

TWO TOP RIDERS COMMIT TO MIDWESTERN CYCLING TEAM

Two of the nation's top young cyclists plan to attend Midwestern State University starting in January.



Alex Boyd of Omaha, Neb., and Natalie Klemko of Bristol, Wis., both age 19, bring experience from racing with the U.S. National Team and top finishes in national championship events to the Mustangs.

“Alex and Natalie will be excellent additions to our team,” said MSU Cycling Coach Gary Achterberg. “I’m confident that their skills and experience will be a great complement to the strong national-caliber riders already on our team.”

Klemko has a background in both road and track cycling. She recently won the national championship for Under-23 women in the points race, a track event. She also won two junior national championships on the track and has represented the United States twice at the junior world championships.

Klemko’s 2006 season also included winning two criteriums, a time trial and another elite track event. She also earned second-place finishes at several prestigious events, including two of the four criteriums run over Labor Day in the St. Louis area, and the Wisconsin road race championship. She also won the best young rider jersey at the San Dimas Stage Race, an event on the national calendar, early in 2006. Klemko also was featured on the cover of the June issue of “Chicago Athlete” magazine.



“MSU has increased its presence on the track this year with our two national championships and a total of five podium appearances at collegiate nationals this fall,” Achterberg said. “Natalie’s track experience – along with a most-impressive road background – make this a really great fit for both her and our program.”

Klemko graduated from high school in spring and is just starting college. She is anticipating her move to Texas: “I am really looking forward to racing for one of the top collegiate cycling teams in the country while continuing my education at MSU.”

Boyd is transferring to MSU after studying for a semester at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He will continue to also race for VMG Racing, a professional team that will be tied closely with the U.S. National Team in 2007. Boyd joined VMG at the start of the 2006 season after racing the previous year for Hot Tubes, the premier junior program in the United States.

Boyd’s accomplishments this past season include racing for the U.S. National Team in Belgium, finishing third in the Under-23 national championship criterium and winning the Best Young Rider jersey at the Nature Valley Grand Prix, a week-long stage race in Minnesota that is on the national racing calendar.

Boyd also had numerous other top finishes in national-caliber events, including the International Tour de Toona stage race, the Superweek race series, the Commerce Bank Triple Crown, the Redlands Classic and the Univest Grand Prix.

As a junior, Boyd earned podium positions in the national championships with his third-place in the 2004 road race and fifth-place in the 2005 road race. Both events were in Park City, Utah. He also competed on the Hot Tubes team at Le Tour de l'Abitibi in 2005. The seven-day-long stage race in Quebec is the only international Junior World Cup event conducted in North America.

"Alex's background and his enthusiasm will be welcome additions to our team," Achterberg said. "I know that Alex is excited about going to college and competing in collegiate events. We're very pleased to have him here at MSU."

"I've known about MSU's cycling program since I was in high school," Boyd said. "I have decided to transfer to MSU to get a quality education while pursuing my career as a cyclist. I'm excited about attending a school that provides a good balance of cycling and education."

The Mustangs begin their spring racing schedule in late February. In addition to racing in many of the large non-collegiate events in Texas, the team will work to win the collegiate conference cycling title for the ninth time. The team will travel to compete at the University of Texas, Texas A&M, Texas State University and Stephen F. Austin University. The Mustangs also will host a race weekend in late March in Wichita Falls.

The collegiate national championships will be conducted in mid-May at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kan. In 2006, MSU riders got on the podium in all three women's events and the team finished sixth out of 47 teams, for its best finish since 2003.