

## City of Marion presents elite rider prizes at launch of Sam Willoughby BMX facility

Mayor of Marion Kris Hanna presented the superclass men's and women's prizes to Izaac Kennedy and Sienna Pal at the end of a shortened opening round of AusCycling's 2022 BMX national season at the newly opened Sam Willoughby International BMX Facility on the weekend.

The \$495 cheques for the elite rider classes were sponsored by the City of Marion as part of the celebrations marking the official opening of the \$6.05 million Union Cycliste Internationale-accredited track.

The facility is named after Sam Willoughby who grew up in the southern suburbs and went on to become a BMX Olympic medallist and World Champion.

Severe weather conditions prompted organisers to stop racing early on Saturday.

More than 500 riders raced through the wet conditions. All competitors completed two motos and half the field completed three motos before the event was halted around 5.30pm.

Superclass winners Izaac Kennedy, from the Nerang BMX Club, and Sienna Pal, from the Terrigal BMX Club, made the most of the clearer weather in the opening heat, taking out the fastest time in the first moto.

Sam Willoughby was trackside for the first moto and dropped the gate for the first race.

The wet and windy conditions persisted on Sunday with race organisers and the ground crew working hard to make sure racing could continue.

The BMX national rounds were part of the Santos Festival of Cycling's BMX Summer Showdown 2022.

Round 1 finished around the time of the official opening of the Sam Willoughby International BMX Facility.

A plaque marking the occasion was unveiled by Sam Willoughby, the Premier of South Australia Steven Marshall, the State Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing Corey Wingard and Marion Mayor Kris Hanna.

The facility was funded by the City of Marion (\$1.75 million), the State Government (\$3.55 million) and the City of Onkaparinga (\$750,000). Marion Council has also allocated \$200,000 for the future construction of a Pump Track on the site.

"This is a world-class facility right here in the City of Marion and it was really special that Sam, an Australian champion who is a local legend for our clubs, was there to celebrate," Mayor Hanna said.

“This facility has taken years of planning and community consultation as well as funding from different levels of government to finally come together.

“To be able to mark the occasion with a world cup-qualifying, BMX National competition with some of the country’s elite riders as part of the Santos Festival of Cycling is a fitting recognition of that collaboration.”

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