



On your bike: Lauren Reynolds, 18, will be taking on the world's best junior BMX riders in Adelaide tomorrow.

Teenage sensation riding to the top

DALE MILLER

Bunbury's Lauren Reynolds may not look tough but the teenage BMX sensation is proof that guts and determination come in all sorts of packages.

The 18-year-old WA Institute of Sport rider is aiming for gold at the UCI BMX World Championships in Adelaide tomorrow after finishing second in the competition's junior women's elite class in 2008.

Her inspiration will come from a gutsy performance in the first round of the World Cup BMX Supercross in Denmark in May

when she crashed heavily during a practice session.

Reynolds was taken to hospital after breaking a thumb and injuring her neck, but returned to the track to qualify for the final where she finished sixth.

"Holding on to your bars is one of the most important things in a race on a BMX bike so we had to make some pretty big changes to that," she said. "I wasn't using my thumb at all. I was only holding on with four fingers."

It was a daunting prospect, taking on huge jumps without the full use of her hands.

"I don't know how I did it really but I thought 'I've come so far, I'm not going to just sit down and watch this weekend'," she said.

"Knowing I made the final and came sixth with how I was physically, it just makes me so much more confident to go even better."

Reynolds was introduced to BMX racing at the age of eight by an older cousin.

The self-confessed "feral" won her first national title as a junior in 2001 and is now one of five young members of Australia's BMX high performance elite development squad.