

## no brakes

## Try out cool bikes – for free!

By LISA TRANSISKUS  
ltransiskus@ajc.com

**D**o you know what a velodrome is? It's a big track where you ride around in circles on a bicycle.

We're lucky to have one in metro Atlanta. The Dick Lane Velodrome in East Point is one of only about 20 velodromes in the United States. There are races, classes and programs for kids and adults.

You must pay for some things, but there's a free program for kids going on there now. It ends Sept. 21, so hurry if you want to try whooshing around like a big-time racer!

Here's the deal: If you're age 8 to 16, you can ride around the track on Mondays and Thursdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Or just come and watch to see if it's something you'd like to try.

Peter Antonvich and other volunteers will help you get started. All you need is your parents' written permission.

Don't bring your own bicycle. There are dozens of special bikes and helmets to use, for free! Here's a big warning: The bikes don't have brakes. Yikes! Without brakes, riders have to slow down gradually, which actually prevents accidents.

"How am I going to slow down?" asked Shayne Clinkscals, 11, of East Point when she found out there were no brakes. You just have to try. After being brave enough to hop on and spin around the track, Shayne told us, "I fell off a couple of times. But learning is the fun part!"

Not everyone agreed. Kiana "Kia" Clay, 8, of East Point didn't think it was fun at first. She told us, "Learning was the fearful part!"

Blake Ramsey, 10, of East

Point found out about the velodrome when he and a friend were riding their bikes and saw grown-ups racing on the track. Hey, not fair, they thought; they wanted to try it, too. Luckily, when Blake and his friend stopped in, they were told they could ride, with their parents' permission.

This is Blake's second year of being part of the program. Has he figured out how to slow down yet? You bet. "You just let out on the pedaling," he explained.

This is the third year at the velodrome for Cabral Clements, 12, of East Point. He started going there by accident. He and his mother planned to play tennis one day, but the tennis courts were full. They discovered the velodrome, which has given Cabral lots of exercise – and you don't have to chase any balls around.

Zachary C. Stanley, 14, of Hapeville jumped on a bike at the velodrome for the first time last year. He was a "natural," and he's now so good



Photos by JOEY IVANSCO / Staff

**Cabral Clements, 12,** started riding at the Dick Lane Velodrome three years ago. A velodrome is a bicycle track with sloped sides.

that he rides for a team and was at a competition near Philadelphia last weekend. If you enjoy riding and you get good enough, you could join a team one day.

It wasn't easy, though, for

Zachary to learn to ride without brakes. "I was scared at first, but it was fun when I got used to it," he said.

His mother, Marty Wenger, is impressed — and not just by her son's pedaling. "He's learning a lot of listening skills," she said. "He's learned about nutrition. He's learned it's not the bike, it's the engine."

Jalen Price, 12, of East Point tried pedaling backward to stop. It didn't work, and he fell down. Oops! But he got back on the bike. You can see Jalen at the velodrome a lot, on Mondays and Thursdays.

To learn more, go to [www.dicklanevelodrome.com](http://www.dicklanevelodrome.com) or visit it, at 1889 Lexington Ave. in East Point. There's no riding when it's raining.

Do you like parties? The velodrome will hold a "Festival of Speed" from 5 to 9 p.m. Sept. 23. Kids in racing classes will get to show off, and you'll also see pro racers. Admission is \$5 for all ages, or \$10 for a family of any size.



**Jalen Price, 12,** found out that pedaling backward won't slow down the bikes at the Dick Lane Velodrome in East Point. It takes practice – and probably a few falls – to get it right.