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feature story

Comp Season:

Front Range Style

by: Mike Banuelos



The air is thick with excitement. The masses of people ebb and flow as cheers erupt from every corner. An intoxicating beat resonates throughout the room as the MC takes the mic. The stars take the stage. Girls scream their names, friends cheer, and the spotlight fixates on their every move. Oh, To be a Rock star-yet not your common conception: the stage is a climbing gym, their art is the fluid movement that carries them up the wall, and the groupies, well, still groupies, but just might have a callus or two. This breed of Rock star rules with an iron grip and precise technique: Do you have a little Rock star in you?

As the long hot summer days wind down and fall lingers just around the corner, thus begins comp season here in the Front Range. Colorado, being a premier state for climbing, also features a host of competitions where you can test your strength against various styles, pro-setting and other climbers. This article will take a comprehensive look at the comps that are making their way through the Front Range, what The American Bouldering Series has in store, and what you can expect from the local hosting gyms.

In 2004, USA Climbing and the American Bouldering Series merged to form one entity that serves as the National Governing Body for Competition Climbing in the U.S. The ABS provides 6 years' experience of organizing and running bouldering competitions across the country and will now serve as the bouldering arm of USA Climbing. USA Climbing and the ABS are for all ages and abilities, though Youth and Adult competitors are categorized differently. (Excerpt from Season 7 Rulebook)

The American Bouldering Series, no doubt still flying high from the explosive finale last year as the Spot, prepares its seventh straight season. Season 7 will include 133 local events, 10 regional events, and 1 national at the Spot in February. The regional and national events will have a youth comp in the morning and a regular ABS event in the afternoon. As always the top three competitors at nationals will secure a place on the 2006 National Bouldering Team later to compete in the World Cup. An ABS membership for Season 7 only costs, \$20 (a steal) and the membership includes: ABS Competitor Handbook, ABS membership card, ABS sticker, inclusion in nation-wide ABS ranking, and special offers from ABS Sponsors. Do you like Climbing Magazine? ABS also offers a membership with all the above-mentioned perks plus a year subscription of Climbing for only \$30.

For more details and to buy your Season 7 membership visit- www.rockcomps.com

ABS Season 7 Colorado Schedule*(Starts at bottom ends at top)*

03/11/2006 ABS7 Comp Aspen Rec Dept **Aspen**
03/04/2006 ABS7 Comp Breckenridge Rec. Ctr. **Breckenridge**
02/25/2006 ABS7 Comp Thrillseekers **Denver**
02/17/2006-
02/18/2006 ****ABS7 NATIONAL****
(ABS7 Comp) The Spot **Boulder**
02/11/2006 ABS7 Comp Vail Athletic Club **Vail**
02/03/2006 ABS7 Comp Gym of the Rockies **Ft. Collins**
01/21/2006 ABS7 Comp Colorado Mountain College **Glenwood Springs**
01/20/2006 Spot Series #4

(ABS7 Comp) The Spot **Boulder**
 01/14/2006 ABS7 Comp Core Elements **Grand Junction**
 01/07/2006 ABS7 Comp Breckenridge Rec. Ctr. **Breckenridge**
 01/06/2006 ABS7 Comp Glenwood Springs C. Center **Glenwood Springs**
 12/10/2005 ABS7 Comp Colorado Rocky Mountain School **Carbondale**
 12/09/2005 Spot Series #3
 (ABS7 Comp) The Spot **Boulder**
 12/02/2005 ABS7 Comp Paradise Rock Gym **Denver**
 11/19/2005 ABS7 Comp Breckenridge Rec. Ctr. **Breckenridge**
 11/18/2005 Spot Series #2
 (ABS7 Comp) The Spot **Boulder**
 11/12/2005 ABS7 Comp Core Elements **Grand Junction**
 11/05/2005 ABS7 Comp Estes Park Mountain Shop **Estes Park**
 10/29/2005 Spot Series #1 - **Psychedelia!**
 (ABS7 Comp) The Spot **Boulder**
 10/28/2005 ABS7 Comp Gym of the Rockies **Ft. Collins**
 10/22/2005 ABS7 Comp Sport Climbing Center **Colorado Springs**
 10/15/2005 ABS7 Comp The Rock at Soc n' Roll **Colorado Springs**
 10/01/2005 ABS7 Comp Rock'n & Jam'n 2 **Centennial**



The Spot, coupled with its world-renowned facility and innovative natural-like structures continues to dominate the bouldering scene. This year Dan Howley and team have concocted The Spot Bouldering Series to test your tips and will for the third consecutive year in a row host ABS Nationals. The Spot Bouldering Series, in accordance with ABS, will crank out four premier comps in four months. There is a four-comp package available for \$60 (Buy three get the final

free!) and all four are ABS sanctioned events, so get those ABS memberships ASAP! (All comps are otherwise \$20 per event and non-ABS members will pay a \$5 day pass fee)

The first competition on October 29, 2005 is The Spot Psychedelia. For those who haven't experienced this ghoulish climbing extravaganza, it's a must attend pre-Halloween celebration. Psychedelia is a costume-clad phosphorescent Halloween party. Regular lights are replaced with black counterparts as holds are painted with bright neon paint-creating an eerie glow. All competitors are encouraged to dress up as they enter a creepy, neon, and psychedelic realm. Climbers of all abilities and ages are welcome. Compete as a team and or individually! As always tons of prizes will be handed out followed by a truly devilish after party (*Adults Only*).



Angie Payne, PSYCHEDELIA - 2004

Although the three remaining comps will have a more standard format, inside sources tell me to expect surprises and of course more rockin after parties. The dates are as follows 11/18/05, 12/09/05, 01/20/06.

Nationals will be held February 18, 2006.



Paradise Rock Gym, one of the premier gyms in the Denver-Metro area, is coming back with its 12th straight Denver Climbing League series. The Denver Climbing League, as a grassroots youth climbing series, was initiated by Paradise Rock Gym eleven years ago. DCL is the first and only school-age climbing competition series of its kind in the country. The field of competition and players that have been involved in years past speaks to the quality of the program, which has seen the likes of Tommy Caldwell, Kevin Branford, Emily Harrington, John and Adam Stack, Adrienne and

Sean Drolet, and Daniel Woods.

The first six events are structured in an informal-relaxed fashion. These will be Saturday evenings, which on average usually draw a crowd of 150 climbers. Competitors are divided into four categories based on ability level and have four hours to complete a set number of boulder problems and routes. The night ends with awards and sponsor raffles. Each event builds upon the next culminating to a full-day, all out final competition. In accordance with USA Climbing the DCL hosts 165 climbers from around the country who are pre-scheduled a climbing time and isolated to compete "on-sight" in "wave" format for both DCL points and USA Climbing points. The structured aspect of the "on-sight" format is not only an exciting way to end the DCL series, but a fantastic chance to introduce kids and parents to USA Climbing. The schedule is as follows:

- October 15, 2005 - DCL 1
- November 11, 2005 - User Friendly - Member/Citizen Comp
- November 12, 2005 - DCL 2
- December 2, 2005 - ABS Bouldering Party
- December 10, 2005 - DCL 3
- January 14, 2006 - DCL 4
- February 10, 2006 - User Friendly - Member/Citizen Comp
- February 11, 2006 - DCL 5
- March 11, 2006 - DCL 6
- April 8, 2006 - DCL/USA Climbing FINALE`

Paradise Rock Gym

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Questions:? Contact Bryan Mallin

Check out the following sites for more Front Range Competitions:

www.thrillseekers.cc

www.rocknandjamn.com

Mike Banuelos October, 2005

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