

# [ PEDALING ]

## CLUBS

# Escape Velocity p/b Catalyst Kinetics

### Raising a New Generation of Racers

BY LISA EVANS

**F**ounded in 1989, this Vancouver, B.C. racing club is starting a new chapter and hopes to inspire a new generation of young cyclists. The goal of encouraging young cyclists began with DEVO (Development and Escape Velocity), the youth-development team of Escape Velocity, but is now known as EV Powered by Catalyst Kinetics.

While many other cycling clubs allow youth to ride alongside adults, EV President Brian Storey (a former schoolteacher and chair of the sport-science department at Douglas College, whose research lies in the area of childhood sport development) felt there was a need for a better model for youth

development rather than just youth riding with adults.

He wanted to develop a program that would allow youth to ride with other youth and receive specialized coaching along the way. DEVO would foster athlete development, turning beginner cyclists into Professional National racing champions by providing a full spectrum of rider education on and off the bike.

Although DEVO had been in existence since 1999, youth membership had dropped to 12 riders by 2012. In order to achieve EV's vision of youth development, Storey hired Andrew Pinfold, a former Professional road cyclist and four-time member of the Canadian National team, to help him re-vamp the program.

Throughout the fall of 2012, Pinfold and Storey reviewed the DEVO program and came up with an eight-year plan for rider development, leading to a re-branding of the club, a partnership with Catalyst Kinetics (the most advanced indoor-cycling facilities on the West Coast) and other major sponsors including Sugo and Cannondale. Since 2013, membership in DEVO has grown from 12 to 42 youth.

This year, the club expects to reach 60, and in 2015, it expects to have 80 youth involved in the program. Named Vision 2020, Storey says this long-term athlete-development plan will be a game-changer in youth cycling in Canada. "A rider who started in 2013 with the new plan at 10 years old would have received eight years of coached developmentally-appropriate riding experience, and by the age of 18 would be ready for the National level," says Storey.

DEVO is broken into four categories: U13 for riders between the ages of 11 and 12, U15 for ages 13 to 14, U17 for ages 15 to 16 and U19 for ages 17 to 18. A coaching staff organizes rides three times a week from April through August. During the winter, U17 and U19 members also do indoor rides with the team's title sponsor Catalyst Kinetics.

Each child also has a parent who



**With a new vision and re-branding along with Andrew Pinfold at the helm, Escape Velocity's DEVO program is soaring again.**

becomes a member of EV. Although parents don't need to ride (approximately half are recreational riders or racers), their involvement is a determining factor for the success of the program and the involvement of youth in the sport in general. "Parents support all the activities of a healthy club," says Storey. Parents volunteer at races, organize fundraisers and the awards banquet, and help organize trips. "The motto we use is 'Community-minded, Parent-supported, Coach-driven and Athlete-centered,'" says Storey.

EV members wear one of two colours: pink for adult members and Cannondale green for the youth (the same colour as Cannondale's Professional team). Adults pay \$100 to join, which includes discounts on all races run by EV.

Youth pay a membership fee of \$175 and a program fee of \$625 for U13 and U15 and \$1,125 for U15 and U19 to cover the costs of professional coaching sessions. The program fee is what differentiates EV's DEVO program from many other youth-cycling programs across the country. "[Without] program fees, you can't pay coaches and the sport never develops," explains Storey.

In addition to its focus on youth development, EV runs races for the community in partnership with other clubs. "We're the largest race-hosting organization in British Columbia," says Storey. EV runs more than 30 races a year, including the popular Spring Series training races in March, the Sportif Series races and the World Tuesday Night Championships from May to September, the longest-running race series in British Columbia.

"We're the centre of the race community in Greater Vancouver," boasts Storey. Money raised from the races helps to fund the club's racing-development programs.

For more information, visit [www.escape-velocity.bc.ca](http://www.escape-velocity.bc.ca).

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