

Starting a Collegiate Cycling Club - A Quick-Start Guide



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Forward

Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook is designed to help anyone form a collegiate cycling team at his or her university or college. From 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 to help you should contact your conference director, which you will find listed below. Please feel free to contact the Director of Youth and Collegiate Development at USA Cycling, whose contact information is listed above.

Additionally, more detailed information can be found at the USA Cycling Collegiate [webpage](#). Pay special attention to the [Team Leader Guide](#), with lots of detailed information on recruiting, sponsorship, and everything you need to know about running a team. The best thing you can do, though, is make sure all your hard work doesn't go to waste and the team doesn't fade away when you graduate (We see this every year...). So, write down everything you do and put it in a club manual, and hand it down to your successor, who you should pick early and groom for success!

A Short History of Collegiate Cycling

Beginning in 1987, collegiate cycling was represented by a standing committee (the National Collegiate Cycling Association, or NCCA), under the umbrella of the official national governing body of cycling in the United States, USA Cycling (USAC). In 2003 the USA Cycling Board of Directors voted to recognize collegiate cycling as an official division of USAC, with Board representation and voting rights in USAC matters, transforming the NCCA into the NCCA Board of Trustees. In 2006, the Collegiate Cycling Program Manager position was created to oversee the collegiate cycling program nationwide.

Today collegiate cycling is a fully integrated division of USA Cycling, with specific licenses available to collegiate athletes for exclusive use in collegiate races. USA Cycling provides racing opportunities for collegiate riders in track, mountain biking, cyclocross, BMX, and road disciplines in 11 conferences nationwide, with national championships occurring once a year for each discipline.

The Steps to Starting a Collegiate Cycling Club

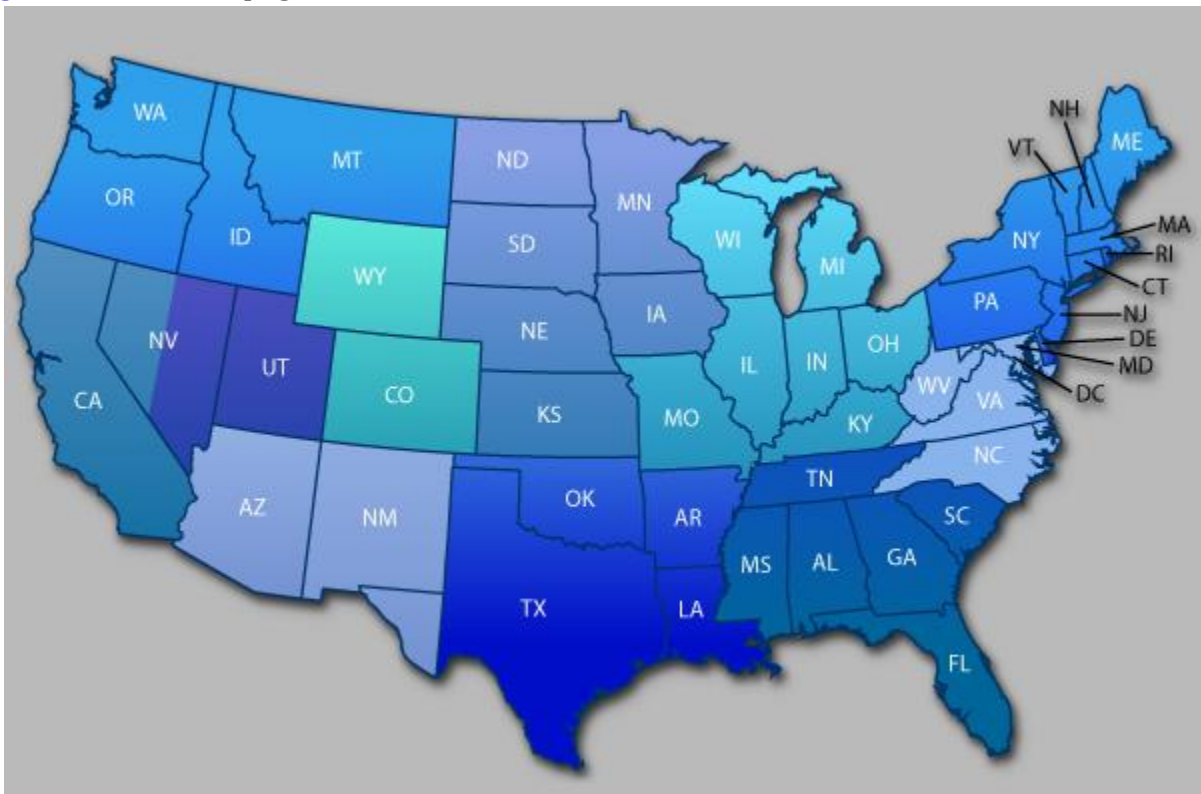
Step One: Registering with Your Club Sports Office

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, to contact your campus activities office, 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.

Step Two: Contacting Your Regional (Conference) Director

The Conference Director (CD) is the best resource for all your needs. Log on to the [USA Cycling collegiate conferences](#) page for a current list of names and email addresses for all directors.





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 \$100. New clubs, (defined as any club that has not been a member for at least three years or more), 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).

We can usually get club applications processed within one business day.

Step Four: Reading the Rules

This may sound a bit dull and/or superfluous, but the best and also the easiest thing you can do to ensure a successful season as a team, is to read the collegiate rules & policies. The collegiate rulebook and policies are included on the [USA Cycling regulations](#) page and linked below.

Rulebook: https://s3.amazonaws.com/usac-craft-uploads-production/documents/USACycling_RuleBook_5_21.pdf

Policies: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/usac-craft-uploads-production/documents/CollegiatePolicyDocument.pdf>

Additionally, some conferences have additional rules, which determine a number of important specifics within each conference. These rules can be found on each conference's web site, a directory of which is available on the USAC collegiate web page.

Benefits to Becoming a Club

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

- *General liability insurance for club events and other activities conducted under a USAC permit for the insured dates.*
 - *Additional insurance is available as a low-cost option against liability for accidents, which, though very rare, do occur.*
- *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, on the road, track, cyclocross, or mountain bike.*
- *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.*
- *Access to USA Cycling guides and help on fundraising and day-to-day operations.*
- *Assistance in scheduling and planning events from Conference Directors, USA Cycling Regional Representatives and event coordinators.*

Choosing a Name – “State Univ. Cycling” vs. “SU Cycling”?

Collegiate cycling clubs must use the name of their respective schools, as recorded in the IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) database, available at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/pas/>. This is according to USAC rule 7B4g, to avoid confusion between schools with similar names and/or initials.



Structure

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 instruction specific to your school.

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

Electing Officers

Elections are typically held at the end of the road cycling season at the end of April for the following year. Your club team should elect officers for the following positions:

President

- ❖ Presides over club meetings and agendas
- ❖ Establishes the goals of the club in conjunction with the other officers
- ❖ Communicates with the conference director, and relays general information to the team
- ❖ Selects and establishes cycling races for the club to host and presents annual budget

Treasurer (optional)

- ❖ Maintains all bookkeeping records
- ❖ Receives and keeps records of all monies due to the club
- ❖ Pays all bills on time and in full
- ❖ Prepares yearly financial statements and prepares annual club budget.

Secretary (optional)

- ❖ Acts as the official recording officer of the club keeping record of all club proceedings
- ❖ Is responsible for club's records, reports and correspondence, track club memberships
- ❖ Submits club rosters to the president to give to the Conference Director
- ❖ Reads the minutes from the previous meeting
- ❖ Sends out any club mailings/newsletters to all current members

Social Media Coordinator (optional)

- ❖ Provides regular race results and/or press releases for the local school paper, the web page and the other local press
- ❖ Provides race reports and web updates for USA Cycling

Sponsorship Coordinator (optional)

- ❖ Contacts potential sponsors. Works to get club members deals in exchange for the company's logo on your jersey
- ❖ Finds a local bike shop sponsor for discounted repairs
- ❖ Can be the designated team clothing coordinator
- ❖ Handles other fundraising activities with alumni and community

Event/Race Coordinator (optional)

- ❖ Works with the conference director to set up the date, and takes the lead on all race organization and preparation
- ❖ Works with USA Cycling event coordinators to permit the event and see it through its completion

Membership Coordinator (optional)

- ❖ Is responsible for attracting new members
- ❖ Sends out club news to the school newspaper and local paper regularly
- ❖ Coordinates advertising



Webmaster / List-serv Manager (optional)

- ❖ Sets up a website to provide the club members with current information
- ❖ Sets up email list through your school's internet services or Topica.com

Category Team Captains (optional)

- ❖ Organizes group rides at the correct skill level for their category
- ❖ Organizes the teams for each race with the coach if possible
- ❖ Provides leadership and example for younger riders

Social Coordinators (optional)

- ❖ Organizes team socials to promote interaction amongst the team

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.

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 CONSISTANT and as regular as possible. Good group rides lead to good camaraderie within the club and gives members something to look forward to outside of class.

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 at www.usacycling.org and use the “[find a coach](#)” tool. 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.



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. The Conference Director should approve your jersey design in order to avoid looking like other teams: this can lead to confusion at races.

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. Developing a dues structure is something worth discussing with the entire club prior to establishment to create buy-in and agreement.

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. See our collegiate cycling fundraising and sponsorship packet for more information on this.

Developing the Club

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 where a person interested in the team could easily get information. Pictures are always good. 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 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 two main seasons, Mountain in conjunction with the fall semester and Road in the spring. There are also two lesser attended, but equally as challenging seasons intermixed. Cyclocross season in the late fall and track season in the summer and early fall are two disciplines that are gaining popularity among collegiate athletes.

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 should focus on the mountain and road seasons, since this is 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 web page 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 biweekly 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 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

Regional competitions 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 Competitions 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 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 from each conference qualify to send a team. Nationals are the height of the race season and not to be missed!

The Future

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 150 collegiate teams and over 2000 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!