BMX Racers



Meet two BMX racers who train and race hard, and win!

Sharon Parsons

Nelson Literacy Directions

BMX Racers

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Dear Reader

When BMX racing became an Olympic sport for the first time in 2008, I was spellbound by the speed and skill of elite BMX racers from around the world.

I began researching BMX racers who came from New Zealand, my home country. I found out about some successful young competitors, Rebecca Petch and Sarah Walker, who both began BMX racing at a young age. Rebecca and Sarah were very humble about their extraordinary successes in top-level BMX racing, and that's one of the many reasons why they are featured in this book.

> **SARAH AND REBECCA SHARED A STEELY DETERMINATION TO RACE HARD – OFTEN AGAINST THEIR BROTHERS!**

It was inspiring and fun to meet Rebecca and Sarah, so I hope you enjoy reading their stories as much as I enjoyed writing about them.

Sharon Parsons

My sincere thanks to the following people for their time, information, images and enthusiasm for this book:

Rebecca Petch and her family, Te Awamutu, New Zealand

Sarah Walker, Cambridge, New Zealand

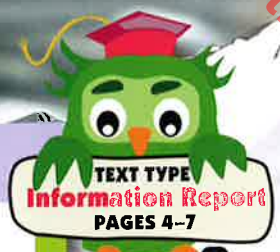
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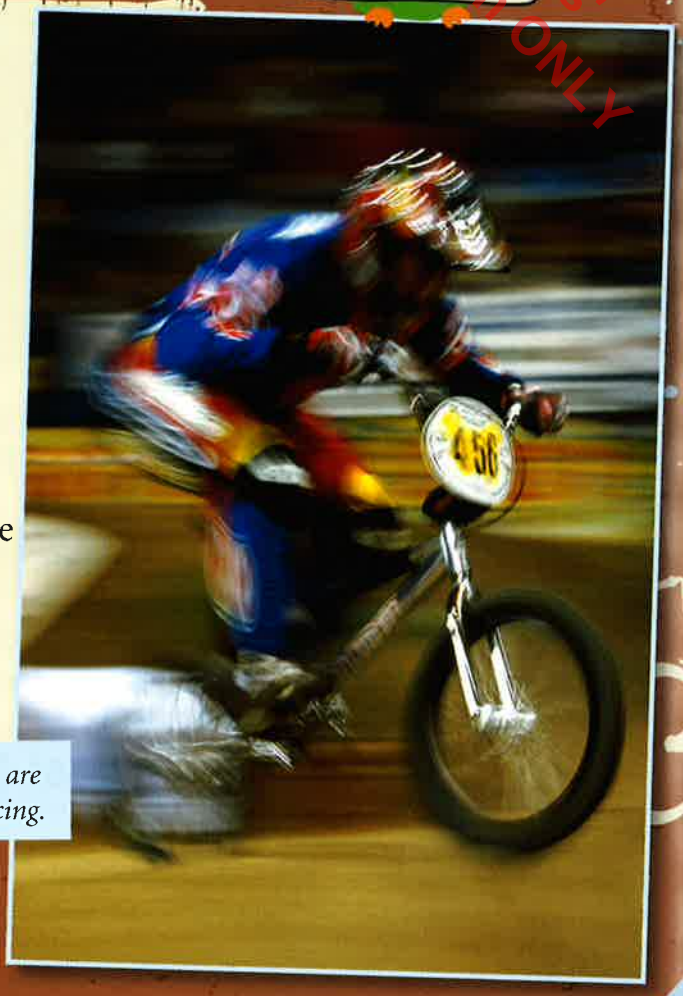
1 What Is BMX Racing?



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BMX racing is an action sport. People can compete in races around the world at various championship levels. Since 2008, BMX racing has been an Olympic sport. This allows experienced racers to compete at the highest possible level.

"BMX" is short for "bicycle motocross", and it describes extreme bike racing on dirt motocross tracks. "BMX" also refers to the style of bike used to compete on motocross tracks. These may have jumps, banked corners and various obstacles to challenge riders.



Speed, skill and safety are important in BMX racing.

A Snapshot of BMX Racing

1970s

In the 1970s, BMX racing began in the USA.

1980s

In 1982, the first of the BMX World Championships was held in the USA.

2000s

In 2008, BMX racing became an Olympic sport for the first time, in Beijing, China.



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BMX Racing Tracks

BMX tracks are built outside and have varying designs and lengths – generally, they are about 400 metres long. The design includes straight sections of track between challenging jumps, small rollers and banked corners that test the riders' technique, skill, fitness and power. The banked corners help the riders to maintain good speeds. The dirt track can be covered with crushed lime "race rock" to give it a speedy finish.



building a BMX track

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A BMX Race

A one-lap BMX race can last for 40 to 50 seconds, depending on the length and difficulty of the track. At the start of a competition track, there is space for up to eight riders to line up at the starting gate.

When the gate drops, the riders surge forward to race over jumps and around turns as quickly and as safely as possible. A one-lap race that lasts for less than a minute puts pressure on the BMX racers to think quickly and skilfully – there's no room for mistakes.



A quick start is important.



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Riders have to be able to clear single, double or triple jumps that range in height from 6 to12 metres.

BMX Finish Line

As the fastest riders fly over the last jumps, their next automatic action is to pedal at even greater speed so they can lunge forward over the white finish line and try to finish first.



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A Series of BMX Motos

To qualify for a BMX final, riders have to race in about three or four pre-final motos. The top eight BMX racers that finish with the least number of points in the motos earn a spot in the final. For example, a win earns one point, second place earns two points, and so on.



A Family Sport

BMX racing is a family-oriented action sport that can be enjoyed all year round by people of all ages and skill levels. As long as riders follow the race rules, wear the correct protective gear and ensure that their bikes are safe to ride, BMX racing can be a lot of fun.

SAFETY GEAR FOR BMX RACERS



2 Freestyle BMX

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Freestyle BMX riding is also known as stunt riding. People get involved for fun as well as to compete. There are five main kinds of freestyle BMX riding.



Dirt Jumping: a BMX rider aims to gain as much speed as possible before riding over a dirt ramp and performing an amazing aerial stunt. The rider is judged on the stunt's originality, level of difficulty and the rider's landing.



Street Riding: in competitions, a BMX street course allows riders to perform stunts while riding up or down ramps and stairs, and along rails and the tops of walls.



Trail Riding: this involves riding a BMX over a series of dirt jumps along trails in places like the bush or forests.





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Park Riding: many BMX freestyle riders ride in skate parks in their towns or cities, but in competitions they compete on special courses.

Vert Riding: BMX vert courses are designed for riders to perform stunts on a series of wide, long ramps in a supervised and safe place.

