



COLLEGIATE

# Starting a Collegiate Cycling Club

## A Quick-Start Guide



USA Cycling Collegiate Cycling Program

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COLLEGIATE

## Foreword

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### *Purpose of this Handbook*

This handbook is designed to help anyone form a collegiate cycling team at his or her university or college. From the recreational rider or beginning racer to the experienced cyclist or coach, this manual contains the basic information needed to help you organize and promote a cycling team at your school. It is meant to be a beginner's guide, and if you would like further help you should contact your conference director, who you will find listed below. Please feel free to contact the High School & Collegiate Cycling Program Manager at USA Cycling, whose contact information is listed above.

Additionally, more detailed information on all of these topics can be found [here](#) regarding day-to-day operations, providing tips and guidance on how to successfully operate and manage a collegiate cycling team. Always feel free to contact your [Conference Director](#) or [USA Cycling](#) with further questions, too.

### *A Short History of Collegiate Cycling*

The USA Cycling Collegiate program, now in its 23rd year of official existence, evolved from the National Collegiate Cycling Association (NCCA), which started in 1985 and was represented by a standing committee of the United States Cycling Federation (USCF), which was the national governing body at the time. NCCA had a non-voting representative on the USCF board of directors, and volunteers ran the organization.

In 2004, the USA Cycling board of directors voted to recognize Collegiate as a separate association within USA Cycling with voting representation on the USA Cycling board. This transformed the NCCA committee to the NCCA board of trustees. As Collegiate grew, USA Cycling committed more resources to support the program by hiring a full-time Collegiate Cycling Program Manager in 2006 to oversee the collegiate cycling program. Collegiate cycling is now a fully integrated USA Cycling program with specific licenses for collegiate athletes for exclusive use in collegiate races.

USA Cycling Collegiate provides racing opportunities for collegiate riders in track, mountain bike, cyclo-cross, and road in 11 conferences across the country, with national championships held each year in each discipline. Collegiate cycling, which offers a low pressure, fun introduction to the sport, has proven an effective entry point for riders who eventually become long-term competitive bike racers after college. More than 6000 current USA Cycling members' first license was a Collegiate license!

## The Steps to Starting a Collegiate Cycling Club

### *Step One: Registering With Your Club Sports Office*

The application process to start a new club varies by school. Check with your club sports office to obtain the proper applications and criteria necessary to form a cycling club. It is also important to understand that every school has rules governing their club teams. Make certain that you read and understand these rules when developing the club, and make the rules available to other club members as well.

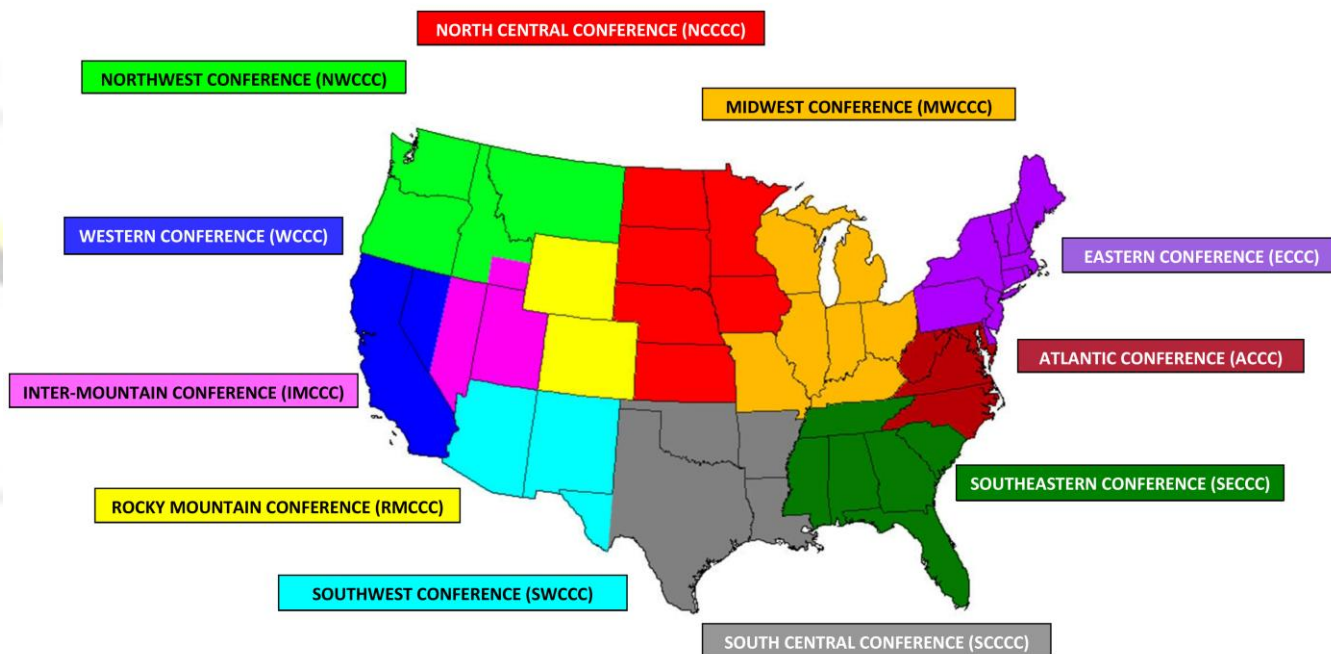
It may also be helpful, if not necessary depending on the club structure at your school, to contact your campus activities office and to register not only as a club sport, but also as a campus organization/club. By doing this, your club may be eligible for additional funding from other sources within the school, and you can attract additional recreational riders without the immediate pressure of racing competitively.

If either office is nervous about the liability concerns of a club cycling team, tell them about the [Club/Local Association insurance program](#) that USA Cycling clubs have available to them.

### *Step Two: Contacting Your Conference Director*

The Conference Director (CD) is the best resource for all your needs. Visit the [USA Cycling collegiate website](#) for a current list of phone numbers and addresses for all [Conference Directors](#).

#### Collegiate Cycling Conferences



### ***Step Three: Registering with USA Cycling***

Every year all collegiate cycling clubs must register with USA Cycling to be officially recognized, insured, and permitted to host events. The annual membership fee for a collegiate team is \$50. New clubs may register for free for the first year. Please fill out the [USA Cycling Club Application Form and Collegiate Club Eligibility Form](#) and send it in to USA Cycling (contact information can be found on the form itself).

On the application, be sure to put the official name of your school, without any additions or modifications. Collegiate cycling clubs must use the name of their respective schools, as recorded in the [IPEDS \(Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System\) database](#). This is according to USAC rule 7B4g, to avoid confusion between schools with similar names, mascots, and/or initials. This also prevents confusion if your school has had a team in the past.

Please submit application at least 45 days prior to club participation in an event.

#### ***Benefits to Becoming a Club***

Once the club is registered with USA Cycling, you will receive the following benefits:

- *General liability insurance available for a small additional fee for non-permitted events such as club rides and fundraisers. This program provides excellent low-cost insurance against liability for accidents, which, though very rare, do occur. Information on this program can be found [here](#).*
- *Collegiate clubs may schedule and permit events through USAC at the regular event permit fees. These can range from races to training rides or fund-raising rides for the team, and include road, track, cyclocross, and mountain bike events.*
- *Only collegiate clubs recognized by USAC gain access to collegiate conference races, results, and points rankings as teams compete to qualify for national championships.*
- *Directors and officers of clubs may purchase group liability insurance at reduced rates through USA Cycling's insurance broker.*
- *Event permit packets and other materials are mailed to clubs upon receipt of their club application.*
- *Assistance in scheduling and planning events from Conference Directors, Local Associations, and USA Cycling Regional staff.*
- *Access to membership benefits from participating USA Cycling Affinity Partners, including Specialized, accessible only to collegiate clubs.*

## ***Step Four: Reading the Rules***

This may sound a bit dull and/or superfluous, but the best and easiest thing you can do to ensure a successful season as a team is to read the collegiate rules. The collegiate rulebook is section seven of the USA Cycling Rule Book, which is available [here](#).

Additionally, each conference has its own set of rules, which determine a number of important specifics, including scoring and Nationals allocations, within the conference. These rules can be found on each conference's web site, a directory of which is available on the USAC collegiate web page, or by speaking with your Conference Director.

## **Structure**

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### ***Drafting a Constitution***

These are some guidelines and suggestions for creating a set of By-Laws for your team. You should contact your sports club office for further instructions specific to your school. Having these basic rules in place for your club will avoid confusion later, especially when it comes to finances. These concepts may seem self-evident now, but eventually there are always questions about whether club funds should go toward regular season racing activities, or national championship expenses, for example, or whether the focus of the club is racing or riding casually.

<b><i>Purpose</i></b>	Explain the purpose of your organization.
<b><i>Goals</i></b>	What are the goals of the club.
<b><i>Club Governance</i></b>	Who are the officials and what are their duties.
<b><i>Rules</i></b>	Include eligibility, racing category qualifications, national competition qualifications, disciplinary procedures, fee payments for club.

## *Electing Officers*

Elections are typically held during the road cycling season for the following year so that there is time for each new officer to shadow the old one and learn. In an ideal world, each of the following positions would be filled by a highly motivated, highly skilled individual. In reality, college students are at worst notoriously flaky and at best extremely busy. The most important roles should be filled by the most confidence-inspiring individuals.

The following is more a list of duties than of individual officer positions (brand new teams won't often have enough members to fill all these officer positions, so don't be intimidated by this list). One officer may, and often does, cover more than one duty – the Treasurer, for example, may also act as the Club Sports Liaison, since their position already entails extensive contact with the club sports office. A precise structure of officer positions needs to be developed based on your own club's size and needs (smaller teams just starting out can probably get by with just a President and Vice-President, for example). If the President is expected to take on multiple duties, make sure the incoming President knows up front what is expected of him or her.

For more extensive outlines of each officer's duties, look to our [Managing a Successful Collegiate Cycling Team guide](#).

- **President** – The role of the president is to be the representative of the team. The president needs to be dynamic and visible to the public, as well as responsible and professional. This person also needs to have energy for, and dedication to, the club and its direction. They need to be the motivator for not only the other officers, but also the team as a whole. This person should be able to make sure all officers are following through with their duties by setting a weekly agenda for the team and holding officer meetings, and give advice on how to improve current situations within the team. This is a time- and energy-intensive position.
- **Vice President** – The VP is the President's right hand officer. It is the job of the VP to make sure things get done in the absence of the President, but also in his or her presence. The VP should have knowledge of every position within the officer core and be able to help each officer with his or her respective duties. In essence, the VP is like an advisor to every position. The VP should also be able to pick up any slack within the officer core, and offer advice on how to run things more smoothly.
- **Treasurer** – The treasurer deals with all things money related. He is responsible for making sure the budget balances, and all money is accounted for. He collects dues, prepares and submits a budget (account for income and expenses), dictates the feasibility of economic decisions, and informs the officer core of the current financial standings. This person should be very responsible and obviously good with numbers and finances.
- **Club Sports Office Liaison** – The club sports office liaison deals extensively with your school's club sports office. The position tends to be time intensive and vital to the smooth running of the

club, and as a result the officer taking on this role is often on his or her way to becoming president the following year.

- **Women's Leader** – This individual (preferably a woman) focuses on recruiting and retaining female members. Teams with female leaders typically have much higher female membership rates, and they know best how to create an environment that is welcoming, rather than intimidating, to new female cyclists. This person should manage the team's women's-only listserv, lead women's-only clinics and rides, organize social functions for the women of the team, and be in charge of actively recruiting women to the team. This position also gives women cyclists someone to go to in the leadership of the team with concerns or questions that they might not feel comfortable approaching a male team leader with.
- **Secretary** – The secretary is in charge of making meeting room reservations, taking notes at officer core meetings, sending out a meeting overview via email to the club pre- and post-meeting, preparing a final report of the year's activities, and maintaining all team records. This is a good position for someone who is organized and is looking for a way to get involved with the club, but has limited experience.
- **Race Directors** - The race directors are responsible for organizing and putting on road, track, mountain, and cyclocross races. In order for a race to be successful, the director needs a committee of people who help make it happen. These are positions such as race sponsorship, registration and results, volunteer coordinator, and co-director a.k.a. details person (i.e. getting permits, officials, announcer, etc). It is ideal if one person within the club can assume this role, but given that it can be a rather large commitment (almost on par with team presidency), that is not always possible. It may also be a good idea to split up the duties of this officer among a few people, or among a few of the pre-existing officers within the club.
- **Clothing Manager** – The clothing manager is responsible for designing, ordering, and distributing clothing. He or she should have the final design approved by team officers and title sponsors. Beyond making sure team members have the clothing they need, the clothing manager should make sure alumni and retailers have access to any clothing they require. This position will require working with retailers and the clothing manufacturer over the summer months. This is a moderately intensive job, with peaks of increased responsibility rather than consistent flow.
- **Sponsorship Director** – The sponsorship director is responsible for acquiring, maintaining, and distributing goods from sponsors. They are responsible for educating the team as to who their sponsors are and placing team orders throughout the year. This position offers great flexibility and possibility for making connections within the bike industry. This position is also great to incorporate as a senior project or an internship. All future business majors should apply for this position as it is a great way to get your foot in the business world and see how things work. This position should be mentored by the previous sponsorship director, so as long as you have motivation, apply! This is a time intensive position if done correctly.
- **Public Relations (PR)** – The PR director creates a relationship between your club and the community. News organizations (such as your school paper and local paper) and sponsors should have press releases sent to them regarding events, results, and other happenings on a weekly

basis during the race season. The PR officer also works with marketing and sponsorship to create brochures to distribute to sponsors and the community. They create flyers and , help promote club events, This is moderately intensive position and one that is good for someone with limited experience.

- **Web Designer** – This is generally not an elected position, rather a call for assistance. The web designer is responsible for maintaining the web site and email listserv. Press releases on events, results and other happenings should be posted on a weekly basis during the race season. The web designer is also encouraged to seek out ways of promoting your site to the public. Once a website has been created, this is a low intensity position that can be performed by anyone with the right skill set.
- **Social Chair** – The social chair is responsible for social events within the team itself. These may include team dinners, movie nights, trainer parties, post-Nationals celebrations, etc. This person should also coordinate team awards and fun events (parties and pasta feeds), organize clinics and bring in guest speakers, and keep the energy within the club alive. The social chair can also be responsible for conducting officer elections.
- **Road Coordinator** – The road coordinator is responsible for promoting road riding and racing year round. They organize group rides and leaders for those rides and distribute ride schedules to the club. During mountain season they should make the club aware of any local road races and promote participation of road racing. During road racing season they should distribute race flyers and coordinate travel, lodging, and other logistics for the team during the season. The road coordinate or should be passionate about cycling and help maintain a strong road following. This is a moderate to low intensity position.
- **Mountain Coordinator** - The mountain bike coordinator is responsible for promoting mountain bike riding and racing year round. They organize group rides and leaders for those rides and distribute ride schedules to the club. During road season they should make the club aware of any local mountain bike races and promote participation in mountain bike racing. During mountain bike racing season they should distribute race flyers and coordinate travel, lodging, and other logistics for the team during the season. The mountain bike coordinator, like the road coordinator, should be passionate about cycling and help maintain a strong mountain bike following. This is a moderate to low intensity position.
- **Track/Cyclocross Coordinator** – This position is similar to the previous two, but dedicated to the development of cyclocross and/or track programs within the team. Given the shorter seasons for these disciplines, this is a lower-intensity position, but the ideal individual will have a passion for these rapidly growing niches in collegiate cycling.
- **Minions** – Pretty much what it sounds like. Unofficial officers, motivated members of the team. Most likely next year’s officers.

## **Meetings**

It is important to hold routine club meetings to keep the team updated and oriented with the training schedule, the race season in progress, and other club matters. Schedule a permanent time, day, and location to hold the meeting. During the off-season meetings can be held once a month, but during the racing season weekly or bi-weekly is best, especially to coordinate race and travel logistics.

Here are a few tips for keeping people interested:

- Keep the meetings exciting and interesting. Possibly bring in guest speakers to discuss training, racing, nutrition, etc.
- Have social events throughout the season to encourage team interaction and give the cyclists an organization that they are comfortable in.
- Organize team rides, possibly one for beginners and one for more experienced riders. It is important to keep these rides CONSISTENT and as regular as possible. Good group rides lead to good camaraderie within the club, and give members something to look forward to outside of class and racing.

## ***Coaching***

Having a team coach could make the difference between winning and losing your competitions. A quality cycling coach will provide the team assistance with training plans, skills, tactics, and many other aspects of the sport that will improve the overall ability of the group.

The most successful way to find a certified coach near you is to visit the USA Cycling website and use the [Find a Coach function](#). There is an extensive list of certified coaches across the country. Some coaches may be willing to volunteer their time with a collegiate team and others may charge a fee for their services. Individual teams should consider a coach when planning their annual budgets, and explore funding possibilities with membership dues, their school or university, alumni association or other outside means.

A coach, though, does not have to take on a formal or full-time position within the team. For some clubs, and especially when getting started, it may be more feasible to seek someone who acts more as a knowledgeable advisor, providing a general training outline applicable to most members. This will be especially helpful for those with less racing experience.

## ***Uniforms***

Uniforms help to promote team unity and matching uniforms are required by rule to compete in any collegiate cycling event. There are many good clothing companies in the states that are already sponsoring collegiate teams and most should be willing to help design a jersey for your club. Voler Team Apparel has good prices and currently sponsors USA Cycling National Championships. A quick option for inexpensive matching uniforms is available through Voler's direct sales website: [www.velowear.com](http://www.velowear.com) The Conference Director should approve your jersey design in order to avoid looking like other teams: this can lead to confusion at races. An important set of rules to consider is 7I in the USAC rule book.

## ***Dues***

Collecting dues from your members is the fastest way to fund your club, pay for uniforms, and fund a coach. Dues are usually collected at the beginning of each semester and allow your club to purchase uniforms, coaching services and other items needed for general club operation. Paying dues also helps ensure dedication to the team by its members, since they have at least a small financial stake.

Developing a dues structure is something worth discussing with the entire club prior to establishment to create buy-in and agreement. Rates should be set carefully after considering team size, funding requirements, general enthusiasm of the membership, and planned member benefits. Cost should be as low as possible – this is collegiate cycling after all.

## ***Sponsorship***

Attaining sponsors helps to increase the value of club membership, which in turn helps with recruitment and retention. Companies within the bicycle industry generally accept sponsorship proposals between the summer and the end of the year. Contact information can usually be found on the sponsor's website. Don't overlook the possibilities that exist with school alumni, local businesses, and other individuals in the community when it comes to raising funds for a race, team travel, or scholarships. Many schools have had great success with alumni and local fundraising efforts.

## **Developing the Club**

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### ***Recruitment***

You may find that attracting people to the cycling team is easy, while keeping them is quite difficult. If you are just starting a team and want to know how to get people interested in your team, here are a few tips that will help you.

- Recruit members from the triathlon club, the cross-country team, the ski club or team, and anywhere else you identify interest, talent, or both.
- Use the club fair booths to advertise the cycling club. Put energetic people who are knowledgeable and can answer questions at the booth. It helps to have someone on a bike doing tricks or riding rollers or something that attracts the interest of a non- cyclist.
- Make flyers to recruit new members and post the flyers around campus or in local bike shops, running shops, and sports shops. On the flyers include what the team is, the time and location of meetings, and any other relevant information.
- Create a website that is informative and easily accessible. It should be able to answer simple questions so a person interested in the team could easily get information. If you can find a good webmaster who is interested in cycling, the website can become one of the main ingredients, along with an email list, to keep people in touch with the club.

- Hold frequent beginner type group rides for new people often to become acquainted with cycling and members of your club.
- Advertise in the local school paper prior to meetings.

### ***The Racing Seasons***

In collegiate cycling there are four seasons: track, in the summer and early fall; mountain, in the fall semester; cyclocross, in the late fall; and road, in the spring.

Your club membership and racing focus may be determined by what riding discipline is most popular in your area, and what training venues are most accessible to the school. In the beginning, your club likely should focus on the mountain and road seasons, since these are the most well attended and where you can get the most experience in the least amount of time.

If your school happens to be in a location close to a velodrome, you should consider developing the track-racing component of your school's team. Visit the [USA Cycling](#) website for more information on the location of U.S. velodromes.

Your conference director will have a race calendar ready at the beginning of each semester, and can answer questions you may have regarding the development of the competitive component of your club. All your club must do at this point is train and show up to the races.

### ***Getting Ready for Racing***

Many club members will be looking for an enjoyable activity to keep them fit and meet new people. There are two key points to any successful season, no matter what the cycling discipline or level. First is consistency. By planing your group rides bi-weekly or more, your club will see the benefits of consistency and everyone will start to advance rapidly. The next most important factor is to expand your riding and training into the winter months. Whether it is going to the gym and staying active, riding the trainer, joining a spin class, or lifting weights, these activities will help you later in the season. For a more structured training program and advice on peaking for Regional competitions or Nationals, you should contact a USA Cycling Coach.

### ***Race Promotion***

For a new club it is not a requirement or a priority to promote a race for your conference. The first year your club should be focused on increasing membership, becoming financially stable, and developing the race component of your club by participating in the conference events. The next step is to qualify a team to send to Nationals, which takes a great deal of planning and resources, and then developing a race to add to the conference schedule of events.

### ***Regional and National Competitions***

Conference championships are held at the end of both the Mountain and Road Season. The best overall team and riders are decided at these competitions.

Every year there are National Championships for each discipline. Once your club is comfortable with racing at the regional level, you will hopefully qualify a team to send to Collegiate Nationals. Since the field size is limited at Nationals, each year the number of teams and individuals from each conference is determined by the percentage of riders that conference has compared to the total number of collegiate riders. Then the best clubs and riders from each conference qualify to send a team. Nationals are the height of the race season and not to be missed!

## **The Future**

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Starting a club is a challenge and an exciting adventure. Your club will become part of a growing movement across the country that includes more than 300 collegiate teams and almost 5000 of the most passionate athletes in the world. There are legendary clubs that have existed from the first years of collegiate racing, riders racing professionally who have worked their way through the collegiate ranks, and many other graduates who are still racing as amateur competitors long after leaving the team.

There is no doubt that competitive cycling is a sport that may be addictive in many positive ways, with the end result typically a lifetime of health and productivity. Your contribution to the sport in collegiate team development is invaluable, and will provide a positive impact on the lives and health of many students through the coming years. We hope your team will grow in numbers and competitive ability and that a National Championship is always on your horizon. Welcome to Collegiate Cycling!