

# Shanaze Reade BMX champion

Shanaze Reade (23 September 1988 -)

This woman takes our breath away. How many adjectives can we use to describe her? Brave, cool, ambitious, intelligent, wise, articulate, magnanimous, dedicated, passionate. The list goes on.

Shanaze is the girl from Crewe who became the sole woman member of the United Kingdom BMX Beijing Olympic team. The country's hopes were pinned on her as the favourite to win gold in the women's BMX event. On the day she gave everything but crashed out.

But her strength of character shone through a month later. When asked if she regretted her 'do or die' mission in the Olympic final she responded simply. "I'd have been more upset if I'd played safe and got a silver or a bronze. I went there to win, and if I was put in the same position tomorrow I'd do exactly the same thing."

She began racing at the age of 10 and bought her first race BMX bike for £1. By 2005 she was racing the National series with the men, despite being only 17 years old. She commented in an interview: "I am usually always top three when racing the guys. I have been racing them now for two years and I was almost the National Champion last year though had to settle for the number two spot. The boys in BMX are all cool, some spit their dummies out but I just let them get on with it! It's really quite fun to watch when I kick their booties."

She has fractured her knee, broken her foot twice, an elbow and a bone at the base of her spine. She won the World Championships in Brazil, in August 2006, despite an earlier injury to her foot.

And it's not just BMX that Shanaze excels at. She started track racing in 2007 and took first place in **Team Sprint at the World Championships** along with Victoria Pendleton. It was also the first ever Women's Team Sprint Gold Medal title in that event. At the 2008 UCI Track Cycling World Championships in Manchester, she again won the gold in the women's team sprint with Victoria.

In 2007 she became **The Sunday Times Young Sportswoman of the Year** and she was just 19 years old when she articulated the fears of many parents twice her age.

"Too many girls get blinded by the easy life," she says.

"They have kids at 16 and you think, 'Phew, where have their lives gone?'

I think it's getting worse among young people, I really do. Look at obesity levels.

"I don't ever want to look back and wonder,

'Why didn't I do that?' It's a negative that comes from my family.

I don't ever want to be a failure. Living as a sportsperson is an absolutely amazing job.

No other job could give you the satisfaction that being a sportsperson does for me."

you can find Shanaze on the web here: [www.shanazereade.com](http://www.shanazereade.com)