Easter biking event set for bigger things

Nick Kossatch

LASSETERS Easter in the Alice Mountain Bike Muster race director John Pyper confirmed on Monday mountain biking in the Northern Territory was set to make its debut on the National Series race circuit.

Mountain Biking Australia executive officer Shane Coppin announced the event would be part of Australia’s National Cross Country Marathon Mountain Bike Series.

It is set to attract riders from around Australia and overseas with many in the elite or pro category.

LEITA is a three-day, four-stage mountain biking event that uses the Red Centre’s mountain bike tracks around Alice Springs run by the Central Australian Rough Riders.

The first stage of the LEITA will also be the first round of the National Marathon Mountain Bike Series.

This is the first time in mountain bike history that the NT will host a round of a mountain biking national series.

“Thenews is huge and it’s massive,” Pyper said.

“The only other sport to hold a national series event in the NT that I know of is the Tatts Finke Desert Race.”

“Adding Lasseters Easter in the Alice to the National Marathon Series will make our club-run event one of the pre-eminent mountain bike events in the country.”

The competition came on the back of Coppin’s visit to the Red Centre earlier this year to discuss the recent mountain biking developments in the Red Centre and how MTBA could support that development.

He was full of praise for the riding scene in Alice Springs and the Easter event.

“It’s a very active scene,” Coppin said.

“There’s a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of support from council and local tourism bodies.

“IP is a very passionate character and he and the club are putting on a great event.”

Divas guarding against upset with attention focused on ladder leaders

Nick Kossatch

ROUND 14 commences with Gillen Divas against Legends from 6.30pm tomorrow in the women’s hockey competition.

Legends will be keen to take it right up to the ladder-leading Divas in a possible preview of the grand final.

Jess Marshall, Amy McDonald and Bev Pavkovich will be Legends’ key players and will need to fire if they are to upset the Divas.

Gillen Divas will look to Stacey Lewis and Maddy Jones to score with Leshay Maidment hoping to add to the six goals she has for the season to date.

Bottom team Centrals took plenty away from their effort against Divas last week and player/coach Maneka Byerley expects a similar effort against Desert Sharks from 6pm.

Sharks hope to have Hayley Batterham back in scoring mode while Centrals should be at full strength.

“It will be tough to beat Legends if they are at their full strength,” Byerley said.

“We had a full team on the weekend so I am hoping for the same numbers for this week’s game.”

Byerley said defence will be the key and injuries ruined Centrals’ chances last time the two teams met.

A tight match looms between Centrals (top) and the second-placed KFC Stunts in the men’s at 1.30pm.

Mark Walsh’s confidence will be sky high after his hat-trick for Centrals last week and the team have three others who are featuring in the top eight goal scorers.

Caleb MacDonald is another who needs to be watched by the Stunts’ defence.

Stunts’ Nick Kuhn said the defence impressed him last week and will need to step up again.

“Our defence was also solid as a rock allowing few chances and hopefully we can now build on this good momentum and make a deep run into the finals,” he said.

Warriors take on Desert Sharks at 3pm and enter the match in reasonable form after a gallant loss to Centrals.

Warriors’ James Nolan said there are no changes to the team.

Rockets blasting off on target for finals

Nick Kossatch

ROCKETS dynasty Junior Saana produced one of his masterclass basketball games with a 23-point haul in Rocks/ 87-65 win against Rockets Saints in round II of League Men.

The Saints were up for the battle early and it was 18-18 at quarter time with youngsters Stefan Yamada (21 points) Keenan Abbott (21 points) and Tyronne Foster chipped in.

Nick Kossatch

Byerley expects a similar effort against Divas last week.

Byerley stepped up in the second half with Kelvin Mattair and Bart Michael combining for 40 points between them.

Nyewente again were too good for Wallabies Storm to win by 14 points.

Nyewente torched the Storm with 26 points and was the clear difference between the teams in the 53-39 win.

MEN’S LADDER

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nyewente</td>
<td>7-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rocks/</td>
<td>7-1</td>
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<td>Memo Magic</td>
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<td>Wallabies</td>
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<td>Rockets</td>
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<td>Saints</td>
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With eight points for the Truckies.

Nyewente and Rockets go head-to-head this Monday night at 6pm in the perfect curtain-raiser to the finals in two weeks.

The teams are locked at a win each with Nyewente winning 69-37 back in round two before the Rockets responding in round seven by five points.

Rockets Saints take on Memo Magic in the late game from 7.15pm and even though Saints were well beaten against Rocks, it still managed a creditable 65 points.

Magic have shown patches of good games but inconsistentency has been its biggest problem.

Gerald Kennedy, Quentin Leathers and Matthew Zigment will again be keys for Memo and have been terrific throughout the season.

The Saints Keenan Abbott and dad Trent, if he plays, have had solid seasons and the return of Stefan Yamada has been a boost.

It’s desperate times for the Saints as it searches for win number one and it would not surprise if it comes Monday.