



**Cameron Bourgue, left,** edges out Maverick White, both 7 years old and from Biddeford, on Sunday during a bike race on ice at the Biddeford Ice Arena to benefit the Community Bicycle Center.

Derek Davis/Staff Photographer

# BREAKNECK SPEED

Riding bikes on ice to benefit a bicycle center is more about community fun than fundraising.

By **BETH QUIMBY**  
Staff Writer

**BIDDEFORD** — You'd think an ice rink would have lost some of its appeal after a long, unusually cold winter.

But add some bicycles to the mix and people will come.

That was apparent at the fifth annual Community Bicycle Center's Bike on Ice fundraiser Sunday, where dozens of contestants lined up to race bikes on ice while dozens more watched at the Biddeford Ice Arena's last public

skate of the year. The event shows off the bicycle-building skills of the more than 340 youths who take part in the center's programs and allows the daring to race around the rink on modified skate bikes.

"It is more about community fun than fundraising," said Bronwyn Potthoff, a staff member, as she signed up race contestants.

The bike center opened 13 years ago and operates out of the former Biddeford Recreation Department office. The program was designed to introduce youths in northern York County to the world of bicycling through bike repair, bike building and biking safety.

The center offers programming year-

round six days a week. Offerings include a drop-in bike-building shop, bike part art classes, bike repair sessions and cycling adventures.

The center operates on a \$187,000 annual budget, raised through events such as Bike on Ice, grants and donations. The average age of the program participants is 12 and about 160 volunteers help out.

Racing a bike on ice takes a certain skill, said Tyler Dauteuil, 17, a senior at Thornton Academy in Saco, who decided to sit out the races this year and just watch. "It's really hard," Dauteuil said.

Racers ride on modified bikes.

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# ICE

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The front tire is replaced by a skate and the back tires are equipped with studs. All riders wear helmets.

The prizes, crafted from bike parts, were made by the youths.

After taking a test whirl on the ice, Brianna Gagne, 8, of Biddeford also gave the race a pass. She said riding an ice bike is difficult.

"The bike always tricks you and you fall really hard," Brianna said.

Cian Barratt, 6, of Shapleigh emerged breathless after pedaling several times around the

rink on a modified tricycle.

"I was spinning doughnuts," Cian said.

But other participants said they were up for the challenge, including several adults.

"It's fun. It's different. You have to get the balance," said Ray Martel of Biddeford, who planned to race.

Martel said his son, Michael, 13, has been an eager participant in the program, which teaches youths skills they can't get elsewhere.

"If you are learning tools when you are 11, 12 or 13, it gives you a head start," Martel said.

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**Mark Prescott of Hollis** laughs as he takes a spill Sunday while warming up for bike races at Biddeford Ice Arena to benefit the Community Bicycle Center.