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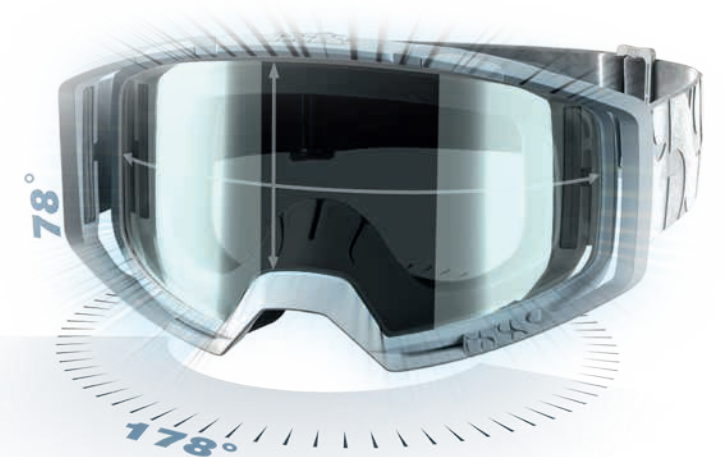


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Mesum Verma, Reza Akhmad, Direwolf Images, Yanuar Surya

Aurelius Satlow

**Having a cup of coffee with Bima and Ditra
The Polygon - Spartan Racing Team /
Indonesia**



It was October 2019 in Yunnan, China, at the Songshan International Downhill Race, when Mesum, Chief Editor of mtbmagasia, taking part in the race, met the Polygon Team Indonesia there. Mesum told me the two riders of that team were super friendly and they had a nice time riding together.

I couldn't meet the two guys personally, but Mesum introduced them to me via Skype, where we had a longer talk and the pair explained with their interesting story. Ditra Pranata



started riding MTB when he was 10; now he is 30 years old, boss of a bicycle repair shop, and still racing. He rode BMX Supercross for a while before he got into Downhill and Enduro, and from 2008 on only rode Polygon bikes. Bima Fikri Aldira, who is 19 years old, got into riding Downhill and Enduro around 2014, at first on KHS DH bikes, later on Polygon.

When it comes to his favourite things about riding MTB, Ditra told me, he just loves the adrenaline kick, the high speed and especially rock gardens. Bima is more into



hitting big jumps and berms as well as aggressive cornering, as one can affirm when watching his exciting insta account.

And there are actually good conditions to do that in Indonesia, especially around Yogyakarta, a city of half a million on Java. There are 3 small to medium size bike parks and not just a few trails around the city. Bima and Ditra can reach the next bike park with a 20 minute car drive; the entrance fee is only about Indonesian 20 Rupiah per day, there are lots



of
berm and jumps in the bike
park, and they can meet many riders. Despite the rainy season
in January and October, one can always ride and it's pretty easy to build and dig your
own trails.

In 2017 they got to know each other at a race. Both of them like the pressure and atmosphere
of racing, so it's no wonder they found each other. Ditra tells me that "Bima is very fast, a
really nice person and good for a practice partner." Bima didn't know Ditra before, he just



knew he's a pro athlete. And when he watched him racing, Bima thought, "I want to race as Ditra can do!" So, now Ditra is Bima's coach, and the younger man comments with a laugh: "Ditra is the killer coach!" and goes on to explain that the training is really hard.

Ditra started racing about 10 years ago and got lots of experience in that. He won the 2018 Enduro Race in Indonesia with a 1st place and ranked 1st in the 2019 Malaysian Downhill Cup. So, Ditra prepares the training schedule for Bima, which contains a different plan for



each day of the week. It alternates between 30 to 60 km road biking or XCO in the morning, short and longer gym trainings in the eve, rest days and riding MTB every full weekend. Beside riding MTB, Bima also plays badminton and futsal from time to time, more as a sort of “hobby” he explained.

Ditra is not only Bima’s coach, they also train together. In the past, Ditra trained alone, but now he finds: “together is better!”. The learning process is not one-directional, for



example
Ditra also learned from Bima how to ride berms better. The two team riders often do follow runs where they check the others riding. “We don’t need a camera, we can just ask each other and mutually give advice.”

Now Bima even lives at Ditra’s house, and when I did the Skype video chat I saw more than 30 trophies in the shelves in the background of their room, and they told me that it wasn’t the only one room with trophies. So, the team already took part in a lot of local and



international
races, as for example the ICE in
Thailand, Downhill and Enduro races in Malaysia, and even Yunnan/ China.
Bima's greatest success was in 2017 at the Indonesian Downhill Race Series 3 in Ternadi
Dawe, Kudus, where he ranked 2nd in the Junior Class. Unfortunately, he also had a
big crash there and had to undergo complicated surgeries on his facial area.

In 2019, Bima went to 2 to 3 races every month, local races in Indonesia as well as abroad.
In 2020, because of the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all the races were



cancelled, but nonetheless he also started his university studies, which means a balancing act between riding MTB and learning.

Bima and Ditra now have a bunch of sponsors, but the pressure and expectation they feel as professional racers is no problem, it's just that it is not easy to win on the Indonesian UCI certified race tracks since there are "too many good racers," as Bima explains. They have to compete with lots of equal opponents, but nevertheless Bima mostly succeeds in



the
TOP 10 and often ranks 4th
or 5th and was able to collect UCI points.

For the future, both are sure to be able to win more races. For Bima, who recently switched from Junior Class in the Elite class, it will be not be easy to win. Bima's biggest dream would be to win in a DH world cup. For now, his and also Ditra's goal is to win the 1st place in the National Championship Indonesia.



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GLOVES RAD RED

Mesum Verma, Aurelius Satlow

Aurelius Satlow, Mesum Verma



“Ride Your Bike!”

**The Mini Bike Festival
in the Dirtpark Ningbo**

宁波山地车公园
Ningbo Dirtpark

Mesum:

Back in 2018, a German guy got in contact with me wanting to know about biking in China, specifically what was happening on the biking scene in China.

In the summer of 2019, Aurelius and I went together to Guide (a place also known as little Utah) for racing. Aurelius, a very passionate rider, started building his own bike park at the end of last year. You can check out the full story below to see how it all began.

We sometimes ride together at the Brave Peak Bike Park; we have done some racing together and of course had some discussions during that time. The idea to organize a Bike Festival had been an idea that was up in the air for quite some time, but we finally decided to bring this idea to life during the National Holidays.

Aurelius – who dug and built the bike park almost all by himself, and



Mesum near the Ningbo seaside



Aurelius riding Dapengshan

completed two lines - found a perfect spot in a rural area in Ningbo to hold the festival. At the time, he was afraid that the dirt park would be too small, and the expert line would scare riders away. Regardless, during his free days he used his time to build the park and, in the end, he had finished a short beginner line, which offers riders with almost no experience the chance to have some fun.

The main idea was to build a place just to hang out with friends, chat, ride our bikes, and have BBQs. We wanted something a bit different to competitive racing; a chilled atmosphere. We wanted to have a place where we could showcase a bit of the biking lifestyle rather than just having a place where riders compete against each other or the clock. We wanted to add a bit more excitement.

The Style Award is a good format; riders can just ride a line and do some

tricks, and in the end the best rider wins. Best style, most runs, ambition etc. Not too much competition and also not just one single run. They each get an hour to show what they got!

Once our concept was established, we organized some sponsors for the prizes for the Best Style Award! Big thanks go out to Öhlins for supporting us! Also, a huge “Thank you!” goes out to Loose Riders China!

We designed and produced medals for all the competitors who would compete in the festival, as well as medals for the winner’s podium. Flags and banners were made, and posters were sent out to spread the word about the upcoming event on social media. And with that done we were ready to host the first ever event at the dirt park in Ningbo.



Mesum cornering through the Bamboo Forrest at Dapengshan



Aurelius:

Mesum, who lives in Nanjing and helped a lot with the whole organization of the event, arrived 3 days before the event. I picked him up at the Ningbo South Railway-station and the next day we went for a pretty nice ride in the nearby mountainous area of Dapengshan.

The day before the festival a friend from Suzhou, Shuige, also arrived and so, in the evening before the festival, Mesum, Shuige and met up at my house and, together with my wife, we all cooked and had a delicious Chinese-European fusion dinner which included the Swiss dish Zurich Geschnetzeltes and some tasty Chinese dishes.

On the morning of the evening we started at about 7 o'clock at the dirt compound and with Zhiqiang and Zhang Yuan installed the flags and banners. We uncovered the 12 jumps and for

Aurelius jumps the 3m double

the first time we put up DIY graffiti name board “Dirtpark Ningbo”. The weather was a bit too warm, but not at least not rainy, and the ground was not too damp – it was grippy, just perfect for the event.

We hadn’t even finished setting up the event when Shuige already bombed down the beginner line and even tried to jump the advanced line as well. He was on fire from the very first moment.

At 11 o’clock most of the riders had arrived. Surprisingly, they not only came from Ningbo and nearby places, but also from Suzhou, Nanjing, Jinhua, Hangzhou and Ninghai. I officially opened the festival by greeting the riders.

Throughout the day, one could see riders speeding around, hopping and jumping, pushing their bikes back to the starting platforms, running down the lines again. The Dirtpark Ningbo was



Shuige pulling his nice no footer



Heer from Ningbo not only shreds bikes

brimming with life and excitement!

Zhaoqi, our youngest rider with his 5 years of age, seemed to be hesitant in the beginning, but when Zhiqiang, one of my Loose Riders China friends, motivated him and guided him along the course while running beside him, it seemed to give the young rider a feeling of protection. He bravely rolled down the 1m high start platform, over the first small table, directly onto the next slightly bigger table; I think that was the first time that small rider had ever rolled over such kind of table jumps.

Another friend of ours, Heer, who had come to ride some lines, brought along his e-guitar and while riders shredded down the beginner line, he stood beside the beginner line and played some rock music guitar riffs.

After two hours of passionate riding, we all had lunch together at a

local restaurant and a short rest as well. Afterwards, the show went on. Mesum and me carefully, but not obviously, watched the different riders and their styles. Shuige was still on fire and started jumping the 3m gap double jump on the advanced line, while the riders on the beginner line became more and more stable in their style. They began riding faster and jumping higher. One of our friends from Germany, Kevin, appeared to be practicing the advanced line a lot. At first, one could see him really struggling with a moderate height jump that had a pretty far gap jump – he had crashed there the month before! But finally, he overcame his fear and did it!

At about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, Mesum and me had observed the other riders enough to make our judgements about who should win the Best Style Award. It was time for us to interrupt the heats to announce the winners and hand out the



Kevin goes high on the wall ride



Zhaoqi, the youngest rider.

medals and prizes.

Shuige earned his 1st place ranking in all respects; he rode from the very beginning until the very end. Besides jumping all of the possible jumps, he also put as much style into his riding unmatched by anyone else. Big and small whips were part of his riding the entire day. Over the beginner table he pulled a one-handed jump including giving a casual high-five to a bystander. What's more is that he almost succeeded in pulling off a 180 on 180 off a table jump. He also rolled up the wall-ride and did a fakie 180 downwards. As his banger trick he pulled a pretty clean no-footer over the 3m gap double jump.

Kevin ranked 2nd, not because of special tricks, but because of his consistent riding throughout the entire day. Furthermore, it was only his 2nd time riding on a dirt-compound in his whole life and he was almost able to complete

all the jumps including the huge 2m high kicker! While everyone else had been resting, one could still see him on the advanced line.

The choice for the 3rd rank wasn't easy for me and Mesum. But in the end, we decided on Zhaoqi, because at just 5 years, over and above riding for the first time on a dirt-track, but he also dared to roll over all the table-jumps. One could see him riding the whole line again and again.

After the small ceremony more and more riders became exhausted and prepared themselves to head home. We shook hands with every single rider who came out to the event, one after the other, and they were already asking for the next event! With that, an awesome and successful day without any major crashes came to an end!



We had a Great Time!!



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Wee Chong Yaw, others

Mesum Verma

TAN SOON SOON INTERVIEW



A man wearing a black helmet, glasses, a black t-shirt with 'SPECIALIZED' written on it, and black shorts is riding a white and orange mountain bike on a dirt trail in a forest. The bike has 'FOX' written on the front fork. The man is looking down at the trail ahead. The background is a dense forest with many trees and green leaves.

Soon Soon! Even you are famous in the whole of Asia, please introduce yourself (a little). Where are you from, age, where are you living and what are you doing for a living.

My name is Tan Soon Soon, 41 years old, living in Kuala Lumpur. Currently working in the wholesale vegetable market.

How did you get into mountain biking? How long have you been riding mountain bikes? And are you into other sports?

A friend introduced to me to mountain biking in 2009. It has been 10 years since my first ride. Mountain biking has always been my only sport.




This year is a bit complicated. How many times have you had the chance to race? And was it different than racing like last year?

This year I only got to participate in one race in March, and I came in 3rd place. The race was the same as other races before Malaysia decided to go to lock-down.

How many times could you ride your bike this year with your friends? Was it the same like last season?

This year, rides have always been the same as before the pandemic, as I only do one ride a week, either solo or with a group of friends.

Last year was your year. Where ever we watched some ranking, you

A full-page background image of a male mountain biker in action. He is wearing a grey long-sleeved Specialized jersey, black shorts, a black helmet with a GoPro mounted on top, and black gloves. He is riding a full-suspension mountain bike with orange frame accents and knobby tires on a dirt trail. The background is a blurred forest with orange and white safety flags.

were on the number one spot in the masters category! Can you tell us how you prepare yourself to win all those races?

I always train hard before the competition because I believe “Train Hard, Race Smart”. In racing it’s not the fastest who wins the race, sometimes it is the lucky one will win the race!

What is your favourite race in Asia, and why? Do you have also any funny stories about racing and traveling to all these venues?

My favourite race venue is in Chiang Mai because I can meet all riders around the world. The environment, cultures and food play along for this trip. Definitely Thailand is the best



place to be! Overall I enjoyed every trip I went to and they left a very good memories to all riders.


How often do you train per week? Do you also care about what you eat and drink?

I have no diet on my food intakes. I only get to train once a week as I have other commitments.

What would be your dream destination for riding your bike? Which bike you would take with you? And who you would ride with there?

In 10 years of riding, I have never been to Europe. I wish to have a chance to ride and race anywhere in Europe. I would definitely take

Aman Jaiswal

A full-page background image of a male mountain biker riding down a dirt trail. He is wearing a grey helmet with a GoPro mounted on top, a dark green Specialized jersey, black shorts, black gloves, and black knee pads. He is leaning forward in a racing position. The trail is made of brown dirt and is surrounded by dry leaves and branches. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the trail and some trees.

my 'Specialized' bike as I am one of the Ambassadors. Riding with Sam Hill, "flat pedal" world cup rider, would be a dream come true.

What is the meaning of biking for you? Why you are biking?

10 years ago I never thought that I would be part of a competition team. Riding a mountain bike was supposed to be a hobby. I took my first race and I was hooked with it. With all the support and teammates I have, I decided to pursue it further.

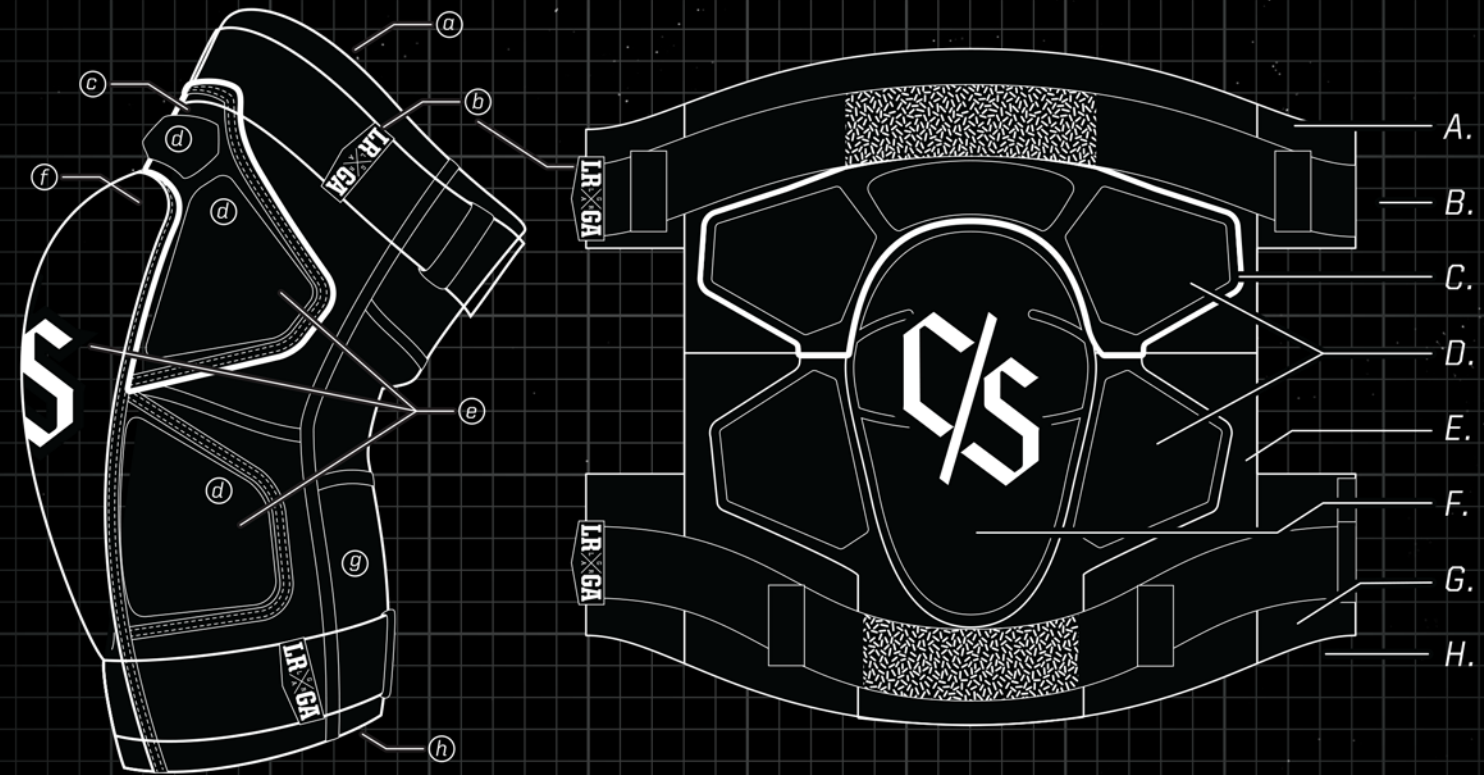
Thank you Soon Soon, I hope I see you again somewhere at a race!! Ride on!! Keep it real!!

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PHOTO-RECAP

PHOTOS: MORITZ ABLINGER



2020 MOUNTAIN BIKE
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Pauline Ferrand Prevot FRA





Jordan Sarrou

FRA





Camille Balanche

SUI





<p>Reece Wilson</p>	<p>GBR</p>	
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#SPECIALTHANKS

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