

NORA YOUNG

The Canadian Cycling Hall of Fame is pleased to welcome posthumously, as an early era athlete, Nora Young as an inductee for 2018.

Nora Young (1917 – 2016) was a leading early era athlete who rose to prominence as one of the top female road cyclists in Canada in the 1930s and 1940s. She is one of Canada's most important early female cycling pioneers, at a time when women were only beginning to compete on bicycles as part of mainstream sporting activity.

In the peak of her career, as a teenager and young adult, Young competed extensively and distinguished herself in the top-level cycling races open to women in that era, and became a national champion and record holder in the ¼ mile time trial.

Olympic, Pan American and Commonwealth Games and World Championship events in women's cycling did not yet exist at the time of the nominee's peak years as a cyclist.

In light of the fact that there were no world/international cycling events (and hardly any national events) for women in Young's day, the other major races that she competed in take on greater significance, as these were the events where top-level female cyclists such as Young could compete and distinguish themselves. These races include:

- Women's track races at the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE): She was a member of the Queen's Cycle Club, the Horne Club, and the Ladies Maple Leaf club and raced there weekly for many years. Newspaper articles from the day show her often at the top of the results list for women cyclists at these weekly races. It was also at the CNE where Young set a record in the ¼-mile time trial as she won a national championship race.
- 50-mile Canadian road race put on by the Danforth Bicycle Club: In 1937, Young was the only female competitor in this race, and finished in an impressive 2 hours, 38 minutes, ahead of many of the male riders.
- Winner of the Broadview YMCA 10-mile road race. This had previously been a male-only race (called the Broadview Boys race), and Young won in 1936, the first year that females became eligible to participate.
- Women's component of Six-Day Bicycle Race at Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens in 1936: Young was selected as one of six women to put on a two-night women's demonstration race as part of a men's six-day race at Maple Leaf Gardens (Young was 19 at the time) – a historically significant event that is memorialized on a plaque displayed at Maple Leaf Gardens today.

- Young attended the Olympic Cycling tryout event in 1936 from which Canada's men's Olympic cycling team was chosen. Interestingly, there was a race for women bike riders at the event too (even though biking for women wouldn't enter the Olympics until 1984). A newspaper record (Toronto Daily Star, June 29, 1936) shows Young won that women's race.

Young also had a second extraordinary cycling career when she was in her 60s, 70s, and 80s, earning multiple gold, silver, and bronze medals and setting many records at Master's competitions in Canada, the United States, and Australia.

She was acknowledged for her work on the Ontario Cycling Association's Cycling Women's Committee in 1980 with the Contribution to Women's Cycling Award.

Nora Young was a lifelong competitor and supporter of women's cycling. We are pleased to have her as an honoured member of the Canadian Cycling Hall of Fame.