

## **Front Rangers Cycling Club Program Structure**

### **Introduction:**

The Front Rangers Cycling Club (FRCC) is an under 19 cycling club. It was founded in 1991 in Denver by then Police Chief Jerry Whitman and local businessman Steve Szymanski. The Boulder chapter was started in 1993 by Steve McCauley; then a policeman in the area. The Colorado Springs chapter FRCC was founded in 1997 by local police officers and turned over to Steve McCauley in 2001 when he moved to this community. Since then, Steve has tried to drive the Colorado Springs chapter by combining his effort with that of the local cycling parents. Currently, this program has 8 graduates that it has placed on collegiate teams, and 1 rider still riding at the elite level.

The Youth Cycling League (YCL) is a long-running program in Colorado Springs designed to encourage and educate local youths about riding the velodrome. Developed and run by two local cycling enthusiasts, Mark Tyson and Brad Luttrell, in 2007 they agreed to allow their resources to be used within the framework of the FRCC. Through the combination of the two programs a surge in youth participation was experienced that was deemed a successful result of efforts to grow youth cycling locally. Because of the success we experienced this past summer, we would like to establish a program structure that allows year-round participation and a community identity.

The vision for the program structure is outlined below and is designed to be a form of “pipeline” of programs that will address the needs of young riders at different stages in their ability development and with different participation desires. The goals of this new structure will hopefully be accomplished while embracing the efforts and drive of the parents and enthusiasts available within the community. The end result is an inclusive team structure that allows local youths to participate in cycling to the degree that their ability and desire will allow.

One thing we have learned from elite cycling is that endurance cyclists share common physical abilities and traits, but the skills of riding the different disciplines within cycling (road, track, mountain, cyclo-cross) are different. The same is true for sprint cycling athletes of different disciplines. A second thing we have learned from observing the cross-over of athletes into other disciplines is that participation in multiple different disciplines of cycling increases a rider’s performance potential by directly addressing different aspects of performance requirements and skills that compliment the ones required for a specific discipline. In other words, helping cyclists of any ability reach their goals and ability potential is best achieved with a multi-disciplinary and self-directed approach. Because we know these things, and have directly observed the benefits of developing well-rounded young cyclists, we would like to create a program structure that encourages our young cyclists to be involved in a broad range of cycling activities. Further, by creating a broad range of opportunities to ride bikes we expect to enhance the enjoyment of cycling activities for the youth.

### **FRCC Tiered Program Mission:**

Our mission is to positively impact our local youth through the competitive sport of cycling.

### **Goals:**

1. Provide a cycling program for regional youths ages 12-18; inclusive to all abilities and all degrees of desire for participation
2. Build character, confidence, and life skills (e.g. diligent persistence, self-sufficiency, etc) in our local youth
3. Teach kids to enjoy cycling and physical activity as a lifetime activity
4. Hand up our youth to collegiate, U23, and elite cycling programs as appropriate for individual goals and talent
  - a. (It is not our goal to create an elite junior cycling team. We want to help our youth reach their goals, and if they can be good enough to deserve elite status we would like to pass them along to an appropriate program.)
5. Fairly and reasonably implement these program rules and guidelines to benefit both the participants and the program

**Three-Tiered Program**

It is important to note that the tiers are divided by three considerations: 1) competitive drive within cycling, 2) desire to participate within the program structure, and 3) ability level as a cyclist. Because of the multiple considerations for the division, it is possible to be involved at higher levels based on ability without receiving the maximum benefits offered for participation in the program structure. For example, a rider with advanced riding ability can participate in advanced level (Blue) group rides as long as they can follow instructions, work within the framework of the group ride, and keep the required pace of the group ... even if they don't want to meet all of the requirements to qualify to work with a mentor coach. In this way, we hope to promote inclusiveness through the program.

**ABILITY COMMITMENT:**

In order to help riders understand the level of difficulty of the rides being offered by FRCC coaches, ride leaders, and staff, a three-tiered structure has been developed to classify the rides. The three tiers of ride difficulty are: Yellow (Beginner), White (Intermediate), and Blue (Advanced). Further guidelines for the different ride levels are included below. The goal of this system is to help coaches and riders communicate about what to expect from a given ride. The system is similar to that seen on snow skiing slope labels (green, blue, black, double black slopes designate beginner to expert slopes, respectively).

- I. Yellow
  - a. Difficulty: Beginner – rides should be appropriate for all ages/abilities
  - b. Format Expectations: Riders should expect courses of limited technical difficulty and limited speed. Activities should be acceptable for all ages.
  - c. Venue: Group Ride or “Stationary” (e.g. Memorial Park for Bump-N-Thump)
  - d. Speed: Speeds should accommodate younger riders, and faster/older riders should expect to ride at an appropriate pace for the group.
  - e. Group Dynamic: “No Drop” only
- II. White
  - a. Difficulty: Intermediate – rides may not be appropriate for all ages/abilities
  - b. Format Expectations: Riders should expect courses that involve some/significant technical difficulty and speeds that push each athlete involved.
  - c. Venue: Group and “Group-Start” Rides
  - d. Speed: Speeds should accommodate riders desiring to improve their ability/fitness. Riders should expect to ride at their own pace or the pace of the group as designated by the coach/ride leader.
  - e. Group Dynamic: Both “Drop” and “No Drop”
- III. Blue
  - a. Difficulty: Advanced – rides are NOT appropriate for all ages/abilities and should be reserved for the hardest/fastest/most technical rides, and riders with the drive and ability to accept the challenge
  - b. Format Expectations: Riders should expect courses of extensive/extreme technical difficulty and/or speed. Riders will be pushed to their individual limits.
  - c. Venue: Group and “Group-Start” Rides
  - d. Speed: Speeds will be fast and/or appropriate for the purpose of the ride
  - e. Group Dynamic: Both “Drop” and “No Drop”

**COMPETITIVE DRIVE and PARTICIPATION COMMITMENTS:**

In order to help FRCC coaches, ride leaders, and staff understand each rider's level of commitment to the sport/recreation of cycling, participation in FRCC, and desire to improve, three tiers of participation are being offered that mimic the tiers of ride difficult. It is very important to note that the two different classifications (i.e. ability level and commitment level) mirror one another with regard to “beginner”, “intermediate”, and “advanced” only, but do not rely upon one another. In other words, rides of white level

difficulty/ability could include riders of yellow, white, or blue commitment so long as riders have the skill and drive to perform within the guidelines of that ride.

The Yellow tier is a very general level of involvement for skill development and recreational participation. The White tier is a level of involvement that designates a rider's desire to make a diligent commitment to improve and increase their level of competition; the commitment may be limited to a particular season (e.g. summer). The Blue tier is a level of involvement that designates a rider's serious commitment to improve their skill and become as competitive in the sport as they are capable. More specific guidelines for the different tiers follow.

#### A. Yellow

This program tier is our basic membership and designed specifically as an opportunity to create team identity, grow the club, and teach local youths to enjoy cycling, learn cycling skills (safety skills, race skills, pack skills, etc), and learn qualities of character (e.g. persistence, perseverance, diligence, optimism, confidence, etc). This program tier allows access to all team rides (assuming rider ability allows access to higher level rides) while asking very little commitment from the cyclists and families. This tier will hopefully be a stepping stone to higher levels and commitments within the program without necessarily being a pre-requisite for entry into those higher program tiers. Ideally, cyclists involved at this level will learn the most fundamental skills and abilities of being a cyclist: safe riding and training skills, program and race rules, and enjoyment of the sport.

- a. Access Requirements:
  - i. Age-based 12-18 years (exceptions by age allowable by FRCC coaches)
  - ii. Anyone, meeting the age requirement, who wants to ride bikes with us can gain access
  - iii. Restrictions to involvement might include:
    1. Keeping appropriate and manageable coach:rider ratios
    2. Riders must be able to fit available bikes, ride with a minimum level of skill, and be able to follow instructions
  - iv. Rider ability requirements:
    1. Riders must be able to ride a bike, but no skill beyond that is required
- b. Ride opportunities available through any FRCC coach
  - i. Current volunteers leading rides: Clay, Renee, Steve, Jessica, Thomas, Eldon, Herb, and Ed
  - ii. Others who possess a similar vision can offer ride opportunities through this structure
- c. Training opportunities:
  - i. Predominantly play- and skill-centered activities
  - ii. Very limited structured training
  - iii. Seasonal attention as announced by FRCC staff
- d. Racing opportunities:
  - i. Determined by individual preference
- e. Must observe USAC Rules and FRCC Code of Conduct
- f. Cost: \$100, possession of appropriate license (USCF and/or NORBA), and participation at necessary team functions (e.g. volunteer for Bannock St. Criterium in early August or provide a suitable substitute volunteer)
  - i. Other fees as necessary, and only as necessary:
    1. Track usage (\$5 per day, punch card, season pass) to be paid directly to the Colorado Velodrome Association (CVA)
    2. Others?
  - ii. Benefits included in cost:
    1. Riding Kit (jersey and shorts)
    2. Insurance (through USAC)
    3. Access to email distribution lists (everyone, road, track, MTB, etc)
    4. Access to Yellow, White, and Blue level team rides
    5. Access to team sponsorship deals; currently:

- a. Cheap team clothing and clothing accessories
- b. Marin bike discount
- c. Possibly Kenda tires/tubes discount?
- d. Possibly Honeystinger products and discounts
- e. Others?

B. White

This program tier is designed to be a progression from the Yellow tier. It would be offered to help young individuals who want to participate in cycling at a competitive level, but who aren't yet ready for the demands, specialization (emotional and physical growth and maturation), and/or the commitment level of year-round participation. Additionally, this level of ride would be available to young athletes with a moderate to high level of ability. This program tier is designed to allow for directed development within cycling while also allowing flexibility to pursue other interests and activities throughout the year (e.g. other sports, band, dance, after-school activities, etc). We feel that similar to rounding out a cyclist through a multi-disciplinary approach, allowing the flexibility of this program tier is important for rounding out the skills and knowledge of our youths outside of cycling. Further, if the public school system an individual attends isn't offering physical education, this would be a way to keep kids active. (Meeting school physical education requirements would require working through the structure of the school system, parental involvement, and some self-directed riding.) This middle tier would be some form of balance between structured training and play, but time with a coach may be limited as all coaches currently have other job and family responsibilities. Therefore, even though there is an option for more direction here, the rider must still be self-motivated, self-directed, and be able to perform tasks outside of team sessions.

- a. Access requirements:
  - i. Must request entry through petition to coaching staff
    - 1. (currently all petitions should go to Clay at [cworthington@usacycling.org](mailto:cworthington@usacycling.org) - petitions will be directed to the appropriate staff from there)
    - 2. Why do you want to be involved in competitive cycling?
    - 3. Cycling goals
    - 4. Race resume
    - 5. Proposed race schedule
  - ii. Age-, ability, and desire-based (14-18 years)
    - 1. Athletes in this level of program must be self-directed, able to ride outside of organized FRCC training sessions when necessary, and motivated to improve in skill and fitness
    - 2. This program tier is a stepping stone towards the Blue program
    - 3. Access to this level of ride is available to Yellow level riders who possess the necessary ability and skill levels to participate in the ride, but who don't necessarily want the maximum benefits of full participation in this level of the program.
- b. Ride opportunities available through any FRCC coach
- c. Training Requirements:
  - i. Must train on appropriate junior gears unless specifically directed to do differently by FRCC coaching staff
  - ii. Must be able to adhere to a limited, but structured, training plan written by FRCC coaches, private coach, or a knowledgeable parent
  - iii. Must be able to attend organized FRCC sessions when training plan requires. Typically will be 2x/wk during season (April-August), and these sessions are team sessions and therefore are not designed to be individually adjusted for individual training plans
  - iv. When requested through the training plan, members must have ability to ride on an individual basis
- d. Racing Requirements:

- i. Must race on appropriate junior gears unless specifically directed to do differently by FRCC coaching staff
  - ii. Must race an appropriate race schedule determined in conjunction with coaching staff
  - iii. A rider, and not the coaches, can certainly choose a specific focus at some point, but development is desirably multidisciplinary. Road, Track, Mountain, Cyclo-cross, etc; must be prepared to travel and race on weekends.
  - iv. Track participants must participate in local Thursday night racing (Tuesdays when appropriate and/or requested)
  - v. Racing appropriate National Championships will be encouraged, but not required
- e. Must observe USAC Rules and FRCC Code of Conduct
  - f. Cost: FRCC Yellow membership; plus \$200 (with Participation Reimbursement)
    - i. Benefits of White program above Yellow program
      1. Addition of organized training sessions
      2. Addition of limited, but structured training plan
      3. Increased involvement from coaching staff

### C. Blue

This program tier is an advanced part of the FRCC program designed to further the development of motivated, directed, and talented young cyclists who have proven their commitment level to the sport, the team, and the program. Young athletes requesting entry into this level of the program should want to pursue cycling as their chosen sport, but may or may not desire to be a professional, elite athlete within the sport. It is designed for “serious” cyclists as the requirements are high to receive the value provided by the program plan. A serious cyclist is someone who is dedicated to performing the tasks presented to them, being part of the team, and pursuing cycling to the highest level of their individual ability. These individuals would be coached directly by Clay, Renee, Steve, and/or Jessica (and possibly other individuals who can properly direct our talented youth and who want to accept this responsibility). Our goals for individuals involved in this plan would be to A) help them achieve their goals, B) develop self-sufficient, well-adjusted, successful cyclists of high moral character, and C) to hand these athletes off to appropriate programs for their goals (collegiate, developmental, elite, etc).

- a. Access requirements:
  - i. Must request entry through petition
    1. (currently all petitions should go to Clay at [cworthington@usacycling.org](mailto:cworthington@usacycling.org) – petitions will be directed to appropriate staff)
    2. What about cycling interests you, and why make such a commitment?
    3. What are your cycling goals?
    4. Race resume
    5. Potential race schedule
  - ii. 16+ years old (racing age)
    1. possible to accept younger through petition process, but it will be selective to prevent burning kids out and to protect the ability level required to push the most talented/committed athletes in this program level
  - iii. Ability based: riders must be able to ride at a certain level of ability and skill to be accepted to this level of the program.
    1. Ability acceptance determined by coaching staff
      - a. if a rider lacks the skill and ability to enter the Blue program, the White is available while gaining the necessary ability level
      - b. A rider involved with the club at a lower level who possesses an ability level allowing them to participate in this level of ride can do so assuming the individual is willing to work within the structure of the training session

- b. Training Requirements:
  - i. FRCC Training Plan Required
    - 1. Includes observation of mandatory time(s) off bike and away from cycling.
  - ii. Must train on required junior race gears (as appropriate for the age) at all times; unless specifically directed otherwise by the coaching staff
  - iii. Must communicate with designated coach regarding:
    - 1. Training needs and prescription
    - 2. Attendance at all practices / team training sessions (0-2x/wk dependent on season)
    - 3. Performance of training / racing on own when required
    - 4. Progress of ability from training prescription
    - 5. Others as necessary
  - iv. Must be willing to dedicate training time to skill development and studying the sport. Athletes will be expected to learn and understand:
    - 1. Race Strategy (team, individual, scenarios, etc)
    - 2. Race Tactics (i.e. how to effect the strategy)
    - 3. Skills (paceline, echelon, bumping, etc)
    - 4. Race Understanding (reading races, reading opponents, etc)
    - 5. Others as deemed necessary and appropriate
  - v. Others as deemed necessary and appropriate
- c. Race requirements:
  - i. Must race!
  - ii. Must race on required junior race gears (as appropriate for the age) at all times; unless specifically directed otherwise by the coaching staff
  - iii. Must race in senior categories, and not advance beyond the Cat 3 level, or similar level of another discipline, unless specifically directed to do so by the coaching staff
  - iv. Must race in appropriate National Championships (road, track, mountain, cyclo-cross, etc) [and appropriate age-group National Championships] ... not necessarily all national championship events.
  - v. Must implement a race schedule determined by each athlete and approved by coaching staff at start of year (coaching staff may decide to direct race schedule to be appropriate for each athlete)
    - 1. Race Schedule must include regular racing and regular breaks
    - 2. Race Schedule would desirably include appropriate amount of national races
  - vi. Adjustments to racing plan possible as year progresses
  - vii. Need not race for FRCC, but must adhere to the requirements of the program to receive the full benefits
- d. Must observe USAC Rules and FRCC Code of Conduct
- e. Cost: Age-based
  - i. ≤18 years old: FRCC Yellow membership; plus \$300 (with Participation Reimbursement)
  - ii. Benefits above White level program
    - 1. Greater involvement/interaction with coach
    - 2. Greater detail within training structure

**Other Program Components**

- D. Participation Reimbursement:
  - i. 50% of the cost of White and Blue program levels (\$150) will be returned if participation and performance goals are satisfactorily attained during the season
  - ii. Participation and performance goals will be individually determined, recorded, and evaluated for fairness

- iii. A training journal must be kept and regularly presented to FRCC coach to show participation. The following information should be present for each ride.
  - 1. Date and Time
  - 2. Weather (e.g. cold, comfortable, hot, sunny, rainy, etc)
  - 3. Workout Details:
    - a. Day's prescription
    - b. What you did
    - c. Difficulty (1-10)
  - 4. Comments
  - 5. Race results if necessary
  
- E. Project Genius: This is a self-improvement project only. Preparation of and involvement with our young cyclists cannot come only in the form of physical effort. Project Genius is an educational component available to any FRCC member (under 18) who wants to pursue a better understanding of the sport through off-bike study directed by a mentor/coach.
  - a. More information is available upon request from Clay ([cworthington@usacycling.org](mailto:cworthington@usacycling.org))
  
- F. FRCC Code of Conduct
  - a. FRCC membership is a privilege and can be revoked without reimbursement of membership fees if conduct violates this code.
  - b. "P" designates the individual reading and signing the document.
  - c. I recognize that this Code does not establish a complete set of rules that prescribes every aspect of appropriate behavior, and applies to athletes, parents, staff, and volunteers. I should use my best judgment before acting.
  - d. I will:
    - i. refrain from conduct detracting from my or my teammates' ability to attain peak performance;
    - ii. respect the property of others whether personal or public;
    - iii. respect members of my team, other teams, spectators and officials, and engage in no form of verbal, physical or sexual harassment or abuse;
    - iv. follow the rules of my sport and my discipline within the sport, including by way of example, rules regarding curfew and required attendance at team meetings or functions and such other rules as may be in force during the time I am representing the FRCC;
    - v. remember that at all times I am an ambassador for my sport, my country, my team, my family, and myself;
    - vi. act in such a way that represents the high moral and ethical character indicative of a Front Ranger

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_