

# Ashley picks up tips from top GB rider

CYCLING by MIKE LEGG

ASHLEY DENNIS is hoping to follow in Chris Hoy's tracks to become a top cyclist.

Hoy won three golds at the Beijing Olympics in the men's keirin, team sprint and individual sprint.

VC Jubilee rider Dennis, 14, is only just starting out on his cycling career but was selected for a sprint school where he picked up tips on how to ride like the Olympic stars from Steyning-based Great Britain rider Peter Mitchell.

Mitchell, who won World Junior Sprint titles in 2007, began his cycling career with Shoreham-based VC Jubilee and demonstrated how it should be done as the expert guest rider at the Newport Velodrome.

Dennis admitted: "I didn't know that much about him when I first started riding but I do now. He's quite good."

Ardingly College pupil Dennis has been a member at VC for three years and is performing at national level in track and road competitions with the new season just gearing up.

Like Mitchell, Dennis would love to progress on to the British Cycling talent pathway which develops the cream of young riders for future success and has drawn inspiration from his Olympic hero.

Dennis said: "I really like Chris Hoy, he's very good."

"I would like to be a top endurance rider and ride in the big bunch races."

"The school taught us how to sprint. We were in the classroom in the morning watching videos then I was on the track in the afternoon with my group."

"We learnt how to swing down the banking and build up speed. When you get to the top of the bank it can be a bit nerve-racking."

Dennis added: "It was great to have Pete help us on the day. It's amazing how fast he can go now and what skills he has got."

"He looks so comfortable on a bike, as if it was part of him. That's something I'm going to take

away and learn how to do, as well as keep trying different things to make me go faster."

Mitchell, 19, started as a 14-year-old at VC Jubilee but is now a full-time cyclist in Manchester at the Olympic Academy and is knocking on the door of the top senior GB sprint riders' times.

Mitchell said: "I really enjoyed the day. It was great to actually have fun on the track, doing some skills."

"I'm usually training at top speed and effort."

"It's great to see other young riders develop, who are not that far behind me in age, but are involved in the right pathway."

"I'm still learning and changing my technique, so this has given the chance for these riders to try something else which may work better for them."

"I'm sure we'll be seeing some of the riders today in future Olympics, and I, of course, hope to be one of them."

Shoreham-based company Ricardo have helped Mitchell on his way to success with crucial funding in his early cycling career.

They are continuing to back the next riders coming from the club with further sponsorship.

Club spokesperson Sally Page said: "The help they have provided Pete with is fantastic."

"It takes a lot to get where Pete is today and there is still such a long way for him to go. This is really crucial funding for him to be able to participate at this level."

"To follow it up with support given to the grass roots club is very generous and really helps our club develop."

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STAR RIDER:  
Chris Hoy

ROLE MODEL:  
Peter Mitchell, left, and Ashley Dennis

