

Cycling

The competitive sport of cycling includes track, mountain biking, BMX and road cycling.

Qualifying – the road to Rio

Qualification to secure spots at the Olympic Games is based around the number of qualifying points earned in the 2 years prior to the Games, at the UCI World Cups, World Championships and other qualifying events for track, mountain biking and BMX, or major road races and world championships designated by the UCI for road cycling.

The New Zealand cycling team selections for Rio will be announced in June 2016 for BMX, and in July 2016 for track, road and mountainbike.

Rio 2016 Cycling

“Our planning, preparations and hard work since London have been aimed fully with Rio 2016 in mind. We have a goal of five medals across all our disciplines of track, road, mountain bike and BMX for Rio, which is a big target given that New Zealand cycling has only won eight Olympic medals in its history, and the most won at any single Games was three medals at London in 2012.

“We are looking to our track cycling team for the bulk of these, given their world class performances in the last 4years, and especially since the inception of our centralised programme and new training base at the Avantidrome in Cambridge.” – Mark Elliott, High Performance Director, Cycling New Zealand



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Olympic Sport Information



Track cycling

Competition runs between 11-16 August at the Rio Olympic Velodrome, Barra Da Tijuca. There are five medal events for both men and women:

Sprints

- **Team sprint**– teams with the fastest times in the preliminary rounds (heats) qualify through to elimination match racing (first over the line wins) for the semi-finals, leading to a final for gold and silver and a ride-off for bronze.
- **Individual sprint** – qualifying is by 200m flying lap with the fastest 18 progressing to a series of knock-out rounds leading to quarter-finals, semis and the final. These latter rounds are ridden on a best-of-three basis.
- **Keirin** – heats, repechage and second round races leading to the gold medal final.

Endurance

- **Team pursuit** – qualifying is on a time trial basis, with the fastest teams qualifying for the knock-out elimination rounds through to a final for gold and silver and a ride-off for bronze. It is ridden over 4000m with teams of four riders.
- **Omnium** – involving six disciplines, with the points from each added together.

Day one– scratch race (bunch race with winner the first over the line), individual pursuit (4000m for men and 3000m for women – all on time trial) and elimination race (sprint every two laps with last rider eliminated down to the final two riders).

Day two – time trial (1000m for men and 500m for women), flying lap (time trial one lap) and finishing with the points race (points every 10 laps with 20 point bonus for lapping the field).

Road cycling

Encompasses both the individual time trial and the road race:

- Individual time trial for both men and women – 10 August at Pontal with one 29.8km lap for women and two laps for men.
- Road race – women on 6 August, men on 7 August at Flamengo Park taking in Copacabana. Women race 130.3km and men race 256.4km

Mountain bike

Competition runs 20-21 August, with cross-country for men and women at the Mountain Bike Centre, Deodoro.

BMX

Competition runs 17-19 August, for both men and women, at the Olympic BMX Centre, Deodoro.

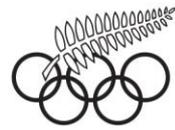
Involves a qualifying time trial (32 men and 16 women) leading to elimination rounds through to a grand final for men and women.



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Demystifying the events

Keirin

The one with the motorbike!

The Keirin (Japanese for 'racing wheels') is a race in which riders sprint for the line after completing a series of laps behind a single motorbike pacer (the Derny). The pacer gradually builds up speed, with riders jockeying for position behind them. However, riders must not pass the Derny until it pulls off the track with two-and-a-half laps remaining, and the riders sprint to the finish line.

What to watch out for:

Positioning behind the motorbike is everything in the Keirin, so expect to see the riders trying to muscle each other out from the start to get their favoured position.

Sprint

Very slow, then very, very fast!

After a flying start 200m time trial to seed the riders, they then race in individual rounds where it's all about who crosses the line first, not how fast you get there. This gives track sprinting its unique combination of chess-like tactical manoeuvres and explosive bursts of speed.

What to watch out for:

As the riders progress through the rounds of the sprint competition and become more evenly matched in terms of their top speed, tactics play an ever-greater part in the outcome of each race. Expect to see the riders slowly circle the track in the early laps, with each trying to force their opponent into a position from which they can launch a surprise dash for the line.

Team sprint

All together now!

The team sprint sees two teams start on opposite sides of the track – three-person teams for men riding three laps (750m) and two-person teams for women riding two laps (500m). After the first lap, the first rider peels off and plays no further part in the race. For the men, after the second lap the second rider also pulls off, leaving just one rider to complete the race on behalf of their team.

What to watch out for:

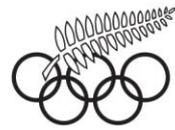
Watch for the lead rider out of the starting blocks as they set the pace.



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Team pursuit

All together now – but longer!

The team pursuit sees two teams effectively chasing one another around the track with the aim of completing the distance in the quicker time. If one team catches the other then they automatically win. While both men and women have four riders, their time is recorded when the third rider crosses the line.

Omnium

All-round action

Best described as the heptathlon for cycling, with an individual rider competing over 2 days in six disciplines – three sprint and three endurance. The Omnium tests the all-round track-racing abilities of each competitor, demanding skill, speed, endurance and tactical abilities in order to win. Riders score points according to their placing in each event, with fewer points awarded the higher the placing. The rider with the highest number of points overall is the winner.

What to watch out for:

It all comes down to the final event – the points race. A lot of points are up for grabs in this race, not just at the finish line but during the race, and overall placings can change markedly.

The Stars of Cycling

The Olympic Games draw the best in professional road riders with the likes of Bradley Wiggins and Chris Froome, while the track has been dominated in recent times by the likes of Wiggins, Sir Chris Hoy and Anna Meares and led by programmes out of Great Britain and Australia. Mountain biking has been dominated by Europeans like Julien Absalom and Julie Bresset, both from France, and in BMX by Maris Strombergs from Latvia.

New Zealand's only Olympic gold medal was won by Sarah Ulmer in the individual pursuit at Athens in 2004. Silver medals went to Hayden Roulston in the same event in 2008 and to Sarah Walker in BMX in 2012.

The most recent New Zealand success has come with the 2015 World Championship titles won by: the Men's Team Pursuit team – Dylan Kennett, Piet Bulling, Alex Frame, Regan Gough and Marc Ryan on the track; Linda Villumsen with the Time Trial World Championship title on the road, following on from her gold medal in the same event at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow; and Anton Cooper with the 2015 world under-23 Cross-Country Mountain Bike title.

The team sprint combination of Ethan Mitchell, Sam Webster and Eddie Dawkins also won the World Championship title in 2014.



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Did you know?

- Bicycle motocross (BMX) started in the late 1970s in California, around the time that motocross became a popular sport in the USA.
- Just like spandex stops chaffing, leg shaving also serves a purpose – it makes getting gravel out of injuries and applying ointment much easier, and it also makes massage less difficult for the massage therapist.
- Solid back wheels on track and road bikes reduce wind drag.
- France, with 73 medals, is the most successful Olympic cycling nation.
- The best all-time performing cyclist at the Olympic Games is British cyclist, Sir Chris Hoy, who added to his tally at the 2012 London Games to make it six gold medals in total.
- On average, a pro-cyclist can ride around 40,000km a year. That's the same distance it would take to go from Los Angeles to New York City 10 times.

Olympic Medals

1 gold, 2 silver, 4 bronze

GOLD

2004 Athens Women's 3000m Individual Pursuit Sarah Ulmer

SILVER

2008 Beijing Men's 4000m Individual Pursuit Hayden Roulston

2012 London Women's BMX Sarah Walker

BRONZE

1992 Barcelona Men's 4000m Individual Pursuit Gary Anderson

2008 Beijing Men's 4000m Team Pursuit Jesse Sergent, Westley Gough, Sam Bewley, Marc Ryan, Hayden Roulston

2012 London Men's 4000m Team Pursuit Jesse Sergent, Westley Gough, Sam Bewley, Marc Ryan, Aaron Gate

2012 London Men's Keirin Simon van Velthooven

Note: Bruce Biddle initially finished 4th in the Road Race at the Munich Games in 1972 and was subsequently confirmed with 3rd place following a positive drug test of the original bronze medalist Spaniard Jaime Huelamo. As Biddle was not drug tested at the time, the IOC has been unable to award him the bronze medal.

Cycling terminology

- Draft:** To ride closely behind a competitor, saving energy by using that racer as a windbreak.
- Flyer:** A surprise attack, usually by a solo rider.
- Peloton:** The main group of riders; also called the pack, bunch or field.
- Pole line:** The innermost line on the velodrome surface used to measure the length of the track; also called the measuring line.
- Repechage:** A round (usually in sprint competitions) in which losers of previous heats race against each other to gain re-entry into the competition.
- Sprinter's line:** A red line which marks the outside edge of the sprinter's lane.
- Time trial:** A race in which riders start individually and race against the clock.

Timeline

- 1817** First bicycle introduced as a mode of transport in Germany.
- 1891** First major competition event (Paris-Brest-Paris) held. Soon after velodromes were built in many cities throughout Europe, the USA and Japan.
- 1896** Cycling was included in the first modern Olympic Games and has been at every summer Olympic Games since.
- 1903** Tour de France began, cycling's most famous race.
- 1970s** Off-road mountain biking began about the same time as BMX, now both Olympic cycling disciplines.
- 1996** Mountain biking debuted at the Olympic Games in Atlanta.
- 2008** BMX racing was added to the Olympic programme in Beijing.
- 2012** Women competed in the same full programme of events as men for the first time at the London Olympic Games.