



TACKLING TOUGH TERRAIN

The STORM Hill Country Mountain Bike Challenge in Comfort was **Randy Christian's** second competition of the 2011 state championship series. With 11 miles behind him and one mile to go, he was having his best race yet.

Then it happened. Racing down the side of a rocky hill at 25 miles an hour, Christian headed into a sharp curve. His tires slid out from underneath him and he skidded along the side of the trail for several yards. Although he was scratched up and a little bloody, he wasn't seriously hurt. The front wheel of his bike, however, was bent sideways. Determined to complete the race, he bent the wheel back into place as best he could, got back on his bike, and crossed the finish line — ahead of most of the competitors in his category.

It's that kind of determination that has helped make Christian, a pharmaceutical products liability attorney and partner in the Austin office of Bowman and Brooke, L.L.P., successful on the treacherous trails of mountain biking. With less than two years riding competitively, he's currently ranked tenth in the state for the 40 to 49 age group.

"I started riding mountain bikes to spend more time with my son, Spencer," Christian says. "We spend a lot of time riding together on weekends." Both compete for the Southern Elite team in the singletrack category. Spencer is ranked



Randy Christian

ninth in the state for the 13 to 14 age group.

Singletrack racing takes place along a narrow trail that is about the width of a bike. "That's one of the big challenges of the race," Christian explains. "A lot of times, there is no room to go around another racer, so you have to plan ahead and decide where you are going to pass."

"Everyone is competitive, but there's a lot of camaraderie and everyone is nice on the course," Christian adds. "No one tries to block you when you are trying to pass. The other competitors are very nice about trying to find a place on the course to let you go by."

Mountain biking requires strength and endurance, so Christian runs, lifts weights, and rides at least 10 hours a week. "I also take indoor spin classes at lunch to fit in more training," he says. "I have an instructor who takes me through exercises on a stationary bike."

Christian also competes in triathlons and marathons. He qualified for the 2009 Halfmax Triathlon National Competition and finished in the Top 10 percent of the 2010 Chicago Marathon, which provided him with a qualifying time for the Boston Marathon, which he plans to run in 2012.

"Keeping fit is important to me," Christian notes. "It's good for overall health and well-being. And in a highly stressful profession, it's also a great way to relieve stress." ❄