

Optimist Club's Bike Roadeo teaches kids cycling safety

By Brian Lockhart

The Orangeville Optimist Club will be hosting the finals of its annual Bike Roadeo at the Alder Street arena on Saturday, May 27.

The competition kicked off on May 5, with participating elementary schools in the area. Students ride their bicycles through a fun and challenging course for the contest.

Riding through an obstacle course, the Roadeo allows students to demonstrate their riding ability, improve their cycling skills, and have some fun.

"The Roadeo has been going for over 30 years," explained Optimist Club vice president Tina Clare. "We've been to nine schools since the beginning of May. We set up the obstacle course and set up a traffic light. We draw on the pavement and set up cones. This year we had a new one ? a ramp crossing. All the kids are scored. For example, at the traffic signal, you have to approach, pay attention to the light, look both ways and use your hand signals.

Clare added, "All the finalists, the top 18 kids over three grade groups, will come to Alder arena on Saturday morning and go through [the] course again. There will be trophies, T-shirts and snacks."

The Optimist Club has a mandate to enrich youth, and the Bike Roadeo is one of its programs to engage youth in the community.

The course included a working traffic light. A bike inspection and safety check were performed by local participating police representatives.

During the competition, the students were scored based on their skills for each challenge in the course. The top scorers qualify for the finale on May 27.

This is the first Roadeo in four years after the pandemic caused a delay in public gatherings.

The finals will begin at 8:30 a.m. at the arena on May 27.

The Optimist Club expects around 160 finalists and their families to attend, along with Optimist Club members and Police representatives.

The Grade 2 and 3 finalists will ride at 8:30 a.m., Grade 4 and 5 finalists at 9:15 a.m., Grade 6 and 8 finalists at 10:00 a.m., and the awards ceremony is at 10:30 a.m.

The Optimist Club also said the times are approximate as working with children means they must be flexible when running the event.