



Reading part 3

How it started

BMX biking began in the late 1960s in southern California. It's based on the sport of motocross, which dates back to 1924 and involves racing motorbikes across rough tracks. It started when children began to copy motocross riders by racing their bikes on tracks which they built themselves. 1) _____

Popularity

In July 1971, a movie about motocross called *On Any Sunday* came out. At the start of the film a group of kids from California are shown riding their bicycles as if they were riding motorbikes. This helped to make BMX biking more popular.

2) _____

BMX Bikes

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the most famous BMX bike was the Schwinn Sting-Ray; this was the bike every young rider wanted to own. At this time 70 per cent of all bicycle sales in the USA were either the Sting-Ray or similar models. By the mid 1970s BMX design had improved a lot and there were many new models to choose from.

3) _____

World Competition

In 1977, the American Bicycle Association was formed to organise the competitions and to make the rules. The sport was also becoming popular in other parts of the world, particularly in Europe. The first BMX world championship was held in Indianapolis, USA, in 1978. Most of the 165 competitors were teenagers, but there were also children competing in special races for the under 8s and under 12s. There were separate races for boys and girls. There weren't many nationalities present at this competition; apart from Americans there were only a few riders from Australia, Japan and Venezuela.

Since that time the number of races for adults has grown very quickly, but BMX racing didn't become a full Olympic sport until the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.

4) _____

Freestyle

As the popularity of BMX grew, riders were constantly testing the limits of their bikes. BMX wasn't just about racing any more. Riders began to take their bikes to skateboard parks and started performing tricks and jumps.

5) _____

- A. But the bikes all had the same sized wheels and usually only one brake.
- B. This became known as 'freestyle' and riders soon began to practise this as much as racing.
- C. This new form of bike racing was named bicycle motocross, or BMX.
- D. Maris Stromberg from Latvia won the first ever Olympic men's gold medal for BMX racing and Anne-Caroline Chausson from France became the first women's champion.
- E. Soon BMX races attracted hundreds of riders.