

## Competition for FUN and SKILLS

Since everyone likes to win, highly competitive athletes, coaches, or parents can become totally focused on winning races. Instead, BMX competitions should reflect the goals for the athlete's stage of development. Not every race is about winning, but each competition should have a specific purpose tied to the athlete's needs, whether it is to improve tactical skills, to practice for an upcoming major race, or to perform. Here are some tips for the "BMX for Fun and Skills" stages:

- Don't introduce competition until the rider has developed sound basic BMX skills.
- Choose competitions which use track profiles suitable for the rider's skill level.
- Emphasize the rider demonstrating skills in competition, not winning. For example, "great position out of the start!" or "great pass on that banking!"
- Avoid chasing rankings or plates.
- Avoid comparing results to other riders. Compare to previous performances- look for improvement and consistency.
- Avoid excessive, expensive travel to national competitions until the rider is ready (Train to Train stage and later).



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### **Cycling Canada**

[www.cyclingcanada.ca](http://www.cyclingcanada.ca)

### **Cycling British Columbia**

[www.cyclingbc.net](http://www.cyclingbc.net)

### **Alberta Bicycle Association**

[www.albertabicycle.ab.ca](http://www.albertabicycle.ab.ca)

### **Saskatchewan Cycling Association**

[www.saskcycling.ca](http://www.saskcycling.ca)

### **Manitoba Cycling Association**

[www.cycling.mb.ca](http://www.cycling.mb.ca)

### **Ontario Cycling Association**

[www.ontariocycling.org](http://www.ontariocycling.org)

### **Fédération Québécoise des sports cyclistes**

[www.fqsc.net](http://www.fqsc.net)

### **Vélo New Brunswick**

[www.velo.nb.ca](http://www.velo.nb.ca)

### **Bicycle Nova Scotia**

[www.bicycle.ns.ca](http://www.bicycle.ns.ca)

### **Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador**

[www.bnl.nf.ca](http://www.bnl.nf.ca)

### **Cycling Association of Yukon**

867 667-8212 (B)

### **Cycling PEI**

[www.sportpei.pe.ca](http://www.sportpei.pe.ca)

### **Canadian Sport for Life**

[www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)



Cycling**CANADA**Cyclisme

203 - 2197 Riverside Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 7X3

Tel: (613) 248-1353

Fax: (613) 248-9311

# Winning BMX – BMX for Fun and Skills



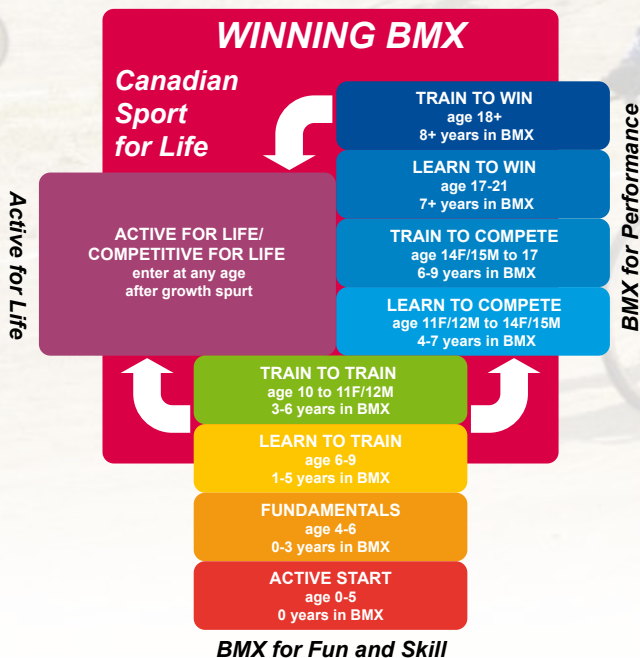
Cycling**CANADA**Cyclisme

## Winning BMX

BMX is really two sports. **“BMX for Fun and Skill”** is for riders up to about 12 years old. BMX racing is fun, fast and competitive. Winning races at this stage is not as important as developing a solid foundation of BMX skills. The keys are Fun, Friendship, Skills and Learning the lessons of sport.

There is a second sport we call **“BMX for Performance”**. Beginning around age 13 or 14, BMXers start developing the physical abilities, competition skills and experience that lead to World Championship and Olympic podiums. Reaching the top in this sport takes years of hard work and dedication.

**There is a secret to success:** learning BMX skills from **“BMX for Fun and Skill”** and developing the physical abilities and competition experience from **“BMX Performance”** will provide the foundation to reach the podium.



## Long-Term Athlete Development

Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD) is a pathway for optimal training, competition and recovery throughout an athlete’s career.

LTAD is divided into stages based on scientific knowledge about human growth and development. The stages are a guide to creating appropriate sport programs. The prior sport experience of the athlete, combined with his/her individual stage of physical, mental and emotional development, is much more important than chronological age. No matter how “exceptional” the athlete seems, he/she can’t be “pushed” through development!

It is very important to take advantage of sensitive periods of adaptation as the child grows and develops. The mind and body are most able to develop in specific ways at specific times. Skills, for example, are learned quickly from about age 8 to 12. Physical strength, power and endurance can be developed after the growth spurt, typically age 12 for girls, 13 for boys.

The “windows” of optimal development are approximately (ages vary from individual to individual):

Development of...	Girls age	Boys age
Flexibility	5 to 9	6 to 10
Speed (leg/pedal)	6 to 9	7 to 10
Skill development	8 to 11	9 to 12
Endurance	11 to 13	13 to 15
Tactics/Decisions	13 up	14 up
Strength & Power	13 up	14 up
Goal-setting	17 up	18 up

## PRIORITY #1 - Skills, Skills, Skills!

BMX skills, including starting, pedaling at high speeds, cornering, passing, and jumping, are the foundation of winning BMX. These skills are best developed when the athlete is from 8 to 12 years old. **High performance in BMX is impossible to reach without these skills!**

What does this look like in BMX?

- Riders using flat pedals (not clips) for all kinds of skill learning, right through their careers. Using flat pedals the rider learns correct form for key skills including hops, manuals and jumps, as he/she can’t pull the bike up by the pedals.
- Participation in other sports to develop well-rounded athleticism on land, in water, and on ice and snow, developing balance, agility, object-control and eye-hand and eye-foot coordination.
- Riders playing all kinds of coach-led games, on and off the bike, to develop a wide range of skills.
- A good mix of relaxed fun and intense concentration during activities.
- Coaches who know how to mix up activities and try different approaches to help riders “get” a skill.
- Advanced riders helping newer riders out, and being role models for them.

Inside you will find a stage-by-stage guide to Winning BMX. You can find more detailed information in Cycling Canada’s Winning BMX guide. Download it free at

[www.cyclingcanada.ca](http://www.cyclingcanada.ca)

## BLEACHERS

### Parents help by:

- Look for NCCP-trained coaches.
- Support participation in many kinds of sport
- Build skills, skills, skills.
- Emphasize fun, friendships, and honest effort in your child's sport experiences. De-emphasize winning and "chasing plates".
- Remember children can be far apart in maturation: don't compare to others.
- Help your child to get to practice and competitions, ensure equipment is safe, and support the coaches' decisions.
- Pitch in as an official, club leader, or helper.

## WARM-UP AREA

### Active Start Age 0-6

- Daily unstructured physical activity - at least 60 minutes per day.
- Basic movement skills on land, water, snow and ice.
- Run, jump, throw, balance, kick, swim and ride a bike.
- Explain that the "big track" is for riders that have the basic skills.
- Limit competition; focus on FUN

## START LINE

## Train to Train

Age 10 to 12

3 to 6 yrs in BMX

- Begin "building the engine".
- Keep flat pedals for skill workouts.
- Work on pedaling 140 + rpm.
- Refine all skills; focus on tactics.
- Provincial races, moving to national level at end of stage.
- Emphasize controllable race results such as times, good positioning, good skills & tactics.

## Learn to Train

Age 6 to 9

1 to 5 yrs in BMX

- Keep building winning skills!
- Stay on flat pedals (no clips). Use clips for racing at end-stage, if local rules allow.
- Work on pedaling 120-140 rpm.
- Refine basic skills; add gate starts, manuals, jumps, tactics.
- All training based on FUN games.
- Club and provincial races.

## FUNdamentals

Age 4 to 6

0 to 3 yrs in BMX

- Use flat pedals (no clips) to build skills on the "mini-track".
- Work on pedaling 100-120 rpm.
- Focus on basic skills: start, acceleration, stop, turn, hop.
- All training based on FUN games.
- Minimize use of placings or times in competition - instead identify and reward good skills.

## Active for Life

Any age

- Stay active in sports throughout life!
- Continue racing for fun if desired.
- Give back as a coach, official or leader.

## BMX for Performance

Ages 12 and up

- Build on a foundation of winning skills.
- Develop top physical, technical and race abilities.
- Next stop the podium!

## PARKING LOT

Fun, hard work, fair play...head for the track!

Negativity, criticism, and cheating stay out here!

# Winning BMX: BMX for Fun and Skill

For detailed information on training and competition for BMX, please download the full Winning BMX document at: [www.cyclingcanada.ca](http://www.cyclingcanada.ca)



CyclingCANADACyclisme