



# Guide to cycle racing

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GLASGOW RIDERZ



## Before you can become the next Chris Hoy, there's a few things you'll need to know...

Cycle racing is an exciting and exhilarating sport, which can be enjoyed at both competitive and recreational levels.

This booklet should give you all the information you need to know about beginning to race.

But if you have any further questions, do not hesitate to email [secretary@glasgowriderz.co.uk](mailto:secretary@glasgowriderz.co.uk) or ask on the Club Facebook page.

Finally there is a lot of information on the following pages about bike choice, this is for information and background. You do not need to spend a fortune on a discipline specific bike, hundreds of children race every weekend on the bike they turn up with. Some of our most successful racers are competing and winning not because of their bike but because of the skills they have acquired from their training.

## Useful Contacts

Lead Coach: Edd Shackley.

[edd.shackley@glasgowriderz.co.uk](mailto:edd.shackley@glasgowriderz.co.uk)

Race Coordinator: Bryan Donnelly.

[race.coordinator@glasgowriderz.co.uk](mailto:race.coordinator@glasgowriderz.co.uk)

British Cycling

[britishcycling.org.uk](http://britishcycling.org.uk)

Scottish Cycling

[britishcycling.org.uk/Scotland](http://britishcycling.org.uk/Scotland)

Scottish Cyclocross

[scottishcyclocross.org.uk](http://scottishcyclocross.org.uk)

Scottish Cross Country

[sxc.org.uk/](http://sxc.org.uk/)

WoSCA

West of Scotland Cycling Association



## Racing levels

There are three main levels of cycle racing you could compete at through the *Scottish* and *British Cycling*'s framework. These include:

**Local racing:** When beginning to race it is likely you will be competing at this level. These events are fun, yet competitive and are aimed at all abilities. Local Clubs organise crits to encourage young cyclists to compete.

**Regional:** These events are aimed at more experienced cyclists, although riders of all abilities are encouraged to compete. They are also fun and a great learning experience into the world of bike racing. Although there is a wider experience level of riders, you will still be able to find your own place in events. The SXC mountain bike series and skinny tyres road and track races are great ways to experience top quality racing.

**National:** Riders who perform well at regional events are often invited and able to compete in national events. They require a higher degree of skill and with competition from other UK countries, they demonstrate the best British talent in youth cycling. In addition, riders are sometimes selected to race abroad with other clubs in Belgium and the Basque Country, Spain

## Racing licence

[British Cycling](#) race licences are required for some races, although temporary licences can often be organised on the day. At the time of writing licences for the u12s are FREE - more details [here](#).

## Age Category

All age groupings are defined as being on 1 January of the year of the appropriate birthday. For cyclo-cross age definitions refer to the cyclo-cross specific technical regulations

[British Cycling definitions.](#)

Glasgow Riderz can support you in all disciplines with bike loan and training.

There are many different kinds of cycling open to youth riders within *Glasgow Riderz*.

**Track racing** usually takes place on specially built tracks with two banked corners and two short straights. The oval-shaped tracks vary in length and are usually made out of concrete or wood.

Here at Bellahouston, we have a 420m tarmac track with very shallow bankings. This makes the track excellent for people beginning to race.

In Scotland there is an indoor 250m fully banked Track at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome, an outdoor fully-banked 250m wooden track at Meadowbank in Edinburgh. Also, at Caird Park in Dundee, there is a 400m tarmac track which is less steeply banked than Meadowbank but larger than Bellahouston.

At *Glasgow Riderz* we have a selection of entry-level track bikes to allow riders to begin to race. These can be borrowed speak to Les Thomson (equipment co-ordinator) to arrange.

Unlike road bikes, *track bikes* have only one fixed gear. There is no free wheel so you need to keep pedalling all the time! It also doesn't have brakes, which saves crucial weight, but this means it takes much longer to stop or even slow down.

They are designed for speed, therefore are very lightweight, often made of carbon fibre or aluminium.



At *Glasgow Riderz* we have a selection of entry-level track bikes, perfect for cyclists who are beginning to race.

Track races require the cyclists to conform to gear restrictions, which determine how large a gear each category can race on. You must ensure your gear meets the regulations before you begin each race.





**Road racing** for youth riders takes place on closed road circuits. These traffic free environments are safe and ideal to develop essential race skills.

criteriums take place throughout Scotland and England and are often 30 minute races with around 20 riders in each category. The cyclists work as a group to create breaks in the field of riders to allow them to win the race.

**Youth A and B riders require a road bike to compete in crits.** Younger youth categories can enter these races with any style of bike, providing it is road-worthy.

During the summer, fun youth crit races take place regularly at Bellahouston Park. These events are a fantastic opportunity to experience top quality racing in a safe environment. In addition, stage races take place throughout the UK.

*Scottish Cycling* or *WOSCA* often takes a team to compete.

Bikes used for road racing are lightweight, aerodynamic and are designed for use on paved roads. The thin, high-pressure tyres lower the resistance to allow the rider to cycle faster.

The positioning of both brake and gear levers allow the rider to do both whilst on the 'drops' of the handlebars. By riding on the 'drops' you are much more aerodynamic, therefore can cycle faster.

The frame is commonly made of aluminium with a carbon fork, but more expensive, elite level competition bikes are made entirely of carbon fibre.

Similarly to track riding, road racing requires youth riders to adhere to gear restrictions (see below) to prevent injury and ensure racing is fair for all. You can be disqualified if you are riding with the wrong setup!!

If you would like advice on choosing a bike, *Glasgow Riderz* coaches will advise you.

#### Gear Restrictions

Youth A	6.93m
Youth B	6.45m
Youth C	6.05m
Youth D	5.40m
Youth E	5.10m



## Mountain biking

The most common kind of mountain biking for youth riders in Scotland is cross-country.

The riders start together and the course is often a measured distance or time. The course covers many technical terrains, including, narrow tracks, rocks and mud whilst incorporating climbing and descending.

The club has a selection of entry-level mountain bikes that can be borrowed for races, if required.

Although there are several downhill mountain bike events for youth riders each year, *Glasgow Riderz* focuses mainly on cross country mountain biking.

The SXC is a series of monthly events popular with current *Glasgow Riderz*, which offer fun, technical races in several locations throughout Scotland.

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Hardtail mountain bikes are most common in cross-country mountain biking, where speed and endurance are very important.

They incorporate a front suspension fork with an aluminium frame. They are given the name hardtail, as there is no rear suspension on the bike. In addition, disc brakes are now a common feature on most mountain bikes.



Downhill mountain bikes have both front and rear suspension as they are designed for racing down hills, over jumps, and on bumpy terrain.

Their focus is on speed, which means the frames are light, strong and made of aluminium.



These bikes are designed for use on designated tracks and most have only one chain ring at the front. They have high gears to cope with the fast downhill speeds of these races.



**Cyclocross** is an autumn and winter cycling discipline, taking place on short grassy courses, which are less technical than most cross country mountain bike races. The races occur throughout Scotland in country parks, school playing fields and many other grassy areas.

Mountain bikes are often used in these events, although the better suited *cyclocross bike* is more commonly used among the adults. Cyclocross bikes look similar to road bikes, but have knobbly tyres, low gears and larger frame clearance to prevent the bike clogging up with mud.

There are variations of mounting and dismounting seen at these races, and often these specific techniques are taught at winter training sessions.

If you are interested in coming along to sessions like these, speak to Bryan (race coordinator) or Edd.

**Time trials** are a race against the clock, with no influence on other riders times. It is a measure of your fitness and endurance as you ride the distance. They are often 10 miles, but can be longer or shorter depending on the course.

Aerodynamics play an important role in cyclist position on the bike, with aero handle bars (tri bars) being used. This allows the rider to reduce their resistance, thus allowing them to achieve a faster time.

The frames are lightweight, being made of either aluminium or carbon fibre, and are designed to be aerodynamic.

Although TT bikes are used in professional racing, a normal road bike which is fitted with tri bars will reduce the cyclists drag.



Places for youth races are often limited so it is best to enter races a few weeks in advance; it also allows the organiser to send out essential information regarding the race.

Currently most cycling races are entered online normally via [British Cycling](#) or popular sites such as [Entry Central](#), this makes it very easy to pay online by card. Some organisers close the entry a week or two before the event, so keep this in mind when entering!

Some events, such as the *Scottish Track Championship*, require an entry to be posted to the organiser before the closing date.

Local events, such as *Glasgow Riderz Dirt Crits* and *Johnstone Jets Road Crits* can be entered on the day of event. They often require parental consent forms to be completed, so make sure you have an adult with you.

As a club we strive to support your child as much as possible throughout the racing season. We have bikes to borrow, as much advice as you'll need and contacts in *Scottish Cycling* to your child achieve their full potential.

Often parents help one another by car sharing and giving lifts to other cyclists to ensure that no child is disadvantaged by not being able to make races. This also allows parents a weekend off from driving their children to events.

There will information posted on the club forum giving details about races and spaces in cars if your child needs a lift.