

# CU Cycling New Rider Handbook



Cycling at the University of Colorado Boulder has a long history of success. Since 1988, the year of the first Collegiate National Championships, University of Colorado Boulder has produced over 65 individual National Champions and taken home 12 Team Event National titles (Road Team Time Trial and Track Team Pursuit). Additionally, we have won the Overall Team Omnium at 12 National Championships. Many University of Colorado Boulder racers have gone on to the professional ranks after graduation and achieved success at the highest level of the sport.

While competition-level at the National Championships is between the elite racers on the team, conference competition is all about team participation with riders at every level contributing to the team's success. The University of Colorado Boulder is a powerhouse in the Rocky Mountain Collegiate Cycling Conference, consistently battling cross-state rival Fort Lewis College for top honors.

While performance and results are important, the team actively encourages each member to reach their potential and to be their best in the University of Colorado Boulder's extraordinary range of challenging academic and extra-curricular opportunities. CU Cycling takes an active role in the larger community volunteering for various sporting and non-sporting events in Boulder and the surrounding area.

# Table of Contents

<b>Club Organization</b>	<b>3</b>
Club Sports	3
Officers	3
Coach	4
<b>Member Benefits &amp; Obligations</b>	<b>5</b>
Sponsorships	5
Coaching	5
Dues	5
Club Functions	5
Volunteer Events	5
Fundraising	5
<b>Racing</b>	<b>7</b>
Racing License	7
Disciplines & Schedule	7
National Championships Qualification & Selection	10
<b>Training Schedule</b>	<b>11</b>



# Club Organization

## Club Sports

CU Cycling is part of the Collegiate Sport Clubs Program at CU Boulder. Club Sports is an organized competitive sports league that allows you to compete with other universities. The Collegiate Sport Clubs Program provides students the opportunity to participate in competitive sport club against other intercollegiate teams as a means to enhance their collegiate experience and provide a vehicle for a well-rounded education through physical, social, and leadership development.

**“My biggest fear is not crashing on a bike... It’s sitting in a chair at 90 and saying, ‘I wish I had done more’”.**

*-Graeme Obree*

As part of the Club Sports program, CU Cycling receives limited financial and organizational support from the university. Unlike the varsity programs that are part of the Athletic Department, CU Cycling is primarily self-financed and self-run. CU Cycling competes against schools that are “varsity cycling programs” that provide significantly more resources to their cycling programs. While the club’s long-term goals include elevation to varsity status, we continue to be competitive with varsity programs within Colorado and the nation.

## Officers

The club has several officer positions that take primary responsibility for executing the business of the club. Club officers are not solely responsible for getting things done, club members will be assigned tasks as necessary and are expected to assist in the day-to-day operation of the club.

The positions include:

President - overall responsibility for club operations, manages officers, delegates tasks to officers and members, interacts with Club Sports (attends required meetings).

Vice President - assists President in all duties, prepares for ascension to President

Treasurer - manages finances of club, develops annual budget, makes necessary payments for club functions (checks, credit card), reports to President on financial status of club.

Travel Coordinator - manages team travel to races, delivers Club Sports race rosters and other required participation reports

Race Director(s) - manages the hosting of competitive events, secures venues and necessary permits, coordinates volunteers for setup, breakdown, registration, etc.

Media Coordinator - manages club marketing and promotion activities with public, prepares monthly newsletter for distribution to supports, coordinates race reports and photography, coordinates social media activity, communicates with Club Sports to promote Cycling Club within University.

**“When my legs hurt, I say: “Shut up legs! Do what I tell you to do!”**

*-Jens Voigt*

## **Coach**

The Head Coach for the cycling program is Jeff Winkler. Jeff has been coaching the CU program for 3 years. He is a USAC licensed coach and is certified at the highest level. He started racing in 1986 and brings his years of racing experience in the U.S. and European peloton to help CU cyclists progress as racers. He also has extensive collegiate experience, both racing and coaching. Jeff raced and coached for the University of California San Diego in the 1990s. As a collegiate racer he won the National Road Championship in 1993 (ahead of former Buff, Tyler Hamilton).

# Member Benefits & Obligations

## Sponsorships

The club has generous sponsors that offer discounts on goods and services to members. The club is very appreciative of the support our sponsors provide and expects all members to present our sponsors in a positive light to the public and to be courteous and respectful when dealing with these companies and their employees.

Sponsors change from year-to-year. Upon paying dues the club will provide each member with the specific details regarding available sponsorships.

## Coaching

CU Cycling is coached by a USAC licensed coach, Jeff Winkler. Jeff will provide training schedules, lead team training rides and skills practices, present at meetings on racing-related topics, and manage the team at races. Assistant coaches may also be available to lead workouts and assist with other coaching duties.

## Dues

Every member of the club is responsible for paying dues each year. Only dues-paying members may race as CU in any collegiate race and take advantage of offers from sponsors. Dues provide a portion of the necessary financial resources to meet the clubs expenses throughout the year.

## Club Functions

Occasionally, officers will request that members perform tasks necessary for the effective functioning of the club. While the officers manage the majority of the club functions, all club members are expected to assist as necessary to complete the regular work of the club. These obligations will be kept to a minimum and spread equitably among the members.

## Volunteer Events

The club hosts or participates in several events throughout the year where club members must volunteer. Volunteers will dedicate a block of time to various tasks such as: course setup/cleanup, event registration, corner marshaling, riding with sponsors/alumni, etc. A volunteer coordinator will manage and distribute these tasks for each event. The club will provide transportation and food as necessary.

Representative club events include: 1) Summer Short Track MTB series at Valmont Park in Boulder, 2) Fall Semester MTB race weekend in Snowmass, 3) the Buffalo Bicycle Classic, 4) Spring Semester Road race weekend in Boulder area, 5) Alumni rides.

## Fundraising

In order to meet its financial obligations, the club must engage in fundraising activities. All club members are expected to participate in these activities and failure to do so may result in restrictions on participation in races or other club activities.

The club raises funds through various activities: donation letters, alumni and corporate outreach, charitable/social non-racing events, race hosting, and others. Members are required

to participate in these activities by directly soliciting friends and family for donations and volunteering time in support of other fundraising activities.

The funds raised through club activity are used to cover the various costs of racing and non-racing events throughout the year.

# Racing

Collegiate cycling offers something for everyone. Whether you participate in road, mountain, cyclocross, BMX, or track racing, collegiate cycling offers it all. Better yet, you can do it all since all five have their own seasons. Most importantly, though, it doesn't matter how good or how experienced you are. There is a level for everyone, from novices to pros, with the chance to move up the ranks as you gain experience.

In 2012 there were 305 collegiate cycling teams, 17 of which are recognized as varsity teams. That same year, USAC sanctioned 162 collegiate events, while granting 4,755 licenses to collegiate athletes.

## Racing License

Collegiate cycling is governed by USA Cycling and all racers must purchase a license to race.

To purchase your license, create a USA Cycling account ([www.usacycling.org](http://www.usacycling.org)) and purchase a Collegiate License for \$30. You can also purchase your collegiate license in conjunction with a regular USA Cycling license. In this case, the total cost will be \$60 (the normal price of a racing license), and your collegiate license will be a free add-on. In either case, your license is good until December 31 of the same calendar year you bought it.

If you've never raced before, you will be automatically assigned to the lowest category (in the RMCCC, this is Category C for both men and women), so you will only be competing against others at your skill level. Most road, track, or mountain bike races will include some form of clinic for beginners, so you can feel comfortable starting out. Once you have some race experience under your belt, you can submit for an upgrade from your My USA Cycling account page under "License Info". In our conference riders there are 3 categories for each men and women: A, B, and C.

"A" riders are eligible to compete at the National Championships, subject to eligibility and qualification requirements imposed by CU Cycling, the Rocky Mountain Collegiate Cycling Conference (RMCCC), and USA Cycling.

For more information see:

USA Cycling Collegiate Cycling: <http://www.usacycling.org/collegiate/>

## Disciplines & Schedule

Collegiate racing consists of 5 disciplines: Track, MTB, Cyclocross (CX), BMX, and Road.

MTB and Road have conference racing season of approximately 8 weeks. CU races these seasons and consistently brings 30+ riders to each race weekend. For each of these disciplines, the season culminates with Conference Championships for the whole team, and with National Championships for the best riders on the "A" team.

Track, CX, and BMX do not have racing seasons, but have a National Championships.

Below you will find the rough timing of each discipline's competitive season and or event, and some sense of when training and preparation occurs for each.

## **TRACK**

The track has countless types of races that vary by location. Chances are you'll find one you like. Check out the USA Cycling Rulebook for definitions of all the different races. Track racing is incredibly fun because it all takes place on an enclosed, embanked oval called a Velodrome. Track bikes have no brakes and can't "freewheel," which means that as long as the wheels are moving, your pedals are locked in motion with the movement of the bike. The track season starts in the summer and goes into September, with Collegiate Track Nationals in late September.

The types of races that occur at USA Cycling Collegiate Track National Championships are:

**Match Sprints:** Two riders race against each other for two laps. The first lap or even lap and a half are often very slow, with each competitor watching the other and waiting to see who will make the first move.

**Individual Pursuit:** Two riders start on opposite sides of the track and race for a pre-determined distance (3km for women and 4km for men) in pursuit of one another.

**Points Race:** A pack of riders race for a pre-determined distance (20km for women and 30km for men), sprinting for points every five laps. The rider with the most points at the end of the race wins.

**Time Trial:** The race of truth: 500m for women, 1km for men, as fast as you can. Go.

**Coed Team Sprint:** A team of 2-6 riders (with at least one woman and no more than four men) races for six laps, with each rider pulling off after his or her turn at the front of the line.

**Team Pursuit:** Two teams of 3-4 riders each start on opposite sides of the track and race for 3 km in pursuit of one another.

- season: (no collegiate track season)
- peak: late-September (nationals)

Use road racing/training to prepare during summer. Spend 4-6 weeks before Nationals to specialize training and racing. 2-3x week on the velodrome (Colorado Springs or Erie, when available).

## **MTB**

The mountain bike season spans from August to October and is divided up into two categories: Gravity and Endurance. Gravity races are technically challenging and rely on the forces of, yes, gravity for speed while challenging the reflexes and courage of each rider. Endurance events, on the other hand, depend more on the athletic abilities of their competitors as they traverse all types of terrain, both uphill and down. Collegiate cycling is unique in that it rewards the most versatile of riders: for those who manage to succeed in both endurance and gravity events, the Individual Omnium prize awaits them at the end of the season, and at USA Cycling Collegiate Mountain Bike National Championships. A typical race weekend will comprise numerous events. Below are the types of races that occur at these weekends and that are contested at Nationals:



Cross Country (endurance): This mass-start event lasts as much as 1.5-2.5 hours, covering a large loop of single-track with plenty of elevation gain and descending every lap.

Short Track (endurance): Another mass-start event, this race takes place on a short loop with lap times in the 2-5 minute range. Races are short, around 30 minutes, but very intense.

Downhill (gravity): One rider at a time descends a long stretch of treacherous terrain as fast as he or she possibly can.

Dual Slalom (gravity): Two riders on two parallel and similar courses race downhill, weaving around gates set up throughout the course. (Think ski racing on two wheels.)

- pre-season: summer
- season: september - October (6-8weeks)
- peak: late October (conference & nationals)

**“It never gets easier, you just go faster.”**

*-Greg LeMond*

Many of you will be racing on or off road through the summer. Therefore, the challenge is less about being fit for the collegiate season, and more about remaining motivated through the end of the season (late October). For this reason, it is recommended that you plan a brief rest and recovery break before returning to school, perhaps including the first week of school (late August). This break should not exceed 2 weeks and should not be entirely off the bike. During this break, total riding time should be decreased 50-75% and any structured interval training should be avoided.

## **Cyclocross (CX)**

Cyclocross is the perfect transition between the fall mountain bike season and the spring road season. Racing takes place on mostly dirt or grass courses, featuring hairpin turns, natural obstacles like steep hills (called "run-ups"), and man-made obstacles such as barriers and stairs. Laps are short, between five and ten minutes, and the entire race is between 45 and 60 minutes long. The race is contested on what basically amounts to a road bike with knobby tires. The 'cross season runs from November to January, and the USA Cycling Collegiate Cyclocross National Championships are held in conjunction with USA Cycling Cyclocross National Championships in January.

- pre-season: July-August
- season: September - December (USAC only, no collegiate CX races)
- peak: mid-January (nationals)

## **Road**

The road season spans from February through May, culminating in the USA Cycling Collegiate Road National Championships in early May. As it's the final discipline of the academic year, a lot of pressure rides on the road season, as everyone in collegiate cycling waits to see who comes out on top. Collegiate road cycling is split up into 11 conferences, with schools competing within their conferences until they all come together at the Collegiate National Championships. Each race weekend usually consists of three events over a 2 or 3-day span: a time trial, a criterium, and a road race, with all three contested at Nationals.

Time Trial: A time trial is a pure race against the clock, with racers going off one at a time to see who can record the fastest time over the designated course. Some weekends will have an individual time trial, while others will pit teams against one another as teammates work together to produce the fastest time. At Nationals, it is the team time trial that counts.

Criterium: Possibly the most exciting of all races to watch, criteriums take place on a small closed-street circuit, with short laps (one mile or less) and LOTS of cornering. Races last 20-90 minutes, depending on the category.

Road Race: This mass-start event sends riders out onto some of America most scenic roads for what ends up being as much 50-70 mile race for women and a 60-100 mile race for men (less in the lower categories), with plenty of ups and downs along the way.

- pre-season: January - February
- season: March - April
- peak: late April (conference and nationals)

## **BMX**

- season: (no collegiate track season)
- peak: early April (nationals - ???)

## **National Championships Qualification & Selection**

Each discipline and event has its own qualification requirements, but generally in order to qualify to compete at the National Championships you must compete in the A category and compete in a minimum number of qualifying races during the season (as an "A").

Selection of each National Team will be by the Head Coach and will be based on the following criteria: fitness/results, participation, and budgetary constraints. The selection process will be as transparent as possible and the exact criteria will be announced at the beginning of the competitive season.

If you have questions about the process, please contact the Head Coach at the beginning of the season.

## Training Schedule

In general, the more time you spend riding your bike, especially when you are starting out, the better you will get. Following the simple “ride lots” plan will work, but at some point your fitness and performance will plateau. To continue to make improvements you will need to vary your training intensity in a controlled way. Simply put, sometimes you need to ride very hard, sometimes, hard, and sometimes relatively easy. The right mix depends on your goals and race discipline.

Another consideration to keep in mind is that it is difficult to keep your training (and racing) at a high level indefinitely. Usually, you will reach a point where you are mentally or physically drained (or both) and are no longer able to perform at the same level. This is prevented by incorporating rest & recovery into your regular training schedule and inserting longer periods of rest at key points between competitive or training periods.

**Team training schedules are announced each semester.**