

# ACTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

## DEMPSTER NAMED TO CANADIAN WORLD JUNIOR CYCLING TEAM

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Madison Dempster was a little surprised when the email arrived from Cycling Canada.

The announcement of the Canadian team for the world junior championships wasn't supposed to be coming for another week. The 17-year-old had performed exceptionally well at the junior national championships, yet she didn't want to assume that was enough to earn her a spot on the team.

She clicked on the email and read the two sentences. This was not about world juniors. This was better.

It had been just over three years since the rural Milton resident began track cycling. Her parents were looking for an athletic outlet for their daughter to replace the 30 hours a week she had spent in the gym as a competitive gymnast. So when David and Heidi Dempster attended the cycling competition at the Pan Am Games at the newly constructed velodrome in Milton, they returned

home and suggested their daughter might want to try it.

She knew nothing about the sport, but gave it a shot anyway. She signed up for the beginners' class, went to a couple of race nights and was hooked.

Her first official race was the provincial championships, where she earned a gold medal.

"Having that first provincial medal gave me confidence," said the Grade 11 student at Acton High School. "When I started beating the people I was training with, I knew I could go places."

Where Dempster is going now is Switzerland. The email she received was telling her she had been selected to attend the junior track training camp at the World Cycling Centre. Dempster will be the only Canadian at the five-week camp where she'll receive instruction from some of the top coaches in the world.

She'll follow that up by going to Frankfurt, Germany for the world junior championships. Dempster is looking forward to chal-



Ivan Rupes

After setting two national age-group records and winning four gold medals at nationals, Madison Dempster has been named to the Canadian team for the world junior track cycling championships in Germany. She was also selected for an international training camp in Switzerland for young riders.

lenging herself against riders from other countries.

In Canada, she has more than established her credentials. At junior nationals in April, she set a new age-group pursuit record for the third straight year -

each time with a different partner. Dempster also set a new junior mark (36.479 seconds) in the 500-metre time trial and added gold medals in the keirin and sprint challenge.

Ontario high perfor-

mance track coach Joe Veloce said Dempster follows her training plan to a T and dramatically improves each time she competes. And as her rapid rise would suggest, though still relatively new to the sport, it

doesn't take her long to understand cycling concepts.

"You explain a tactic to her once and she goes out and executes it like she's been doing it her whole life," he said.

Her strong work ethic off the track has also provided her with a physical edge.

"She's very powerful," Veloce said. "We've done some testing on how much power an athlete puts into the pedals and her numbers are pretty incredible - not even just for her age, but even for a much older rider."

What intrigues Dempster is how she'll stack up against the competition overseas, where the sport is much more popular and riders start competing at a younger age.

She hopes the competition at the training camp and junior worlds will push her to go even faster.

"Cycling is not the biggest sport in Canada, especially for young female riders. I have trouble even finding a partner for the pursuit," Dempster said. "Being fast in Canada is one thing, but Europe, they'll be very fast. It will be an eye opener, but it will be a great experience to see what's out there."



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