

Tour de Nez winner looking to repeat

By Maggie Thach, Reno Gazette-Journal

There was no one around him. It was just Brett Melcher and the finish line. The wind was strong, but he could hear the spectators calling his name. All his focus pointed to crossing that line.

Tim Healion was leaning over the rail at the finish line, arm outstretched and waiting for a high five. Melcher, widely and affectionately known as “Bubba,” lifted his left arm. With that exchange, he had won a Tour De Nez for the first time in 13 tries.

“He’s a local guy and people have gone out there and seen him come in second or third or fourth,” said Healion, the Tour de Nez’s race director. “The crowd went crazy. It was extreme excitement.”

He has won other races – Melcher, 50, was a U.S. cycling national criterium champion in 2001 and 2004 and was ranked third in the country in the 45-49 Masters classification last year – but there was something special about the hometown guy winning the local race.

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