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## Lachlan Morton: the boy wonder made of different stuff

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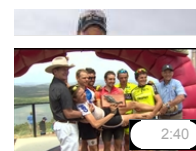
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Already as a bike racer Lachlan Morton differs from 99 per cent of the people on the planet. But even within the male professional cycling community he stands out, writes **Mary Topping** from Colorado.

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**“ THE SINGULAR PACKAGE OF PERSON AND BIKE RIDER THAT IS LACHLAN MORTON MAY BE THE OFFSHOOT OF A DIFFERENT KIND OF JUNIOR EXPERIENCE. ”**

First there's his hair. Tousled wavy locks float haphazardly above his forehead, a style that doesn't pair well with a snug bike helmet.

Most cyclists feature a frame and spokes or team kit on their Twitter profiles. Morton's depicts a gorilla with snow-white fur walking in frozen mountainous terrain.

Recently he tweeted a link to a video about a flying lawnmower.

More than just a unique sense of style places Morton in a league of his own. Just 21 years-old and a neo-pro with the World Tour Garmin-Sharp team, he's scoring results more senior riders dream about.

On Tuesday's Stage 2 of the USA Pro Challenge he summited 3,505 metre-high Hoosier Pass first and alone. Mathais Frank (BMC) and Lawson Craddock (Bontrager) joined him on the descent.

Morton missed the win by three seconds but gained his second yellow jersey of

the season, not to mention another best young rider prize. Nearly two weeks ago he became the Tour of Utah race leader after attacking on the highest peak of the Wasatch Mountains and winning solo. He went home to Boulder as best young rider.

The last two years have been tough. This year he sustained injuries due to accidents caused by motorists and a cyclist. To develop his current fitness probably required a steady, persistent commitment much like the one which carried him up and over Hoosier Pass alone on Stage 2.

The singular package of person and bike rider that is Lachlan Morton may be the offshoot of a different kind of junior experience. With his brother, Morton learned about cycling from Graham Seers in his town of Port Macquarie Australia on the coast of NSW. A bike shop owner, Seers rode for Australia at the 1980 Olympics. He took the boys away for weeks at a time to races.

In 2004 Morton's parents Annie and David brought their sons and a couple of juniors along with them on a business trip to Colorado for training on their bikes. After noting improvements in the kids from riding at altitude and sharing experiences together, the couple launched a junior development program called Real Aussie Kids (RAK) with Seers as coach.

RAK brought a small group of junior riders to Colorado for a six-week summer camp annually through 2012. Team membership afforded the juniors with more than overseas racing experience. The program expected professional behavior – commitment to academics, self-discipline, independence, and respect for sponsors. Initially RAK's base was Breckenridge, the Stage 2 Pro Challenge finish town.

By racing with RAK Morton competed against some of Colorado's top adult cycling talent. That included future Garmin-Sharp teammate Tom Danielson, who once chased down a speedy 14 year-old Morton in local races.

Becoming a professional cyclist is nearly impossible without a support network beginning as a junior that provides a steady supply of encouragement, advice, equipment, transport, and more. Morton's family provided that in spades and now his Garmin-Sharp team does the same.

"When they give you an opportunity it sort of fills you with confidence and you have no hesitation," Morton said about his teammates after his win in Utah.

The junior who challenged Danielson around the streets of Boulder should again enjoy the support of his experienced teammates in Colorado. In the Tour of Utah Garmin-Sharp whipped up the pace on the route to the uphill Snowbird finish to protect Morton's lead. To the last turn Danielson looked back for Morton, who had been dropped.

However all the support in the world won't transform a dream into reality if the cyclist doesn't do his part. For two weeks now Morton has said: "I had an opportunity and just grabbed a hold of it."

He's also added someone to his team of advisors. Contacted to comment on her son's recent success, Annie Morton wrote by email, "He has had so much bad luck, yet he has an amazing training ethic that he never wavers on. I think the turning point was when he started working with a new coach Ben Day ( a fellow Aussie rider). Ben has given Lachlan a much more scientific approach to training and has taught him to train smarter not more. Ben can really relate to what Lach has gone through and believes in him. That has made the difference."



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Tour of the Goldfields - 4:37



Cape to Cape - Day 4 1:03




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Stage 9

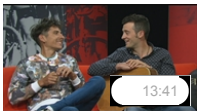
Day 3

October




6:45

Grafton to Inverell




13:41

Lachlan Morton & Nathan Haas Unplugged



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Cape to Cape - Day 3



2:01

Crocodile Trophy - Stage 8

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baz81

You can't forget Mitch Docker is the innovator of retro style.

Aug 22, 2013

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jaseter1970

A refreshing change and nice to see someone who doesn't necessarily conform to the norm in cycling, plus great taste in old school sunnies!! Go Lachlan, representing the Mid North Coast (NSW) with Pizazz.

Aug 22, 2013

Well done.

Jason

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RFA Futbol Mundial

SBS ONE

7:28 pm

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SBS ONE

8:40 pm

A-League Highlights Show

SBS 2

11:00 pm

The World Game

SBS ONE

Tuesday, 29th Oct

4:30 pm

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5:00 pm

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