



elete Athlete Profile: Sally Bigham, Pro MTB Rider



(Above:) Sally Bigham pictured accepting Silver at the 2011 European Marathon Championships in Austria.

I'm not a 'normal' pro-rider," states Sally Bigham, a pro-mountain bike racing sensation who lives in England. "I didn't gradually rise through the ranks. Instead I stumbled across mountain biking in 2006 and 2 years later I found myself competing against the World's best. She joined Topeak-Ergon Racing Team, a German mountain bike team, in 2009. After juggling work, training, and racing for years, Sally made the decision—the scariest one she'd ever made—to go professional. Sally's decision has paid off. In 2011, she finished her first year as a full-time

pro cyclist number one in the World UCI Marathon Rankings, victories in eight different countries, and seven, 2nd place finishes.

Sally has been an avid user of **elete Electrolyte Add-In** and credits it for helping her stay hydrated and her muscles working in top condition during training and competition. Here's more about Sally Bigham...

How and when did you first get involved with your sport??

"I've always loved spending as much time as possible in the countryside. As a child I would go exploring all day on my horse, but when I moved to University in London, I lost this outdoor lifestyle. I started running and long runs in the forest allowed me to get back outside, but I got lots of injuries. One day I took my boyfriend Dave's mountain bike and rode for as long as I could on the coastal bridleways near our home in Poole. When I got home he asked, 'Why did you ride so far!?' That was when it started – I became obsessed with endurance mountain biking."

What are some of the recent awards you've received/current ranking?

"I am currently ranked number one in the UCI World Marathon Rankings, and some of my victories in 2011 include: The Cape Epic 8 day stage race (South Africa), Andalucia 6 day stage race (Spain), Grand Raid Cristalp (Switzerland), Roc D'Azur (France), Adamello bike marathon (Italy), Kitzalp (Austria), Etna marathon (Sicily)."

What are your plans and goals for 2011?

"In 2012 I would like to be healthy, happy and continue to win races."

Describe your average day. What is your typical training regimen?

"My day always starts with oats and coffee. After breakfast, I prepare my nutrition for the day's biking, including mixing my energy drinks and packing energy bars and gels. I calculate how many grams of carbohydrates I will need based upon the principle of 1 gram of carbohydrates per kg of body weight per hour. After my ride, I shower and eat. If the day's ride

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(Above and Right:) Sally riding the trails in South Africa and Switzerland.

was long (5+ hours) then I relax for the rest of the day, but if it was a shorter session then I might do yoga and core exercises in the afternoon. Rest and recovery usually includes coffee and cake ;)"

In terms of nutrition, what are the indispensable items or strategies you've found are key in giving you the edge over the other athletes?

"I use **elete** before, during and after training or racing. In the days leading up to a race, I drink approximately 2 litres of water containing **elete** per day, and on race days I drink at least 500 ml in the hours before the start. During racing and training I always add **elete** to my carbohydrate drinks and afterwards I add it to my water. Together this helps me stay fully hydrated at all times, this is critical for top performance and recovery."

What is the biggest factor in terms of winning? Likewise, what are the biggest obstacles?

"There are many factors that are all important when it comes to winning races: Fitness, skills, equipment, and race support. With careful preparation all of these factors can be addressed before the race. During the race, however, nutrition is the critical factor. Not consuming enough carbohydrates or becoming dehydrated are the biggest obstacles that I face during a race.

I race for a long time, usually between 3 and 7 hours, and often in the heat or at altitude. If I don't have enough carbohydrates and fluids, or if I get low on

electrolytes, then this directly impacts upon my performance. This is why I carefully plan exactly how many grams of carbohydrates and how many litres of fluid, including electrolytes, I will need for each race."

Interesting or little-known fact others may not know about you?

"As well as cycling, I love to windsurf and surf and my nickname is Surfer Sal."

What is your personal philosophy?

"The one who has the most fun wins."

How did you come across elete Electrolyte Add-In™?

"I was recommended it when I very first started racing and I've used it ever since."

Describe some of the specific benefits you've noticed using elete.

"**elete water** helps me stay hydrated which is key to top-level performance and recovery; losing one percent of your body weight through loss of fluids can cause a five percent drop in performance!

During stage races such as the Cape Epic (South Africa), I have to race hard for eight consecutive days in high temperatures. Staying hydrated is therefore not only important for that day, but it is also critical for the following day because dehydration affects the body's ability to recover. When I finish a race, I often have salt on my face and clothes; replenishing these lost minerals during and after the race is essential. I often see other competitors struggling with cramps,



(Above :) Sally pictured above finishing at the European Marathon Championships.

but I've never had this problem when I've used elete."

For the average person who participates in mild to moderate fitness activity, what would you tell them about elete?

"Drinking plenty of water is important for all fitness activities, but it's not just water that's important—making sure that you get enough electrolytes is important for everyone, too. Adding **elete** to water before, during, and after sports can help everyone to enjoy their sport whatever their level."•