

# HANGIN' WITH CORBEN SHARRAH

## BMX RACER

**AS THE WORLD BMX championships approach later this month, 19-year-old Corben Sharrah is angling for one of three U.S. team spots at the 2012 London Games. So far in 2011 the second-year pro has won a World Cup event and the U.S. elite men's national championship. As Sharrah, who competes for GT Bicycles, tells Mike Ogle, he's loved the thrill of riding from the very beginning.**

**Can you sum up what BMX racing is all about?** You race around a dirt track starting on top of a hill six-to-10-foot tall. Around the track are obstacles—rollers, tabletops, step-ups, doubles, triples and berms—that take 35 to 45 seconds to get through. It's one of the most exciting sports out there.

**How big was becoming an Olympic sport?** It puts BMX on the biggest stage, which is exciting. It signifies BMX is really a sport and takes talent and work to be at the top.

**How'd you get started doing this?** My parents got me a bike

when I was two, and I was riding it with no training wheels basically the first time out. When I was five, this dirt track nearby had commercials on TV. I'd call the phone number but hang up because I didn't know what to say. So my dad took me one night to watch. The next week he took me to ride. Ever since I've been racing.

**Were you already doing jumps at home?** Yeah, we'd set up ramps and my brother and friends would lay down to see how many people we could jump over.

**Were your parents aware?** They knew. They were watching me once when I was four, and I fell and scraped my face up. But they saw I was having fun.

**It sounds like you were pretty fearless as a kid.** I've never really been scared of getting scratched or falling on my head. I just focus on being quick and getting everything right. I've been fortunate. I've dislocated a pinky, broken a finger and tore the meniscus in my knee doing a 360 once. But nothing major. Really, my mind-set hasn't changed from when I was little. I just go out there and do it.

**Do you have time for any other hobbies? Or are you always on the bike?** Sometimes I'll rap and dance when I'm hanging with my older brother, Jacob, and friends. It's good for my racing, for rhythm. We'll listen to some beats and throw down some rhymes, some freestyle.

**Would Jacob say that you're better at rhyming or riding?**  
(Laughing.) Definitely riding! ●

### THE SHARRAH FILE

**Age:** 19

**Hometown:** Tucson

**College:** Pima Community College

**Motto:** "Do what you love, and love what you do."

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