

Age group racing will be replaced by an ability based A, B, C group racing system for the 2010 season. This new system will be similar in structure to that commonly used in region's cyclocross racing series. Within the system Club members will, at the start of the season, have the option to select the group in which they want to race. In order for this new system to work effectively the Board is asking all Club members to honestly evaluate their fitness, and thoughtfully consider their racing skills, before choosing a racing group. Keep in mind the system will work only if members are willing to remove their ego from the self-evaluation process to objectively assess their ability, fitness and skill. To that end the Board suggests the following criteria be considered.

Group Selection Considerations

First, bike racing is more than just riding fast or hanging on to the back of the pack. Tactics are an integral part of racing. Being part of the race involves more than holding a wheel and always following a move. Instigating and attacking are key elements of racing, and to be part of the event means to initiate the moves and be an opportunistic player in the race's aggression. If all a rider ever does is hang on to the back of the pack, then a rider is never really racing, Instead, such a rider is serving merely as pack filler and proving a sweaty, tired body for other riders to beat. Please realistically assess your racing abilities and select the racing group in which you can be a viable competitor to challenge not only your fitness, but to employ your tactical skills as well.

Second, the weekend Breakfast Rides promote a sense of natural selection in suggesting which group a rider may viably compete. Riders who regularly ride in early the group should consider racing in the B or C group. Similarly, those who ride with the late group but are frequently dropped, may find greater reward by competing with the B group. Likewise, riders who can sit in with the late group, but are seldom at the front, may find new rewards in racing by assuming the role of aggressors and instigators in competing with the B group

Third, the USCF license category a rider holds may serve as one of the strongest indicators as to which group a rider should race. Cat 5 riders in their first season of racing should consider the C group. Cat 5 riders with multiple seasons of racing experience may opt for the challenges of the B group, as should Cat 4 riders. Any rider with a Cat 3 license or above will be an A group competitor.

Fourth, in beginning the 2010 season a rider's overall results from the 2009 season

may also suggest what group would best serve an individual's racing aspirations. All riders who finished in the top three of their respective age groups will most likely race the A group. In similar fashion anyone who frequently placed in the top five of their age group when they raced should consider racing the A group. In short, if in age group races you played the role of race dictator, then race the A group. If, instead, you played the role of subject to the race, then race the B group.

Of course, a plethora of exceptions may be made with these indicators. For example, life circumstances can easily change from one season to the next. One year a rider can be a top contender in the A group, but following an off-season of life filled with everything but training, a self-imposed downgrade may be in order. Also, as an option with the focus on mentorship and rider development, an A group rider could regularly ride with the B or C group not for the purpose of competing, but in providing coaching and instruction while racing.

Please be honest in your self assessment. If you're a rider with experienced skills and strong fitness, then race the A group. If you're a rider with intermediate abilities and developing fitness, then race the B group and have the goal of moving up to the A group the following season. Riders new to the sport or new to racing are strongly encouraged to gain a season's experience in racing the C group. Ultimately, please evaluate your age group finishes in the races from 2009, and when doing so honestly assess whether you contributed strong performances to make the race or whether you were just following the race.

Whereas the previous age group racing system provided an objective format for group selection, the A, B, C group racing is a somewhat subjective method. With that in mind, there will very likely be some adjustments that will need to be made as the season progresses so that group size and competitiveness can be maintained.

Group Upgrade

The option of a rider upgrading from one group to the next will be available, but individuals will have to meet some rather loose criteria. The upgrade system will be somewhat similar to that of USCF category racing. Riders may move up to the next group based on results or experience.

If an individual is frequently and blatantly pummeling the group in which they race, the Board may ask the rider to consider moving up to the next group. Similarly, those riders that finish the season in the top places of their group may want to

consider upgrading for the following season. Please keep in mind the ultimate goal of the A, B, C group racing is to hold three groups of races in which Club members can find enjoyable, challenging and attainable competition. And to that end the Board does not want to sandbagging to be part of the Club's weekly racing program.

Upgrading will be possible in the midst of the season, but any rider wishing to do so will want to seriously contemplate the move. A rider will need to have at least a two-hundred point standing in the B or C group to be eligible for a midseason upgrade to the next level. The consequence of the upgrade, however, is that no points earned from the previous group will transfer to the next level. The rider will start from zero when earning points in the upgraded group. What this will mean is that a rider wishing to affect an upgrade will need to consider whether the move up is of greater reward and importance than forfeiting a high overall place in the previous group.

The Club's goal is for members to enjoy the racing experience. Thus, a provision will be in place for a rider who upgrades midseason to then return to the group from which the upgrade made, and do so in the same season. Should this happen, the rider will reenter the previous group with the same points earned prior to the upgrade. Any points earned while briefly racing in the upgraded level will not transfer to the downgraded level.

In general the rules and requirements for upgrading will be relaxed and riders' requests to upgrade will typically be honored. However, please keep in mind the Club's goal of providing enjoyable, challenging and attainable competition for racers with different skills and fitness. So that the Club can hold three levels of races on a weekly basis a situation could arise such that the Board would deny a rider's request for a midseason upgrade. If such a rider's absence from their original group would noticeably detract from the quality of that group's races, then the Board may request the rider defer their upgrade and to continue in the original group for the remainder of the season.

Group Downgrade

As mentioned previously, downgrading will be permissible, but not for the purposes of sandbagging. The same rules regarding the transferring of points that apply to midseason upgrades will also apply to midseason downgrades.

Awards

The A, B, C group format will require some changes to the Club's awards structure. Please bear in mind this award structure may well require adjustments and changes as the A, B, C group format evolves and matures. The award systems that was in place for the age group racing was the result of many seasons of development. Please offer some patience with this structure and feel free to provide the Board with your comments, thoughts and ideas.

The Club will continue to have both an overall award system as well as an award structure for each of the three groups. However, there will be some changes from previous seasons.

The Club Champion will be scored from the A group only, thus the rider with the most points in the A group will be the Club's overall winner. The Wheelman of the Year (WoY) and Most Improved Rider awards will not change, and a vote will continue to determine the recipients of each of those honors.

Unfortunately, for this first year of A, B, C group racing a Women's Club Champion will not be awarded. The Club's women's field is simply not deep enough to hold a separate women's race, and the Board is anticipating the Club's female members to be spread throughout the three groups. With that likelihood in mind, the Board has not been able to devise an equitable method for determining a Women's Club Champion. The Board welcomes members' ideas and input in resolving this matter.

Thursday night criteriums and road races will essentially be three separate races, each with their own sprint or prime laps. Consequently, three year-end awards will be given for Sprint Champion consisting of one award for each of the three racing groups.

The Club will continue to have both a Time Trial Champion and a Women's Time Trial Champion. Since a TT is ultimately an individual race with a rider's course time being an objective, quantifiable result, the TT Champions have the possibility (although such may be unlikely) of coming from any of the three groups.

The criteria for TT Champions will be based on an overall point system. For each TT overall points will be awarded to each rider regardless of their A, B, C group standing. The TT Champions will be determined by combining the points from a rider's single best short distance TT overall placing, single best intermediate distance TT overall placing and single best long distance TT overall placing. The

one male and one female with the greatest point total will be awarded their respective Club Time Trial Champion honors. In the event of a tie, the rider with the best overall placing in the Club Championship TT event will be awarded TT Club Champion. If one of the tied riders did not participate, or did not finish the Club Championship TT event, then the rider who did participate and finish will be awarded Club TT Champion.

Time trials will also be scored on an A, B, C group basis to be applied to group points standings, but there will be no individual A, B, C group TT champions.

Awards will be given for the top five end-of-season placings in each of the three racing groups. Like the previous age group champions, the A, B, C Group Champions will be scored on a rider's best twelve races. In the event the rider with the highest group point standing did not compete in twelve races, they will still be declared the group winner.

Race Workers and Directors

As in previous seasons, each racing Club member will still be required to serve as a worker or director at two races. For each of the two races worked twenty points will be awarded to the member's group points total. The forty points earned for race working will be in addition to the rider's point total for their best twelve races.

Race Logistics

The majority of the races will be run as follows. The A group will start first, followed thirty seconds later by the B group, and then another thirty seconds after that by the C group.

As the case has been in past seasons with age group racing, there will be races in the A, B, C format (particularly criteriums) where riders of one group will catch and pass riders for another group. In such instances, per USCF rules, riders of the group being overtaken and not permitted to ride with, nor take advantage of, the riders in the overtaking group. Any rider of the overtaken group who rides with, or takes advantage of, the overtaking riders will be relegated to last place in their group standing.

Likewise, in the event later starting riders catch an earlier starting group, the later

starting riders are not permitted to ride with, nor take advantage of, the riders in the earlier starting group. Any rider doing so will be relegated to last place in their group standing.

For reasons of race safety and for ease of race logistics all omnium and point races will be run as a single mass start event that combines the riders of the A, B, C groups. The A, B C group scoring for these races will be handled in the same manner as was the age group scoring from previous years.

In addition to the omnium and point races, a limited number of criteriums and road races will be held as single mass start events that combine the riders of the A, B, C groups. The purpose of such is to allow Club races to retain the feel of large group racing. The races will provide riders of the B and C groups the opportunity to experience riding in a faster paced event with a larger field. Although these races will be a combined field they will be scored only as individual group races.

For example, if in such a race six A group riders are the first finishers followed by a seventh B group racer, then the A group riders will receive placings one through six for the A group and the B racer will be awarded first place for the B group. And such will be the process for the entire field mixed with A, B, C riders.

For each race the Club will provide each rider with a colored wrist band that will serve to identify the group to which each rider belongs. Similarly each group will sign-in for the race on a separate sign-in sheet. To simplify race logistics the color of the sign-in sheet for each group will correspond to the color of the wrist band assigned to each group

Epilogue

The Board realizes the transition from age group racing to that of A, B, C group racing was not a unanimous decision within the membership, and there are members who are opposed to the new format. The Board asks all Club members to recognize the reason for which this shift was made, and to understand the goals of this new format.

Ultimately, this new system is intended to provide a means for Club members of all abilities with a venue for equal competition. Members with little experience would have the opportunity to actually compete in a series, while providing the same to

those of intermediate and advance ability. It is intended to provide a sense of competition to all riders. This shift in format is also designed to make bike racing less intimidating, and thereby more accommodating of new members or members new to racing. And in doing that the Club hopes to broaden its appeal and increase its membership. Of course, this system may not serve its purposes as intended. If such proves to be the case and the membership so deems, then a shift back to age group racing can be made the following season.

Lastly, The Board also asks for members to employ patience and tolerance with the new system, especially during the first races of the year. There will be some problems, and perhaps unforeseen issues, that requiring resolution. Members input and constructive ideas will be welcomed by the Board.