



For Immediate Release



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Middle Mountain Momma, a Virginia showcase mountain bike race event, held annually on the trails of Douthat State Park, enters year 14 with a new credential: national Kenda Cup qualifier.

The Virginia State Championship Mountain Bike Series had been around for 4 years already before the grand lady of the hills, Middle Mountain Momma, entered the scene in 1997. Since that time, this annual race, held at Douthat State Park near Clifton Forge, easily made up for lost time by taking over the crown as a premiere venue in a commonwealth that has held IMBA¹'s nationwide designation as "best state for mountain biking."

Now 14, Middle Mountain Momma has been adorned with a new ribbon: she's become a qualifier amidst a nationwide series of select races to determine a one day national champion. The network of Kenda Cup Qualifiers was created to allow local and regional riders from across the country a chance to make the start line of the Specialized Invitational Finals on September 11-12th in California. This race will issue a #1 and champions jersey to the top cross country rider in the country.

Instead of making amateur and local Pro riders chase a national series, especially under the weight of current economic stress, the US Cup is partnering with premier venues, promoters and races from across the country to create a cohesive network of qualifiers.

Middle Mountain Momma founder, Kyle Inman, years ago lovingly dubbed Douthat State Park "Mountain Bike Disneyland." Thanks to an abundance of wonderful singletrack trails that trace the flanks and ridges of Middle and Beards Gap Mountains, Douthat's beauty and variety inspire and echo the nickname through each sweeping turn, sharp climb, and switchback. Most Middle Mountain Momma trails are over 70 years old, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the Great Depression. Opening in 1937, Douthat is Virginia's first state park. The surrounding George Washington National Forest provides additional, exquisite trail mileage for the double cross-country course, a 40 mile endurance class who's riders set out hours ahead of the main fields.

Top pros, like Olympic hopeful and multi-national champion Jeremiah Bishop, six time world 24 hour solo champion Chris Eatough, and national short track champion Sue Haywood, have all left their (temporary) marks on Douthat's beloved trails. The race routinely attracts riders from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, as well as travelers from across the entire commonwealth of Virginia. The economic impact on the Allegheny Highlands will certainly be positive and may help spur the burgeoning outdoor scene that's underway in this quaint, railroad town on the Jackson River.

Middle Mountain Momma is honored to join Massanutten's famous Hoo-Ha! as a qualifier, although that race carries the additional honor as host of the US Cup Triple Crown *final*. The inaugural Triple Crown is a series within the series of qualifiers. Its goal is to identify the best all-around US circuit pro riders, not just cross country or downhill specialists. Each Triple Crown venue provides competition in 3 disciplines: super D, short track, and cross country. Points earned for each are carried forward from California, to Colorado, and finally to Virginia, where points earned and tallied determine the best all-around rider.

The folks at US Cup have their eye squarely on the racer's experience, and are committed to making that experience the best possible. The US Cup brings a welcomed energy and pioneering enthusiasm that mountain bike racing hasn't seen in years. This is just the beginning.

The US Cup [schedule](http://www.uscup.net). www.uscup.net

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¹International Mountain Bike Association, www.imba.com