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## Sport History

### *Cycling – Mountain Bike*

#### **Origins and the sport today:**

The first official records of bicycles being modified for off-road use date back to August 1896, with the expedition of Buffalo Soldiers from Montana to Yellowstone, while the Swiss military had its first bike regiment in 1891. However, the discipline really gained momentum in California in the 1970s. Fatter tyres, rapid-shift gears, drum brakes and suspension led to the first downhill race in 1976.

In 1983, the first National Championships took place in Santa Barbara, with the World Championships making their debut at Purgatory Resort in 1990 in Colorado, with more than 30,000 spectators in attendance. Six years later, mountain bike became part of the program at the Atlanta Olympics.

The main governing bodies are the Union Cyclists Internationale (UCI) and Cycling Australia (CA), with Mountain Biking Australia (MTBA) the peak body for mountain biking in Australia.

#### **Mountain bike cycling at the Commonwealth Games:**

Mountain bike 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.

First introduced at the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games for men and women, favourite Roland GREEN (CAN) won gold, along with fellow Canadian Chrissy REDDEN. Canada's success continued at the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, with Marie-Helene PREMONT taking gold in the women's event, but there was an English one-two in the men's – Liam KILEEN (gold) and Oli BECKINGSALE (silver).

The sport was dropped from the Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games, before returning to Glasgow 2014. New Zealand took gold and silver in the men's event (Anton COOPER and Samuel GAZE), while Canada continued its success, with Catharine PENDREL winning gold and Emily BATTY silver.

#### **Mountain bike cycling in Australia:**

Key to the development of mountain bike cycling in Australia was the emergence of Cadel EVANS, who won two world championships and competed at the Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, before switching to road racing.

Large numbers of trail networks have since been established, particularly in the Victorian high country, and mountain biking has become a major summer sport in alpine resorts.

Mary GRIGSON is the only Australian female to have won an elite cross-country World Cup race, while also winning five national titles, Commonwealth Games bronze (Manchester 2002) and the 24-hour World Mountain Bike Championship in 2001.

Daniel McCONNELL (AUS) won bronze at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, as did fellow Australian Rebecca HENDERSON in the women's event.