



GLEN ELLEN'S OWN NIKITA DUCARROZ IS ABOUT TO HAVE A BIG MOMENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT. Born in Europe and raised here in Sonoma County, Ducarroz has been named one of the top female BMX freestyle athletes in the world. With the relatively unknown sport poised to make its debut at the Summer Olympics in Tokyo, the 24-year-old is excited to demonstrate her passion on a huge stage. - Dana Rebmann

Robert Snow/Red Bull Content Pool

OLYMPIAN NIKITA DUCARROZ

INTRODUCING BMX FREESTYLE I usually tell people it's the small bikes that we ride at skate parks, sort of like skateboarding. Riders are given a course with no set direction and many jumps and obstacles. It's up to us to decide what route we want to take and what tricks we want to do. Everyone rides a bit different.

ON FINDING THE SPORT I played soccer quite seriously during my early teen years. I always suffered from anxiety, but after some more difficult struggles, at age 14, I had to quit playing.

That summer, while trying to find something active to do in place of soccer, I discovered BMX through YouTube videos. I always liked bikes, so I was immediately drawn to it. I started out just trying to learn tricks in the driveway, and my love for it continued to grow.

MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY I've suffered from severe anxiety, panic attacks, and depression for most of my life. BMX is what helped me eventually leave the house, and over the years, break down many fears that were holding me

back from living a normal life. I started a nonprofit, Mind Tricks, as a way to share athletes' stories about their experiences with mental health and show that even the "best" deal with things and it's OK to talk about them. It's not weak. It doesn't make you a failure.

JUMPING IN Don't be afraid to try a sport because you are a girl. BMX is a sport for everyone, no matter who you are or where you come from. If it's something you want to try, grab a bike, head to the skate park, and give it a go!

THE VIEW AHEAD I think what I am looking forward to most is experiencing the athletes' village and meeting other athletes who are the best in their sports! At the end of the day, I'm just super-excited to be with all my friends again, and to do everything in my power to land a dream run. 🏆