Kentucky Student-Athletes Earn Eight Top-10 Finishes at NICA Central Regionals as KY NICA Leads Regional GRiT Programming

Twelve state leagues gathered at Centennial Park in Fayetteville, Arkansas, for a weekend of racing, riding, and community

November 9, 2026 – Kentucky student-athletes earned eight top-10 finishes at the 2026 NICA Central Regional Festival and Championships, held November 7–8 at Centennial Park in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The Kentucky Interscholastic Cycling League (KY NICA) joined riders, coaches, and families from 12 NICA state leagues for the weekend and led the event's GRiT (Girls Riding Together) programming, where KY NICA organized a panel of professional women from the cycling and outdoor industries, giving student-athletes a chance to see women leading in these fields and picture their own futures there.

Why It Matters for Kentucky

KY NICA is a nonprofit youth development league that builds strong minds, strong bodies, strong character, and communities, using mountain biking as the tool. As one of 33 NICA state leagues across the country, it gives Kentucky students in grades 5 through 12 a place to ride, race, and grow, and it welcomes riders of every experience level.

Central Regionals put Kentucky student-athletes on a regional stage alongside peers from 11 other states. It also showed Kentucky leading: KY NICA designed and ran the GRiT programming for every league in attendance, and two of the weekend's featured panelists came from Kentucky businesses.

The benefits come home, too. This season, Kentucky student-athletes logged 1,831.25 Teen Trail Corps volunteer hours caring for Kentucky trails, and each event weekend brings families and visitors to host communities across the Commonwealth.

The Event

NICA Central Regionals brought together 12 leagues from across the heartland: Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin. This was NICA's second Central Regional event, and one of three Regionals NICA hosted across the country in 2026, joining Eastern Regionals in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the first-ever Western Regionals in St. George, Utah.

Think of Central Regionals as youth mountain biking's version of the SEC Tournament: one weekend when state leagues from across the region come together to compete and celebrate their sport.

Centennial Park has hosted UCI Cyclocross World Cup rounds and the 2022 UCI Cyclocross World Championships, and its purpose-built mountain bike trails make it a natural home for NICA racing.

Saturday featured Adventure rides, GRiT activities, Teen Trail Corps programming, an on-site expo, and course pre-rides. Sunday brought high school racing in JV and Varsity categories, with the NICA Skills Zone, Adventure course, expo, and GRiT space open throughout the day, followed by a podium awards ceremony.

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Kentucky Leads GRiT (Girls Riding Together)

KY NICA sponsored and led GRiT programming for the entire Central Regionals community. GRiT is open to all female NICA student-athletes and coaches, creating a welcoming space to ride, connect, and get more girls on bikes.

On Saturday afternoon, the GRiT Professional Panel brought professional women from across the cycling and outdoor industries to the TC Screen Printing stage. Panelists shared their career journeys, the challenges they have faced, and their advice for the next generation of riders, then took questions from the audience. Denile Hill of KY NICA and Mike McGarry of NICA National co-moderated.

Eight women took the stage, including two voices from Kentucky: Kate Strom, founder of Radical Custom Cycling Apparel (a sponsor of both KY NICA and NICA National), and Desi Braman, founder and co-owner of D.I.R.T. Solutions and Director of Outdoor Infrastructure and Recreation for Perry County, Kentucky.

- Holly Anzalone, owner, Mojo Cycling & Rentals, Bentonville, Arkansas
- Anneke Beerten, retired professional racer, world champion, and full-time coach, Bentonville, Arkansas
- Desi Braman, founder and co-owner, D.I.R.T. Solutions; Director of Outdoor Infrastructure and Recreation, Perry County, Kentucky
- Clare Burton, Nebraska NICA alumna
- Jenn Campbell, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, University of Arkansas; former design engineer, Trek
- Madigan Munro, professional cross-country racer, Liv Factory Racing; NICA alumna
- Kate Strom, founder and owner, Radical Custom Cycling Apparel, Lexington, Kentucky
- Samantha Van Blerkom, ambassador, ride leader, and coach, Women of Oz; coach, Bike School Bentonville and the Lincoln Leopards NICA team

KY NICA thanks TC Screen Printing for hosting the stage.

Kentucky Results

Kentucky student-athletes earned eight top-10 finishes across the Varsity and JV categories, led by Adelise B.'s win in JV1 Girls. Every Kentucky racer finished their race.

- Adelise Bozeman., Campbell County (NKY Roots Campbell Composite): 1st, JV1 Girls
- Carden Bozeman., Campbell County (NKY Roots Campbell Composite): 4th, Varsity Boys
- Jonathon Clark., Hardin County (Hardin-Elizabethtown Stampede): 4th, JV1 Boys
- Avery Fortenberry., Hardin County (Hardin-Elizabethtown Stampede): 6th, Varsity Girls
- Evangeline Fortenberry., Hardin County (Hardin-Elizabethtown Stampede): 6th, JV2 Girls
- Raylee Rothrock., McCracken County (McCracken County Mustangs): 7th, JV1 Girls
- Eli Tabb., Hardin County (Hardin-Elizabethtown Stampede): 10th, JV2 Boys
- Chloe Sharp., Marshall County (Marshall County High School MTB Team): 10th, JV3 Girls

Kentucky also finished second among the 12 leagues for the Strong Body Award, one of NICA's new Spirit of NICA Awards, which honors the highest point-scoring league at Regionals. Because every rider's finish earns points for their league, each Kentucky student-athlete who crossed the finish line contributed to that second-place result.

KY NICA celebrates every Kentucky student-athlete who raced and participated at Central Regionals. Full results are available at my.raceresult.com/433738.

Thank You to Our Partners

KY NICA thanks its Season 6 partners for supporting its nonprofit work across Kentucky: Trek Bicycle, Henderson Services, Scheller's Fitness & Cycling, Middle of Town Cycling, Radical Custom Cycling Apparel, TC Screen Printing, Midway University, and the Kentucky Department of Tourism. Their support helps put more Kentucky students on bikes, from team practice to event weekends.

NICA Central Regionals was made possible by NICA's national event partners Mazda, Trek, SRAM, RockShox, and Specialized, along with host partner Experience Fayetteville.

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About KY NICA

The Kentucky Interscholastic Cycling League (KY NICA) is a nonprofit youth development league of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association that builds strong minds, strong bodies, strong character, and communities, using mountain biking as the tool. In its 2026 season, KY NICA supported 374 student-athletes (180 high school, 194 middle school), 229 coaches, and 22 teams across eight statewide events. Student-athletes also logged 1,831.25 Teen Trail Corps volunteer hours giving back to Kentucky trails. Learn more at kentuckymtb.org and follow @Kentuckymtb on Instagram and Facebook.

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