

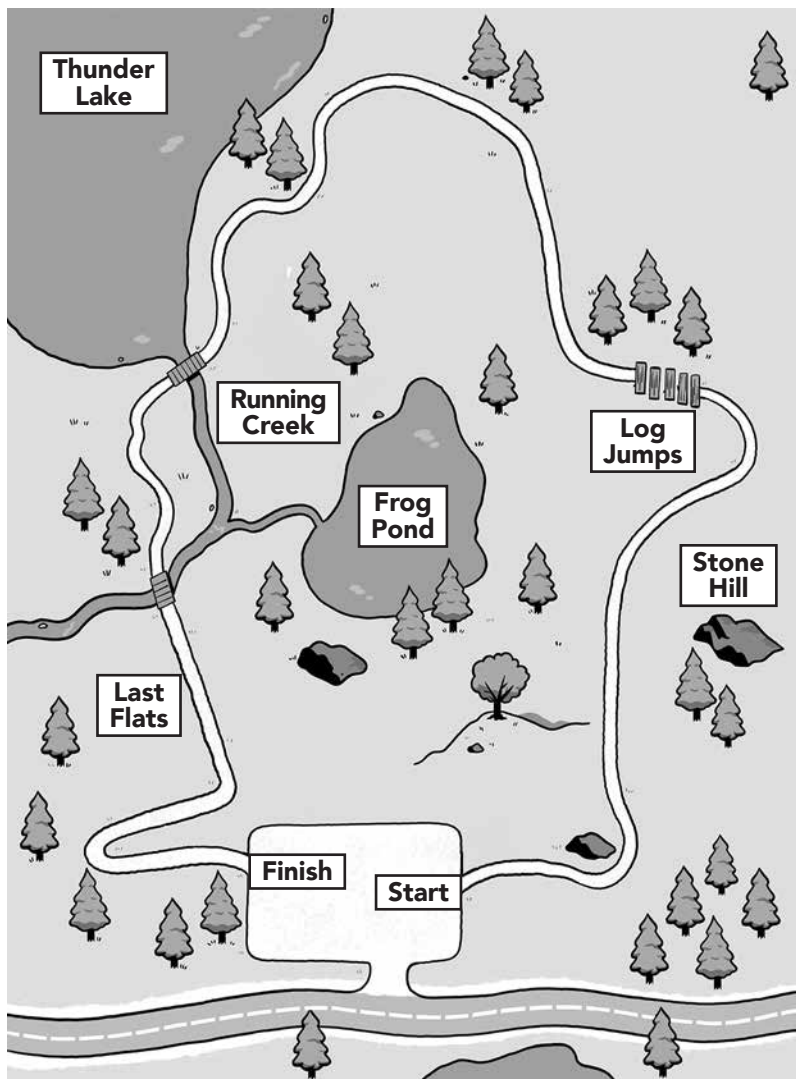
Contents

1	Test Ride	1
2	Team Practice	7
3	The First Race	13
4	Magic Mountain	19
5	Fix It	25
6	The Shortcut	30
7	The County Finals	37



Jamal and Kat are cousins. Sarah and Eli are sister and brother. They play a lot of sports in Roseland! They play to win.

Roseland Park Trail



Chapter 1

Test Ride

It was spring, and the days were getting longer. It stayed light outside later.

“The mountain biking finals are in six weeks,” said Sarah. “I can’t wait.”

“We haven’t even had the first race yet!” said Eli.

“I still can’t wait,” said Sarah.

“Let’s go for a ride now,” said Eli.

Sarah and Eli Latu lived near Roseland Park. The mountain bike trail in the park was used for races. The middle school finals were going to take place there.

Sarah and Eli rode their bikes to the park.

“Want to race?” Sarah asked Eli.

“No,” said Eli. “You go ahead. I’ll follow.”

The first part of the trail went up a hill.

Sarah stood up to pedal. She was going fast.

She was out of sight in seconds.

Sarah always shows off, thought Eli.



Eli wanted to catch up with Sarah. He rode standing up. When he got to the top of the hill, Sarah was waiting. She was standing by her bike, drinking from her water bottle.

“Ride with your hips in front of your seat,” said Sarah. “It will give you more power.”

“I feel like I’ll go over the handlebars,” said Eli.

The next part of the trail had five jumps. The jumps were made of logs covered with dirt. They were less than 2 feet high.

Sarah took off fast. She pulled up on her handlebars to lift the front tire. Then she pushed down and back on the pedals

to push the back tire up.

I'm flying! thought Sarah as her bike went into the air. She went over the next four jumps fast and then waited for Eli.

Eli slowed down when he got to the first jump. He pulled up on his handlebars to lift the front tire. His back tire hit the log.



“Don’t slow down!” yelled Sarah. “You need speed to take jumps in the air!”

“Stop telling me how to ride,” said Eli.

“Fine,” said Sarah. “I’m going to finish the trail. Are you coming with me?”

“You go ahead,” said Eli. “I’ll meet you at home.”

Sarah rode the last part of the trail. At the end of a long, flat area, there was a sharp turn. She leaned low into the turn. She zipped around it and kept riding hard. She got to the end of the trail.

That was a good ride, thought Sarah. She rode home by herself.

Eli came home an hour later.

“What took you so long?” asked Sarah.

“I rode the trail again,” said Eli.

“I hope you practiced jumping the logs,” said Sarah. “It seems like you’re scared of them.”

“I’m not scared of them,” said Eli. “I was studying the trail. I wasn’t racing through it.”

“You should just ride fast,” said Sarah.

“You have a lot to learn,” said Eli.

Chapter 2

Team Practice

A few days later, the Roseland Middle School mountain biking team met at the park. There were 20 riders on the team. Besides Sarah and Eli, Kat and Jamal were on the team, too.

Coach Rogers was a teacher at Roseland Middle School. She led the team up the first hill. It was called Stone Hill.

Sarah and the coach rode up Stone Hill standing up. They got to the top first.

“Your form is perfect,” Sarah said to Coach Rogers. “I told Eli his hips were too

far back. He thinks he's going to fall over his handlebars."

"Standing when riding up a hill is hard," said Coach Rogers. "Most pro riders both sit and stand going up hills. For short hills, sitting is fine. For long hills, standing up works best near the top."



“Really?” asked Sarah. “I thought standing was always better.”

“Not always,” said Coach Rogers.

Eli and Jamal were late getting to the top. “My chain came off,” Jamal said.

Jamal is always last, thought Sarah. And he always has problems with his bike.

“OK, let’s all go to the log jumps,” said Coach Rogers. “I’ll give you some tips.”

They went to the log jumps. Coach Rogers said, “Jumps have three parts. Getting the *front* tire in the air. Getting the *back* tire in the air. *Landing*. Let me show you.”

Coach Rogers was standing as she rode up to the first jump. Her knees and arms

were bent. She pushed her hips back to get the front tire in the air. Then she moved her hips up and forward to get the back tire in the air. She sailed over the jump. Both tires hit the ground at the same time.

“I thought you were supposed to pull up on the handlebars,” said Eli. “Your arms were bent, but you didn’t pull up.”

“Use your hips, not your arms,” said Coach Rogers. “When you pull up with your arms, there’s a chance your wheels will turn. If your wheels turn, it messes up your landing.”

Have I been doing jumps wrong? thought Sarah. *I always use my arms when I pull up.*

The rest of practice was free time. Eli and Jamal rode hard to the end of the trail. Sarah and Kat stayed at the log jumps. They wanted to practice jumping them.

On Sarah's third try, she went higher than ever. But when she was about to land, she lost her balance. She fell off her bike.



“Are you OK?” asked Kat.

“Yes,” lied Sarah. She had big scratches on her leg, and her hand hurt.

She was still in a lot of pain when she got home.

“What happened?” asked Eli. “You’re limping, and your leg is a mess.”

“I went really high on a jump,” said Sarah. “I fell when I landed.”

“You have to be more careful,” said Eli. “The first race is in three days.”

“I’ll be ready,” said Sarah. “A little scratch won’t stop me!”