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Teoh Sue Ling, who finished fourth in the Women Sport category, said she had almost ended (fly unexpectedly over the handlebars) at the end of The Office (where it curves to the right). As she descended the most difficult part of the trail, aptly named the Triple Terrace, she had noticed a loose log and tried not to skid on it. Luckily, Teoh held her nerves, focussed on the trail and tried to lighten her grip on the brakes to roll through smoothly. Teoh, who has been riding mountain bikes for almost two years, trained for over two months for this race. She loves mountain biking for the excitement and the challenge of getting through rough terrain. Plus, it brings her closer to nature as she rides through the jungles.

Kusmawati Yazid from

Indonesia's Polygon Factory Team has been the Women's Elite winner for three years running, and she ripped the field apart, holding a strong lead to the finish three minutes ahead of the second rider.

For a day's work at The Office, Kusmawati won the top prize of RM3,000 with a fast time of 41 minutes and 29 seconds for 4 laps around the 2km course in the Women's Elite category. To keep ahead of the field, she said that her team coach keeps innovating their training program to improve on skills and endurance each year.

Even though she's aced this route three times over, there's no room for complacency. Kusmawati shall look forward to participating in the SEA Games this coming December, and will find out soon if she will participate in Langkawi's International Mountain Bike



And they're off! Women riders of the KL Mountain Bike Carnival start their race.

Challenge at the end of September too. She has been mountain biking for 15 years and trains daily in the hills of Bandung, Indonesia.

The Women's Elite category was clearly dominated by Indonesian riders, thanks to their diligent preparations and structured training in technical skills.

■ For more info, check: www.klmtbcarnival.com.my



Nur Assyira Zainal Abidin tackling a tough section of the race track.

More clinics to bring in more 'patients'!

IT'S inspiring to see the increasing number of women participating in mountain biking in general. You can choose to go mountain biking at any time – morning, afternoon, or even at night! (For the last option, just make sure you get really bright lights.) In the KL Mountain Bike Carnival's Women Sport category, Teoh Sue Ling (who's also an ambassador for the Zero2Hero mountain biking group) said there were a few new faces this time round, two of which came from her group's coaching clinics which have been held around KL for over a year.

The clinics are meant to encourage more people to pick up mountain biking or improve their skills and it helped her learn essential skills and techniques when she first ventured into mountain biking.

To further improve, she mentioned that she would need to improve on her technical skills like handling tricky switchbacks, cornering faster and balancing on the bike.

It would be good for the Mountain Biking scene in Malaysia to have more teams or clubs with structured training programs (which also include women) to encourage them to take up mountain biking and improve their skills/confidence levels which would lead to an increased participation in races.

Bicycle shops selling mountain bikes too could play a part by organising weekly rides, just like they do for road biking which has increased in popularity. In the Klang Valley, places like the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) in Kepong and the Kota Damansara

Community Forest (KDCF) are friendly places for beginners to start.

Perhaps, in the run up to mountain bike races and events like these, more coaching clinics could be held weekly or monthly to build up the skills required for the events. One would then be able to ride confidently to prevent nasty falls and "close encounters" with trees.

Mountain biking also brings us closer to nature as we ride through the forest, inhaling fresh air, while enjoying an exhilarating workout to improve our well-being. What's not to like about it? – **Yeow Mei Jyn**



Teoh Sue Ling tackling the slopes at Bukit Kiara. – ROHAIZAT/ The Star.