



HOW TO START A COLLEGIATE CYCLING TEAM

WHO IS USA CYCLING?

USA Cycling is the national governing body for competitive cycling in the United States and one of 50+ National Governing Bodies (NGBs) recognized by the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee. As an Olympic Sport, USA Cycling oversees everything from grassroots community races to selections for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Cycling Teams.

The organization sanctions and regulates events across all major cycling disciplines, issues licenses for riders and support staff, and provides insurance, rankings, and clear pathways for advancement. It develops athletes through national team programs, trains coaches and officials, supports clubs and collegiate programs, and partners with communities and event organizers to grow the sport nationwide.



WHAT IS COLLEGIATE CYCLING?

USA Cycling's Collegiate Cycling Program supports and governs competitive cycling at colleges and universities across the United States and is a natural step in the junior athlete's participation pathway. Open to riders of all skill levels, the program offers both club and varsity pathways, enabling students to compete regionally and nationally in multiple disciplines, including road, mountain biking, cyclocross, track, gravel, and BMX racing.

In addition to structured racing seasons, Collegiate Cycling offers leadership opportunities for athletes and serves as a proven pipeline for developing elite talent, many U.S. Olympic and professional cyclists were members of collegiate cycling teams.



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, gravel, and road disciplines in 11 conferences nationwide, with national championships occurring once a year for each discipline.



TWO COMPETITIVE PATHWAYS

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VARSITY CYCLING TEAMS

The varsity cycling program offers a highly competitive, semi-pro racing environment for athletes looking to continue to develop their racing skills while earning a college degree. Most varsity teams are governed by the athletic department at their respective universities and offer top-tier coaching, structured training, and financial assistance for participating athletes.

While Cycling is not an NCAA sport, schools investing in varsity cycling know that they'll see returns in the form of national titles and competitive legacies. The impressive track record of alumni success at these institutions is helpful in driving admissions, fostering relationships with alumni, and securing major gifts for campus-wide athletic facilities.

Together, the 21 varsity teams make up roughly 60% of USA Cycling's collegiate rider base and average 57 riders per team.



CLUB CYCLING TEAMS

The club cycling program offers an easy and affordable way for students to start or continue competitive cycling while earning a college degree. Most club teams are governed by the college or university's campus recreation department and recruit from the pool of students already enrolled at the college or university. They are often student-led and offer flexible training and competitive environments for cyclists of all skill levels.

Although collegiate clubs tend to be more recreational in nature, several world and Olympic team members raced on a club team while continuing to train with their respective development programs.

There are currently 110 active club teams in the United States. These teams are an average of seven riders and contribute to 40% of the collegiate rider base.

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 its 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. Visit the usacycling.org/college to find your CD.

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. Please fill out the USA Cycling Club Application Form and Collegiate Club Eligibility Form and send them 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

- The best way to ensure a successful season as a team is to read the collegiate rules & policies.

CREATING A NEW TEAM



CHOOSING A NAME FOR YOUR TEAM

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.

“State Univ. Cycling” vs. “SU Cycling”?



ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUILDING YOUR TEAM

- Create a constitution and leadership team: Form a committee and assign clear roles like president, treasurer, and communications to keep the team organized.
- Hold regular meetings: Set a consistent meeting schedule to keep members informed, aligned, and engaged throughout the season.
- Assign jobs and responsibilities: Clearly define who handles racing, finances, communications, and logistics to avoid burnout and confusion.
- Secure funding and sponsors: Collect dues and pursue sponsors to help cover uniforms, travel, coaching, and race costs.
- Order team jerseys: Design and order matching kits early, as uniforms are required for collegiate racing and help build team identity.
- Promote and grow the team: Recruit new members through campus outreach, social media, and word of mouth to keep the team sustainable.



REGIONAL & NATIONAL EVENTS

Regional competitions are held at the end of both the Mountain and Road seasons. The best overall team and riders are decided at these competitions.

Every year, there are National Competitions for each discipline. Once your team 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 teams from each conference qualify to send a team. Nationals are the height of the race season.



THE FUTURE OF YOUR TEAM

Starting a team 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 2,000 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.



PARTICIPATION METRICS



VARSITY PROGRAMS

Club count: 21

Average rider count: 57

Aggregate participation: 1,200+ riders, approx.

60% of total collegiate ridership

Institutional Value: Universities that fund varsity programs generally realize greater visibility, competitive success, and recruitment opportunities per dollar spent, amplifying the return on investment compared to student-led club programs.

CLUB PROGRAMS

Club count: 110

Average rider count: 7

Aggregate Participation: 800+ riders, approx.

40% of total collegiate ridership

Institutional Value: Universities that offer club programs provide a structured pathway for athletes that want to continue or start competitive cycling in college, but the smaller institutional investment paired with the student-run nature of these programs limits growth potential and return on investment.



SUPPORT THE SPORT

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