

Mastering Mountain Bike Skills: Techniques to Excel in all Riding Styles
Review of a book by Brian Lopes & Lee McCormack

by Mitch Trujillo, PCI #244T

Boulder PD (CO)

IPMBA Board – Membership Coordinator

“I ride my bike to ride my bike.” Zen proverb

Funny how the more you ride your bike the less you really know. If you ask the incredibly talented bike handler how they managed to pull off a spectacular move, they might likely respond with a shrug and say, “I don’t know. I just did it.” Execution of the skill is often easier than explaining it.

That’s a situation that master-bike handlers Brian Lopes and Lee McCormack faced when writing *Mastering Mountain Bike Skills*. Their 196-page book is becoming widely recognized as the technical manual for the disciplines of sport mountain biking: cross-country, downhill, mountain cross, freeride, dirt jump and urban riding. The main topics in the book include: bike selection and set up, balance, positioning, pedaling, pumping terrain for speed, braking, cornering, wheelies and hops, drops, jumping, speed, lines, and racing.

The text affords the IPMBA cyclist a great deal of resource material. There are enough maneuvers dissected, explained and displayed in such a way that riders from novice to advanced will all benefit. The skills are directed to riding off road, but are easily adapted to the street. Here are some valuable features I found in the book:

- Progressive skills, from fundamental to the most advanced, are broken down and paired with full-color visuals and photo sequences to increase reader recognition;
- Large type that is easy to read, with interpretive advice and experiences in entertaining and informal bike lingo;
- A balanced, functional, and well designed format.

There were only a few items that I felt were lacking:

- Coverage of crash avoidance and injury prevention techniques (exits, tumbling techniques and falling drills) that are vital when testing limits;
- Emphasis of the importance of environmentally responsible riding.

I contacted and interviewed author Lee McCormack by phone and we discussed the merits of the book. He was appreciative of the feedback. Some of the missing information I noted was omitted at first publication because of document size restrictions. He added that the topics might find their way into a companion DVD or the next publishing. I’ll be anxiously waiting.

In the meantime, masters Lopes and McCormack are offering *Mastering Mountain Bike Skills* as an effective tool in elevating rider skill. The tandem has successfully designed a text for defining bike maneuvers, and put together a practical resource for public safety cyclist and instructor alike. It’s even possible the material might make riders capable of explaining how they perform their moves.

Cost: \$22.95 (US), \$28.95 (Canada)

Contact: Order at www.imba.org or Human Kinetics Publishers at www.humankinetics.com

Mitch is an IPMBA Instructor Trainer, serves as Membership Coordinator on your IPMBA Board, and has a penchant for singlespeeds. He can be reached at trujillom@bouldercolorado.gov.

© IPMBA. This review appeared in the Winter 2007 issue of *IPMBA News*.