



## the SCENE

### Going past the point of no return

AT TREK'S DIRT SERIES skills camp, more than 60 women gather to spend a weekend becoming better riders. Contrary to the letters section of *Penthouse*, there are no tickle fights or heated debates about which flower pattern looks best on a skirt. Instead, the weekend is filled with lines in the sand, some residing inches from a small log-over, while others are tucked between wood slats looming several feet overhead.

"First, figure out where the line of commitment is,"

professional downhiller Tracy Moseley advises as she stands atop a drop that looks so impossible it might as well be gracing the roof of the Sears Tower. "You can stop before that line, but once you pass it, you've reached the point of no return."

With the invisible boundary comes an understanding that from this point on, there is no changing your mind. No take-backs. Nothing to do but hold on and wait to see how the story unfolds.

Riders watch the scene

unfold, hoping you'll nail it, but not completely opposed to a NASCAR-esque crash, either.

With a deep breath, the brakes are released. Twenty feet and counting to the point of no return. Your blood tingles with adrenaline. Friends yell, "You've got this!" or, "Can I have your bikes if you die?" Fifteen feet. You visualize success, as if cheesy self-help books were really designed for people looking to launch their bikes through the air for no particular reason. Ten

feet. An unseen force tries to curl your fingers around the brake levers—and you barely succeed in fighting it off. At five feet, the world goes silent as the moment drowns out your heart's rhythmic bass and obscures all but the line in front of you. Three. Two. One.

No going back now. In seconds, this will all be over and the story will end with a smoothly placed landing or the cracking thud of defeat. But for now, you just wait. And try not to blow it.

—KRISTIN BUTCHER