

## Cycling

Hello everyone! My name is Stephen Cannell, I'm a Coordinator for International Relations in Toyohashi. Bicycles are a part of our everyday lives. We use them to commute to work and to shop, as well as for exercise. But bicycles are also used in high-level competitions. Today I'd like to introduce the cycling events that will be taking place at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.



Cycling has been a part of the Olympics since the 1<sup>st</sup> games in Athens. In Athens there were 6 cycling events, and in Tokyo there will be 11 events, including the newly added BMX freestyle and madison events.

Let's begin with the road racing events. The road race at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics will be 244km long for men and 147km long for women. It will start at Musashinomori Park, circle Lake Yamanaka, pass through Fuji Speedway, and turn around at Fuji Sanroku before returning to Tokyo.

Next up is the newly added BMX freestyle event. Athletes have 1 minute to utilize ramps and handrails to perform their best techniques around the park and receive points based on style and difficulty.

The other new event in 2020 is the madison. Cyclists ride in pairs across a distance of 50km for men and 30km for women, and take turns riding in front allowing the rear cyclist to avoid wind resistance and conserve energy.

When the athletes switch positions, the front cyclist uses their hand to slingshot the rear cyclist to the front. Points are awarded for lapping the



opponent and for winning short “sprints” which take place throughout the race. 1<sup>st</sup> in the spring is awarded 5 points, followed by 3 points, 2 points, and 1 point for 4<sup>th</sup>. The pair with the most points at the end is the winner.

With many events come many athletes, and among those athletes is Toyohashi local Tomohiro Fukaya. Fukaya is a professional keirin and sprint cyclist. He is looking to qualify for the spring event at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Currently Fukaya ranks the highest among Japanese athletes in the sprint world rankings. If he maintains his current rank, his chances of appearing in the Olympics are high. Japan has not taken a medal in sprint since they took bronze in 1984, so Fukaya looks to end the 36 year drought.

Sprint takes place on a slanted oval-shaped track. The athletes race around the track and the winner is determined by the finishing order. There are a variety of tactics employed in sprint, mostly revolving around reducing air resistance as much as possible. The athlete in front faces the most air resistance, while the athletes in the back get to conserve energy. The athletes decide on a moment just before the finish where they explode and attempt to overtake one another. Proper timing of this is one of the most important skills in sprinting.

There are a large variety of cycling events for people of all different interests. The Tokyo 2020 Olympics introduce BMX freestyle, which is sure to bring in new audiences. Let's all tune in to the Olympics next summer!

