



CYCLING BC CATEGORY UPGRADE POLICY

Effective Date: December 14, 2023

Last Revised: February 23, 2024

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 licence 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, whether the race is at the provincial, national, or international level, racers may be categorized based on various criteria. Some races group participants by age, while others consider skill levels. In some cases, races may incorporate a combination of both. A rider's age determines their age group and their skill level is determined by past performance and results.

2.1. Age Groups

A rider's age group automatically changes as they get older.

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

This policy is subject to updates as necessary.

2.2. Skill Levels

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

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

3. Race Category Choice

In provincial-level races offering both age-based and skill-based categories, riders have a choice. 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 category identified on their licence - either masters or elite.

4. General Upgrade Information

4.1. Criteria for Upgrades

To move up to a higher race category, a rider must meet specific criteria, such as earning enough points or gaining enough experience. Please refer to the discipline-specific criteria below for information about upgrading in a specific discipline.

4.2. Timeframe for Upgrade Consideration

Cycling BC will consider race results over the previous 12-month period to determine if a rider qualifies for an upgrade. Upgrade points are given to Provincial Race and UCI Race license holders competing in races sanctioned at Provincial A and higher. Results from grassroots and self-seeding format races do not count toward upgrade eligibility.

4.3. Upgrade Request Procedure

When a rider has accumulated the required points for an upgrade, it is their responsibility to submit a category upgrade request to Cycling BC along with documentation of the races in which the upgrade points were earned.

All category upgrade requests must be submitted online at <https://cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request> and only fully completed upgrade request forms from Cycling BC members in good standing will be considered. The processing time for upgrade requests with objective criteria can range from 7-14 days depending on the season. Subjective upgrade processing times can be found under the Subjective Upgrade Clause (see Appendix A).

4.4. Exceptional Cases

In exceptional cases, if a rider does not meet the discipline-specific criteria or if a youth rider is looking to “race up”, they may request to have their upgrade reviewed by an upgrade committee through the Subjective Upgrade Clause (see Appendix A). The upgrade committee will review the request and may ask for a letter of support from the rider’s NCCP-certified coach. Decisions by the review committee are final and cannot be appealed. Application for consideration under this clause does not guarantee an upgrade.

4.5. Re-entry and Category Re-classification

- 4.5.1. Riders who temporarily stop racing and do not renew their race licence in any jurisdiction can return to their current category within 24 months after their licence expires.
- 4.5.2. Riders returning to racing after an absence of more than 24 months will be moved down one category for every 24 months of absence and must upgrade according to the standard category upgrade procedure.

5. Masters Riders

- 5.1. Riders 35 years old and older must decide whether to race in the "Elite" or "Master" category for the entire season. This choice is made when applying for a race licence each year. Members riding for a UCI trade team must choose "Elite" and are therefore not able to ride in "Masters" categories.
- 5.2. The choice between Elite and Master determines the rider's category in national and international events.
- 5.3. Once the Elite or Master category is chosen, a rider must race in that category for the entire season. However, for races that aren't UCI-sanctioned, national championships, or provincial championships, Masters riders can usually choose to ride either Elite or Master.

For example, if a rider 35 years old or older wants to race in the Elite category for local events but Master for provincial championships, nationals or international races, they'll need a Master licence.

6. Discipline-Specific Upgrade Criteria

6.1. BMX

In BMX racing, riders in the 20-inch class are categorized based on their skill level and gender. The categories are as follows:

For Males:

- 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

For Females:

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

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

At the Challenge level, the ages would be 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17-24, 25+ for females and 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17-24, 25-29, 30-34 and masters 35+ for males in the 20-inch class.

For cruiser (24-inch class) it's 12 & under, 13-16, 17-29, 30-39 and 40+ for females and 12 & under, 13-14, 15-16, 17-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49 and 50+ for males.

7. CYCLO-CROSS

Results-based Upgrades

In cyclo-cross racing, upgrades are based on race results. Here are the rules:

- 7.1. Only races with licensed officials and UCI ability categories count for upgrade points.
- 7.2. Results from informal, self-seeded, or mass participation events don't count for upgrades but may be considered in special cases. Please refer to clause 4.4 for more information.
- 7.3. If there are very few riders in a race, only a portion of them can earn points. For example, if the number of riders in a category is less than double the number of positions awarded points in the lowest tier of the points matrix (see Appendix B), points will be limited to half of the field, rounded down (e.g. In a race with 6 riders, points are awarded to top 3 finishers as follows: 5 points, 4 points, 3 points)
- 7.4. If gender categories are combined for a race, points are calculated separately for each gender category based on the total combined field size.
- 7.5. If ability categories are combined for a race, points are calculated for the finishing position within the combined field. Ability categories will not be separated out for upgrade points calculations.
- 7.6. Female-only race categories have their own points system based on field size. At a minimum, the tier 3 (15-25 riders) points scale will be applied regardless of field size (see Appendix B).
- 7.7. If a race groups riders by age instead of ability, riders will get half the points detailed in the points matrix (see Appendix B).
- 7.8. Points from races in other provinces may count only if they follow a similar format to BC races and have officials.

This policy is subject to updates as necessary.

- 7.9. When a rider moves up a category, they start with zero points in their new category.
- 7.10. If a rider needs an upgrade for a specific race, the rider must request a Temporary Upgrade Letter from Cycling BC. See Subjective Upgrade Clause - Appendix A.
- 7.11. Riders may not skip a category under any circumstances.
- 7.12. Results from the following events will receive double points:
- BC Cup
 - Provincial Championships
 - USAC-sanctioned races (or equivalent AAA-sanctioned events)
 - Races on Cycling Canada's National Calendar

8. MOUNTAIN BIKE CROSS-COUNTRY & DOWNHILL

To qualify for a category upgrade in mountain bike cross-country and downhill, riders are required to earn upgrade credit through their performance at recognized events, including BC Provincial Championships, BC Cup races, and sanctioned local/regional mountain biking events.

- 8.1. To move up a 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.
- 8.2. Field size consideration: If there are fewer than five riders in a category in a race, only the top two will receive upgrade credit.
- 8.3. Riders can only move up one category in a race season.
- 8.4. In some cases, 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.

9. ROAD

Results-based Upgrades

In road racing, upgrades are based on your race results. Here are the rules:

- 9.1. Only races with licensed officials and UCI ability categories count for upgrade points.
- 9.2. Results from informal, self-seeded, or mass participation events don't count for upgrades but may be considered in special cases. (See Clause 4.4).
- 9.3. If there are very few riders in a race, only a portion of them can earn points. For example, if the number of riders in a category is less than double the number of positions awarded points in the lowest tier of the points matrix (see Appendix B), points will be limited to half of the field, rounded down (e.g. In a race with 6 riders, points are awarded to top 3 finishers as follows: 5 points, 4 points, 3 points)
- 9.4. If gender categories are combined for a race, points are calculated separately for each gender category based on the total combined field size.
- 9.5. If ability categories are combined for a race, points are calculated for the finishing position within the combined field. Ability categories will not be separated out for upgrade points calculations.
- 9.6. Female-only race categories have their own points system based on field size. At a minimum, the 15-25 field size tier on the points scale (see Appendix B) will be applied regardless of field size.
- 9.7. If a race groups riders by age instead of ability, riders will get half the points detailed in the points matrix (see Appendix B).
- 9.8. Points from races in other provinces might count if they're similar to BC races and have officials.
- 9.9. Riders can only earn half of their upgrade points from time trial events.
- 9.10. When a rider moves up a category, they start with zero points in their new category.

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- 9.11. If a rider needs an upgrade for a specific race, the rider must request a Temporary Upgrade Letter from Cycling BC.
- 9.12. Riders may not skip a category under any circumstances.
- 9.13. Results from the following events will receive double points:
- BC Cup
 - Provincial Championships
 - USAC sanctioned races (or equivalent AAA sanctioned events)
 - Races on Cycling Canada's National Calendar
- 9.14. 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.
- 9.15. 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.

10. TRACK

To advance to a higher category in track racing in British Columbia, riders can earn upgrade points, but it has specific rules:

- 10.1. Riders can earn upgrade points at the BC Provincial Championships and at sanctioned local/regional events.
- 10.2. Upgrade points for moving from Cat 3 to 2 and Cat 2 to 1 are only available at BC Provincial Championships and at local/regional sanctioned events.
- 10.3. Cat 4 riders can earn upgrade credit in races with more than 10 riders, but only based on Omnium Standings. For example, winning a specific race in an Omnium won't count as one win, but winning the overall Omnium might.
- 10.4. To move up a category, riders need either two 1st-place or three top-five finishes.
- 10.5. You can only upgrade one category in a season unless there are special circumstances. In that case, a rider will need to apply to Cycling BC with support from an NCCP coach.
- 10.6. Points from races in other provinces might count if they're similar to BC races and have officials, but this is at the discretion of Cycling BC.

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APPENDIX A: Subjective Upgrade Clause - “Racing Up”

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The purpose of the Subjective Upgrades Clause is to provide a mechanism for athletes with exceptional circumstances or performances to request category upgrades outside of the standard criteria.

Key Provisions

Deadline:

Applications for subjective upgrades must be submitted by the last day of February of the competition year, or as specified under the discipline-specific criteria below.

General Criteria for Subjective Upgrades:

- Significant margin of victory within current age-appropriate category
- Results at three or more sanctioned events (i.e. BC Cup, Canada Cup, Crankworx) within the previous calendar year must be consistent with top-3 results in the category wherein the athlete wishes to compete.
- All inquiries should go to membership@cyclingbc.net

Discipline-Specific Criteria for Subjective Upgrades:

Road & Cyclo-cross

- U17 to Junior - eligible to compete at Nationals only but are **ineligible** for UCI points until their race age matches the category.
 - [Upgrade request](https://cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request) must be submitted online at <https://cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request> no later than 4 weeks before the event.
 - Subjective requests must include a letter from the athlete's NCCP-certified coach.
 - Upgrade requests must be approved by Cycling Canada.
- Temporary upgrades from Category 3 to Category 2 for trade team events (athlete must be a member of a registered UCI or Cycling Canada trade team) must be submitted by email to Tara Mowat at tara@cyclingbc.net.
 - Athletes must return to their designated category after the event and pursue a permanent upgrade through the standard policy.

BMX

- n/a

APPENDIX A: Subjective Upgrade Clause - “Racing Up” (continued)

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Track

- U17 to Junior - eligible to compete at Nationals only, but are **ineligible** for UCI points until their race age matches the category.
 - [Upgrade request](https://cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request) must be submitted online at <https://cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request> no later than 4 weeks before the event.
 - All subjective requests must include a letter from the athlete's NCCP-certified coach.
 - Upgrade requests must be approved by Cycling Canada.
- Athletes in their final year of the U15 category can apply for an upgrade to U17 if they meet the following requirements:
 - 50% of their team at the event is racing in their appropriate age category.
 - Athletes must have posted times (eg. Kilo/500m, IP, etc.) that could potentially be top 5 at National Championships in the upgraded category.
 - Athletes wishing to race in bunch races in an upgraded category must receive the endorsement of a certified coach and Provincial Sport Organization.
 - Cycling Canada may ask for verification of the rider's ability to race in a pack.

XCO

- U17 to Junior - eligible to compete at Nationals and Canada Cups only, but are **ineligible** for UCI points until their race age matches the category.
 - [Upgrade request](https://cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request) must be submitted online at <https://cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request> no later than 4 weeks before the event.
 - All subjective requests must include a letter from the athlete's NCCP-certified coach.
 - Upgrade requests must be approved by Cycling Canada.
 - Upgrades are event-specific, not seasonal
 - UCI Junior Series events are not eligible for upgrades due to the event sanctioning process

DH

- U17 to Junior - eligible to compete at Nationals and Canada Cups only, but are **ineligible** for UCI points until their race age matches the category.
 - [Upgrade request](https://cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request) must be submitted online at <https://cyclingbc.net/upgrade-request> no later than 4 weeks before the event.
 - All subjective requests must include a letter from the athlete's NCCP-certified coach.
 - Upgrade requests must be approved by Cycling Canada.

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APPENDIX B: Upgrade Points Structure (Road)

Table 1.1 - Upgrade points are awarded to the top finishers in a race based on how many competitors are in the field.

PLACE	POINTS			
	Field Size 41+	Field Size 25-40	Field Size 15-25	Field Size < 15
1st	12	10	8	5
2nd	10	8	6	4
3rd	8	6	5	3
4th	7	5	4	2
5th	6	4	3	1
6th	5	3	-	-
7th	4	2	-	-
8th	3	1	-	-
9th	2	1	-	-
10th	1	1	-	-

Note: Field sizes are not inclusive of riders that Did Not Start (DNS).

Table 1.2 - Points required to upgrade to the next category

Category	Minimum
5 to 4	*
4 to 3	25 points
3 to 2	25 points
2 to 1	30 points

Note: Riders who have met the minimum points requirement may request an upgrade by submitting an [upgrade request](#) to Cycling BC. However, Cycling BC reserves the right to upgrade riders who have accumulated double the required minimum points to ensure fair and competitive racing.

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

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