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).
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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of...</th>
<th>Girls age</th>
<th>Boys age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>5 to 9</td>
<td>6 to 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed (leg/pedal)</td>
<td>6 to 9</td>
<td>7 to 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill development</td>
<td>8 to 11</td>
<td>9 to 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>11 to 13</td>
<td>13 to 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactics/Decisions</td>
<td>13 up</td>
<td>14 up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength &amp; Power</td>
<td>13 up</td>
<td>14 up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-setting</td>
<td>17 up</td>
<td>18 up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priorities #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
**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.

**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.

**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!

**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.

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**Active Start Area**

*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

**WARM-UP AREA**

*Active Start Age 0-6*

- 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.

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**PARKING LOT**

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

Negativity, criticism, and cheating stay out here!

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**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.
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**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

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**Cycle CANADA**

Cyclisme

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*Winning BMX*