

Fall Kit Warm clothes for cool weather

Sleep Snooze your way to better cycling

CANADIAN Cycling

MAGAZINE

**MAGHALIE
ROCHETTE'S**

**CX
FEVER**

**WILL SHE
MEDAL
AT WORLDS?**

I Survived

MY FIRST 900 KM
MOUNTAIN BIKE
STAGE RACE

(YOU CAN, TOO)

**Defeat
THE
WINDIEST
ROADS
in the
Country**

PLUS

**Zoncolan
Faces of
Suffering**

**Kimberley, B.C.
A Growing
Singletrack
Network**

**Top Tires
for 'Cross**

Bikin' in 'Nam





by Tara Nolan

#cyclingstarontherise

With a national championship win and top international performances, **Maghalie Rochette** is on track to becoming a multi-discipline biking superstar





P.38

Rochette drops into the woods at the Mont-Sainte-Anne World Cup 2017

LEFT

Rochette rides to victory at the 2016 national cyclocross championships in Sherbrooke, Que.

in 2013, Maghalie Rochette was pre-riding the course for the mountain bike world championships in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, when she came upon one feature she describes as super scary and challenging. Relatively new to the sport, Rochette felt like she had a lot of catching up to do and had no choice but to push herself and try the feature. "At one point, I just sort of went for it and it wasn't pretty, but it worked," she recalls.

Catharine Pendrel happened to be riding with Rochette that day and remembers that Rochette was the first girl to do that new drop jump on the course. "I loved her courage and positive personality, so I introduced her to my team manager," Pendrel says.

That positivity, determination and winning personality (pardon the cliché), have propelled Rochette from a virtual unknown into the top levels of cross country mountain biking and cyclocross. Growing up in Saint-Jérôme, Que., Rochette played a lot of sports. She remembers her dad coming back, smiling and muddy, from mountain bike rides. She started riding as an eight year old and did some local races, but also raced triathlons. Eventually she made the move to do triathlons, solely because it was logistically easier to get to races as her older sister, Chloe, was doing them, too.

At 18, running-related foot injuries led her toward adventure races, some road races and an introduction to cyclocross. During this time, Rochette rediscovered mountain biking, which she hadn't done since she was 12. The winter before that 2013 season, Rochette started training hard. She asked her boyfriend David Gagnon, co-owner of PowerWatts Nord and owner of DG Endurance Coaching, to help her. "I didn't know much about it, so we grew together in that adventure," says Gagnon, who had never really been on a mountain bike ride. "We sat down, evaluated the exact needs of the discipline. We figured out where we needed to go, the skills we needed to work on and the people we needed to get in touch with to jump-start Magh's mountain bike career."

"Maghalie's belief in me made me believe more in myself. That's the sparkle a great teammate brings to a team."

RIGHT
Clif Pro Team
teammates
Maghalie Rochette,
Catharine Pendrel
and Haley Batten
on a ride in
Sedona, Ariz.

BOTTOM
Rochette rides on
to take the 2015
Manitoba Grand
Prix of Cyclocross
in Winnipeg



HOW TO ENJOY A CX RACE

TIP NO. 1: Root for someone

Stephen Bassett of Silber Pro Cycling got his start in racing with 'cross. He still rides a bit of CX in the fall. His advice for cyclocross spectators is to find someone to root for. "If you don't already know one of the riders, find a rider you have some connection with. Having someone to root for makes the race more interesting," he says.





ABOVE
Rochette
celebrates at the
2016 national
cyclocross
championships

OPPOSITE
Rochette in
Canmore, Alta.,
at the 2017
national XC
championships

HOW TO ENJOY A CX RACE

TIP NO. 2: Bring stuff for handups

If you want to help a rider who's suffering at the back of a 'cross course, give him or her a handup. A can of cheap beer can really lighten a rider's mood. A doughnut works well, too. Bacon is also good, but will require some prep on your part. Some Winnipeg 'crossers have experimented with pierogi handups. They discovered that those pierogi require a little too much chewing than most racers are prepared for or even able to do. So... beer it is!

6 SIGNS OF CYCLOCROSS FEVER

Rochette created the #CXFever hashtag to describe how she felt about cyclocross. "Basically, the CX Fever is a feeling of high excitement about cyclocross – kind of an uncontrollable giddiness and happiness about going out to ride your 'cross bike," she says. Here are a few symptoms:

1. As soon as you close your eyes, you imagine yourself ripping up a cyclocross course.
2. You have an uncontrollable, silly smile on your face when you think about the next race weekend.
3. Everywhere you go in your everyday life, you can't stop shredding corners and taking the best lines (for example, at the grocery store with your shopping cart). You might do a "jump over the barrier with your bike at your side" motion when you have to step over a curb while walking in the street.
4. You are secretly hoping it will rain so you can go slide around and shred in the mud.
5. When riding your road bike, you are always looking for a patch of dirt or short bit of trail.
6. You suffer from the Monday morning, post-'cross race weekend hangover.



Photos: Jeremy Allen, Matt Stetson



FUN, OFF-THE-BIKE FACTS ABOUT MAGHALIE ROCHETTE

- 1.** In her downtime, Rochette enjoys woodworking. These days, she says she's turning a lot of pens. "Somehow I realized that I'm so much happier when I get to create some stuff – even if it's not very useful."
- 2.** Rochette enjoys cooking – and eating. She recently spent \$150 on cheese.
- 3.** While Rochette says she's not very good with a camera at the moment, she has been reading a lot about photography and is trying to improve her skills.
- 4.** She believes it's important to never stop learning and is always reading random books on everything from Phil Jackson, one of the NBA's top coaches of all time, to weather to honey bees.
- 5.** If you, too, have cyclocross fever, Rochette sells T-shirts and socks on her website that celebrate her hashtag alongside a dancing pepper.

Photos: Matt Stetson, Uncredited

HOW TO ENJOY A CX RACE

TIP NO. 4: Heckle

Sometimes, a CX race can feel a bit like a comedy club with all the heckling. Remember to keep your heckles short and witty. Temper the nastiness of each heckle accordingly: if you're heckling a friend, you can get a bit meaner – usually.



the team. "It's kind of a cool structure and environment to be in." She explains that she is one of four development riders on the Clif Pro Team and the goal is to get them all ready to perform when the others retire or go on to other types of racing.

Rochette's first years on the team didn't go as smoothly as she had hoped. She describes her races as a slap in the face after slap in the face. Gagnon remembers the time. "Learning to deal with the schedules, travel and high level of racing was very challenging. The results suffered because she was fairly new to mountain biking, but had signed to the best team in the world," Gagnon says. "She felt like she needed to improve quickly and took a lot of risks in training and races. The first year, I think there was not a day where we didn't put a bandage, peroxide or Neosporin on her."

Despite Rochette's setbacks, she has not lost any of her determination. Her innate self-motivation only seems to make her better. Gagnon says he never hears excuses from her, only solutions.

In 2016, a bad mountain bike season – one example: Rochette's bike stopped working one minute into the World Cup race at Mont-Sainte-Anne – propelled her to focus on 'cross. That September, she suffered heat stroke and was carried away in an ambulance after the second day of the Rochester Cyclocross event. It took

about a month to recover. Rochette decided to focus on nationals in Sherbrooke, Que., in early November, which she won. After, Stepniowski gave her his blessing to go to Europe, so she prepared for the cyclocross world championships in Bieles, Luxembourg. She placed fifth, the best-ever finish by a Canadian at 'cross worlds.

For her mountain bike season this past year, Rochette focused mostly on races in North America and feels she's been more consistent with both her performances and results. Stepniowski, Gagnon, Pendrel and Nash all agree that the future looks very promising for Rochette. "It's not an easy thing to combine both disciplines, but Maghalie is going about it the right way and successfully getting better at both at the same time," says Nash.

When asked about one day competing in the Olympics, Rochette says it's a dream and a goal. "One of the cool things about being on that team is – because they're such rock stars – it's allowed me to dream bigger," she says. Rochette is on contract with the Clif Pro Team until the end of 2018, but hopes to stay on for as long as possible.

"Maghalie showed us at cyclocross worlds that she has a world-class engine and the ability to put it together on the big day," Pendrel says. "She has a really smart approach to progressing in the sport, so I think we will see her take steps closer to the podium every year as all the pieces of training and racing fall into place."

OPPOSITE TOP
**Rochette at
Hardwood Ski and
Bike during the
2016 Canada Cup**

ABOVE
**The rider from
Saint-Jérôme,
Que., sports
her national
cyclocross
champion's kit**