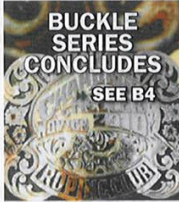


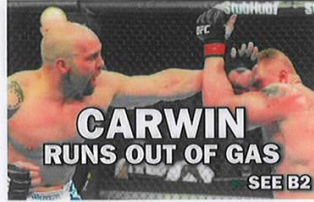
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RMCCC rises to one of top camps in the country



Athletes at the Rocky Mountain Cross Country Camp participated in Crested Butte's Fourth of July parade on Sunday, before getting back to the business of becoming the country's next top runners earlier this week.

Courtesy photo

Running with the lead pack

Matt Smith
Times Staff Writer

The premier cross country running camp that Trent Sanderson set out to create just a few years ago has quickly established itself as one of the nation's top havens for up and coming stars.

In its sixth year of operation in the Gunnison Valley, the Rocky Mountain Cross Country Camps

(RMCCC) will bring in a record 115 athletes representing 40 different states for summer sessions running June 27 through July 17. With Western State (WSC) as their home base, each elite prep runner will be pushed to their physical and psychological limits — all by way of choice.

"One of the things we've said all along is that we want to change American distance running, and I think we are," said

Sanderson, a former cross country coach at the University of Maryland. "I think that, by far, we've become one of the top camps in the country with some of the best (athletes)."

The camp's steady rise in reputation has not gone unnoticed by those with their fingers on the pulse of elite prep athletics in America. RISE — a high school sports magazine published by the powerhouse ESPN network

— included the RMCCC among three camps where the best of the best can be found this summer.

To kickoff this year's edition, RISE reporter Phil Latter spent five days in the Gunnison Valley posing as a camper at the RMCCC. He trained with the attendees, participated in informational sessions on proper ways to prepare for college and even

RMCCC

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took part in the Fourth of July parade in Crested Butte.

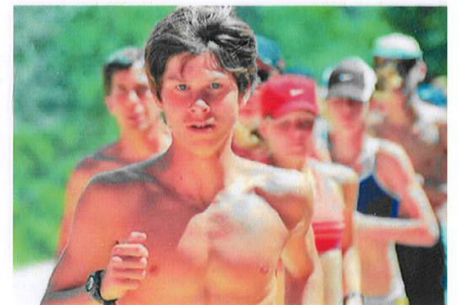
Latter's ultimate conclusion, which has been published on the ESPN RISE website, was that there is something profound and unique to behold at Sanderson's boot camp for ambitious harriers.

"At an altitude of 9,000 feet, and with the wildflowers in full bloom, it's hard to imagine a more ideal place to train for a summer," wrote Latter. "When all is said and done, it's the natural beauty combined with Sanderson's excitement and passion that'll keep the kids coming back to Gunnison and Crested Butte for years to come."

The same sentiments are being echoed by the actual athletes who are calling WSC their new home throughout the month of July.

"I think this camp separates itself because Trent really makes people believe that they can do anything," said Kylie McCoy, a high school senior-to-be from Hampton, N.H. "(Trent) is one of the most motivational people I've ever met in my life."

For many of the campers — about 90 percent by Sanderson's



About 90 percent of the runners at the RMCCC will earn college athletic scholarships, estimates camp director Trent Sanderson.

Courtesy photo

calculations — the effort has an end result of landing important college scholarships. For McCoy, letters from Stanford, Clemson and other well known NCAA Division I programs have been landing in her mailbox back home.

"The biggest thing is trying to implement a camp that will allow the successful athletes to not be held up," said Sanderson. "Our niche is athletes who want more and are getting it right."

According to ESPN RISE Sanderson is the one who is getting it right. To read Latter's full coverage of the top prep camps in the nation, visit rise.espn.go.com. For more information about the RMCCC and Sanderson's Team Prep USA visit teamprepusarunning.com.

(Matt Smith can be contacted at 970.641.1414 or mattsmith@gunnisontimes.com)