

CATEGORY UPGRADE POLICY

Effective Date: December 1st, 2025

Last Revised: December 17th, 2025

Purpose:

To establish a clear and standardized framework for categorizing and upgrading riders in their respective disciplines, ensuring fair competition and adherence to the rules and regulations set by Cycling BC, Cycling Canada, or UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale). This policy outlines the specific requirements riders must meet to advance to higher categories within the sport.

Policy:

- 1. Introduction:** A race license confirms a rider's official permission to participate in sanctioned cycling races. Holding a race license ensures that participants race according to the rules set by international (UCI) and national (Cycling Canada) organizations.
- 2. Race Grouping:** When entering a Cycling BC-sanctioned race, racers may be categorized based on various criteria. Commonly, athletes are grouped by age or by ability; in some cases, races may use a combination of both. A rider's age determines their age group, and their ability level is determined by past performance and results.

2.1. Age Groups: A rider's age group automatically changes as they get older.

- Youth (U13, U15, U17)
- Junior (U19)
- U23
- Elite (23 & up)
- Master (35 & up)

2.2. Skill Levels: A rider's skill group is determined by past performance and results, leading to the following categories:

| Road / Track / CX | MTB XC / DH | BMX |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Cat 5* | - | - |
| Cat 4 | - | - |
| Cat 3 | Sport | Novice |
| Cat 2 | Expert | Intermediate |
| Cat 1 | Elite | Expert |

**Cycling BC is the only province to use Road Cat 5.*

3. **Race Category Choice:** In provincial-level races that offer both age-based and skill-based categories, riders can choose. For example, if there's a road race with a "masters" category for people 35 and older, as well as Cat 2, Cat 3, and Cat 4 races, someone with a Masters Cat 3 license can choose to race in the Masters group or the Cat 3 group. In national and internationally sanctioned races, racers are required to compete in the **age** category identified on their license - either masters or elite.

4. **General Upgrade Information:**

- 4.1. **General Criteria:** A Provincial Race or UCI Race license is necessary to accumulate objective upgrade points. A rider must meet specific criteria, such as earning enough points or gaining enough experience.

- 4.2. **Application Options:** **[NEW FOR 2026]** Athletes can choose one of three options when applying for an upgrade:

- Objective upgrade with minimum number of points: \$0
- Subjective upgrade with a coach letter: \$0
- Subjective upgrade without a coach letter: \$25

Temporary age-category upgrades are no longer included in this policy. Please note that Cycling Canada does not permit temporary age-category upgrades at National Championships. Similarly, while Cycling BC generally does not encourage racing up an age category at Provincial Championships, we recognize that exceptional circumstances may arise for youth athletes within a development-focused system. Beginning in 2026, Cycling BC has incorporated an event-specific mechanism within Provincial Championship technical guides to allow youth athletes to request the opportunity to compete in an older age category under defined criteria. These criteria will be based on ability category (e.g., Expert, Category 1/2, or equivalent). Athletes who elect to compete in an older age category will do so by choice and will not be eligible for Provincial Championship titles in their younger age category.

- 4.3. **Application Process:** Athletes are responsible for submitting a complete upgrade application using Cycling BC's application process. Please visit cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request. Only fully completed upgrade request forms from Cycling BC members in good standing will be considered. **Application processing time is less than 14 days for Objective and Subjective with/ Coach Letter (usually every Wednesday), and up to 14 days for Subjective without a Coach Letter.**

- 4.4. **Subjective Applications:** If a rider does not meet the discipline-specific objective criteria, they may submit a subjective application. However, approval is not guaranteed.

- 4.4.1. Subjective applications that include a coach letter (signed by an active NCCP-certified coach) are approved. View coaches at cyclingbc.net/registry.

- 4.4.2. Athletes who do not have a coach or cannot find one to vouch for their abilities can submit a subjective application without a coach letter. Applications are reviewed by Cycling BC staff and/or the upgrade committee. The committee's decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

To receive approval for a subjective upgrade without a coach letter, an athlete must demonstrate the following in order of priority.

- A. Significant proficiency (safety and skill) within their existing category.
- B. Significant margin of victory in their existing category.
- C. A link to or a copy of results from a minimum of three events within the previous calendar year.

In the sport of Downhill, administrators may check race results to verify subjective applicants have demonstrated the ability to complete the course within 10% of the winner's time in their desired category.

- 4.4.3. Athletes who compete in specific events receive partial or automatic approval. See section # below.

- 4.5. **Re-entry and Category Re-classification:** Riders who temporarily stop racing and do not renew their race license in any jurisdiction can return to their current category within 24 months of their license's expiration. Riders returning to racing after an absence of more than 24 months will be moved down one category for every 24 months of absence. They must upgrade in accordance with the standard category upgrade procedure.

5. General Criteria

- 5.1. Objective upgrade points (different from BC Cup or other series points) are available at events sanctioned at A-level or beyond (accredited officials are present, and ability categories are used). Therefore, results from informal, **grassroots (i.e., self-seeded)**, or mass-participation events do not **award objective upgrade points** but may be considered for subjective applications. However, Road Category 5 athletes who demonstrate the ability to finish three races with the peloton can use Grassroots or Mass-Participation results to successfully apply to Road Category 4 using an Objective upgrade.
- 5.2. To be approved for an OBJECTIVE upgrade, a rider must collect a minimum number of upgrade points based on their specific cycling discipline, calculated from the number of starters and the athlete's finish position. **Results from the past 365 days are valid. View the Appendix for the objective upgrade points matrix.**
- 5.3. Cycling BC encourages all athletes to participate in the category that best reflects their experience and ability to help ensure fair and enjoyable competition for everyone. To maintain balanced racing, Cycling BC may adjust a rider's category when results or performance clearly indicate that a change would better align with the spirit of fair play

and the intent of our category system. Riders, coaches, or members who believe a review is appropriate may contact events@cyclingbc.net with supporting details.

- 5.4. When competing in the following sanctioned events, earn DOUBLE points:
 - AA-Sanctioned Events (i.e. Provincial Championships)
 - AAA-Sanctioned Events (i.e. National Championships)
 - National Calendar Races (i.e. Tour de Beauce, Redlands)
- 5.5. When ability categories are combined for a race (i.e. Category 3 and 4 races together), points are calculated for the finishing position within the COMBINED field. As a result, we recommend athletes who have many of these types of races on their Racer Resume to submit a subjective upgrade application.
- 5.6. When gender categories are combined for a race, points are calculated SEPARATELY for each gender category but based on the total combined field size.
- 5.7. When there are fewer than 15 riders in a race category, only the top half of finishers earn upgrade points.
- 5.8. When a rider moves up a category, they start with zero upgrade points in their new category as of the date the upgrade is approved.
- 5.9. Results from races held in other provinces may be considered for upgrade credit if they have a similar format to sanctioned local/regional BC races, BC Cup or BC Provincial Championship races and have officials overseeing them.

Examples include the NW Cup in Washington State for DOWNHILL MTN BIKE racing, whereby points are honoured per the table below:

| Cycling BC Ability Category | NW Cup Ability Category |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sport | Cat 3 |
| Expert | Cat 2 |
| Elite | Cat 1 |

Discipline-Specific Objective Upgrade Criteria

6. BMX [This section is currently under review and may be further updated by Feb 1st, 2026]

6.1. The BMX 20-inch racing class is categorized by skill level and gender.

| Male | |
|--------------|---|
| Novice | New riders with less than 10 race wins |
| Intermediate | Riders with some experience and fewer than 25 race wins |
| Expert | Highly skilled amateur riders |

| Female | |
|--------|--|
| Novice | New riders with less than 25 race wins |
| Expert | Highly skilled amateur riders |

6.1.1. To move up an ability category, a rider must achieve one of the following

- Two 1st-place finishes in their current category
- Three top-five placings in their current category

6.2. In BMX racing, amateur riders are further divided into age-group categories called the Challenge category, which excludes those considered Championship categories (Junior 17-18, U23, Elite 19+).

| Challenge Age Categories | Championship Age Categories |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17-24 (male/female) | Junior (17-18) |
| 25+ (female only) | U23 (19-22) |
| 25-29, 30-34, 35+ (male) | Elite 19+ |

6.3. The BMX 24-inch “cruiser” class features different age categories and does NOT include ability categories. Age categories include:

| Cruiser (24-inch class) Age Categories | |
|--|--|
| Female | Male |
| 12 & under, 13-16, 17-29, 30-39 and 40+ | 12 & under, 13-14, 15-16, 17-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49 and 50+ |

7. Road

7.1. To be approved for an OBJECTIVE upgrade, a rider must collect a minimum number of upgrade points as per below, according to Appendix B Schedule 1

| Road | Minimum |
|--------|-----------|
| 5 to 4 | ** |
| 4 to 3 | 25 points |
| 3 to 2 | 25 points |
| 2 to 1 | 30 points |

7.2. Riders can earn only half their upgrade points from time trial events.

7.3. For upgrades from Cat 5 to Cat 4, riders need to complete at least three races with the peloton (in the main group) or successfully complete an accredited Cycling BC Learn to Race program or clinic (i.e. Road 54). Event results must be available for review by Cycling BC.

7.4. Riders in Cat 2, Cat 3, or Cat 4 who successfully complete an accredited Cycling BC Learn to Race program or clinic (i.e. Road 43, Road 32, Road 21) can earn 5 upgrade points.

CYCLO-CROSS

7.5. To be approved for an OBJECTIVE upgrade, a rider must collect a minimum number of upgrade points as per below, according to Appendix B Schedule 1

| Cyclocross | Minimum Requirement |
|------------|---------------------|
| 4 to 3 | 25 points |
| 3 to 2 | 25 points |
| 2 to 1 | 30 points |

NOTE: Since categorized CYCLOCROSS racing is not readily available in British Columbia, we recommend athletes submit a subjective application. Cyclocross ability upgrades are helpful for aspiring athletes who wish to compete outside of British Columbia, where categorized cyclocross is more common.

8. MOUNTAIN BIKE CROSS-COUNTRY

8.1. To be approved for an OBJECTIVE upgrade, a rider must collect a minimum number of upgrade points as per below, according to Appendix B Schedule 2

| Mtn. Bike | Minimum |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Sport to Expert | 20 points |
| Expert to Elite | 25 points |

***NOTE:** Since categorized XCO racing is not readily available in British Columbia, we recommend athletes submit a subjective application.*

9. MOUNTAIN BIKE DOWNHILL

9.1. To be approved for an OBJECTIVE upgrade, a rider must collect a minimum number of upgrade points as per below, according to Appendix B Schedule 2

| Mtn. Bike | Minimum |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Sport to Expert | 20 points |
| Expert to Elite | 25 points |

9.2. For DH and Enduro, riders who earn an ability upgrade in one sport will have it reflected in both.

9.3. First-year U15 downhill athletes must compete in at least one Cycling BC-sanctioned event before applying for an upgrade to U15 Expert.

9.4. Athletes who earn entry to a World Cup Downhill event or achieve a top-five finish at the Canadian Downhill National Championship can apply for an upgrade to the highest ability available based on their age, as per the table below.

| U15 | U17 | U19 | 19+ (Elite) | 35+ (Master's) |
|--------|--------|--------|-------------|----------------|
| Expert | Expert | Expert | Expert | Expert |
| Sport | Sport | Sport | Sport | Sport |

10. TRACK

10.1. To be approved for an OBJECTIVE upgrade, a rider must collect a minimum number of upgrade points as per below, according to Appendix B Schedule 2

| Track | Minimum |
|--------|-----------|
| 4 to 3 | 25 points |
| 3 to 2 | 25 points |
| 2 to 1 | 30 points |

10.2. Athletes who earn entry to a World Cup Track event or achieve a top-five finish at the Canadian Downhill National Championship can apply for an upgrade to Cat 1.

10.3. Athletes who compete at the Canadian Track National Championships can apply for an upgrade to Cat 2.

APPENDIX: POINTS MATRIX SCHEDULES

Upgrade points are calculated by the number of race starters (DNS are excluded) and the athlete's finish position.

| SCHEDULE 1 for ROAD, CYCLOCROSS | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| PLACE | Field Size 41+ | Field Size 15-40 | Field Size <15 |
| 1st | 12 | 10 | 8 |
| 2nd | 10 | 8 | 6 |
| 3rd | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| 4th | 7 | 5 | 4 |
| 5th | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| 6th | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 7th | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| 8th | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 9th | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 10th | 1 | 1 | 1 |

| SCHEDULE 2 for TRACK, MTN BIKE | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| PLACE | Field Size 15+ | Field Size <15 |
| 1st | 12 | 10 |
| 2nd | 10 | 8 |
| 3rd | 8 | 6 |
| 4th | 7 | 5 |
| 5th | 6 | 4 |
| 6th | 5 | 3 |
| 7th | 4 | 2 |
| 8th | 3 | 1 |

Reminders:

5.4) When competing in AA, AAA, or Cycling Canada/[USA Cycling](#) National Calendar Races, earn DOUBLE points.

5.7) When there are **fewer** than 15 riders in a race category, only the top half of finishers earn upgrade points.