

Olympic glory or a scholarship offer?

Bootes to make life altering decision

BMX



By **ANDREW PIVA**

andrew.piva@thechronicle.com.au



Former Toowoomba BMX rider Wade Bootes will decide this week whether he will accept a national coaching scholarship from the Australian Sports Commission.

PICTURE: SUPPLIED

FORMER Toowoomba BMX rider Wade Bootes has a life-changing decision to make in the next week.

The 32-year-old has seven days to decide whether he wants to take up a fulltime national coaching scholarship with the Australian Sports Commission.

It seems like an easy choice, but choosing the scholarship comes with a condition that Bootes must stop racing BMX events at the high-performance level, which will end his hopes of representing Australia at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Earlier this week, Bootes was left out of the Australian BMX team picked to compete at the 2007 World BMX Championships in Canada during July.

Bootes, a former national and world champion in BMX, said he would love to compete at the Olympics, but had to weigh that dream against the reality of securing a career after racing.

"I was first offered the position back in December so I've dragged out the decision until now," he said.

"In a way I'd be silly not to take it up. I'd be moving into a national coaching position straight away.

"The Olympics are a big risk. Do I gamble and fail and potentially miss out on a career?

"I'll be up against guys that are younger and have no fear. I have a lot

more responsibilities with my life like paying bills and putting nappies on babies."

Bootes, who is currently a national talent identification coach, said what made the decision hard was that physically he knew he was capable of winning on the world

stage.

Two weeks ago he finished second at the Australian BMX Championships at Lake Macquarie.

"It's not like I'm slow or off the pace. It's just a lot harder for me to manage things," Bootes said.

"It's hard racing these kids that

live at home and have no bills to pay."

While Bootes missed out on the squad for the 2007 World BMX Championships, Toowoomba's

Jared Graves was named in the team. Graves is currently overseas racing in a World Cup Mountain Bike event.