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IMAGE ABBIE MELLE

To Meaghan Stanton, champion mountain biker and maths teacher, her exacting disciplines have much in common. ‘Completing a maths exam and a mountain bike race are actually not so different. Although some natural talent is helpful, it’s more important to practise to develop technical skills, to be optimistic about tackling obstacles and to have the determination to keep going.’ Meaghan teaches at Oxley College, Burradoo and is Australian Masters Cross Country and Marathon Nationals Champion. She also coaches Oxley’s burgeoning MTB program with Peter Dowse, her partner and mechanic for MTB team Australia and Bowral bike shop, The Fixed Wheel. Peter is also owner of Trek Shimano Australia, the elite team Meaghan rides with. ‘I’m happy to be working at a school progressive enough to allow me to set up a mountain bike program. We’ve had several big wins this year and the kids we coach are a fantastic group of very keen riders.’ Daughter of nutritionist Rosemary Stanton and a bike rider since a kid, Meaghan started mountain biking 12 years ago.

‘Racing began as a family thing with my three daughters and I all riding competitively. Zoe was Under 15 National Champion in 2017 and I borrowed her bike for the Australian Nationals, which I won. Over time the girls gave up but I kept going, stepping up my training about three years ago.’

In 2017 Meaghan placed fifth in the Masters World MTB Championships in Andorra, and has won the Australian Masters XCO and Marathon Nationals for the past three years. ‘It’s a logical step to race the Masters World Championships again but I couldn’t go in 2018 or this year because I had a senior advanced maths class and I wouldn’t want to leave my students right before their HSC.’ When she’s not explaining calculus or at home in Bowral, Meaghan can be found out shredding it up. ‘I love racing for the excitement of whizzing through the forest as fast as I can, for the fitness it brings and the satisfaction of giving it everything. Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing sports in Australia, and we are lucky to have good trails at Welby and Wingello. There is so much potential to develop more trails in the Highlands.’ ■