall sports details

CHSAA announces plan for football with choice of 2 seasons

Shelby Reardon
Steamboat Pilot & Today

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — It's official. High school football will be played in Colorado this fall. How many and which schools participate are the next questions on the table.

On Thursday afternoon, the Colorado High School Activities Association released specifics on what the fall and spring football seasons would look like. The CHSAA Board of Directors voted late Wednesday night to allow schools to decide whether to play football, field hockey and sideline cheer, three sports that were approved with the new guidelines for organized sports issued by Gov. Jared Polis.

Schools can still choose to play football in Season A — in the fall — or Season C — in the spring — but not both. There will be two seasons, two playoffs and two sets of state championships. Teams must declare which season they are participating in by 8 a.m. Monday.

No area schools have made a decision yet, but Steamboat Springs Athletic Director and CHSAA board member Luke DeWolfe said he hopes to have a decision made for Steamboat sometime tomorrow. The structure for Season A and Season

C will be identical, comprised of a 6+1 season, meaning all teams will play a six-game regular season. Teams must play at least four of the six regular-season games to be eligible for postseason. Teams that don't qualify for the playoffs can choose to play another non-qualifying team in week one or two of the postseason.

All schools, regardless of season, will have a schedule built by CHSAA due to the short time frame between now and the start of the season. Practices will begin Thursday, with first games Oct. 8. Playoffs will begin Nov. 21, and the championship will be played Dec. 5.

The playoff race will be highly competitive, with just eight teams qualifying from each classification, based on the CHSAA Seeding Index.

If 50% of a league is playing in any given season, the league will remain intact. Otherwise, leagues may need to be adjusted.

"It's important for people to understand that one season isn't necessarily different or better," DeWolfe said. "The only thing that's different is the time, dates, when the seasons occur."

Spectators are allowed so long as they are compliant with the regulations for outdoor events.

No more than 175 people are permitted, and individuals or family groups must remain 6 feet from each other. If multiple games are taking place in the same vicinity, spectators must not mingle with each other. Contact information must be collected, including times of arrival and departure.

BE HEARD

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Single direction traffic flow must be established.

For more constructed facilities like Gardner Field in Steamboat, these requirements will require a little extra work, but ultimately, would be possible to execute.

A decision on fan attendance will be made, pending a decision on when games will be played.

"That consideration goes back to working with our local health department to figure out the specifics of what that looks like and the best way to do that safely," DeWolfe said. "But, I do feel confident that the configuration of our stadium, and Gardner Field in general, is built really well to lend itself towards social distancing and safe entries and exits."

Meanwhile, at unenclosed fields such as the ones at Hayden and Soroco high schools, it may be harder to manage entries and exits.

If Steamboat were to pick up football practices next week, Mike Appel would be the interim head coach, with the retirement of Shaun Baumgartner at the conclusion of the 2019 season. Appel has been an assistant coach for the past 25 years.

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