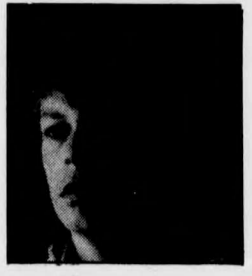


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The view from the saddle

by John Andrews

Cycling is Canada's fastest growing sport. Although almost every Canadian owns a bicycle, very few are familiar with the organization and specifics of cycling.

Canada has recently gained a lot of press in the cycling world due to 1984 Olympic silver medallist Steve Bauer, and such athletes as Alex Steida and Brian Walton. All of these racers are professionals, riding for the American based 7-Eleven team. Steve Bauer recently made headlines when he signed a three-year multi-million dollar deal. Although these three athletes can take some credit for cycling's growth in Canada, the real reasons seem to be positive advertising and the fitness craze.

With so many different facets, cycling is an ideal sport to pursue. Many athletes begin cycling to help them training for their specific sport, while others take to it is a non-impact sport offering relatively injury-free training. Cycling offers the athlete overall strength and cardiovascular fitness. Contrary to popular belief, cycling does not just work the leg muscles; it is also good for your lower back, abdominal, shoulders, neck, arms and pectoral muscles. For someone looking for a complete workout without bulking up, this is the sport.

Racing in Ontario is fairly accessible and it is not that difficult for a dedicated rider to quickly move up to the top level. This is particularly true with women's racing, as the average turnout for a race is about 30 riders compared to the well over a hundred competitors in men's races.

Choosing the correct bicycle is the most important decision a budding cyclist will make. These days, one can spend well over \$4,000 dollars on a bike, so there is plenty of choice.

The first step is to decide what type of riding you want to do. Whether it is racing, mountain biking, touring or commuting, you should

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