

THE FOOTHILLS BMX STORY



THE NBL YEARS

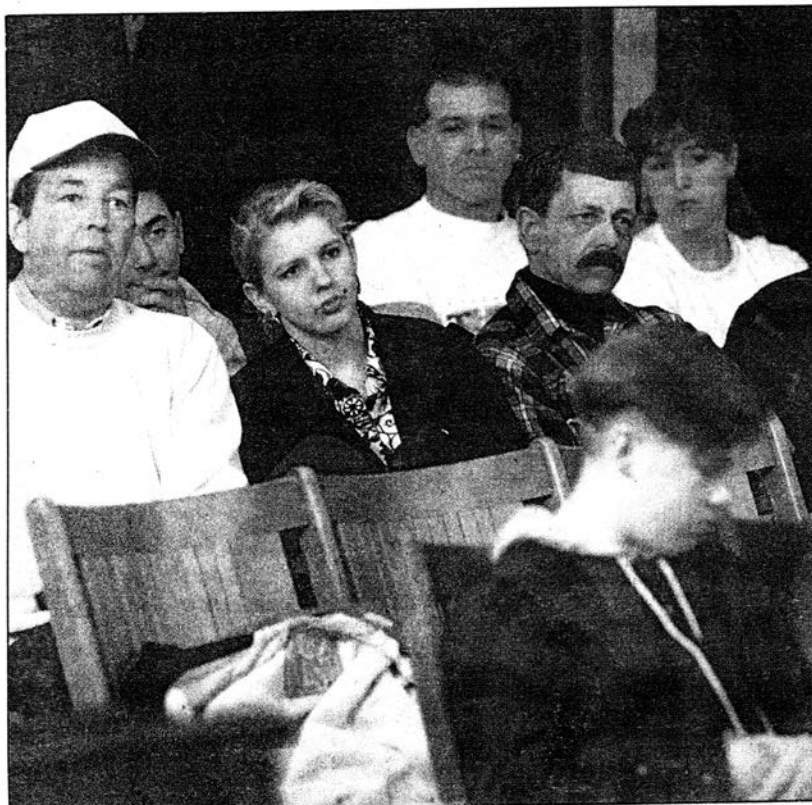
A DREAM BECOMES REALITY

In February of 1993, a presentation was made at a town meeting that had been called to discuss providing more activities for local youths. The presentation included a video shown by the state commissioner Don Olson and discussion from BMX people including Roger Plaskett, Tom Johnson, Joe Doherty, Greg Plaskett and the Wesolowski family. Joe Doherty and Tom Johnson had spearheaded the idea months earlier by approaching Rick Dalla Valle, the chairperson for the Mayor's committee on youth, with the idea. This meeting was poorly attended by local youths and was made up primarily of people who were already into BMX.

TOWN, YOUTH SEEK TO CURE ILLS

John Harvey/Republican-American

Few children attended a meeting of the Mayor's Committee on Youth at Torrington's city hall Wednesday night. See story on page 2B.



In the picture left to right is:
 Bill Finkle
 Dan Plaskett
 Joann Doherty (Kidd)
 Al Wesolowski
 Bob Sonenberg
 Mrs. Wesolowski
 Jason Wesolowski is in the front row

Torrington tries to shed 'boring' label

By KAREN ALI
 Republican-American

TORRINGTON — Richard Dalla Valle plans to mingle with the city's teenagers some weekend soon at their favorite hot spots, like McDonald's and Burger King.

It's not that Dalla Valle, a former councilman, enjoys spending his time eating fast food in parking lots late at night. But as chairman of the Mayor's Committee on Youth, he wants to look into the complaints he hears so often from teenagers who say they're bored with Torrington.

"I'm going to go out there to get them. They're sitting there in Burger King and they're complaining there's nothing to do. Well, that's just not true," Dalla Valle said. "If they won't come out to our meetings, then we'll go to their meetings."

Dalla Valle was irritated Wednesday that only about five youths came out for a youth committee hearing. Adults spoke about potential activities the city could offer, like karate or BMX bike racing.

Greg Plaskett, 21, and his brother,

Dan, 17, showed up to learn more about the possibility of a BMX track.

They listened intently as Don Olson, the state commissioner for Nutmeg BMX, a Connecticut league, read the praises of the sport. Olson also showed a promotional video about dirt bike racing.

The Plasketts' father, Roger, a district commissioner for the BMX league, said the event not only provides entertainment, but is family-oriented. "It becomes a family thing. Some men get into it because they

see their kids having so much fun doing it," he said.

Plaskett said he plans to schedule a meeting soon for parents whose children are interested in taking up the sport.

The city's youth may soon be able to take advantage of free karate lessons. Dane Wine, the chief instructor at Villari's, a Torrington karate studio, spoke about possibly offering free martial arts classes to the city's youth.

Park and Recreation Director John A. Timm said the city's teen

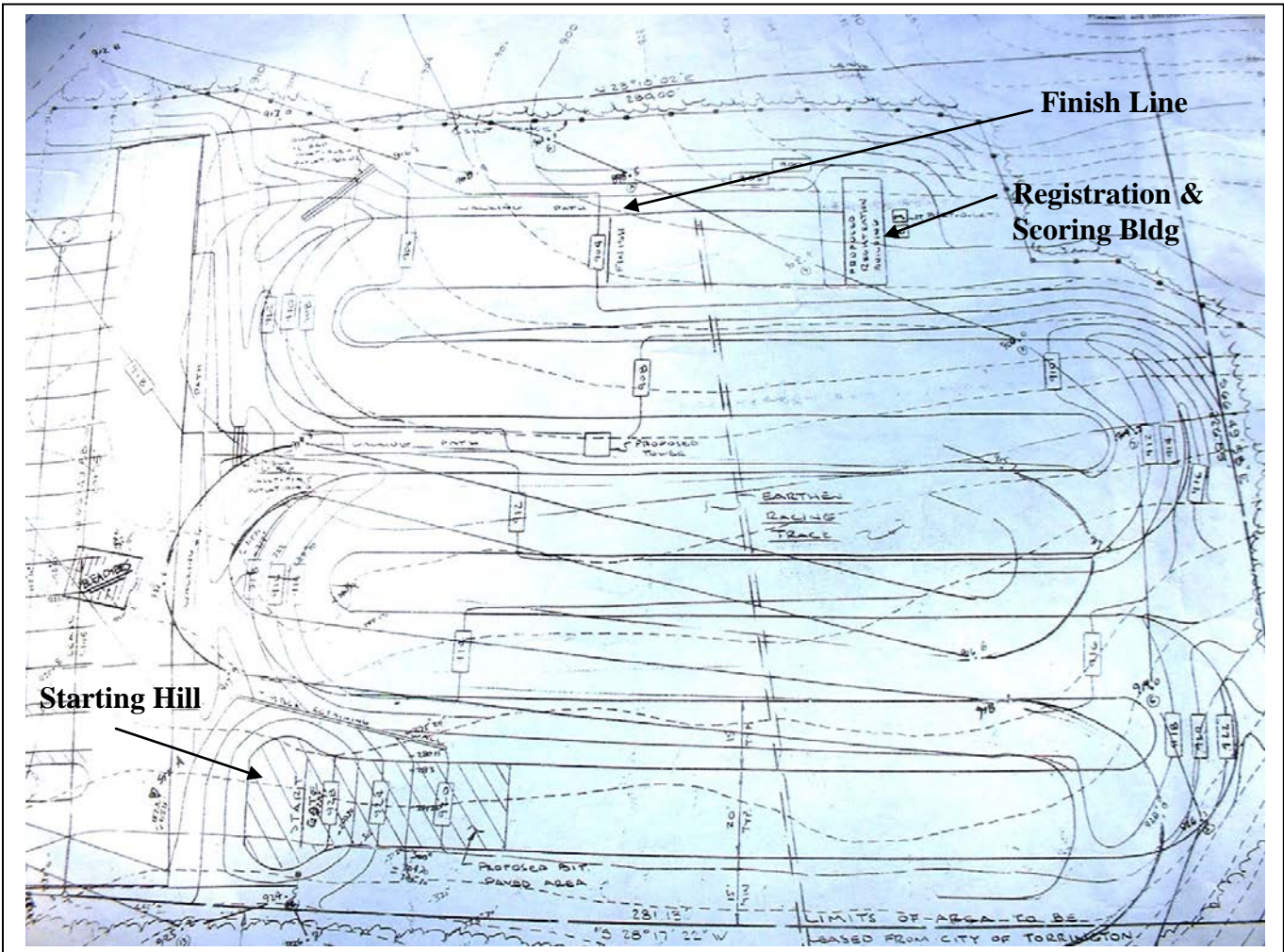
center, which offers video games, electronic equipment and pool, will expand its hours beginning next week.

The additional hours at the East Albert Street Recreational Hall include Wednesday and Friday from about 5:30 to 9 p.m. and Sunday from about noon to 5 p.m.

Dalla Valle said by next year he hopes to run the teen center all day and much of the night. "The main thing is to get the kids off the streets," Dalla Valle said.

In April of the same year, a plan was approved by the Torrington City Council to lease city owned property at Toro Field off Palmer Bridge Road to the newly formed Litchfield County BMX Association. Not long after this meeting, it was discovered that wetlands existed in the area where the proposed track would be built. Had this setback not occurred, it was anticipated that racing in Torrington could have started in May of 1993 as the land was all cleared and little site preparation would be required prior to building the actual track.

Not long after that, the next site proposed by the city was up in Alvord Park at the current location. Before anything further could be done a number of obstacles had to be overcome, the first of which was the need of a site plan. We got a copy of the site plans for the track in Mullica Hill New Jersey. It was a track that had been recently built and we all liked it. We approached Larry Regan of Streeter Engineering in Burlington and he agreed to draw up a site plan. It was actually Herman Castelli that approached Larry. Herman had committed to helping us with the construction of the site. He would tell us many times later that he had no idea what a BMX track entailed. Larry needed to survey the property and review the current maps of Alvord Park on file with the city. He agreed to do this work without any fees. This was great news although we fell well down on his priority list of things to do.



Once the site plan was finally completed, it was submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission for their review and hopefully, approval. However, the plan had some inherent problems associated with it and these could be recognized by anyone who was familiar with the sport of BMX. The biggest issue was with the fourth turn and last straight. It curved away from the starting hill and caused the finish line to be deep into the woods. How would scoring be done and how would the riders get back to the starting hill? There was no spectator area within the leased lines and the parking lot called for curbing, marked spots and even some islands with trees. Nonetheless the plan was submitted.

The next obstacle was with the city planner Dan McGuiness who informed the city council and us that we had not filed an application with the inland wetlands commission. Dan waited until the council meeting to inform us all of this issue. He informed the commission that they could not act on the site plan without wetlands approval. We would eventually get by the approval process in March and start cutting trees in April of 1994.



This was what the Alvord Park site looked like when we first saw it in 1994. The brush piles are where the parking lot is now. The big tree with the curved branch in the background was right in the middle of turn #2. How could we possibly build a BMX track here?

We also needed to start raising some funds. The early fundraisers were in the form of Spaghetti dinners held at the Riverside Restaurant about once a month. Each one of these raised about \$200.



└ This tree was in the middle of turn #2, it will be seen in many pictures.

All through 1994, the cutting of trees and grading of land took place. Because BMX was new to the area there really was no established core group of volunteer parents. The original core group was small and made up of people that were already involved with BMX as racers and one adult who had been involved with a former track organization. Rog Plaskett was the track director at Thunder Alley BMX in Bristol when it closed in 1991.



Roger Plaskett, chain saw in hand, emerging from the jungle where the 3rd straight now resides.



Craig Klembara drops a mighty oak along the third straightaway.



Pictured left to right
Joe Doherty
Greg Plaskett
Dan Plaskett

We rented a brush chipper from Taylor Rental on a Saturday. It choked on the bigger stuff but was a help in getting some brush removed so that we could at least move around. If only we knew someone who had access to a bigger chipper.

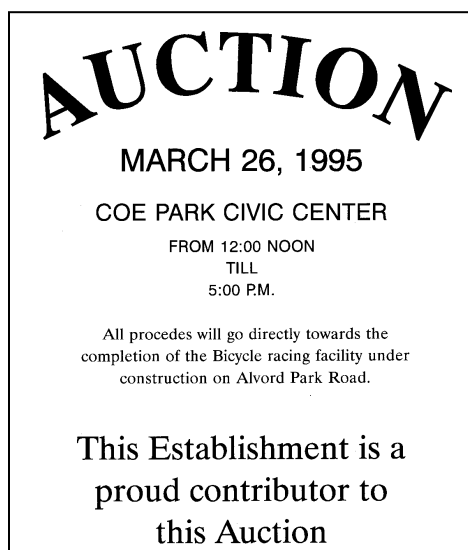


Nick Currier to the rescue. Nick brought a machine up from Bethel that was more suited to ingesting the size and magnitude of the brush at Alvord Park. In the picture are Greg Plaskett, Joe Doherty, Tom Johnson, Nick Currier and Jason Wesolowski.



Nick Currier in his "Lets Roll" attire.

Our most major fundraiser ever was an auction that was held at the Coe Park Civic Center in March. A number of people went to area businesses and asked for items that they might want to donate for our cause. An unbelievable amount of items were donated and the ultimate profit was in excess of \$3,000. A windfall that far exceeded expectations. This allowed us to start purchasing material "clay" from O & G Industries and rent various equipment. Herman Castelli was still donating time and equipment at that point.



This sign was given to all businesses that contributed towards the auction. Over \$7400 worth of items were donated. These included gift certificates, Bikes, tv's, tools, faucets, YMCA memberships, Helmets and even a bed set from Torrington Mattress.

Early in 1994 Tom Johnson came up with the name "Foothills BMX". He based the name on the fact that we were in the foothills of the Berkshires. Certainly we were closer to them than any other track so why not?

Roger Plaskett designed the first logo. Although only adopted for one racing season, it was the forerunner of the next logo.



Logo Circa 1994



Logo Circa 1995 - 2010

Meanwhile it was a long summer and fall in 1994 as we worked very hard to get ready for the 1995 season opener.



This is a close up view of the tree specified in the middle of turn two. This shot is taken from where the turn two berm is.



This view is from the same area but a different angle. This is looking straight down the second straightaway.



Sometimes it was necessary to work the young people really hard, always with a promise that we really would have a nice facility some day.

Come on "Pull you animals Pull!"



Wow, nice job. Next time maybe we'll do it using a chain saw!



This picture is taken looking back at where the Registration building is now located.



There is no doubt that the single biggest contribution to the existence of Foothills BMX came from Mr. Herman Castelli. He donated countless hours and numerous machines to create the initial facility. No matter what transpires in the future, the track simply would not be there had it not been for Herman Castelli. This is turn one. The big rock behind the bucket arm is still there

today and is painted with the words “Foothills Rocks”. What an understatement! We also hit a big ledge just under the entrance to the turn.



This was one of the last days for the tree in turn two. Shortly we would determine it would be unsafe to leave it.

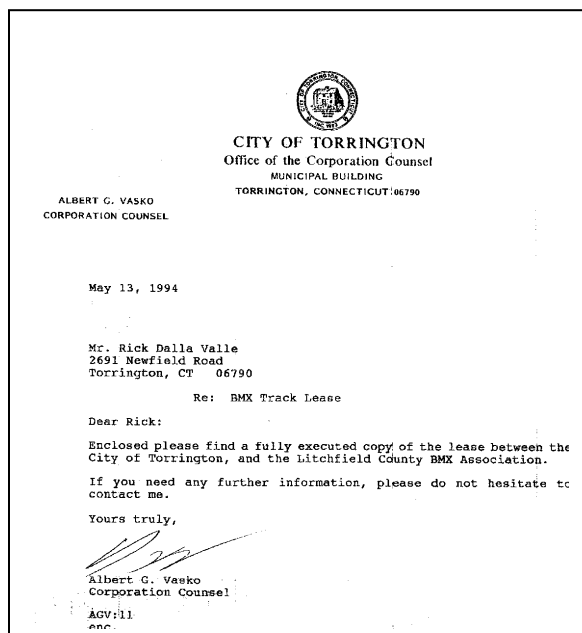


Even during the excavation phase the tree was always in the way.

We finally admitted it was time for the tree to become firewood for Christmas Village.



The initial lease agreement was signed on May 13, 1994. This was a five-year agreement and probably the only multi-year agreement between any track and their host city in the state. The Park and Recreation Director, John Timm, was very instrumental in working with the city to find us a suitable piece of land. Rick Dalla Valle was our “key to the city”. His leadership and influence on the inner sanctum of city politics was probably the only reason we even had a shot at getting the whole program set up.



This is a copy of the cover page from the first lease agreement.



This is a view from the top of the starting hill. You can see the beginning of what would become the first jump. You can also see the ruts that were formed from a recent rain shower. This was a common occurrence in the first year as everything was dirt including the starting hill and the three turns. Where was turn four and turn five? They were not even thought of when we opened. We simply came off of turn three and went to the finish line. The turns four and five would not be added for a couple of years yet.



As mentioned earlier, Roger Plaskett was the last track Director at the Bristol track when it closed in 1991. He had stored a number of items in his garage. These items included a sound system with speaker horns, a gate starting system, a back board, orange cones, Corner Marshall flags and other miscellaneous items. Seems he had a thought that they may be required at another track in the future. These items all became part of Foothills BMX and some are still around today. The gate starting system was the oldest in the area. Bristol had purchased it from South Windsor when they closed in the late 1980's. The NBL had not yet developed the electronic system with the push-pull cylinder. This system was an electromagnet with gravity drop. It was very heavy and very slow.

There was no live electricity in Alvord Park. This presented a couple of immediate problems. How would we run the gate and how would we power up the sound system. The answer was generators. We set up one generator behind the starting hill. Two sections of Cape Cod fencing was used to hide it and attempt to block the sound. A second generator was used and located outside the last straightaway to power the sound system located in the infield.



This picture was taken on opening day in 1995. The NBL letters down in turn number 1 came from the Bristol track and were made for the state championship race held there in 1990.



This is pretty much the whole track. The eight pack can be clearly seen along the third straight-away. One popular obstacle was the “step-down” coming out of the third turn. Every obstacle had old tires on each side holding them in place.



Bob Garfield joined us and used his skills to build our “Registration Building”. Bob can be seen walking in front of the building. The next year he would become our Track Director. This building was started only one week prior to our opening day on May 21, 1995.



So we made it to opening day. Even though the Registration building was not completed, no one seemed to care. Inside the building are Sandy Meyers, little Jill Jenner, Mrs Jenner and Carol Meade. Outside are an unknown person on the left, Libby Covelli, Eleanor Covelli and Emily Covelli.



The track surface itself was very sandy. Although packed quite hard if you got off to the sides it would be very soft. During a practice round on this morning, we experienced our first injury. Greg Plaskett broke his collarbone on the inside going into turn one. His bike virtually sank in the sand and he went over the handlebars. Here was one of the riders that was

instrumental in building the facility, ready to enjoy a summer of local racing, only to have it all end in the first practice round. He required surgery to repair the damage.



The finish line was at the end of four straights. Note the dirt starting hill. No asphalt.

Due to the effects of rain, we missed the first two scheduled races. With the entire surface including the turns, newly excavated, the track was susceptible to washouts. Some ruts would develop after a thunderstorm, that was more than 3 feet deep.

That first day we had no idea of what to expect. Because the rider count in the State was down the year before as there were only three tracks operating. Bristol had closed four years prior. The younger guys, Tom Johnson, Joe Doherty and Greg Plaskett were very optimistic and knew that all the top riders would come out to the most technical track in the state.

The third straight-away featured the “Devils Backbone”, an area that had eight large rollers that were very deep. All the other jumps were very large compared to what the normal in the state was in 1995.

When the gate finally dropped, the rider count was 124 with 36 motos. Well, it wasn’t quite the 50 motos that some had predicted but it was a start. Unfortunately, with the exception of the two Double pointers that we had that year, this rider count would be the largest for the year. The second week only 90 riders in 25 motos came out and that was one week before our double point race. That first “big race” was to draw 169 riders and 43 motos.



Each week just prior to gate practice, the local fire department would show up and water down the track. Unfortunately, by the time we started racing, it had already dried out



The first Bike vendor was Don Holder from RGM. After a few years he would eventually sell his business to Joe Siglar who was already managing T/C Cycle.

In July of 1995, Tom Johnson had been talking to Peter Andrighetti about BMX racing. Somehow, Tom was able to talk Peter into donating his services to pave the starting hill. This was a tremendous help from a maintenance standpoint and really helped us to be able to focus on other things besides the track surface itself. We got Peter involved the next year by purchasing his son a bicycle and giving him free racing for the year.

In 1995 we also ran a fall series with Bethel and Meriden. It proved to be a bad idea as all of our volunteers were really burned out. Even though we only raced once every three weeks, simply maintaining the track was difficult. It was a rainy fall and the newly built track would suffer huge washed out gullies simply because it had not settled yet. We were all pretty happy when the last week was rained out.

By the end of the first year we had been hearing many complaints that the track was too dangerous and that the parents were afraid of it. This complaint came mostly from families who were familiar with the other tracks. The new riders from Torrington had no issues, as they simply

had not been to any other track. Only 13 races were run during the regular season but it included two double point races. The average rider count was 101. In hindsight, even though the experienced riders liked the technical course, there were only 180 riders in Connecticut the year before who had earned State Plates. Of those, only 33 were experts. There simply were not enough experienced riders that could support the track.

Only 47 riders had enough races at Foothills BMX to earn year-end awards. We spent \$8.00 each for plaques and doubled with Meriden at Riverside Park (now Six Flags New England) for our awards outing. Of course we chose the coldest day of the fall for that event.



1995 Awards outing at Riverside Park in Massachusetts.

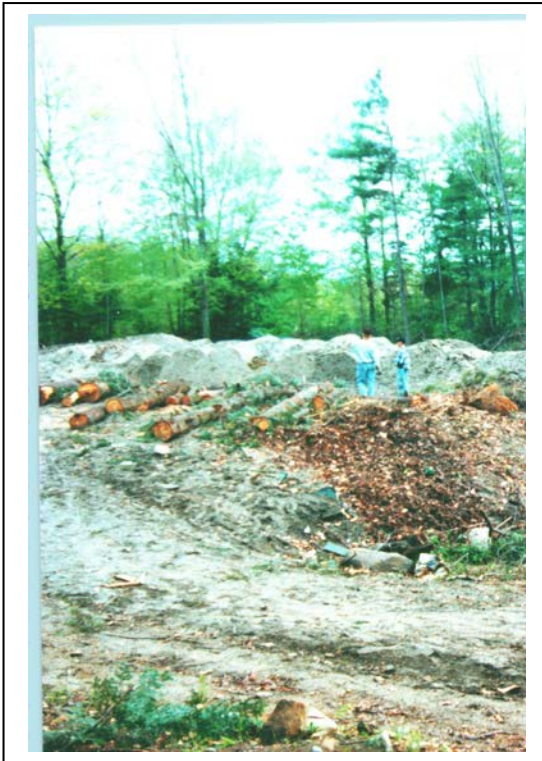
The Staff that first year was as follows:

Joe Doherty – President / Track Director
Rick Dalla Valle – Vice President
Roger Plaskett – District Commissioner / Announcer
Sandy Meyers – Clerk of Course
Eleanor Covelli – Secretary
Carol Meade – Treasurer
Referee – Joe Covelli

With the start of our 1996 season only two months away, we undertook in March, what was to evolve into a major renovation. We needed to get the turns paved and the first turn was simply not big enough nor was the first straightaway wide enough. So here we are again, totally tearing up the first straight and turn one.



It was also this year that the Wall-Mart plaza was being built. We were able to get a lot of fill from that work site, so much in fact that it was hard to turn them off. It seemed like every time we leveled the parking lot, more fill would show up.



This View is looking back at where the registration Building now is. In the background are the massive piles of fill that kept showing up from the Wal-Mart site. Every time we spread the fill, by the next day it was full again.



Local contractors saw the piles and kept illegally adding to it. It actually became a problem and the city got involved and shut down the deliveries.

They had the same problem down at the soccer fields which were being expanded with this "bonus fill" from the new Wal-Mart plaza.

Because of the renovations and rainy summer, we only held 12 races that second year. Amazingly, even with the reduced number of races, 51 riders qualified for year end awards by getting their 10 races in. This was the first year that we would host the Connecticut State Championship race and just two weeks before we got turns 1, 2, and 3 paved. At the beginning of the season Trumbull had given us some old bleachers that were set up along the first straight at T.R.A.C.K. Roger was the regular announcer down there and he would show up early on race nights with hammers and wrenches and take them apart piece by piece. By the end of the summer two sections were dismantled. On a Sunday morning Joe Covelli had secured a flat bed truck and we went there, loaded them up for transport to Torrington. Unfortunately, one complete section fell off in Seymour and was damaged.

The State Championship race went off as planned but it was not easy after a complete washout on the day before as the remnants of hurricane Fran washed away all the work that was done to prepare the track. With no drainage whatsoever, it was a disaster. 317 riders split into 76 motos provided some heart pounding excitement and the first real big race held at Foothills.



Part of the big crowd on that first State Championship held at Foothills BMX.

In 1997 it was time to expand. With all the added fill there was room to lengthen the track by adding the last two turns and related straights.



Herman Castelli behind the controls of his dozer constructing the back straight leading into turn #4



View from the starting hill looking Out at the early shaping of turn #4

This was the first year we had electricity at the track although limited. Across the street there is an electrical box that was used to light a no-defunct sliding hill. We talked the city into letting us run a line from that box to the Registration Building (Now the tool shed). It was only one line but it allowed us to run the gate and the sound system but with numerous blown fuses.

Along with that expansion came some staging rails courtesy of the track in Trumbull.



Adam Kinosh and Will Marcano
pitching in with some fresh paint.

When we first built the starting hill, the gate had to be mounted to concrete. Unfortunately, when we poured it the area was totally flat meaning there was no angle to the area where the riders were touching the raised gate. With the original gate being a gravity drop, no pressure on it made it a very slow release. In 1997 we built some wooden ramps to remedy the problem.

To the right you can see the wooden ramps providing an angle and the central electromagnet that released the gate.



1997 was the year we held our first "Big-Name" Rider clinic. A couple of members of the GT Factory Team were here led by AA Pro Greg Romero. From California Greg had over 100 Pro wins including a World Championship and, in later years, would be the personal coach of two Olympic medalists, Mike Day and Jill Kintner.



Greg Romero (Factory Robinson) and B.J. Gant (Factory GT) give instruction. Auburn, Powerlite and Robinson were all owned by GT Bicycles at that time.



This year we used the Torrington AIC (Alternate Incarceration program) in the form of community service personal to help rake the track before race days. We eventually donated a race-ready bike to them and a few riders tried it with one becoming a regular racer and very good.

By the end of the 1997 season we had a preliminary draft of our Constitution and By-laws in preparation of becoming incorporated, a much needed undertaking to relieve the staff of volunteers of any personal liability issues.

In an effort to save costs, we held our year end outing with Falcon BMX at Falcon BMX. One highlight of that day was a marathon softball game between the two tracks. No one remembers who won other then it went on for hours.

In the off season there was much discussion to change our race days from Sundays to any other day in an effort to boost rider count and respond to complaints from riders about racing on Sundays. We extended a lot of effort in the feasibility of installing lights at the track. It was simply too cost effective to proceed. Not only would the track need to be lighted but the parking lot as well.

In 1998 we added the concrete blocks at the bottom of the starting hill on the right hand side. This was a result of the city edict that we needed to do something to stop the erosion. Iffland lumber donated 15 "Mafia Blocks", Toce Brothers Tires hauled them to the Track and Cotton Hill Construction installed them. At that same time we filled in the bottom of the starting hill in an effort to stop launching riders over the 25 foot long first jump. That is why that portion of the track is on such a raised level now.

Even though it was a tough start to the season as we lost the first three weeks of racing to adverse weather, the ridership was starting to show signs of growth as we enjoyed 63 riders who met the 10 race criteria to earn a year end award. This also was the year that we held our second but last fund raising auction. Although it was not as prosperous as the first one, well over \$1,300 was raised on April 5th.

1998 was the year that we finally got a telephone line run to the track and had an actual telephone in the Registration building (Now the tool shed). Previously we were using a portable phone that always had reception and battery problems. (No pocket cell phones invented yet).

Those nice red moto sheet holders that are still in use today, were made this year by Rich Pellet and Ed Walsh, who were relatives of a couple of local riders.

The second turn was made a little higher and re-paved in the fall of this year.

Our sanctioning body made some changes in the local program structure this season with the addition of points awarded in main events. Main events then were only held in classes that had more than 6 riders in them. On a good day with maybe 40 motos, the number of main events might be about 12. The NBL point structure always awarded the majority of its points in the motos. For example: in the Expert Classes, a rider would get 60 points for each moto win, 55 for a second; 50 for a third etc. The Main events simply determined your trophy position for the day if you had one. Otherwise your overall score determined your trophy. Now, you would get an additional 20 points for a main win, 18 for second; 16 for third etc. The moto points, always a staple for the National Bicycle League, certainly provided some excitement in each moto as every position earned valuable points.

1999 is the year that everything began to change as Foothills took a more leadership role and not so much the follower for the first time. This is the year that Cheryl Lopardo joined our organization and we have never been the same since. All through this year she kept talking about fund raising and selling advertizing signs. Her fresh ideas and energy level were second to none.

As is the case with most growing organizations, there were some rough times with differences of opinions, but we all were working for a common goal and learned to agree to disagree with some issues. It was a real test and set the stage for our “Foundation of Teamwork”.

In the every early spring, Roger Plaskett met with Attorney Tom Becker from Canton and began serious discussions regarding applying for non-profit 501c3 or 501c4 status. Attn Becker had volunteered his services and was wonderful. We dropped our previous name of “The Litchfield County BMX Association” and pursued Federal recognition as “The Litchfield County BMX Group”. On June 28th, 1999, we received official notification from the Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury in Cincinnati Ohio that we had been granted 501c3 status. This was the birth date of “The Litchfield County BMX Group, Incorporated”. The government would watch our filings for 5 years then make a final determination if we were a 501c3 private organization or a 501c3 public charity. This would make a difference regarding if donations were tax deductible or not.

In an attempt to raise early season funds, we decided to sell advertizing signs for the first time thanks to Cheryl’s determination. It was a smart decision as we sold 12 signs that brought in \$4,200 before we dropped even one gate! This has evolved into being the “financial life-blood” for the organization each year since.

It was also this year that the Litchfield Bancorp donated money for us to build an announcer’s tower.



The Announcer’s Tower under construction. Steve Gagnon, whose wife was also a volunteer and his son a racer, did a great job in his spare time erecting the tower after we attained a building permit from the city.

By the end of the season it was time to sign the second 5-year lease agreement with the City. That went well but we scrambled to get a new site plan done with expanded lease lines from the original. Once again Streeter Engineering came through with an “as-built” site plan. We purchased a set of bleachers and set them up under the trees along the starting hill.

This was the first year that we sponsored some local kids from The Connecticut Junior Republic in Litchfield. We helped 8 kids on a weekly basis that year by providing them with their NBL Licenses, entry fees and gear. In return they helped us maintain the track. It was a great give-and-take program and continued for a number of years. This was also a means for us to help the community which would help in our desire to become classified as a “public charity” by the Federal Government.

This year we held our awards outing at a local Roller rink and had a blast.

Changes continued in 2000 including an energetic push to improve the facility and up the rider count. This is the year that Cheryl Lopardo began playing such an important role. She got some building plans drawn up for a new Registration building and had to submit yet another site plan with the City to attain a permit. Cheryl was in the real estate business and had many contacts in the building industry. She was able to get a few carpenters to donate their time to put together the building using materials and services donated by many people and companies.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS FOR THE REGISTRATION BUILDING

Harry Almsted – Plans

Luke Dietlin Framing Materials

Heritage Builders-VariouS Supplies

Don Lamy – General Contractor

Farmington ready Mix- reduced cost concrete

Quality Roofing - Shingles

Forrestville Lumber - Windows

Truss Manufacturing – Bldg Trusses

Hart Building Supplies – 22 sheets plywood

One of the most disheartening things we experienced with the building is that the day after Hart Building Supply delivered 22 sheets of donated plywood to the sight; all 22 sheets were stolen forcing us to spend the money to purchase replacements.



Primary funding for the building came from a donation of \$1,600 from The Torrington Company.



The track was again renovated and drainage was added in certain areas. We also added a fence all around the viewing areas. Prior to the season we sent over 15,000 flyers to local school systems.



The above picture on the left shows the renovations widening the back straight and making an area where the old bleacher system from Trumbull would reside.

The above picture on the right shows the beginning of the Registration Building and the perimeter fencing.

Improvements and growth was everywhere. We finally got rid of the old wooden ramps and poured a new concrete pad with the proper angle. Ram Welding of Naugatuck provided a new gate at no charge!



For our Open House Information Day, we held it in conjunction with a pretty large tag-sale. All monies from the items sold went into our treasury.



The biggest problem was where to store all this stuff. Don Jenner offered up his home.



152 riders got their ten races in to qualify for year-end awards. That year we were named #7 in the NBL for average rider count per race! It was simply a harbinger of things to come.

We held the State Championship for the second time and it was the biggest "local" race in Connecticut history with 428 riders entered and split into 101 motos. To this day, that race remains as the largest ever.

2001 was upon us and we certainly have matured over the last 7 years, but it would be hard to top the accomplishments of last year. Thinking big, we wrote a letter to the Coca-Cola Bottling Company asking them to be our "Title Sponsor". They declined but did provide two vending machines at the track. They also gave us our first moto counter at zero cost to us. It hung on the Announcer's tower. The two vending machines were gone within two months due to multiple vandalism attacks in spite of the cage.



Our announcer worked the moto counter as he called the action.



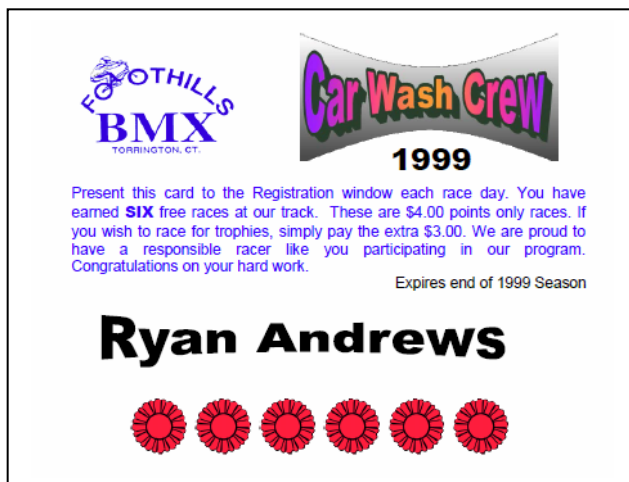
After last year's success with advertizing signs, we put forth a real push and sold a record 30 signs of various sizes. This brought in a whopping \$9,725 before the season even started. This effort was spearheaded by Cheryl Lopardo.

In the spring of this year we applied for a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from The Torrington Area Foundation for Public Giving and in June our application was approved. The purpose was to drill a well on the site to provide much needed water. This was a "reimbursement grant" and we would be paid after submitting a receipt. Little did we realize the amount of red tape required to drill a well on city owned property. This was going to take awhile.

From 1999 through 2004 we conducted annual car washes. This was a means for riders to learn about responsibility. All the money that was earned from the car washes went to the track. The total amount was divided by the number of rider volunteers and they were given a "punch-card" that they were free to give away to friends or use themselves. The track always through in a little bit to round off the numbers.



At times it seemed that more water went on the volunteers than went on vehicles.

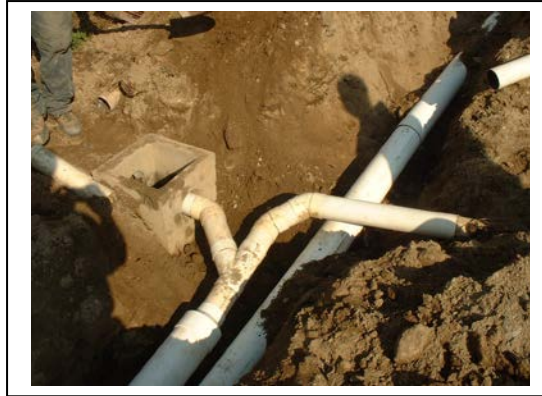


This was a typical Car Wash "Punch-Card" that was given to the volunteers.

These events were held at either the Burger King Restaurant on the Winsted Road or the McDonalds Restaurant in the Walmart Plaza.

Riders were also given Certificates of Recognition for their work at the Car Washes. This type of event also helped in our quest to be classified as a "public charity" from the Federal Government.

It was this year (2001) that we to put in some serious drainage. We ripped up the track and installed 12 catch basins in various locations, all connected in a system that drained off all the surface water very quickly. It made a huge difference. On certain days when an afternoon thunderstorm would come through, after about 20 minutes we were back to racing.



A significant amount of money was spent on drainage but it really paid off.

Keeping them clean by emptying the catch basins about once a month was the only maintenance required.

One thing we learned, possibly from the mistakes of other tracks, was to treat people who came here as a respected customer. The theme for our staff became making a visit to Foothills a pleasant and fun experience for everyone. This is a theme that continues today. 2001 was the year we shocked the entire BMX world by finishing second in the entire NBL for average race day rider count with 198 riders. There were 140 NBL sanctioned tracks in 2001. At Competition Congress that year, which is the NBL's annual meeting of all tracks, people were asking "where the heck is Foothills BMX?" Being a track that had never held a National or regional event, people from out of state had never heard of us.

This year we upgraded the electrical service to the track thanks, in part, to the city running an upgraded line to the upper parking lot.

We held our year end outing again at the Riverside Roller Rink and enjoyed 132 riders qualifying by getting ten races in for the season.

In 2002 some more modernization changes took place. The days of the hand written moto sheets was over! The computer age had finally reached us. A used laptop and a DOT Matrix printer were in the house, what could be better?

We installed an alarm system in the registration building and purchased a new gate system to replace the old magnet released gravity drop system.

The Staging lanes were dirt up to this point and the ruts that we used to get in there were huge. This year we finally leveled it out and poured some concrete.



The new staging area. One day during the week, a father showed up with his two children while Roger was working there. After a lengthy conversation he was a welder and asked what he could do. Two weeks later the overhead number frame appeared just before we put down the concrete.

All during the season the place was on fire with crowds that were bigger than some of the NBL Regional Series races. When the dust settled, this little track in Connecticut, with inadequate parking, no lights, no snack shack or rest rooms outdrew them all. We were named the number one track in NBL Country for average rider count per race. 208 riders and the only track to ever average over 200 riders per race in NBL history.



Big crowds every week as the vibe of the Foothills experience spread.

The place was alive with energy

Not only was our average rider count impressive with the 208 entries per week but the moto count average was an unbelievable 52! We were beginning to realize that the large rider counts at Foothills were propagating throughout the state. We were becoming a “feeder track”.



Shocking the BMX world was an understatement. In only our eighth season of racing we accomplished something that no Connecticut track had ever done. We were number 1 in the country for average rider count.

In reality, not only did we enjoy a large number of new riders coming through our doors to enter the world of BMX, but we also enjoyed riders visiting us from the efforts of other Connecticut tracks.

Nutmeg BMX was thriving!

One of the other tracks in the state had pledged that their “Rider of the Year” (Track Champion) would be a girl rider. We liked the idea of awarding the Top Girl but felt by deciding the sole title would cut out all the boy riders, Foothills, for the first time, named both a male and

a female track champion. We then went back through our records and determined who the previous girl winners would have been (Top female points scorer in each year) and created the "TRACK CHAMPIONS" sign at the track with all the names of past winners on it.

While enjoying the success of 2002, behind the scenes there was trouble brewing at the Sanction level. Back in 1997, the NBL had joined, and actually sold some ownership to USA Cycling. USA Cycling is a sanctioning body in the United States that governs all aspects of competitive cycling in the United States. This was necessary to get BMX Racing recognized by the International Olympic Committee. USA Cycling chose the NBL over the rival organization the ABA primarily because the NBL was a not for profit organization.

During the course of 2002, USA Cycling Chief Executive Officer Gerard Bisceglia tried to sell the NBL to its arch rival the ABA. The attempt was foiled by the NBL membership led by the efforts of Florida Attorney Darol Carr, when the board of directors of USA Cycling on November 5th, voted "**NO**" to the sale. Because of this, Sanction wars between the ABA and the NBL was elevated to new heights. Looking back, it was obvious only one would survive.

At year's end we had a record 171 riders qualified with 10 races in. We held our awards outing at the Elks Club Facility in Torrington for the first time and it was a large turnout.



Big crowds and big trophies. For the next eight seasons we held our awards outing here.



In 2003 B/E Aerospace donated \$1500 for another set of bleachers. We decided to purchase another set as well.

During the early spring a guy showed up to check out the facility and saw us struggling just moving the packages of bleacher components around. He said he had a small bucket loader. It wasn't long before Peter Hock, owner of Outdoor Artistry LLC, was on site with his loader and, not only did he clear a place to set the new bleachers on, but he created the entire viewing area on top of turn 1. This area has become one of the most popular viewing areas and provides an incredible panoramic view of the Foothills BMX Racing Facility.



Peter Hock working his magic on the rocky terrain. He was certainly a great help.



We also removed the original triple rollers going into turn 2. This work was actually done in the fall of 2002 but ready for the 2003 season.



The Triple roller on the left became the step up on the right

During the season we had a clinic with some pretty good instructors brought in as the traveling DK Products tour made a stop here. Reining X-Games gold medalist "Robo" Robbie Miranda was here with his friends Nathan Fons, Nate Strieby and Brian Strieby.



Robbie



Brian

Even though our average dropped a bit, 181 riders per race was still good enough to maintain our #1 status within the NBL. 149 riders got their ten races in qualifying for our year end awards.



During the year J. Fragale & Sons Paving, Inc., volunteered to add a patch of asphalt to the bottom of the staging lanes which finally finished off the staging area. Just another fine

example of community minded local organizations coming through for the youth of the community.

Peter Hock (Outdoor Artistry) had donated some out of production concrete wall-blocks. We had them piled near the seating area on the east side of the starting hill. They were to be used to build a retaining wall on that side of the staging area. Within one week someone had helped themselves to 75% of the pile. The remainder is in place today (2014) in that area.

Up to this point all of our advertising signs were put up and taken down each race day. This was a pain in the neck and very time consuming. We decided to put them up permanently. Within once month someone had vandalized every one of them by slicing them to pieces. The replacement cost was \$653.40. After making a public announcement regarding the incident, two anonymous donators came forth with \$350.00 to be applied towards the replacement costs. Needless to say we went back to putting them up and down each race day.

One of the things we always wanted to try was holding make up races during the week opposed to running a double header on the weekend but how could we do it with no lights? Well, we strung a cord in the trees along the seating area, Built a large frame that we could raise and lower in turn one and built a box that fit perfectly on top of the announcers tower that held four banks of lights. We actually ran two night races this year but scrapped the idea as the sound system was loud (sensitivity to neighbors) and the parking lots were not lighted.



In this picture you can see the frame on top of the announcer's tower where we would put the box that had an array of lights fastened to it. It had to come down after each race for fear of vandalism.

In hindsight, 2003 may be described as the end of the facility growth years as we seemed to be migrating into a Facility Maintenance Phase.

In 2004 the asphalt in the second turn was now 9 years old, cracking badly and was never really shaped correctly to begin with. There was a ridge towards the top that was always an issue as well as a periodic accident where a rider would take a bad line and crash into the fence. It's now 2004 and time to do something with only limited space to do it in. The July BMX Camp was intended to provide funding. More on that soon.



The ridge is clear in this shot taken at the year-end State Championship race. This would be the last day that we raced on it.



No stopping now.



Adding concrete blocks gave us a foundation to build off.



No longer would the turn be a hairpin turn. We used up all available space.



All ready for some asphalt

Patrick Maher was able to borrow an excavator from the company he was working for and he was like a surgeon in shaping the new turn.

It's been three years since we were approved for that \$5,000 grant for a well on this city owned property and we still had no water. In addition to all the red tape, the city, which recently expanded their soccer field complex below the track, was in need of water also. They had been talking about tying into the city water line which runs down Kennedy Drive.

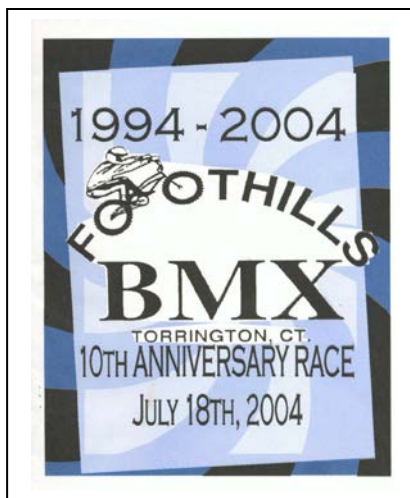
Keeping a dialog open with the city's Department of Public Works. We were able to coordinate a plan that allowed us to run the line from the soccer field up to the registration building. The city ran the line and we simply tied into it. We did pay for the materials from the soccer field to the building.



Dave Kelly digging out the final trench and making the connection that provided us with water after 10 years without

Our lease agreement with the city was renewed for this season and the next 4. We have maintained a great relationship with the city.

Amazingly this is our 10th year of existence. In July we held a tenth Anniversary celebration race and enjoyed 199 riders split into 52 motos. We were still the hottest track around. It was a great event as we brought back former staff members from the previous seasons to help in the celebration. All riders were given commemorative stop watches.



This pamphlet, along with stop watches went to every rider who registered that day. Shhhhh, don't tell them we started in 1995.

In July we held our first ever BMX Camp. This was put on by Carlos and Mady Perez and what a boost it was for our ability to rebuild turn #2. This camp paid for about 50% of \$6,500 cost of materials. Brian Streiby, Nate Streiby, Chris Keller, Alan Zalawa, Eric Schnieder and Jill Botchler were the camp instructors.



The entire crew from our first camp

The year ended with Foothills Hosting the State Championship for the 3rd time. It was the second biggest race with 363 riders split into 87 motos.




This was the Official Logo of the 2004 Nutmeg BMX State Championship Race.

This year we earned our third consecutive award as having the largest average rider count in the NBL with 188 per race.

In 2005 there was no track upgrades as we seemed to have taken a breather to stop and smell the roses.

We did come up with a 16 & Over Money Open Program.



FOOTHILLS OPEN INFORMATION

Once certain riders become young adults, there usually are few riders available to make up a class, and when there is, it's usually not very exciting or competitive.

Our **16 & Over Foothills Open Class**, once known as the "Money Open" is the program that encourages older riders, who still love the sport of BMX, to be able to race, and in a highly competitive environment.

The entry fee is \$7.00 per rider. Foothills BMX will match the entry fees up to \$125 each week. The entire pot will be paid back to the riders as follows:

1st place = **50%** of Pot
2nd Place = **30%** of Pot
3rd Place = **20%** of Pot

In addition, if there are at least 8 riders entered, T/C Cycle will sponsor the "**T/C Cycle Hole Shot Award**" which is worth \$20.00 to the first person to reach the top of the landing ramp on Jump number three during the Main Event.

Rules:

- All Riders must have an active NBL License and be prepared to show it at time of registration.
- Full NBL required gear and Tech Inspection is mandatory.
- All decisions by the day's scorers are final and official.
- Any abuse to our volunteers will be subjected to a zero-tolerance approach.
- Any altercations on the track will be subjected to a zero-tolerance approach.
- If there are less than 9 riders registered on any given day, one rider will be dropped from the motos. A minimum of six riders required to make a race. They would be split into two groups of three with four riders making the Main.
- 20" or Cruiser bikes may be entered.
- Protesting under the rules of the NBL are allowed but highly discouraged.

We hope that this program will promote exciting racing for each of the riders entered. We look forward to watching it. Because of the nature of this highly competitive type of racing, we remind all entrants that tempers must be controlled. By competing in this class, you are all automatically "Role-Models" for the younger riders. The most predominate single issue that could destroy this program is an altercation between riders. It is imperative to the success and future of this program that cooler heads prevail.

The Staff

Each Sunday it seemed like the feel of a National or Regional event was in the air.

In an effort to provide something for the older riders by creating an environment that promoted a large turnout and some great competition, we started running 16 & Over Money Opens.

As its popularity grew, so did the need to really govern the rules and guidelines.

The concept worked and there were riders from all over coming to run in it.

The prize money was 100% payback of entry fees plus Foothills was kicking in a match up to \$125 per week.

All we had hoped for in return was some of the rider's time in the form of an occasional clinic for new riders who were looking up to these guys. It was hoped to be a give-and-take situation but eventually ended up being a take situation.

Prudential Cup Series Racing

Every Sunday
May through August

BMX Fun For All Ages

Bicycle Racing



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This was a break-through year for our program as it was the first year that we had a "Title-Sponsor". Prudential Financial stepped up and it really changed our finances.

With the sponsor fees they provided, all riders who earned year end awards would come to the catered outing at the Elks facility at no cost to the rider.

In July we held our second Camp which was run again by Carlos and Mady Perez. The money earned at this camp would be applied to renovating turns #4 and #5 next year.

One unexpected incident this year was a visit and complaint lodged from a neighbor who complained about the amount of noise from our sound system on Sunday mornings. A letter with a promise to re-point speakers and control volume solved the issue.

This was the first year that we had a web Site. Foothillsbmx.com was actually started by Ed Hayes and looked nothing like it does today. But it was a foundation of things to come very soon.

One issue we heard about a few times was that certain people wished that we raced a little later in the day to allow for them to attend church services. As a compromise we started holding non-denominational services at the track each Sunday. There were people who took advantage of it and even a racing team developed out of it. "Team Moto-Cross".



Riders on this team helped new riders by putting on free clinics and setting up a Rider mentoring Program. This was a forerunner of our free rider clinics that continue through and beyond 2014.

The services and the team were the result of the efforts of Kim Mitchell.

The rider count was still strong with an average of 176 per race, good enough to earn us our 4th consecutive #1 status in the NBL.

In 2006 turns 4 and 5 were really starting to deteriorate and it was time to take some action. We again approached the Community Foundation of Northwest CT. and asked for a grant of \$9,000. In April we were notified that we were approved for \$4,500. Between last year's camp income and this grant, we were able to proceed with re-builds.

Two weeks into the season we had enough help and had again coordinated with Peter Andregghetti to do the paving. This time we didn't rip out anything but simply added a tack-coat over the existing asphalt and then paved on top of the old surface.



Turn #4



Turn #5

We came up with an idea for an Open Series for older riders. We called it the Weekend Warrior Series and it would include the two weekend tracks (Torrington and Meriden). On selected weekends day one would be at Meriden and day two in Torrington. The owner of a state team (Jim Edgar of CMR) pledged to throw in \$1250 adding to the nearly \$2,000 already collected through donations. This would be a ten race series with \$250 being divided to the top three each of the ten races. At the finals \$1,000 would be up for grabs between the top three riders. The entire series brought some excitement into the weekly races but there was some

problems and, unfortunately, some riders still complained. All in all it was something fresh and new.

At the beginning of the season the Coca-Cola Moto Counter died. We got a price of \$1,700 to purchase a new one. It was money that we simply hadn't budgeted and didn't have. We announced that we were looking for any business that might want to contribute. Within one week both the Torrington Savings Bank and the Rotary Club came forward.



By mid season the new counter was in place

Roger Plaskett's daughter in law Christine, designed a new template for the website. This template, and many edits later, is what is used for the website today.

This was the first year that we actually developed an operating budget and had really good control over spending by being able to project costs.

The partnership with The Connecticut Junior Republic is still going strong with 10 kids sponsored again this year.

Over at the Sunday morning Moto-Cross tent, Kim Mitchell had organized crafts and games for the children who were not racers. It was a lot of fun and prevented boredom while little brothers and sisters were sitting around doing nothing.

We modified the 16 & over money open rules by eliminating the \$125 match that we were doing for entry fees. It was simply becoming too expensive with zero return on our investment.

We were summoned to meet with the Mayor and city departments regarding traffic control at Alvord Park. Because of the large turnouts we had, it had become a problem with the soccer league. The meeting was excellent as ideas were thrown out including making a lower entrance to the soccer area from Kennedy Drive. This never happened but the city did get more involved with scheduling very obviously catering to the needs of Foothills BMX. It was this meeting that the idea of the big BMX sign at the end of Kennedy drive was born. Surprisingly, the city paid for half of its cost and even installed it for us.

With an average rider count of 190 per race, we earned our 5th consecutive award for having the best average in the NBL.

In 2007 some of the Connecticut tracks wanted to raise the entry fees from \$7.00 to \$8.00 per race. This prompted much debate between the tracks at the Nutmeg BMX level. The state organization finally left it up to the individual tracks. Foothills elected to hold the prices.

We ran a Warrior Series again this year but only at Foothills. We called it the "Ultimate Warrior Series".



Ultimate Warrior Series Logo

In 2006 it was sponsored by CMR Racing

In 2007 it was sponsored by "PJ Collectables

In 2008 it was sponsored by The Bikers Edge

Prudential Financial decided to go in a different direction so we needed to find a new "Title Sponsor". Tommy's Bicycle and Fitness center in downtown Torrington was under new ownership. We approached them and, after some convincing, they agreed to be our sponsor for the 2007 season.

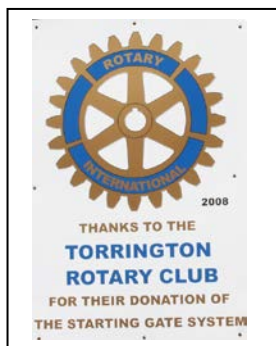


This year we ran our summer camp on our own. The Strieby brothers came out from Indiana and were the instructors.



Camp Instructor Nate Strieby raises his arms while his brother Brian (red helmet) smiles at the end of the four day camp. It down-poured about 5 minutes after this picture was taken.

At the end of the season, the Rotary Club donated \$1,000 towards the purchase of a new gate starting system.



The system was received in December and installed the next season. The Torrington Rotary had come through yet again.

Even though the rider counts in the state were showing signs of a slight decline, sending 16,000 flyers to the local school system continues to help our efforts. For the sixth year in a row, we were awarded the distinction of being the #1 track in the NBL for average rider count with 169

In 2008 we again ran the Warrior Series but for the last time. The Bikers Edge sponsored the series with a sizable donation. (\$1,000). This year it was time for us to renew our 5-year lease agreement with the City and it went very well as expected.

Tommy's Bicycle and Fitness was back as our Title Sponsor.

Our sponsored rider program was at its best during 2008 when we had 44 riders who had their entire season paid for in advance. This proved to be beneficial to the organization as this was money that came in before the season even started. We could get materials and supplies before we needed them. We also enjoyed 77 new riders and 11 trial memberships this year.

Patrick Maher stepped up and conducted Monday night rider clinics. He was fantastic with the kids and these free clinics, which continued for a couple of seasons, were drawing riders from other tracks.



Pat was like the Pied-Piper of BMX.

It was obvious the he had found a real niche to stay involved with a significant contribution but avoid being a member of the Board of Directors. He was perfect at this and eventually started using some of our more experienced riders as assistant instructors.

As far as track work goes this was the first year that we used a machine to prepare and spread the clay over the track surface as, in the past, it pretty much was a hand raked operation. Although this made the job much easier, the machine scraped so deeply that the raised surface was now brought down to ground level. That significantly affected the tracks ability to drain itself of surface water. There were some mud-cancellations where we once were able to race.

It was our turn for the State Championship again and we again proved that we knew how to run a big race. The turnout was 341 entries split into 82 motos.



Foothills was bursting at the seams with another huge crowd.

At Competition Congress we received our 7th consecutive NBL award for having the highest average rider count with a number of 171.

In 2009 it was time for turn 1 to join the other turns (except turn 3) with a total rebuild. In the fall of 2008 we were soliciting bids and entertained three ranging from \$10,000 to \$16,400.



This turn was still the original asphalt surface and it has sunk at the top rim, had numerous patches added and now had significant sink holes forming.

After securing three quotes from area businesses, \$10,000 from Martin Laviero Contractors from Bristol was the cheapest. With no grant money for this project it was all out of our savings.



It takes a lot of work to re-build a turn as large as this turn was. Just ripping out old asphalt is no easy task.



We really were blessed with an early spring allowing the asphalt suppliers to open early. With our season scheduled to start on May 3rd, all of this work was completed just 11 days prior. Unfortunately everyone would have to wait a week as our first race was rained out.



By opening day we had another 5 year lease agreement with the city of Torrington.

The Tommys Bicycle and Fitness store was falling on rough times and elected not to return as our title sponsor. However, The Bikers Edge Store in Bristol was opening a new store in Torrington and agreed to come on board.



The Bikers Edge became our new Title Sponsor and has been with us through 2014. They have been a wonderful supporter of our efforts at Foothills BMX.

All through the 2009 season the crowds were very good and we finished with an average of 162 riders per race day; good enough to earn our 8th consecutive best rider count award from the NBL. The sponsored rider program was still strong with 35 riders enjoying sponsors. Unfortunately The Connecticut Junior Republic had changed direction and was no longer a campus where troubled youth were schooled. Over the years we had sponsored nearly 100 riders and helped in getting them pointed in a positive direction.

As 2010 rolled in, The National Bicycle league was beginning to crack at the seams. Darol Carr, Chairman of the Board, elected not to run again and was replaced by James Bagwell. A new CEO, Gary Aragon was brought in from outside the industry. Other long standing "lifers" of the Board of Directors were replaced also. Long Time Director of Competition Bob Tedesco resigned. This was the dawn of a new day but the sun was hardly shining.

They started playing around with major changes designed to boost rider counts in a sagging economy. They offered half-price cruiser licenses to riders who had purchased a 20" license among other changes. They also tried but failed, to increase the costs per rider to each track. That plan would have penalized the tracks with the most rider counts the most. Foothills BMX spearheaded the efforts to prevent this plan from becoming reality. There had to be a better way. In hind sight, none of the Track Directors were told how dire the financial situation really was within the NBL.

They also announced that after this year, there would be all new criteria for move-ups. Rookie Riders, for example, would be called Challengers and would automatically be moved up to the next level after one year. The entire proficiency structure that has been in place since 1974 was now being reformatted.

It was a big crowd at the July 18 Triple Points race. 291 Riders and 70 motos



All through 2010 the crowds and rider counts were holding their own. 164 averages were good enough for our 9th consecutive award from the NBL for the highest average rider count per race in the country!

It was also this year that our President / Track Director and one of the Founding Fathers of Foothills BMX and The Litchfield County BMX Group Inc., would be stepping down from the Board of Directors. Roger Plaskett, whose son had been diagnosed with a terminal illness, knew that 35 year old Dan Plaskett would soon be gone and the stress of the affect on his personal life would be too much to allow him to continue to focus on the needs of the track and related organization. Over the course of the 2010 season, we would be searching for his replacement / replacements.



Rog Plaskett giving thanks and offering painful goodbyes at the last year end awards outing to be held at the Torrington Elks Facility

In August the NBL announced numerous changes including class structures and memberships coming by January 1st, 2011. It was this membership scenario that would prove to be the final nail in the coffin for the NBL in just 7 short months.

Three levels of memberships now replaced the annual fee of \$60. With the new plan there would be no entry fees to pay at the tracks.

\$99.00 LOCAL MEMBERSHIP: All-You-Can-Ride local racing at any outdoor track in the Nation with no entry fees. Includes both 20" and Cruisers! This includes access to Pre-races at Nationals and Entry into the President's Cup.

\$245.00 CHALLENGER MEMBERSHIP: All the benefits of the LOCAL membership PLUS All-You-Can-Ride Challenge Championship Series racing with no entry fees (Editor's note: The "Challenge Championship Series" is the new name for the NBL Regional series). Includes both 20" and Cruisers! This includes the Challenge Championship and All Challenge Championship Entries.

\$395.00 CHAMPION MEMBERSHIP: All the benefits of LOCAL and CHALLENGER membership PLUS All-You-Can-Ride National Series racing. It includes both 20" and Cruisers!

Up to this point each local track, with a race day rider count of 100 or more, would pay the NBL \$30 affiliation costs plus \$75 Insurance costs each race. The local track would cover all of their own expenses including trophy's, materials etc.

So with virtually no race day income for the tracks where would their operating money come from? The NBL pledged they would reimburse each track \$5.95 for each entry (excluding Opens) within 30 days of the event. At Foothills it meant the sponsored rider program and advertizing sign sales would become the only source of pre-season or early-season revenue.

With a discount offered if you paid your new membership fees by January 1st, 2011, there was a large influx of renewed memberships and attendance at the remaining 2010 Nationals.

As 2011 rolled in the winter months were booms for the riders in the warm-weather states as many had already raced enough locals and Nationals to surpass what they would have spent under the old membership plan. The problem was the NBL was not reimbursing all the tracks within the 30 days affiliation agreement. Just under the Local membership plan, any rider that raced 16 times at any local track, the NBL would start losing \$5.95 per rider if they paid the reimbursement. It was becoming very obvious that the plan would soon bankrupt the NBL.

Mindy Delisle stepped up and replaced Roger as the President of The Litchfield County BMX Group Inc. Todd Pfeffer replaced Roger as Track Director.

On opening day we enjoyed 204 riders in 57 motos. Maybe this membership plan will be actually work out OK in spite of the financial numbers not seemingly to work out in the NBL's favor. (Some people on the NBL's "Inner circle" had speculated that SWATCH had come forward as a major NBL sponsor allowing the financial numbers to add up).

By the first race in June it was over. The NBL announced they were out of money and that they had "merged" with the American Bicycle Association. The 2011 season would finished using NBL rules but be managed by the ABA now calling themselves USABMX. The biggest issue became the fact that we were back to entry fees on race days even for those who had already paid up front.

Our rider count in June had dropped to 128 averages in spite of riders from nearby Whip City now being able to race here with their ABA licenses. We even extended the season past August 31st for the first time since our initial season back in 1995.

Riders were angry, others did not like the ABA flavor of BMX, tracks were struggling with lack of funds owed from the NBL and BMX in the Northeast was in turmoil. By November it was announced that a court settlement would grant all debtors 38 cents on the dollar reimbursement. By 2012 nearly 200 Connecticut riders dropped out of BMX altogether.

Our 2011 average had plummeted to 127 riders per race. With no records kept by the ABA in this category, we have no idea where we would have finished; our streak of Number 1's was as dead as the now defunct National Bicycle league.

So this ended the NBL years at Foothills BMX. It was wonderful watching the building of one of the most successful BMX Racing programs in the country. In hind sight, it's still amazing that a little track with limited parking, no rest room facilities, no snack shack, no lights, can overcome those limitations, band together in an awesome effort of teamwork to become a nationally recognized program.

From the 9 consecutive titles as the number 1 track in the country for rider count, to the affiliation with the Connecticut Junior Republic rider sponsorship programs, the countless number of riders helped out from DCF referrals, a web site second to none and the thousands of riders who have passed through the gate, The Litchfield County BMX Group Incorporated's Foothills BMX has been a model that programs around the country have strived to emulate

So this ends the story of the birth and development of The Litchfield County BMX Group Incorporated's Foothills BMX and its affiliation with The National Bicycle league. But, in reality, even though it's a wonderful success story, it does not end here.

Going forward under the sanction of USABMX, we enter a new era with its related growth and develop issues. With a solid foundation to build off of the sky is the limit.



ADDENDUM

THE LITCHFIELD COUNTY BMX GROUP INCORPORATED STAFF HISTORY

1995	
President /Track Dir	Joe Doherty
Vice President	Rick Dalle Valle
Treasurer	Carol Meade
District Commissioner	Rog Plaskett
Referee	Joe Covelli
Clerk	Sandy Meyers
Secretary	Eleanor Covelli
1996	
President /Track Dir	C
Vice President	Joe Doherty
Track Director	Bob Garfield
Co-Treasurers	Carol Meade – Carol Meade
District Commissioner	Eric Patterson
Referee	Don Jenner
Clerk	Sandy Meyers
Secretary	Eleanor Covelli
1997	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Vacant
Co-Track Directors	Eric Paterson – Tom Johnson
Treasurer / Clerk	Laura Falcetti
District Commissioner	Brian Taylor
Referee	Don Jenner
Secretary	Elaine Browning
1998	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Vacant
Track Directors	Brian Taylor
Treasurer / Clerk	Laura Falcetti
District Commissioner	Joe Guzman
Referee	Don Jenner
Secretary	Elaine Browning
1999	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Brian Taylor
Track Directors	Don Jenner
Treasurer / Clerk	Laura Falcetti
District Commissioner	Dennis Werner
Referee	Patrick Maher
Secretary	Doreen Maher
2000	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Cheryl Lopardo
Co-Track Directors	Don Jenner – Pat Maher
Treasurer / Clerk	Laura Falcetti
District Commissioner	Dennis Werner
Referee	Patrick Maher
Secretary	Doreen Maher
2001	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Cheryl Lopardo
Co-Track Director	Pat Maher
Treasurer / Clerk	Laura Falcetti
District Commissioner	Dan Merli
Referee	Jay Morse
Secretary	Doreen Maher

2002	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Jeff jeannin
Track Directors	Jay Morse
Treasurer	Sue Bakunis
Clerk	Gail Parente
District Commissioner	Jim Chasse
Referee	Al Bakunis
Secretary	Kerry Palmer
2003	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Kerry Palmer
Track Director	Jay Morse
Treasurer	Sue Bakunis
Clerk	Gail Parente
District Commissioner	Jim Chasse
Referee	Al Bakunis
Secretary	Kerry Ross
2004	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Kerry Palmer
Track Director	Jay Morse
Treasurer	Sue Bakunis
Clerk	Gail Parente
District Commissioner	Jim Chasse
Referee	Al Bakunis
Secretary	Pat Borla
2005	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Frank Buonocore
Track Director	Mike Ritchie
Treasurer	Jennifer Brown
Clerk	Gail Parente
District Commissioners	Jim Chasse – Paul Faulkner
Referee	Bob Maher
Secretary	Pat Borla
2006	
President / Track Director	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Frank Buonocore
Treasurer	Jennifer Brown
Clerk	Gail Parente
District Commissioner	Paul Faulkner
Referee	Bob Maher
Secretary	Pat Borla
2007	
President / Track Director	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Frank Buonocore
Treasurer	Jennifer Brown
Clerk	Gail Parente
District Commissioner	Tom Pannullo
Referee	Ardie Kalivis
Secretary	Pat Borla
2008	
President	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Frank Buonocore
Track Director	Erik Maher
Treasurer	Pat Borla
Clerk	Gail Parente
District Commissioner	Tom Pannullo
Referee	Ardie Kalivis
Secretary	Mindy Delisle

	2009
President / Track Director	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Frank Buonocore
Clerk	Michelle Pannullo
Treasurer	Pat Borla
District Commissioner	Tom Pannullo
Referee	Ardie Kalivis
Secretary	Mindy Delisle
	2010
President / Track Director	Roger Plaskett
Vice President	Lisa Ferris
Clerk	Michelle Pannullo
Treasurer	Pat Borla
District Commissioner	Tom Pannullo
Referee	Bob Mahner
Secretary	Mindy Delisle

	2011
President	Mindy Delisle
Track Director	Todd Pfeffer
Vice President	Lisa Ferris
Clerk	Michelle Pannullo
Treasurer	Krista Galeski
District Commissioner	Tom Pannullo
Referee	Bob Mahner