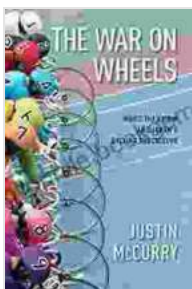


Inside the Keirin and Japan Cycling Subculture

In the vibrant and pulsating streets of Japan, where the intersection of tradition and modernity unfolds, there exists a captivating cycling spectacle that has captivated the nation for decades – Keirin. This high-stakes, high-octane sport has woven itself into the fabric of Japanese culture, intertwining elements of gambling, competition, and a mesmerizing subculture that sets it apart from any other cycling event.

The History and Essence of Keirin

Keirin's origins can be traced back to the early 20th century when Japan sought to harness the popularity of cycling for financial gain. The sport was initially designed as a form of legalized gambling, resembling the excitement and adrenaline rush of horse racing, but on two wheels.



The War on Wheels: Inside the Keirin and Japan's Cycling Subculture by Justin McCurry

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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File size : 9760 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 269 pages



Keirin's essence lies in its unique format. Each race features six to nine cyclists who start behind a motorized pacer, known as a "dernity," which gradually increases its speed over the course of the race. Once the dernity reaches its maximum velocity, it pulls off the track, signaling the cyclists to sprint towards the finish line.

The Rules and Strategies of Keirin

Keirin races are governed by a strict set of rules that add to the strategic complexity of the sport. The participants are assigned starting positions based on their past performances, with the best sprinters placed in the more advantageous positions closer to the rail.

During the race, riders employ a range of tactics to gain an edge. They can form alliances, working together to block opponents or create slipstreams. Others may adopt a more aggressive approach, surging forward early or attempting audacious passes.

The Keirin School: Breeding Grounds for Elite Sprinters

To nurture the next generation of Keirin champions, Japan operates a specialized Keirin School. This rigorous training facility selects promising young cyclists and subjects them to an intense regimen that combines rigorous physical conditioning, technical instruction, and mental fortitude development.

The Keirin School is renowned for producing world-class sprinters who have dominated the international cycling scene. Graduates of the school have won numerous Olympic and World Championship medals, showcasing the exceptional talent and dedication that this institution fosters.

The Thrilling Subculture of Keirin

Beyond the races themselves, Keirin has cultivated a vibrant and passionate subculture in Japan. Fans gather at velodromes across the country, immersing themselves in the electric atmosphere and cheering on their favorite riders.

The subculture extends beyond the track, with Keirin-themed merchandise, magazines, and even video games. The sport has also influenced Japanese popular culture, appearing in movies, anime, and even music.

The Betting Aspect: High Stakes and Financial Allure

Keirin, from its inception, has been closely intertwined with gambling. The sport's popularity as a form of legalized betting has played a significant role in its financial success and widespread appeal.

Racegoers can wager on the winner, place bets on the top three finishers, or participate in more complex betting options. The high stakes and potential financial rewards add an extra layer of excitement to the races.

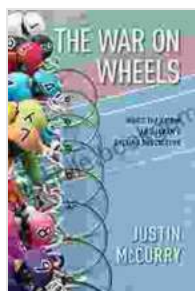
Keirin's International Presence

While Keirin remains primarily associated with Japan, its influence has spread to other parts of the world. Professional Keirin races are now held in South Korea, Taiwan, and Australia, attracting riders and fans alike.

International cycling organizations have recognized the uniqueness of Keirin and have incorporated elements of the sport into their competitions. The UCI, the governing body for international cycling, has included Keirin as an event in the Track World Cup and World Championships.

Keirin, with its electrifying races, strategic gameplay, and vibrant subculture, stands as a captivating and unique spectacle in the world of cycling. From its humble beginnings as a gambling enterprise to its status as a globally recognized sport, Keirin has captured the hearts of millions in Japan and beyond.

Whether it's the adrenaline-pumping sprint to the finish line, the intricate tactics employed by the riders, or the passionate subculture that surrounds it, Keirin offers an unforgettable and immersive experience that continues to enthrall and inspire.



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