



Sport History

Cycling – Track

Origins and the sport today:

Track cycling first became popular during the second half of the 19th century, when English cyclists competed on specially constructed indoor wooden tracks. Large crowds attended races in the 1870s and the first Track Cycling World Championships took place in Chicago, USA, in 1893.

The Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) was founded in 1900 and has organised the Track Cycling World Championships ever since. As the discipline evolved, three distinct types of event emerged: sprint, endurance and combined.

In 2014, the UCI Junior Track Cycling World Championships were hosted in Seoul, Korea, (the first time the event travelled to Asia) and in 2016 the UCI's representation reached 185 national federations.

Track cycling at the Commonwealth Games:

Track cycling is an optional sport at the Commonwealth Games, meaning it is up to the host federation to decide whether it should be on the program, but has been represented by at least two events since the British Empire Games of 1934.

Of the current program, the men's 1km time trial and 4000m individual pursuit have the longest history, dating back to 1934 and 1950 respectively. The women's scratch race and women's team sprint both first appeared at the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.

Seven of the 13 Commonwealth Games track cycling records are held by Australian athletes, with England, Scotland and New Zealand cyclists sharing the rest. Only two Commonwealth Games records from Delhi 2010 still stand (men's 4000m individual pursuit and women's team sprint), with all of the other records broken at Glasgow 2014.

Track cycling in Australia:

Australia has a glittering history in track cycling. The country's first recorded track bike race was at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1869, with the Melbourne Bicycle Club (MBC) formed in 1878.

The country's first Olympic cycling team travelled to the Antwerp 1920 Games, with the first Olympic medal won by Edgar 'Dunc' GRAY at Amsterdam 1928 – bronze in the 1000m time trial.

One of Australia's most famous cyclists is Anna MEARES, who won two Olympic gold medals (Athens 2004 in the 500m time trial and London 2012 in the sprint) and six Olympic medals in total. She also won five Commonwealth Games gold medals across the Melbourne 2006, Delhi 2010 and Glasgow 2014 Games, with a total of eight medals. She retired in October 2016 and the Anna Meares Velodrome opened in Brisbane later that year. Perhaps her most notable feat was coming back to compete after breaking her neck on the World Cup circuit in Los Angeles in January 2008.

Sid PATERSON won every Australian track championship in the sprint, time trial, one mile and five mile events. He also won the World Professional Pursuit Championships in Paris in 1952 and Zurich in 1953 – he died in 1999, aged 72.

Kathy WATT was known for her all-round ability and won gold in the road race at the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games, along with silver in the 3000m individual pursuit. She also won four Commonwealth Games gold medals: the road race at Auckland 1990, along with the individual pursuit, time trial and team time trial at Victoria 1994.