

# 'La Contienda' Bicycles Race 'Round the Mall *Bicycles*

**F**OR the 10th year, the three-stage "La Contienda de las Colinas" (the contest of the hills) bike race incorporates the tricky sixth-tenths of a mile loop around the Pacific Garden Mall as its final leg Sunday.

At least 230 contestants kick into gear for this race, vying for prizes in the form of cash, bicycles, bike parts and dinners for two at various restaurants.

Robert Leibold, founder of the race, says that although the name of the race implies it is hilly, this year the course is actually quite flat.

"It changes each year," Leibold said. "It's been a whole bunch of different races. At one point it was the longest race in the U.S. In 1979, there were 10 stages, in four or five different counties."

In 1980, with less money than usual to fund it, the race was reduced to three stages, where it has remained.

This year, the first two stages took place in San Ardo. Riders took off in a mass start for the 70-mile first stage, then competed in a 10-mile time trial, with one rider leaving every minute.

"The second part demands less tactics, but more strength and endurance," Leibold said.



After taking on the hills, bicyclists negotiate downtown loop Sunday.

Tactics and a good sense of balance and speed come most into play on the narrow, potentially dangerous loop which is the last leg

of the race.

The course runs south on the mall, up Locust Street, back on Cedar Street, and across Cath-

cart Street back to the mall. The race finishes on Cedar Street.

Six to 10 heats take place; the longest is a 26.5-mile race consisting of 40 laps. Although sharp turns will keep riders on the edge of their seats, Leibold said that in past years there were "surprisingly few wipeouts."

Leibold expects to see last year's winner in the men's division, local Hall Worthington, back to defend his title. Women's winner Elizabeth Johnson, of Nevada City, may also return, as well as Debbie Newell of Aptos, who took second place last year. As with many summer races of any kind, entrants often register at the last minute, making it difficult to know who is competing.

The Pacific Garden Mall race, though short, promises to be impressive nonetheless. "Normally the mall is fairly sedate," Leibold said. "You get huge packs of racers going full speed, and it's pretty exciting. We'll get a couple thousand people watching it."

The heat begins at 7:30 a.m. this Sunday and finishes before noon. The four streets involved in the race will be closed to through traffic during these hours. •

—Pat Gallagher