

Kom Cycling Competition Supports Veteran Suicide Prevention

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The El Segundo, CA based Disabled Veteran Empowerment Network (DVEN) is pleased to announce the locations for their 2020 #StressBuster King and Queen of the Mountain Bicycling Competition on the 1st of August 2020. To find out more about DVEN, visit their website at the following link: https://dven.org/.

The pandemic is affecting the lifestyles of diverse communities all over the world. The social restrictions one must follow due to the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant rise in stress levels all across the United States, and this increase in stress may directly contribute to the rise of suicide cases. Veterans, as a community of people who have been exposed to significant trauma, tend to be at a higher risk for suicidal tendencies. Making matters worse, the COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in the halting of almost all organized sports, a popular and accessible means of stress relief.

To combat this issue, DVEN has decided to take the initiative and create a cycling competition based on the King of the Mountain champion jerseys (awarded as part of the European grand tour bicycling competitions).

The goal of this event is to raise the morale of the community in order to support the prevention of suicide, particularly among veterans.

The DVEN #StressBuster King of the Mountain competition runs from August 1st to December 31st, 2020. Cyclists will ride the competition segments individually in order to safely maintain social distancing requirements. Each cyclist may ride the segment as many times as they like during the year. In the original race, which is a mountain biking competition, the winner is awarded the title of King Of The Mountain and the now iconic winner's jersey. By the 31st of December 2020, the male and female riders (in each KOM segment and in each USA Cycling age group) will be awarded a custom design King or Queen of the Mountain red polka dot jersey. Participation is open to all, and those interested may register here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805084daba829abfc1-king.

?This program has two goals: to provide cyclists a fun competitive event to help them deal with the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic and to raise awareness of the need of our disabled veteran community,? said Robert Hess, founder of the Disabled Veterans Empowerment Network. He adds, ?I?m a combat veteran, myself, so I understand the critical importance of staying healthy and managing stress. Exercise is a great stress reliever, and our 2020 #StressBuster KOM Challenge offers a great reason to get out and exercise.? The design of this competition allows participants to finish the race safely, with adequate protection measures for the pandemic in place. It also allows the riders to complete the race in their own time?and as many times as they please.

This year's race is taking place in two countries, contributing to the stress relief and positive mindset which the organization hopes to achieve. The 2020 competition includes seven courses, six in the US and one in the UK: Los Angeles; Golden, Colorado; Leesburg, Virginia; Dammeron Valley, Utah; Beverly Hills, California; Delta, Alabama; and Richmond, England.

The participation process is simple and user-friendly. All competitors may register and then log their rides using the Strava.com platform. They can also see how well they are doing in comparison to the other riders in their age group. All competitors may also join the Foundation?s Strava.com club at https://www.strava.com/clubs/CancerJourneysFoundation for additional athletic training and support.

It is important to know more about the Disabled Veteran Empowerment Network in order to truly appreciate the motivation behind this race. DVEN is a central information hub for disabled veterans that encompasses support programs with the mission of making a meaningful difference in the lives of America?s disabled veteran community. The Network pursues this goal by providing information and resources to increase veterans? safety and independence as well as to enable them the best possible quality of life. They play an active role in attempting to ensure a healthy mental state in all veterans as well. Further, the network takes a keen interest in providing support to veterans who are at high risk of mental health conditions, including

suicide.

For more information about DVEN and the race, contact Robert Hess. More information can be found on the organization's official website as well.

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DVEN (Disabled Veteran Empowerment Network) is a program of the Cancer Journeys Foundation. The DVEN program was created in 2018, to support the thousands of veterans dealing with service-related cancers and PTSD.

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