

Meet Weston Pope

A Champion

Truthfully, where does one start when trying to introduce Weston Pope? If you're a fan of BMX racing, then you are probably familiar with the name, if not the impression he's made on the Collegiate Mountain Bike scene in the last year. Out of the pastures of Kentucky and onto the podium, Pope is a pure athlete. Not new to the bicycle, but new to a mountain bike, Weston took his years of BMX, basketball and even djembe drumming to 26-inch wheels and made everyone look twice. How'd it happen? Where'd he come from? Find out below through the photography and interview questions.



NAME: WESTON POPE
AGE: TURNING 21 IN 5 DAYS! UH OH
WHERE ARE YOU FROM: CLAKSVILLE, IN
BMX OR MTB'S: I THINK I WILL ALWAYS HAVE MORE LOVE FOR THE BMX SCENE. SHE STOLE MY HEART PRETTY EARLY IN LIFE
STREET OR TRAILS: TRAILS HANDS DOWN
COFFEE OR CAPPUCINO: AHH MAN...I'M A COFFEE LOVER
OCEAN OR MOUNTAINS: I GET BORED AT THE BEACH AFTER ABOUT DAY
TIGHT OR LOOSE JEANS: LEVI'S STRETCH SKINNY 511s. YOU GET THE GOOD FEEL, THE LOOK, AND THE MOVEMENT.
GIRLS, BOYS OR LOGAN: HAHA.. GOOD ONE. GIRLS FOR SURE
PUMPTRACK OR SKATEPARK: PROBABLY SKATEPARK BECAUSE I CAN PLAY WITH A FEW MORE LINES
MOUNTAINCROSS, DUAL SLALOM, OR DOWNHILL: THIS IS A HARD ONE. I REALLY LIKE RIDING AND PRACTICING DOWNHILL BUT I'M NOT TO BIG OF A FAN OF RACING IT. I WOULD PROBABLY SAY I WOULD LIKE TO RACE MOUNTAIN CROSS THE MOST
TOP 5 FAVORITE SONGS ON YOUR IPOD?
1. MAT KEARNEY- GIRL AMERICA
2. OAR- BLACK ROCK
3. SOJOURN- FAITHFUL
4. MATISYAHU- WP
5. DEREK WEBB- WEDDING DRESS

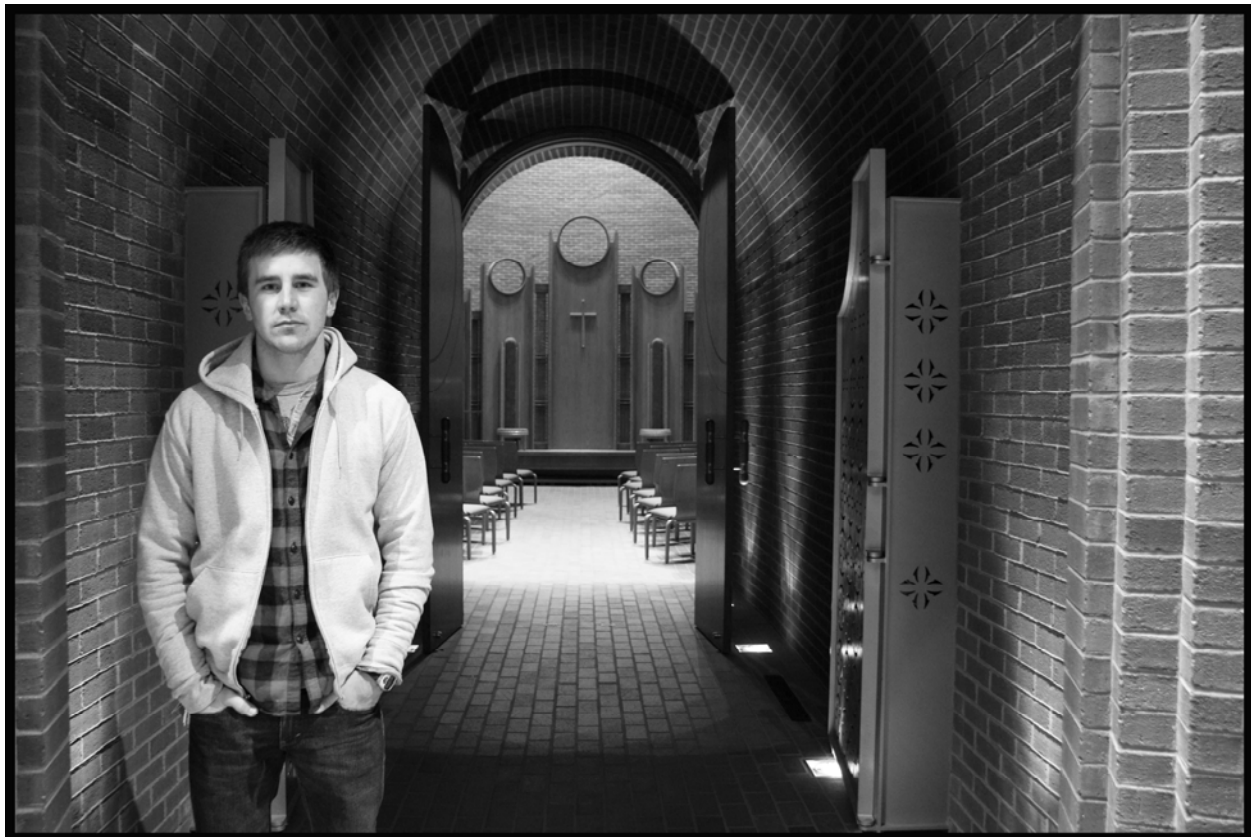
How long have you been riding bikes?

WESTON: I raced my first BMX race when I was 7 years old, but I can remember shreddin' the neighborhood for a few years before that. So competitively I've been going for about 13 full years now.

You ride a lot of BMX. Tell us about that?

WESTON: Yeah, hmm. BMX has always been kind of this outlet for me. It was always something that I could do as I was growing up. Only in the last 4 years have I really taken it to the next level in training and thinking about future opportunities with BMX. It was kind of a set up from the beginning for real. My dad began working at a bike shop when he was 12. He worked there until I was 17. So growing up, I always had a bike or two.

You see, my parents are really smart people. They saw that I really liked BMX, and that it was something as a family, we could do together. Basically, my parents fully supported BMX from the beginning, so they went all in, and sent me all over the world to pedal a bike. By no means were we wealthy. They didn't know where it was going, but they knew that it was good for a boy to have a dream and the means to chase it.



Right now you're currently on a plane to Arizona for your first Pro BMX race.

WESTON: I saved this question until after the race. Haha... man, it was a rough weekend. I didn't come anywhere near to reaching the goals I had set. I am now on the plane home looking at the weekend in retrospect. I had two pretty stacked semi races and didn't transfer out of either. Of course I was frustrated, because I hate not meeting my goals. However, I felt good on my bike and that's a good thing. I'm coming away from the weekend pretty motivated to train with the guys back at school.

When you came to Lindsey Wilson College you were strictly a BMX rider but now you ride road, cyclocross, and mountain bike disciplines. Did you get immersed in the bike loving culture or what?

WESTON: In high school I always took the winters off from BMX to take basketball pretty serious. It was always a good break and I would come back fresh to the bike. Now, I tool around with cyclocross a bit and it does the same thing for me. Here at LWC there is always someone to ride the roads with. I love it! So when I need a good active recovery I'll get somebody to pedal with me and I'll just take in the scenery. It's soooo good here. And I came to school knowing that I would start riding MTBs. But I didn't know that I would enjoy it so much. Slalom and four cross are creeping in and I'm taking it more serious each year. We will see what happens. Green River is sick to ride also!!



Three years ago in Angelfire, New Mexico you placed 4th in mountain cross. Two years ago you were runner up to LWC graduate Cody Stagner in Dual Slalom. This year you were the Dual Slalom National Champion on arguably one of the best tracks in the Nation. Tell us a little about this year's race and how you felt when you took the title.



WESTON: I know right... My first year, I was first going into the first turn and I took a spill to finish fourth. Last year, I won the first lap and got beat the second two laps by my teammate Cody. And this year, I finally won. When I crossed the line and saw the time differential showing, I was soo psyched! All I could think about was the journey was well worth it.

Several influential mountain bike riders who are at the top of the industry have said that you have the potential and talent to represent Team USA in 4X at the World Championships, a feat that only 4 American riders are chosen for. That's a pretty honorable thing for them to say. Do you think you have what it takes to be the top in 4X also?

WESTON: Oh man... That is a big claim. I can't say that I know I have what it takes, but I can tell you one thing that I know- That whatever I discern the correct path is for me, I will give my life to that path, and I will work extremely hard to release all of the potential inside.

Two weeks ago it was below freezing temperatures and I noticed that you were out doing hill repeats on your bike. What does your training regime include?

WESTON: Haha... I have to get out there before January, because it really gets cold then. It's a pretty good program. Coach Grigsby and I sat down and worked out a program for me that looks like is going to be top notch. Grigsby knows what he is doing and is willing to put in the time to help out all of his team in this way.



**Can you say that since you have been at Lindsey Wilson College you have grown spiritually?
What made you make the necessary changes in your life to be the person that you are today?**

WESTON: Yeah man, I guess you can say it like that. Right before I came to college I experienced an encounter with Jesus for myself and I was infatuated with him and his ideas, and his way of life. So when I came here, I was soooo interested in learning about, and taking part in the discussion of what happens when a person meets this Jesus character. So I believe the changes I made were more of a natural response anyone would have. But I did seek to meet a few other people who have responded to Jesus. I met a kid named Ray Moore that fed me with some great stories, and I now have the privilege to call him a great friend.



What advice would you give to someone who is considering racing collegiately?

WESTON: I can only speak from my experience at LWC and what it provides for me. If you want to make some dope friends, ride your bike in a good community, and be challenged academically and spiritually, then this place could be for you. But like most opportunities in life, it is what you make of it! For me, I have given my life to this, and I couldn't think of a better place for me to be.

If you weren't into cycling, what would you be doing?

WESTON: A barista at a coffee shop, a fisherman, a bookworm, a graduate, a djembe drummer, a traveler, a friend, and a son. Dude, I really don't know...



What's the best piece of advice that anyone has ever given you?

WESTON: Man, I have a lot of good advice come my way. But I think this at least makes the podium...

"Don't miss out on enjoying the journey because all you do is think about the destination."

This advice comes to mind when I think about my college experience, my cycling, or on second thought, probably my entire life.

What does the future hold for Weston Pope?

WESTON: Some hard work, some great times, and probably a few rough times. I can't say I really know for sure. But, if things work out, I hope to stick around LWC for a few more years as a rider, student and possibly a member of the staff. That would be pretty cool. But I will choose to follow the whisper wherever it may lead. So whatever may come, I'm pretty psyched, I'm in good hands.

Do you have any thanks?

Weston: My parents are probably cooler than yours, just sayin'! haha... See ya guys around. Peace.



Weston Pope

- ❖ Three-Time World BMX Champion
- ❖ 2008 NBL Cruiser National Champion
- ❖ 2008 Collegiate Dual Slalom National Champion
- ❖ 2007 Collegiate Dual Slalom National Champion Runner Up
- ❖ Three-Time BMX National Champion Runner Up
- ❖ 2006 Collegiate National Mountain Bike Championships – Fourth Place
- ❖ Member of the 2008 Team USA World Championships squad