

Olympian's cycling academy welcomes 'youngest ever' riders as 2019 sees 'radical changes' to cohort

Following another successful season, the Bryan Steel Academy introduces new senior squad and launches new youth team

Back for its fourth year, the Bryan Steel Academy has welcomed a new cohort of cyclists for 2019 and launched a new Youth Academy, with riders as young as 14.



The Bryan Steel Academy. L-R: Mick Padley, Jack Ford, Tom Booth, Jonathan Oxley, James Alexander and Bryan Steel.

Going from strength to strength since its launch in 2016, the Academy continues to attract the East Midlands' most promising cyclists, eager to learn from former Olympian, Bryan Steel. Bryan competed in four Olympic games, winning Bronze at Sydney 2000 and Silver at Athens 2004, as well as five World Championship medals. Now retired, he has dedicated his expertise to training the next generation of East Midlands champion cyclists through his eponymous Academy.

With continued backing from Vision Express and the all-British cycling apparel manufacturer Godfrey Bikewear, the cycling Academy has accepted four promising young riders for its fourth-year intake. 21-year-old Tom Booth, currently studying at Reading University, has returned for his second year with the Academy, while new riders 18-year-old Jack Ford, James Alexander aged 18, and 20-year-old Jonathan Oxley have joined the team.

Amidst training for his second year with the Academy, Tom commented: "I originally became interested in the Academy through word of mouth and social media – Bryan has a great reputation. I'm returning for 2019 to progress as far as possible and to continue to benefit from the strong support the Academy gives, as well as access to a large network of contacts within the cycling world."

As one of the youngest senior riders, James is hoping the Academy will help him to accomplish his cycling goals. 'Friendship is the main benefit of joining Bryan's Academy,' he said. "The team is dedicated to helping everyone achieve their goals and there's a real team spirit. I'm looking forward to seeing where the Academy can take me and what doors may open in the future."

For the first time, the cycling Academy has also introduced a team of junior riders to its new Youth Academy. Riders aged 14-16 will benefit from access to coaching and race support

from Bryan, as well as monthly training rides with the Olympian and the senior team. Through the new mentoring program, the Youth riders will be able to set goals and see a path towards professional cycling from a young age.

Bryan commented: “We’ve mixed things up with the Academy quite radically this year – we’ve broken it down into senior and junior academies, welcoming the youngest riders we’ve ever had. The aim of the Academy is to create a pathway for talented riders within the East Midlands, helping them move on to competing internationally. Since launching the Academy, we’ve had a member of the team placed with a professional team, which is a massive success – we hope to continue to triumph this year.”

The Academy is gearing up for another busy year with the racing season kicking off in March 2019. The Academy will be focusing on National Series Road and Criterium races in the Midlands and Yorkshire areas.



Bryan Steel at the Race Smart road race in March.

Nottingham cycling enthusiast and road racer who works for Vision Express as an IT Engineer, Darren Cole, lost over eight stone after taking on a sponsored bike ride in 2013 for Vision Express charity partner, the Childhood Eye Cancer Trust, alongside Bryan. He said: “Cycling has become a massive part of my life, kickstarting a huge transformation in my lifestyle, and it’s an honour to have worked so closely with Bryan during our charity events. I’m very proud of Vision Express’ continued support for young cyclists through the Bryan Steel Academy and we all at Vision Express wish the 2019 team well for what promises to be a strong and triumphant season.”

To find out more about the Bryan Steel Academy, visit <https://bryansteel.co.uk/>

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Notes for editors

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