

FASTER AND FARTHER

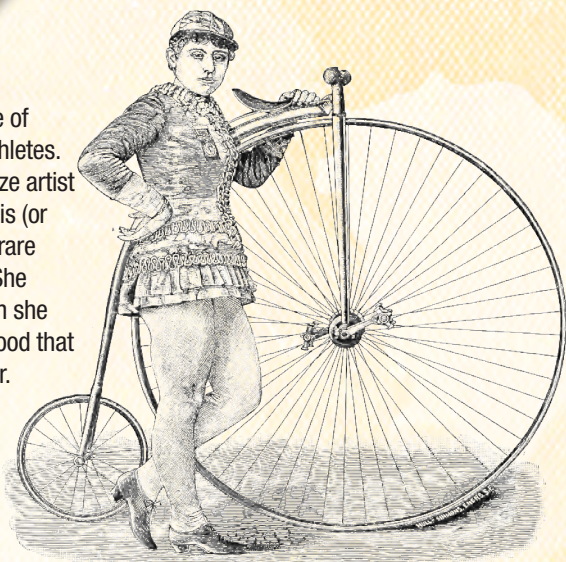
**As long as there have been bicycles, there
have been bicycle races and racers.**



A bicycle race in
Portage la Prairie, Man.,
date unknown.

**The first bicycle races took place
outdoors on regular roads or on
track loops. Cycle races were
common by the 1880s. The first
national meet, run by the Canadian
Wheelmen's Association, took place
in 1883. Later events happened
indoors on temporary wooden
tracks or in cycling buildings known
as velodromes. Some races were
short and fast. Some were many
kilometres long.**

Louise Armaindo of Montreal was one of
Canada's first professional women athletes.
She was also a weightlifter and trapeze artist
whose real name was Louise Brisebois (or
maybe Brisbois). She was one of the rare
women who raced penny-farthings. She
raced all over North America . . . when she
could find competition. She was so good that
few others wanted to race against her.



Nora Young grew up in Thunder Bay, Ont., and later moved to Toronto. She was good at every sport she tried, but cycling was her favourite. There weren't many races for women in the 1930s, so she often competed against men. She was one of a small group of women cyclists chosen to put on a demonstration race before a men's six-day event at Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens in 1936.

When Montreal hosted the World Cycling Championships in 1899, more than 30,000 people came out to watch.



The longest bicycle races lasted six full days. They were usually held in indoor arenas, with teams of two cyclists taking turns on the track. The first six-day race in Canada was in 1912. By the 1930s, the races were hugely popular, but they gradually disappeared after the Second World War.



William "Torchy" Peden of Victoria, B.C., won many Canadian championships. He was also a star in the six-day race, winning half of the events he entered in his first four years. The money he won made him one of the highest-paid athletes in the world during the Depression.

The world's most famous cycling race is the Tour de France. The leader after each section gets to wear a special shirt. The first Canadian to compete in the Tour was Montreal's Pierre Gachon in the 1930s. In 1984, Kelly-Ann Way of Windsor, Ont., became the first North American woman to win a stage of either the men's or women's Tour. And in 1986, Alex Stieda of Coquitlam, B.C., became the first North American to earn a yellow jersey.



Pierre Gachon



Kelly-Ann Way



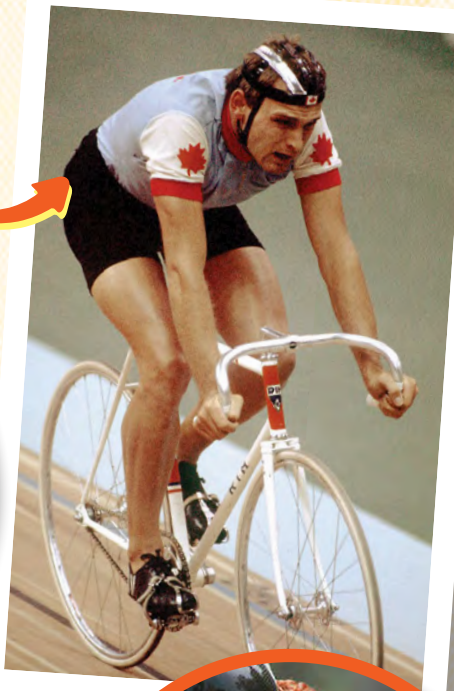
Kelly-Ann Way

Montreal's Guy Morin was Canadian champion eight times. He worked in cycling organizations after retiring from racing.

For a time after cars became popular, Canadians' interest in bicycle racing dropped. It picked up again in the 1960s with Canadian racers winning honours in all kinds of events. These included team and individual races, from road racing to track (indoor) and mountain bike events.



Toronto's Jocelyn Lovell was a teenager when he first raced for Canada at the 1968 Olympics. He won 35 national championships and many medals at the Commonwealth and Pan-Am Games in the 1970s.



CP Images

Thanks to her three world championships and many international medals, Edmonton's Alison Sydor was named one of Canada's cyclists of the twentieth century by *Canadian Cyclist* magazine. She was a strong road racer and was even better at mountain biking.

Toronto's Lori-Ann Muenzer won Canada's first Olympic gold medal in cycling in 2004.



Clara Hughes of Winnipeg won two bronze medals at the 1996 Summer Olympics. She later won speed skating medals in the Winter Olympics, making her the only person to do both.