

Pedal-powered Pirate Gears up for Bike Month!

Farah Nazarali

The roads and highways of the Lower Mainland would seem an unlikely place for a pirate—but not the Purple Pirate! BC's one and only pedal-powered children's entertainer, Dustin the Purple Pirate, sails the asphalt ocean in his custom designed bicycle.

"I love the fun and freedom of cycling," says this brazen buccaneer who cycles to his performances from Langley to West Vancouver. "Parents are amazed when they see me arrive by bicycle, and kids think it's cool!"

But there's no mistaking the Purple Pirate's unique, futuristic machine, which looks more like a vehicle than a bicycle. Fitted with front lights, steering that includes a cell phone holder and a tail section styled like the stern of a ship, Dustin and his ship look like characters from a futuristic cartoon, such as the Jet-sons.

Dressed in a pirate costume to match, Dustin the Purple Pirate is gearing up for Bike Month; a month of activities designed to encourage and promote cycling for children and adults of all ages.

"Bike Month is my favourite month of the year because it celebrates one of the greatest activities that families can do together," Dustin says. "Personally, I cycle for adventure, transportation, health and most of all FUN!"

Born and raised on the West Coast, the Purple Pirate has been involved in action and exploration for over a decade. After cruising around the world and entertaining audiences in Australia, the Caribbean, Europe and China, he returned to Vancouver in

1999 where he began navigating on two wheels.

He has since combined his passion for pedaling and his love for making children smile by emphasizing fun and fitness and becoming the only entertainer to exclusively use pedal-powered transportation.

And Dustin takes his message seriously. "If I'm going to talk about fitness, then I've got to be an example," he says while tuning his ship.

In fact, the Purple Pirate will easily ride from Surrey to North Vancouver for three or more birthday parties in one day. Last year, he cycled from Vancouver to Banff in six days for the Banff International Television Festival. This year, he will cycle from Vancouver to Prince George to perform at the Canadian Northern Children's Festival.

Riding 85 km in one day doesn't sound like fun but somehow the Purple Pirate manages to make cycling seem like play. Though he assures it took time to become strong enough to cycle to his performances, he also makes a point of downplaying his athletic prowess. "If I can do it, anybody can. It just takes time," he says encouragingly.

Indeed, it took this playful Pirate four years to make the transition to relying solely on his bicycle for transportation. In fact, the Purple Pirate is a good example of the discipline and technique required of any sport. Diet, training, and rest is a huge part of his success as an athlete. And, his image as a fun and adventurous Pirate is a huge part of his success as an entertainer.



"Kids need to experience fitness as fun because kids love to have fun and play," says Dustin who recalls the first day he rode his pirate ship. "I felt like I was six years old... and to be able to travel by your own power is totally exhilarating."

With the energy and enthusiasm of an excited child with a new toy, it's no wonder kids can relate to the Purple Pirate. And, with the latest news of the growing trend of obesity in children, one can only hope that his message of fun and fitness inspires the next generation. ☐

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CELEBRATE BIKE MONTH!

Cycle your way through obstacle courses, skill rodeos, safety challenges & festivals this June.

Stanley Park
Brockton
June 12,
Registrat
booths op
stanleypa

Kids on B
North Su
June 19,
Lots of pr
Ages 3-8
604.502.

Sapperton
Cap's—N
June 19,
Everyone
604.524.

The FUNDamentals of Fitness

Strap on your bike helmet and get ready for fun and learning with the Purple Pirate's new interactive show, *Prepare for Adventure and FUNDamentals of Fitness*.

Prepare for Adventure is a 40-minute show that introduces children to various aspects of bicycle safety including route planning, helmet safety and the rules of the road.

Safe pedaling is a priority for this pirate who cycles an average of

300km a week. Riding with a flag for visibility, reflective gear and plenty of lights, Dustin's pirate ship is ready to navigate the roads and highways of Vancouver day or night.

Prepare for Adventure will premiere at this year's Stanley Park Bike Festival on Saturday June 12th. In addition to the Purple Pirate's performance, the Festival will include a kid's bike race, skill rodeos, a treasure hunt and lots of fun and games!