



JAPANESE RIDERS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Rider rankings are defined by how many points athletes accumulate over the season. For every sport part of this ranking, a male and female FISE overall winner is crowned.

If one sentence could sum up the past season, it's "nothing can be taken for granted". We saw dramatic increases in the level of some riders, stars cracking under pressure, brand new players entering the game, breath-taking falls, legends proving their status, unwelcome injuries and much more.

We began the season in the city of Peace, Hiroshima. Both Japanese Riders and Fans turned up in their masses for the first ever FISE event in the country. Then, it was time for Montpellier to prove once again why it has its insane reputation, and is considered the must attend event of the year. As usual the atmosphere was unbeatable with a huge range of sports and a record breaking number of athletes for a FISE event. We then touched down in Edmonton, Canada where we were welcomed with the customary Canadian Hospitality. The riders put on a fantastic show for the Canadian spectators who were treated to a number of World First BMX tricks. Last but by no means least we headed East again to Chengdu, China. This time the event was held in Pidu District, which proved the perfect spot to wrap up the season in dramatic fashion with an event that saw huge surprises and unexpected champions crowned.

Here is how it ended up after a phenomenal season.

JAPANESE RIDERS TO LOOK OUT FOR

MOTO SASAKI – BMX Flatland – age 32

Many consider Japan to be the cradle of BMX Flatland so it is not a surprise so many riders from this country are now at the top of the international scene. As a legend of his sport, Sasaki is one of them and he keeps on working hard to push the limits of his sport. He rides with an ultra-technical riding style and he drops tricks with simplicity. Every single trick looks easy to him, and his style makes him crowd favorite.

ERIKO ONO – BMX Flatland – age 43

Eriko can rock dirt trails and street spots but it is for her skills in BMX Flatland that this bright Japanese rider is most famous. Considered by many specialized BMX media as the female rider to follow since back in 2014, she dedicates her whole life to her sport. When she is not riding with her husband the two of them work together at Wheelies, the BMX Shop they co-own in Sapporo. A super clean and smooth style is her signature.



JAPANESE RIDERS TO LOOK OUT FOR

KATAGIRI MISARI – BMX Flatland – age 26

Katagiri Misari is humble and discreet so she isn't well known outside of her country, Japan. But she is definitely a proper champion, who rocked FWS in 2018. She took the gold at every single stop, thanks to her runs full of the most sophisticated combos in the Women's contests. Her good vibes and flawless tricks always bring delight to the crowd, and the 2019 tour will offer her another opportunity to show the world what she's made of.

ERI FUNATSU – BMX Flatland - age 34

Pizzas are to Italy what Flatland is to Japan, so no need to say that this country is the beating heart of the International Flatland scene. The discipline is immensely popular in the country so it's no surprise that the top female riders come from Japan. Eri Funatsu is the kind of rider who pushes the development of the sport in her country even further with her cool video parts and by winning contests abroad.

CHIIHIRO AZUMA – Roller Freestyle – age 22

Born in Okayama, Japan she began rollerblading at the tender age of 5 years old. Widely regarded as one of the best female Roller riders around, this 22-years-old Japanese rider consistently takes the top honours at the competitions around the world and she even took the gold at the final stop of the 2018 season in Chengdu. She has a laidback effortless style when skating and looks as at home on parks as she does on street sports.

TAKESHI YASUTOKO - Roller Freestyle - age 32

Yasutoko comes from a family of Japanese skaters, both his parents and his brother are also professional. He got his first roller skates aged 3 and has been unstoppable ever since. Known for his demanding and original technique, he's a world champion and multiple gold medallist at the X Games an undoubtedly a world legend in Roller. Called the Japanese Bullet, he is particularly famous for his ability on vert ramps.

MINATO OIKE – BMX Freestyle Park – age 22

Her father's passion for cycling definitely rubbed off on this young Japanese rider and she first started competing in bike sports when she was still a girl. After trying a few different sports, she finally settled on BMX Freestyle and she has been lighting up the Japanese BMX scene ever since. After impressing in FWS Hiroshima but suffering a few bad falls she came back with a bang in Montpellier to win her first FISE event, and continued to impress throughout the season.

IKEDA DAISUKE - Skateboard – age 17

Originally from Tokyo, this high-school student was put on a snowboard at the age of 2. Passionate about it from early, he began to look around for a similar summer sport and



JAPANESE RIDERS TO LOOK OUT FOR

took up skateboarding a few years later. No matter what the trick, he makes everything look easy and the way he lands everything so cleanly is absolutely insane. Two big wins on the FWS 2018 made him a serious challenger to Tury, and he promises to be contender for the title again in 2019!

SORA NEGISHI – Skateboard – age 16

Only 16 years old and already in the running to steal headline billing, this young rider burst on to the scene in Hiroshima last season. Riding in front of his home crowd gave him wings and he placed 3rd, which ensured his invitation to the French stop. With his ultra-fluid style and big bag of tricks we look forward to seeing him again in Hiroshima this year.

RIM NAKAMURA – BMX Freestyle Park – age 16

Being a high school student doesn't stop this young rider competing with the big guns. His dad is a BMX rider, and put Rim on a BMX at 3 years old. Then the story began, and at only 13 years old the notoriety of the Japanese prodigy was already growing. Now supported by some of the most prestigious sponsors on the BMX scene, it seems that nothing can stop this riders progression to the top.