

# Local BMX boys zoom to two-wheeled success

By **Pete Colaizzo**  
Poughkeepsie Journal

One moment, the father and son were out fishing. The next moment, the kid was on a BMX bicycle. And then, a star on two wheels was born.

Such is the unusual progression for the state's top-ranked 14-year-old expert division BMX rider — Highland resident Jeffrey Croshtier.

"A friend of his told him about BMX when he was 9," his dad, Jeff Croshtier said. "We just took him out to the (New Paltz BMX) track one day. It was a fluke, we were just out fishing and I said to him 'I don't think you'll want to do this.'

"We got there, there happened to be a practice," dad recalled. "We put him on a bike, and away he went."

Five years later, Croshtier is still pedaling strong several days

per week. He practices at the New Paltz track on Tuesdays and races on Thursdays. On the weekends, the Croshtiers pack up and head over to neighboring Connecticut for that state's series in Torrington. He is ranked fourth in his class in that series.

The Croshtiers also travel to regional tournaments throughout the Northeast. This weekend, they will be in Pottstown, Pa. The following weekend, it's Bennington, Vt. "We travel all over," Croshtier said. "It's a very fun sport and we enjoy it."

Croshtier is sponsored by Robinson's Refuse of Highland and Towrific Auto Service of New Paltz. For more information on BMX racing in New Paltz, go to [www.newpaltzbrmx.org](http://www.newpaltzbrmx.org)

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## About BMX racing ...

### What's in a name?

BMX stands for **Bicycle Motocross**. It is often mistaken for motocross, which uses dirt bikes with a motor. The only motor on a BMX bike is the person pedaling it.

### When do they race?

The BMX season in the Northeast runs from about April until November, but if you travel you can race all year. The final event of the season is the Grand National in Louisville, Ky., over Labor Day weekend. Riders

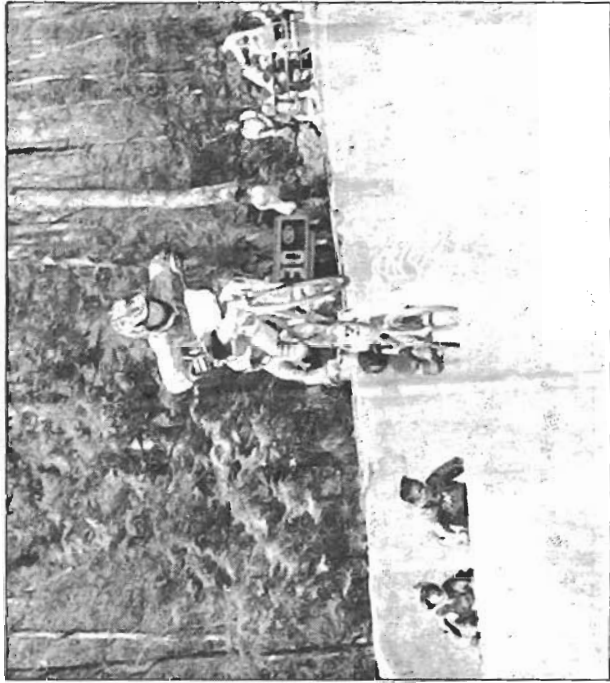
will come from all over the world to compete for one of the top eight trophies and other prizes.

### What's Casey's plan?

BMX standout Casey Tanner of Holmes, a 9-year-old, will be making his third trip to the Grands this year. He has one Grands trophy from his first trip racing as a 7 expert. He will also race at the Northeast Regional event at Woodward Camp in Pennsylvania, and at the Connecticut state championships in September.

Courtesy photos

Casey Tanner, a 9-year-old BMX racer from Holmes in eastern Dutchess County, races at tracks in Connecticut and New York on a regular basis, as well as traveling to regional and national events throughout the year. He is seen here (below, above right) in racing events at the Torrington (Conn.) BMX facility.



# This 9-year-old never stops pedaling

By **Pete Colaizzo**  
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*Editor's note: Casey Tanner of Holmes is just 9 years old, but he has been racing BMX bicycles for the past four years. He stays very busy in the sport, racing several times per week and traveling out of state frequently for regional and national events. Poughkeepsie Journal Players section editor Pete Colaizzo conducted an e-mail interview about Casey's pedaling prowess with Casey and his parents, Susan and Mark Tanner.*

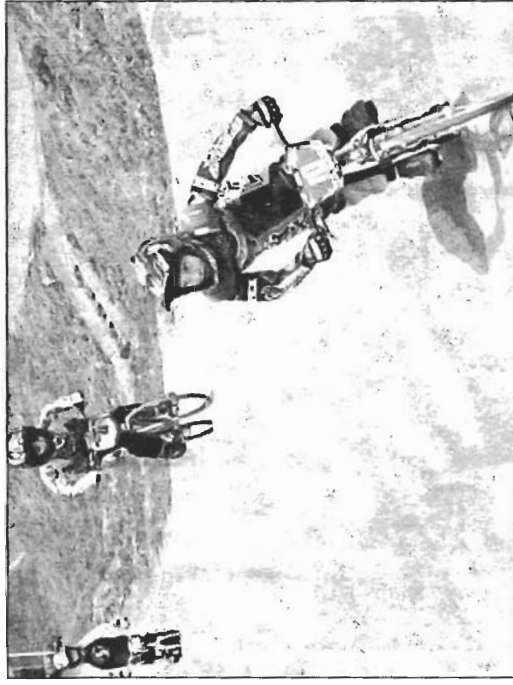
### How did Casey get involved with the sport? Who introduced it to him?

When Casey was 2.5 years old, we went to a local bike shop to buy a tricycle and came home with the smallest bike made, which had a tag on it advertising a local BMX track. When Casey was 5, we took him to New Paltz BMX. And with help from the track director, Jerry Paterson, and some local kids, they showed Casey what to do. He has been racing ever since!

### What are his favorite aspects of the sport?

Casey says his favorite aspects of the sport are speed and jumping! Casey started racing when he was 5 as a Rookie. He had to win 15 races to become a Novice. He was a novice at 6, and had to win 20 races to become an Expert. He turned expert when he was 7. When you race, you race against kids your age and classification. Casey now helps the younger kids just starting out to show them the ropes.

### How often does he practice and race?



Casey practices at Bethel (Conn.) Supercross whenever he gets a chance, but most of the practice is before the races on race day. He races locally Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, and for regional and national races the racing is on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Casey also takes lessons with one of the local professional riders at Bethel. He also rides his regular bike at home when ever he gets a chance.

Casey wears a racing jersey and pants, along with a full face helmet, chest protector, gloves and clip shoes. The National Bicycle League (NBL) requires a full face helmet, long-sleeve shirt and long pants to race.

To race in the NBL, you have to join for \$45 for the year and then you pay a nominal fee for local racing, and about \$35 to \$45 for the regional and national races. The track is a quarter-mile of jumps and turns and rollers. You race in three motos or races to qualify for the main event with 3-8 riders per race. You are racing for points and a plate at the end of the year which gives your national, regional or state ranking.

Casey races two bicycles — not dirt bikes, there is no motor! The bicycle he races most often is a 20-inch and he also races a 24-inch cruiser. The 20 and 24 are the size of the tire. These bicycles are made specifically for BMX racing. The bikes are lightweight and do not

# BMX: Young rider excels

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Casey finished 10th in the nation last year and rides this year with a #10 plate. He finished #1 in the New England region, #1 in New York and #2 in Connecticut. Casey has been asked to be on a team for next year's racing season, Team Edge out of Bristol Conn. He will sign with them in September at the regional championship at Woodward, Pa. We choose to travel a lot, and that is the biggest expense. We have a camper, as do many in BMX, and we camp when we can.

**Talk a little bit about the safety aspect of the sport. Is it safe? Would you recommend it to other children? What are some of the dangers, if any?**

Like any sport, BMX can be dangerous. You have to ride responsibly. ALWAYS wear your helmet!! Sometimes there are falls or crashes, usually ending with just scrapes. At every race there are EMTs to help with anything serious.

I would definitely recommend BMX to kids of all ages. It is a great outdoor sport that uses up a lot of energy, and anyone who can ride a bike can race BMX. It is a family affair and can be both an individual and team sport. BMX will also be in the Olympics for

the first time in 2008 in Beijing. We have met some of the nicest people from this area and all over the country. Casey has friends from all over the country that he races and looks forward to seeing at the big National and Regional events.

**Where do you race/what is your home track?**

Casey races primarily in Connecticut. His home track is Bethel (Conn.) Supercross, which races on Wednesday evenings. We live in a great area for BMX as Connecticut has four tracks and New York has at least five, and then there is New Jersey and Pennsylvania as well.

Bethel Supercross is open all the time for practice. So if you have an interest, just take your bike — any bike — to the track and try it out. Remember the helmet, long-sleeve shirt and pants — all three are required to ride the track. There is always someone at the track willing to help out a new person.

**How does BMX racing fit into your family's overall lifestyle?**

Casey loves racing BMX and puts a lot of time and effort in to his chosen sport. When he is not racing, Casey plays hockey for Pawling Youth Hockey. Both sports benefit each other and keep us busy all year. We are very proud of Casey and the person he is becoming.