



Steven Cisar leads Chris Doyle out of the Shark's Fin. Doyle is holding on strong considering Cisar has been in Olympic contention multiple times, including the upcoming 2016 Games. Photo: Al Cayne



# TRAIL BMX

TRAIL RIDERS OF AMERICA

## DOUBLE CROSS AND DIRT JUMP COMP

Where trails and tracks go head to head

**BMX is lost. We have heard it from industry heads to the biggest legends of the sport. It seems to have lost its sense of self, lost respect for its roots, and the defining riders that made this sport what it is today. And when you step back and really think about it, why should any rider commit to the future of the sport when they have no respect for the past or even the now? Whether it is over concern with one's self and a "what's in it for me?" attitude, or lack of concern for the sport as a whole, nothing makes us happier than to see someone take BMX by the reins and give it a good old yank, bringing everything to a screeching halt.**

Turn back the clock; before you were born, before the X Games, before there was any such thing as freestyle, before there were racing sanctions and, in fact, before the term "BMX" was even coined. This is where BMX as you know it was born, with nothing but kids on bikes pedaling through endless fields of dirt. Some raced from empty lot to empty lot, while others jumped down embankments left by developers in expanding communities. This wasn't a Southern California thing or something guided by trends or an individual. There was no Internet and no one riding on TV, and yet somehow around the same time kids nationwide were all having the same





Photo: Troy Zeigler

idea. Sure, maybe one person gathered those kids together for an organized event and can lay claim to "starting BMX racing," but the truth of the matter is, thousands of nameless kids are the real godfathers of BMX.

Mike Gentilcore is one such rider who has been around the sport long enough to be part of this golden era of BMX, and it shows through in his sense of "us." It became clear to us

while talking about this and various other gatherings he has organized over the years that there isn't a whole lot of "I" or "me" hardwired into Mike, rather "we" and "us" when it pertains to his riding crew and the sport as a whole. It is a rare mentality to encounter anymore, an individual putting themselves out there with the sole intention of the greater good. Mike is so obsessed with the greater good that he has spent his

life protecting trail spots and fighting for improvements within race sanctions. But like many of us, he has seen the sport pulled in so many directions so fast that he felt it was time to bring the sport back to its early roots and introduced the TRA Double Cross.

The concept was simple—a fun racetrack that blended trail riding and racing and would bring legends on top of legends out of the woodwork for one heck of a good time. The event would take place on Mike's private ranch in Pennsylvania and draw out the friendly yet competitive spirits of some of the greatest riders the sport has ever known, both then and now, who grew up with dirt under their nails and a shovel in their hands.

#### MIKE GENTILCORE

##### NAME, AGE AND WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

"Mike Gentilcore, I am 45 years old, and I'm from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania."

##### WHAT ARE THE CLIFFS NOTES ON YOUR HISTORY IN BMX?

"I've been building trails and racing BMX since 1979. I was the old man of the Bethlehem BMX scene even in my teen years [laughs]. I went to Penn State in the '80s and started the State College trails where we built the first

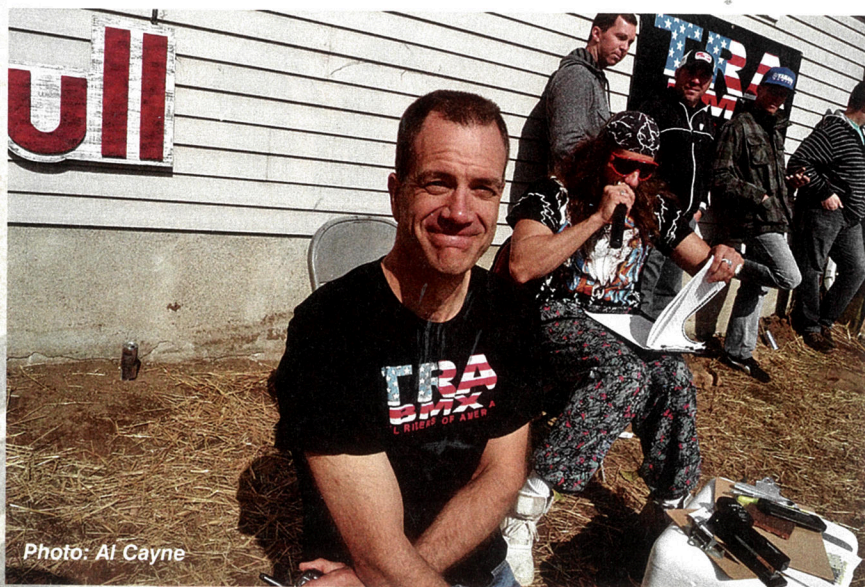


Photo: Al Cayne



# TRA COMP



The smile says it all. Aaron Ross on race day. Photo: Al Cayne

modern trail-style rhythm sections on the East Coast, which spread across Pennsylvania and beyond. I raced Single A Pro for 12 years and was a member of the Board of Directors of the National Bicycle League until the sanctions merged a number of years ago. Today, I'm CEO of TRA BMX and president of Lehigh Valley Bicycle Association, the non-profit behind Posh and Catty trails, where I serve along with Jay 'Flash' Crosson, Jason Lonergan, Dave King and Chris Janis to help keep the trails alive."

## HOW DID THE TRA DOUBLE CROSS COME ABOUT? IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME IN THE MAKING FOR SURE.

"The TRA Double Cross came from our passion for the sport. We love BMX racing, and our crew spent years on the road traveling to races all over the country in the '80s and '90s. It was a different time when everybody rode everything—race, trails, street, vert, flatland, you name it. We were sitting at a rest stop with Darryl Nau about 20 years ago talking about how rad the sport would be if we could race on the type of tracks that we, the riders, would like to see. Fast-forward 20 years; I was a project manager in the corporate world and was coming to the end of my time on the board with the existing race sanctions who, with all due respect, just didn't see the same vision for BMX racing that I did. I wanted to do something with BMX racing that was true to the roots of the sport, a modern version of what Scott Breithaupt had done from the very beginning. At the same time, Dave King and his company,

Dirtsculpt, had built up a decade of experience creating some of the best dirt courses in the world for clients like ESPN and Red Bull, working on projects like Elevation, Dreamline, Dirt Conquers, X Games, Revolution and more. With Posh and Catty trails legalized, Flash had the idea for the 'Fastest Run' comps at the Catty jams. Watching guys like Brian Foster and Clint Reynolds whip

through the trails at speed was amazing. All of us, including Darryl Nau, just knew it was time right then to do what we had always envisioned. TRA was created, and I went to work planning the Double Cross event. It was a chance to pool all of our resources and experience together to do what we believe is right for the future of the sport, independent of anything else out there."

## WHY DO YOU THINK IT WAS SUCH A SUCCESS? WE HAVE SEEN MUCH BIGGER ENTITIES TRY AND FAIL TO BLEND DIRT JUMPING AND RACING, YET YOU NAILED IT.

"We think it was a success because we simply believe in BMX as it truly lives in the woods across America and around the world. To us, building trails and jumping our bikes in the dirt is bicycle motocross, so racing on trails is BMX racing. With that spirit in mind, we asked Dave King to work his unique magic and build some epic downhill trails wide enough to race on—nothing more, nothing less. Having fun and jumping is the whole point of riding BMX, so when you build courses that allow riders to do what they do every day at the trails, the turndowns and one-footed tables just start to flow. It's timeless BMX that never gets old, whether it's legends like Van Homan and Chris Doyle at the Double Cross or Harry

This retro, moto-style gate with Doyle and Homan racked up pretty much sums up the entire weekend. It is all about the dirt.  
Photo: Chris Denman





Leary and Timmy Judge from back in the day; it's pure bicycle motocross.

"Another element of the event's success was being absolutely fearless when it came to doing what is right for the sport. Clipless pedals and carbon fiber were instantly gone. And if riders want 9-foot-tall, 18-foot sets with steep lips and landings packed in tight back to back, then that's what the racetrack should look like. We did the same thing with the starting hill, just like the trails—a quarter crank was all you needed to drop in and blast it, and the steep backsides made skills paramount and sprinting unnecessary. We also instinctively knew not to make the jumps too big. Progression is happening every day in the woods, and it's something you can't quantify with a tape measure. The jumps don't need to be toned down, nor do they need to be morphed into something so large that the core BMX audience can't recognize it. It's the same type of layout that makes for big airs, whips and nonstop action in motorcycle motocross racing, BMX racing's original influence. Put all this together and you have AA Pros and trail legends battling it out on the same racetrack that's also being used for a pro dirt jump comp. It's the best of all worlds. We believe that presenting BMX like this, the way it's done by core riders around the world every day, is the absolute best thing for the sport, riders and industry."



**Redline's Brandon Dosch is one of the many, current professional dirt jumpers who got their start racing. Clearly, he hasn't lost his touch. Photo: Al Cayne**

#### **CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE EVENT FORMAT AND HOW THE COMPETITIONS WERE INTEGRATED?**

"The event featured two contests, the Double Cross and the Dirt Jump Comp. Riders were free to compete in one or both contests for a shot at \$8000 in cash prizes, with \$4000 on the line for each contest. The Double Cross was a full-on, head-to-head BMX race—no lanes, timers or style points, just straight up BMX racing from start to finish, the way it should be. Random motos were run until the final two riders battled it out

in the main. As the field narrowed down, run-off motos were held to determine the third- through eighth-place finishers. The Dirt Jump Comp was a judged event held right on the same exact course. Every rider took three runs with their best scores counting, and prizes went to the top eight riders.

"The cool thing about this format was the great mix of riders and nonstop action it created. With top AA Pro racers, X Games gold medalists, NORA Cup legends, street riders, dirt jumpers, park riders and plenty of core trail riders, it was a melting pot of all



**The youngest rider of the event, Hyper's Eddie Rovi, carving out of the Shark's Fin. Photo: Al Cayne**



# TRAMP COMP

riding disciplines. We had AA Pros like Steven Cisar and Derek Sipkoi taking on underdogs like Victor Behm, who won the Double Cross event. Jeremy Ball, a trail ripper who you wouldn't normally see on a racetrack, was hanging with the seasoned racers one moto and then battling it out with Scotty Cranmer the next. Where else can you see that kind of show? Then you had Brandon Dosch ripping around the course in a full-face helmet, moto-scrubbing like Bubba Stewart with a style most pro racers would love. The good times just went on and on. It brought a whole new dimension out of these guys that we just knew they'd have fun with. And with the moto-cross-style gate and all-trails course, any riding style and any type of bike could be used to compete and have fun, whether you were a street rider like Aaron Ross or a brakeless rider like Justin Inman. From legends like Van Homan to young guns like Eddie Rovi, this style of track made for many great



*Michael Gentilcore enjoying the fruits of his labors in full race mode.*

**Don't be too quick to pigeonhole Van Homan as a street rider, kids. He got his start at the racetrack, and then spent most of his formidable years at the trails, making tricks over big jumps like this. Just another day in the woods.**  
Photo: Troy Zeigler







Chris Harti lays out a one-footed flattie during the dirt comp, earning some love from the judges for classic style.  
Photo: Al Cayne



Fit's Northwest legend Justin Inman getting in touch with his race roots, and doing so brakeless on the terrifying downhill course. Photo: Al Cayne

battles with plenty of passing from start to finish. It was a BMX race for BMX riders where the only thing that mattered was riding and having fun. It doesn't get any more straightforward than that.

"In the Dirt Jump Comp, it was awesome to see many of the same guys who raced putting on an entirely new display of skills right on the same dirt course. Since the entire course was trails, every set was trickable. Scotty Cranmer was working the roof gap, while Chris Doyle found a spot on both the race and dirt jump podiums. Brandon Dosch was able to make a comeback from a hard fall in the Double Cross to win the Dirt Jump Comp. The overall event format, with racing and dirt jumping combined in the right environment, truly made the sport feel like one again, with mutual respect in the air for riders of all disciplines. Everyone involved was totally psyched on how it turned out."





Representing the Pittsburgh trail crew, Mark Potoczny buzzes his shoulder while cruising the line. Photo: Troy Zeigler

## TRA COMP

### WHAT IS THE LONG-TERM PLAN FOR THE EVENT?

"This event was created to reignite the fire for BMX racing, bringing it back into the fold with dirt jumping and serving as an example for what is possible. What we thought would take a few years to catch on has created an overwhelming amount of interest overnight. We would like to keep this event going at some level while we work toward creating public events that everyone can be a part of. It's going to take some time, of course, but we wanted to take a step in the right direction for the future."

### BEST MEMORY FROM THE TRA DOUBLE CROSS?

"Watching Van Homan and Chris Doyle line up on the gate—that was just surreal for everyone. We were like, are we really about to watch this historic

match-up go down in a BMX race in 2014? There were so many cool memories, like watching Brandon Dosch pass for a transfer spot and fist pump in the air over the finish-line doubles. It was so much fun that everyone was just happy to be there and take it all in. Jay Lonergan, one of our contest judges and leader of the Posh crew, said it best when he said, 'For a day, BMX was BMX again.'"

### WHERE CAN PEOPLE GO TO FIND OUT MORE?

"Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and check us out at [www.trabmx.com](http://www.trabmx.com) for additional coverage of this event and more. You can also follow Dave King's travels at [www.dirtsculpt.com](http://www.dirtsculpt.com) and check out the trails at [www.pawoods.com](http://www.pawoods.com), as well as the Catty Woods and Posh Woods Facebook and Instagram pages. Keep an eye out for the summer jams at the trails and come ride with us!"

### WORDS OF THANKS?

"We want to say a big thank you to all of our sponsors: Dan's Comp, S&M, FIT, Dirtsculpt, Odyssey, United, Empire, Doublecross Bikes, Hyper, SNAFU, Soilworks, Blackman's Cycle, Axlerad Screen Printing, DKOI Bikes, Indust, Action Wheels, Fab Tech Welding and Repair, STAY STRONG, Red Bull Media House, Troy Zeigler/Elevated Visuals, Nat Bartholomew/Spintech Films, as well as all of the media who supported the event. We'd also like to thank all of the riders and fans who supported the event and all the volunteers who helped us run it, including the Posh and Catty trail crews. Also thanks to Dave Best, Kyle Keck and Chris Janis, for putting in an insane amount of work. Last but not least, big thanks to Dirtsculpt CEO Dave King, who dedicated what would have been his only month off from an epic year of nonstop building around the world to build us an amazing course like only he can so this event could happen. We could not have done it without all of you. Thank you for the interview, *BMX Plus!* Ride on!" □



# TRA RESULTS

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Trails or Trials...  
you've got to stop sometime.



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Dirt Jump Podium  
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Double Cross Podium  
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The TRA event crew.  
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