

BMX New Rider Guide

A GUIDE TO BMX RACING



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WHAT IS BMX RACING?

What is a BMX Race? In simple terms a BMX race can be described as "sprint cycling over a specially prepared dirt race track". Races are run on tracks that are usually 300-400 meters long and consist of a series of jumps and bumps with banked corners known as "berms". Riders race each other over one lap with a maximum of eight riders in each race.

Who races BMX bikes? Our members are drawn from all areas and backgrounds with riders from four years of age up to forty plus. They race against riders of their own age or ability group. The people and families involved are usually interested in bikes, competitive sport and the physical and mental health of their children. The sport also prides itself on the ability to offer equal opportunities to both sexes and top class competitive sport to all members. It is common for the whole family to be involved. The family nature gives the race day far more depth and dimension than just a simple race - it is an Event!

Are all BMX bikes the same? No - while all BMX bikes have a similar base specification, each one, in time, becomes customized to meeting the owner's personal preferences. BMX bikes come in a range of frame sizes from the Mini for the very young rider, through the expert, pro to the XL and even the XXL. One major variation is a slightly bigger BMX bike fitted with 24" wheels called a cruiser. Cruisers are made in a range of sizes to suit young riders, and up to full size versions that are particularly suited to the parents!

Is it safe? Even though BMX Racing is a fast, exhilarating sport, its safety record is second to none within the cycling sport. At each event, qualified first aid personnel are present. At all events riders are required to wear suitable safety equipment, the details of which are covered in the rules of BMX racing.

F A Q's

Who owns and runs the BMX tracks?

Cycling BC BMX Racetracks are non-profit or not-for-profit Organizations, they are not owned by anyone, but ran by a volunteer Executive or Board.

Who makes the rules?

BC BMX racetracks affiliated with the Cycling BC; governed in Canada by the Canadian Cycling Association (CCA) and worldwide by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI).

Who owns the land that the tracks are built on?

The Town or City commonly leases the property to the track.

How old do I have to be? Do I need experience?

BMX racing welcomes male and females of all ages and abilities and offers the opportunity for riders to compete and build confidence in a non-threatening, zero tolerance environment. Our youngest racers are 3 years old and you are never too old to start racing BMX!

Can the parents be involved?

BMX Racing is a family sport that encourages family participation where parents can get involved every step of the way. Moms and dads can ride a traditional BMX bike (20"), cruisers, and also 24" or 26" mountain bikes. They compete the same day as their children and now the kids can cheer mom and dad on! You can hear the kids yelling: "pedal harder mom!"

What is unique about BMX racing?

Riders of all ages can learn new skills, build self-confidence, gain self-respect and respect for others, make good friends and enjoy themselves. It is also one of very few sports that offer such a wide age range and everyone can compete at the same venue on the same day.

The environment at a BMX racetrack is such that Pro and Expert Riders mix, talk, laugh and offer advice to novice and intermediate riders. There is no fear of ridicule or intimidation.

LICENSING AND INSURANCE

Due to Insurance Issues, any rider on a BMX racetrack must have one of the two licenses available in for BMX Racers:

I am just starting out, is there a license that allows me to try BMX?

Yes, the first time you come to a BMX track you can try the sport by sign a one-event waiver. If you enjoyed your time you can then buy a 30-day license. This permit allows you to race at your local track, take part in Beginner Clinics, practice on scheduled practice nights and take part in all local track activities. This is a good idea for the racers that is “not quite sure” that BMX Racing is for them. This license has the SAME Insurance Coverage as the full license and can be upgraded to the Full License at any time by paying the additional amount.

I want to race every track and collect points. How do I do that?

This is the full UCI race license that is accepted Canada and World Wide. The license is issued by Calendar Year (Jan 1 to Dec 31) and can be purchased at any time throughout the race season. This license will also allow you to participate in Cycling BC, CCA and UCI sanctioned events world wide, but we do strongly suggest that any time you race outside of Canada that you take out additional Insurance Coverage available through the CCA. UCI race license prices vary by class and are available online at cyclingbc.net or at your local track.

You can race the complete Provincial, and National series on this license as well as any UCI event in the World.

WHAT ARE THE RULES AT MY TRACK?

The following rules apply to most BMX racetracks; please make yourself aware of the rules at any track you may visit. These rules are in place for safety reasons:

Is there a direction to ride on the track?

A BMX racetrack is a one-way track; please do not ride the track backwards. As we have kids of all ages riding at one time, it is sometimes hard to see who is over the other side of the jump.

I love doing tricks; can I do them on the track?

Sorry, there is no trick riding - this includes kick-outs (where a rider kicks out his back wheel while in the air). It becomes a safety issue for other riders.

I am worried about my daughter's safety - what happens if she wipes out?

In the event of a fall - do not panic, there are certified first aid officials present at all times. Please advise your child that if their ego is the only thing that is hurt - to stand up and wave so that we know that they are ok. If they are hurt, tell them to stay down, they will be attended to immediately.

Can I drop off my 12-year-old son and pick him up later?

Please check with your local track - each track has different procedures.

I have a freestyle BMX - can I use it on the track?

Sure you can, you just need to make a few minor modifications:

- Please remove or disable front brakes, remove pegs, kickstand, chain guards or additional items that could fall off on the track or cause an injury in the event of a collision or crash.

If you want to make sure that your bike is safe, ask any track official.

I would love to volunteer, but I know nothing about BMX racing

We all started out the same way . . . we learn as we go and we will help you every step of the way. Talk to a track official and they will point you in the right direction.

The complete UCI rulebook is available at www.uci.ch. Please make yourself aware of all rules.

HINTS FOR THE NEW RIDER

- Make sure you attend beginner clinics that are offered throughout the season at your home track!
- Standing up for the whole lap allows you to handle your bike more easily and get over obstacles faster.
- When practicing focus on all parts of the track – not just the jump you get the ‘best air’ on.
- Stay low on the jumps. Most of the time, you are faster on the ground, so learn how to stay low and speed jump.
- Learn to balance at the gate with both feet on the pedals. This skill will help you get a faster start, and you won’t have to worry about missing a pedal once the gate drops.
- Focus on the first jump or berm as soon as the gate drops. Look where you want to go.
- Practice gate starts from all 8 lanes.
- Try to get the holeshoot, or first position, out of the gate. This position puts you at an advantage, as long as you can hold the lead.
- Keep pedaling all the way to the end and even after you have crossed the finish line. Many riders who thought they had won slowed down to raise their arms in victory only to have the next rider sneak in for the win.
- Practice at as many different tracks as you can. All tracks have different start gates, start hills, jumps, berms and rhythm sections. Be prepared for anything.



MANDATORY SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Each rider must have the following:

- Full Face helmet
- Long sleeve shirt of any kind. Sleeves must reach to the wrist
- Long pants - jeans are fine, must be snug at the ankles or Shorts with knee/shin pads
- Full finger Gloves
- Enclosed shoes (no sandals)
- Working Rear brakes (coaster allowed, but not recommended)

How to set up your bike:

- Get a bmx bike that you feel comfortable on and is in good condition
- Do a check of the frame, fork and wheels to make sure that nothing is cracked or broken
- Remove/disable front brakes, remove axle pegs, reflectors, chain guards and kickstand if necessary.
- Position your handlebars so that they are close to vertical or in line with the fork.
- Add a number plate to your bike (available at local track)
- Lubricate all moving parts such as cables, brake pivot bolts and chain
- Put the correct amount of tension on the chain so that it doesn't fall off when you are racing
- Adjust your seat to a height that allows good mobility, yet safe
- Ride your bike around the neighbourhood before you go to the track so you can make any adjustments or changes while you are still close to home
- If you are converting a street bike, you will want to remove the gyro and front brake.
- Coaster (back pedal) brakes are not the best choice for a bmx race bike; keep that in mind if you are purchasing a bike.

Please ask any track executive member or volunteer if you require any help!

BASIC BIKE CHECKLIST

Wheels/tires

- Inflated correctly
- Good tread
- Spokes in good condition
- Axles not protruding more than 5mm
- Tightened axle nuts
- Wheel runs true and round

Bars

- Grips covered at both ends
- No cracks or bends
- Angled correctly

Headset

- Tight
- Covered by a pad
- All bolts present

Accessories

- No chain guard
- No pegs
- No kickstands
- No reflectors

Brakes

- Front brake disconnected
- Brakes are effective
- Cables are not frayed
- Cable ends are present
- Pads are even and not worn
- Brake lever is smoothly rounded at end

Seat

- Tightly fixed
- No cracks
- Safe

Cranks/Pedals

- Tightly fastened
- No movement on the pedal axle
- Bottom bracket bearings must run smoothly and without play

Frame

- No cracks
- No additional parts have been added
- Check welds

Number Plates

- Cannot extend above the crossbar
- Must be securely fastened
- Numbers must be minimum 3" high and 1.5" wide
- No stickers can cover any part of the numbers
- The correct number plate must be worn for each race



RACING

Let's begin by reassuring you about one important thing:

BMX is no more dangerous than most sports. Statistically, it is safer than nearly every traditional after-school activity or sport. In general the time you spend on a track will be safer than your time on the street.

It's a sad fact that the majority of riders who own BMX bikes don't race. There is a lot more to racing than just winning and losing. It is a family-oriented sport that is fun for all ages. Racing locally is not expensive.

First and foremost, you obviously need a bike and a full-face helmet. You don't need an expensive, fancy bike to race and helmets are now available at most major department stores for under \$60.00. Please make sure the helmet meets CSA standards. The bike does not play that much of a role in the outcome of BMX races. Racers on \$100 bikes have beaten racers with bikes worth over \$1000. Later on, when you get the hang of BMX racing and have some experience in it, you will probably want

a good, dependable bike if you don't already have one. Don't think you need to spend hundreds of dollars on a bike to get into racing! Just about any bike will do starting out.

BMX tracks will welcome Mountain bikes as long as the bike and the rider meets all safety requirements.

You'll find the tracks are very similar to motocross racing tracks, except the jumps and the track are smaller and smoother of course. All you have to do is show up, get a membership, and pay a small registration fee. The track volunteers will help you out with anything you need, and they'll usually give or sell you a temporary number plate if you need one. Also, you need to show up with your parent/guardian if you are under the age of 18. **Don't be afraid to ask questions.**

When you first ride the track, take it slow - be careful. Watch how the other riders balance at the starting gate

and take the jumps and turns. Don't ride over your head. You will get the hang of it eventually; don't worry if you can't clear the jumps or handle the track very well at first - it takes time and practice. After you have raced locally for a while, you can race province wide for more competition, and ultimately race nationally. That is where more fun comes in; traveling all over the country, having plenty of competition, seeing friends, and of course, racing BMX.

All racers will race by age and ability at the local and provincial level. The Provincial Championships is a one-day event that is run under UCI Categories, and you will race year of birth only. There will be no separate classes for ability; all riders will compete by age. Your race age will be your age on December 31st of the race year. For example, if your birthday is September 5, and you will be 12, you will race as a 12 year old all year.

Each racer starts as a NOVICE (unless you wish otherwise). Novice signifies that it is your first or second year of racing and you will be racing

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Cycling BC BMX
201-210 West Broadway
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against others of your age and abilities at locals and Provincials. You can then move to Intermediate, then Expert, then Pro. Move ups are gained by number of wins or by 'self move-up'. You must win 10 races to move from Novice to Intermediate and 25 races to move from Intermediate to Expert. These move-ups are accumulated over a lifetime and are not cleared each year. To confuse you even more - these races must be won against 2 or more riders your own age or older. But don't worry - your local track and the PSO will take care of all the points, you get to race and have fun.

Be sure to check your local track website for their weekly schedule:

Abbotsford BMX

www.abbotsfordbmx.com

Action BMX

www.actionbmx.com

Ridge Meadows

www.ridgemeadowsbmx.com

Big Pine BMX

www.bigpinebmx.com

North Shore BMX

www.northshorebmx.com

Other www.cyclingbc.net

Email: info@cyclingbc.net
Website: www.cyclingbc.net

HOW A RACEDAY WORKS

What do I do when I arrive at the track on race day?

Make your way to the Registration booth - state your name and show your license. You will be required to pay a small registration fee and the volunteer will place you in the Race Day file.

You are now registered to race! Make sure your bike is in good working condition. If you are not sure, ask to have it inspected before you go on the track to practice. Do a few warm-up laps around the outside of the track (be careful in the parking lot) to get your muscles working.

How do I know when the races are going to start?

Just before race time we will announce: "Motos are posted". It is your responsibility to check the moto board (different location at each track), find your moto (race number) and make sure you are in the right class (age and ability). Write your moto number and lane numbers down, or commit them to memory.

When riders are called to staging (area behind start gate) make your way there. It is up to you to make sure you are in the gate for your moto - GATES WILL NOT BE HELD FOR ANY RIDER. When you are in the gate, get set and wait for the cadence "Riders Ready, Watch the Gate, Beep, Beep, Beep, Beep" The gate will drop and you are officially off!

After you have completed your moto, proceed through the finish area. DO NOT STOP at the finish line, this is a safety issue.

Do I leave right after racing is over?

At the completion of the days races feel free to practice more, talk to other riders, grab a burger! If you have won an award, proceed to the Registration booth and line up in an orderly fashion. The points from your motos will be tabulated (lowest points takes first, highest takes last) and you will be presented with an award based on your finish. Be Proud no matter your finish!

Cycling BC Levels of Racing

Cycling BC offers racing for everyone. There are several levels of racing to choose from, athlete of all ages and abilities can compete at our events.

District Racing (Club Racing)

District racing or Club racing is the weekly events held by the clubs. This the entry point for most BMX athletes. Most clubs calculate points for the riders finishes and awards them awards at the end of the year. All Cycling BC clubs offer a weekly gate practice where athletes can practice their skill or be coached by more experienced riders.

- **Half Track Racing.**
At District level event we offer half-track racing for young athletes to enter the sport. Half-track athletes are 3 to 5 years of age and ride on half the track. Parents sometimes assist them or have training wheels, but they are always having fun.
- **Track Attack points.**
Track Attack points are awarded at multi point Cycling BC sanctioned races in BC. Points earned determine your final track attack standings for the season. Awards and plates are handed out at the end of the season.

Provincial Racing

Each year a number of BC Cup races are held across the province to determine the BC cup champions. Athletes must race a minimum number of BC Cup events as well as the Series Finals to qualify for a BC Cup ranking. This is a next level of racing where competitors from across the province compete for the BC Cup ranking.

Provincial Championships

Each year a Provincial Championship race is held to determine the provincial champions. This is an age group race to decide the Provincial Champions for each age group. This race is also a national ranking event, where athletes earn point towards there national ranking.

Canadian Championships

Each year the CCA hosts the Canadian Championships, bringing Eastern and Western Canada together to determine the National BMX Champions in each age

group. This is the highest level of racing in our country. From here athlete can compete in World Championships and Olympic games.

VOLUNTEERISM

This is the absolute cornerstone of every BMX racetrack and is only way that we stay open. In order to operate a successful race day at the track we need 15-18 volunteers. You can help us out! Each track is in need of volunteers in the following areas (full training is provided):

- Concession
- Registration
- Marshalls
- Scoring
- Set Up/Take Down
- Grounds keeping
- Track Maintenance
- First Aid
- Rentals



A racetrack is an excellent place for high school students to get their community hours that they require in order to graduate. A Track Official will sign off hours.

Volunteer time commitment is based on number of volunteers, rotations and schedules made at the start of the race season.

All volunteers who are scheduled are expected to show up on their assigned day. If you cannot make it, it is YOUR responsibility to find a replacement. Please go to registration so that your card can be marked and so we know who is present that day. If you are interested in volunteering and keeping your local track running please approach one of the officials or executive members.

Thank you to all volunteers, without you there would be no local BMX tracks!

GLOSSARY OF BMX TERMS

Axle: The shaft on which the wheel revolves.

Berm: A corner on a track built up on the outside of a turn to create a banked curve.

BMX: Abbreviation for bicycle motocross.

Bottom Bracket: The mechanism at the bottom of the bicycle frame, which holds the spindle and crank.

Brakes: Any bicycle braking system that works by opening and closing two brake shoes on the rim in a clamping motion, like jaws.

Brake Lever: A lever mounted on the handlebar used for activating the brake.

Cables: Steel wires braided into cables and sometimes covered with plastic coating. Cables are used to connect the brake levers to the brakes.

Case: Coming up short on a jump & the back wheel of the bike hits the peak of the landing.

CCA: Canadian Cycling Association, our national body

Chain Stay: The part of the bicycle frame that runs parallel to the chain. It connects the bottom bracket to the rear dropouts.

Chain Wheel: A one-piece front gear. The chain wheel is attached to the bottom bracket and crank.

Clipless Pedals: attach or "clip" to your clip less shoes. Some clipless pedals have a cage around the outside of the pedals.

Crank: The L-shaped metal arm to which the pedals are attached.

Cruiser: A BMX Bicycle with 24 " wheel diameter.

Cycling BC: Our provincial cycling body

Down Tube: Part of the bicycle frame, which slants downward at an angle. It runs from the head tube to the bottom bracket.

DNS: Destination on a moto sheet that a rider "Did Not Start" in any particular race.

DNF: "Did Not Finish" usually due to injury or mechanical difficulty.

Dropouts: Small, slotted openings, which hold the front and rear wheel axles.

Entry Fee: Paid to register for any sanctioned event.

Expert: Highest level of amateur competition.

Fork: The double-pronged section of the frame, which holds the front wheel in place.

Freewheel: A one-piece rear gear that allows the rider to back-pedal. Bearings are built in.

Gear Ratio: A number, which indicates the relationship between the two gears and tells you how much work a particular combination of gears will do.

Grips: Rubber or Plastic cover who goes on the handlebars at the end to aid in grip.

Headset: Bearing set for which your front end rotates on and your fork/handle bars slide into.

Head Tube: A short vertical tube at the very front of the bike. The front fork fits inside the head tube.

Hole Shot: Taking the lead position out of the starting gate and going into the first turn.

Hub: Cylinder, which holds the axle of each wheel.

Intermediate: Skill level for riders with limited experience and ability.

Lane: Position 1 thru 8 on the starting gate.

Main Event: Final class race, after all qualifying has taken place, to determine class placing.

Manual: The act of riding a wheelie without pedaling typically over the top section of various jumps.

Moto: a.) A single racing heat. b.) Any riders specific race.

Moto Board: An area where the moto sheets are posted before and during the race.

Moto Number: Number corresponding with any specific race (moto).

Moto Sheet: Paperwork displaying the races in moto number order.

Novice: New rider to the sport.

Number Plate: Displays riders' earned or temporary number for identification purposes

Platform Pedals: Are the most commonly used pedals for trails, street, and ramps. They have a platform that your foot rests on with little pegs that stick to your shoe.

Rhythm Section: A series of jumps or rollers back to back on a track that pose as an obstacle.

Rims: Round part of the wheel that the tires attach onto.

Registration: Where you go to sign up to compete in a race (moto)

Roller: An obstacle on a track that is rolled over as opposed to being jumped.

Sandbagging: Intentionally allowing other rider(s) to pass during a main event or within any round of a total points race so as not to gain wins towards classification advancement.

Seat Stays: Section of the frame, which runs from the seat tube to the rear wheel dropouts.

Seatpost: The tube, which holds the seat and goes into the frame.

Staging Area: The area where the riders gather for loading into the gate.

Starting Gate: Flat formed area with a hinged portion. This is where each race commences.

Stem: The part connected to the forks that hold the handlebars. Sometimes referred to as a gooseneck.

Step-Up: A jump in which the landing is elevated above the launch.

Sprocket: Same as a chain wheel or either the front or rear gear assembly. Sprockets are strong. They are a combination of a chain ring and a spider together

Table Top: A jump on a track that is completely level or flat all the way across it from the lip to the landing.

Top Tube: The top horizontal tube on a bicycle frame, between your head tube and seat tube.

Track Director or T.D.: a person who runs and maintains all aspects of a BMX track. Does all this for no pay to help the kids and parents who love BMX. Thanks to all track operators in BMX!

UCI: United Cycling International: International cycling body

Volunteer: 1.a VERY special person who **voluntarily** undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake help for the track and riders for no pay or free merchandise.

TRACK CONTACTS

Cycling BC 604 737 3034
info@cyclingbc.net
www.cyclingbc.net

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| Abbotsford BMX | Abbotsford, BC | www.abbotsfordbmx.com |
| Action BMX | Surrey, BC | www.actionbmx.com |
| Ridge Meadows | Pitt Meadows, BC | www.ridgemeadowsbmx.com |
| Big Pine BMX | Kamloops, BC | www.bigpinebmx.com |
| North Shore BMX | North Vancouver, BC | www.northshorebmx.com |

NOTES:
