

# SPORTS

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MILTON SPORTS  
**Beyond the  
Mainstream**

## BMX gives riders a real lift

Track 2000 has racers of all ages and skill levels

By Steve LeBlanc

CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

After two years, Ryan Colwell got tired of watching BMX racing.

It's not that his interest in the sport had diminished. Quite the opposite.

Seeing just how much enjoyment son Grant was getting on the track, the now 35-year-old was determined to join in the fun.

"I didn't want to simply be a spectator anymore," recalled the elder Colwell during the first official practice session at Britannia Road's Track 2000, while young racers whizzed by. "Grant was having so much fun that I figured getting out there and doing it myself was better than sitting there roasting in the sun for two hours watching."

While the thrills and physical benefits associated with BMX racing were certainly a big part of what drew the father of two to the sport, the idea of sharing a competitive endeavour with his boy was perhaps the biggest appeal.

### Provides a great bond

"How many opportunities are there to do a sport with your son?" said the relatively new racer, whose four-year-old son Luke is looking to get on the track soon as well. "It's created a great bond."

Eight-year-old Grant wholeheartedly agrees.

"Having my dad race too is really cool."

Although they may be the only father-son tandem this season, the Colwells represent just the tip of the

### At A Glance

#### Out-of-this-world boost

BMX's popularity took off after the 1982 release of Steven Spielberg's smash-hit E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial. The lovable little alien lifting Elliott and his fellow young riders into the sky remains one of the most memorable scenes in cinematic history, and gave the sport a huge shot in the arm.

#### Beginner's advice

Keeping your elbows and knees bent helps maintain a steady ride, as does leaning back. And riding in a standing-up position will give you a lot more speed than keeping your posterior glued to the seat.

#### Riding locally

Track 2000 (on Britannia Road just west of Trafalgar Road) holds practices every Thursday evening and races most Sundays. A free pre-registered session for beginners — \$30 for four lessons without a bike rental and \$40 with a bike rental — is held Monday nights. A riding licence of about \$45 and track membership of \$30 is required to race the season. Visit [www.track2000BMXracing.com](http://www.track2000BMXracing.com) for more information.

Cycling's BMX/downhill program co-ordinator Nicky Pearson, whose husband Dean co-built the original Drumquin Park track in 1982 (was moved slightly and upgraded in 2005). "It's definitely a family atmosphere."

One of just a handful of BMX racing facilities in Ontario (due to what Pearson said are major difficulties with most municipalities in getting facilities built), Track 2000 attracts riders of all skill levels from across Halton and well beyond — with this summer's enrolment expected to be about 300.

And while the lion's share of those are of the youth and adolescent variety, adults like Colwell aren't in an extreme minority by any means.

#### Not just for kids

"For some races we need three motos (heats) for the adults," said track volunteer Ginny Foster, who's been helping out with everything from selling 50/50 tickets to spotting the riders over the past four years since 15-year-old son Hunter started competing. "We've got riders from four to 64."

While a high percentage of kids these days own BMX bikes, Hunter stresses that there's a big difference between riding one to school and what he and his fellow racers do.

"Yeah a lot of people think of BMX as street riding," he said.

Having recently earned a spot on Team Ontario, Hunter certainly relishes every opportunity to catch some air and test his skills on the jumps and turns at Track 2000 and other venues across the province and abroad.

iceberg when it comes to family connections on the local racing scene.

"We've got brothers and sisters, girlfriends and boyfriends, even husbands and wives," said Ontario



**CATCHING SOME AIR:** Darren McKinnon (left) and Corey Walsh get airborne at Track 2000's recent open house.

MICHAEL IVANIN /  
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

But actual racing isn't the only aspect of BMX that's kept him coming back each year.

"The social part is great. The people I've met (in BMX) are the best."

Echoed mom, "It's a tight-knit and supportive community. People here are always willing to help out."

Pearson suggests another appealing aspect of racing is participants

can make as much or as little a commitment as possible.

She said, "Basically you can excel at your own speed. If you decide not to go out one night you're not hurting a team."

And many are quite content to keep that at a modest level.

"I'm still a little reluctant to leave the ground," quipped Colwell.

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