

## Women's C, Men's E Category

The women's category C events that were held during the 2006 road season were a resounding success. The events featured a welcoming environment for first-timers with just the right amount of coaching and real competition. The new-to-cycling participants enjoyed the encouraging atmosphere and learned a lot in the process. Further, anecdotal evidence suggests that these participants both brought in additional riders and raced more than they would have otherwise.

There is a broad desire to expand the women's C category in 2007 to be featured at most, if not all, events. Further, there has been some talk about a possible Men's E category. There are a few issues to resolve:

- a) Should we expand the Women's C category?
- b) Should we introduce the Men's E category?
- c) Branding – should this be pitched as the “intro to racing” category instead of “Women's C” or “Men's E?”
- d) Logistics – Promoters need to provide the additional time for the events to take place. Further, they must line up an adequate number of coaches (could be other team coaches and/or “A” racers) for the race. Recommendation of one coach per eight participants.
- e) Scoring – Assigning points to these events is a must, is the current mechanism working?

## Field Splitting Calculus

Large introductory field sizes introduce challenges with safety issues and a reduced-quality rider experience. However, we must continue to provide an appropriate venue for competition for anyone who makes the effort to come out and try bike racing.

- a) USCF Category 5 events are limited to 50 riders maximum. Should the “split” happen for D races at 50+ competitors?
- b) What about the split for “C” races? USCF events with any cat 5s are limited to 75 riders.
- c) Should these be hard-and-fast rules or more fluid?
- d) Is the current split on division 1/2 working for both competition and scoring?

## Team Scoring Methodology

Current ECCC event scoring is simple and easy to understand: add up all the individual points won by every team member. However, this is not consistent with how scoring works in other conferences or nationals. These events use a system that normalizes women and men scoring and gives equal worth to both women and men regardless of field size or number of categories. This, you could argue, makes having strong women's team a requirement for success. Unfortunately, the scoring procedure is a little more complicated and not as easy to follow.

The general Nationals scoring procedure is as follows: take the results from the women for each event (e.g. women's D1 road race) and rank the teams based on the sum of individual points. These ranked

teams are assigned team points. Do the same for the men. Then do the same for the other events (time trial, criterium). At the end of the weekend, add together all of those team points and you have your winner. It is somewhat more difficult to understand how it works, but there exists a sweet Excel spreadsheet that automatically calculates everything at Road and MTB Nationals: team results, individual omnium, and more. The spreadsheet can easily be customized for conference competition and distributed on the ECCC website with a handy scoring guide.

The benefits don't exactly jump out at you, but they are as follows:

- a) The racing stays closer; no team can "run away with an event" based on an ultra-strong single-category or gender performance.
- b) Women and men are normalized across field size, number of fields or number of participants.
- c) Teams must have strong performances in both genders if they want to compete.
- d) Everyone in the ECCC will understand what's going on with scoring at Nationals.
- e) Scoring in different conferences will be consistent.

There are costs associated with this:

- a) The scoring is harder to follow during the course of competition.
- b) The scoring procedure is more opaque; it's harder to "check the math."
- c) Any big change like this may have some hiccups.
- d) John Frey's workload may increase.
- e) Ultra-strong men's teams are going to bellyache; the rest of us have to listen to them.

Issues:

- a) Do you wish to adopt this scoring methodology?
- b) Do we apply team points for every road stage (e.g. road race, TTT, criterium) or the weekend as a whole?

### **Tighten the integration with USA Cycling (USCF/NORBA) categories**

Collegiate Cycling is enjoying a renaissance within USA Cycling these days. There are more and more connections to other programs and departments. There was a suggestion to integrate collegiate categories more tightly with USCF categories on the road while providing upgrade opportunities for in collegiate events. At first, it seems like it's a major upheaval of epic proportions, but it actually will be a pretty modest change in practice.

Benefits:

- a) Increased safety of upper categories (in theory).
- b) Full USCF upgrade points for collegiate events (assuming they meet the field size and distance requirements, still requires USCF board approval)
- c) Is consistent with other road racing, easier transition from collegiate to USCF.

Costs:

- a) May exclude ultra-fit athletes from other sports who decide to take up cycling.
- b) Will keep people in lower categories than they may be in otherwise.
- c) People who raced A's last season might have to move down to B's.

## Standardize point penalties and procedures

Collegiate Cycling provides a great environment for people to start in the sport of cycling. Invariably, though, there are the actions of the few that threaten the rest of the friendly, safe community in the ECCC. We need a mechanism to evenly apply penalties when appropriate.

Issues to resolve:

- a) What is a penalty-worthy incident?
- b) What are the point penalties?
- c) How can we apply penalties evenly and equitably?

## TTT Scoring: finish time on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> wheel?

At nationals, both women and men finish on the 3<sup>rd</sup> wheel. In 2006, the ECCC used this standard for Easterns, but otherwise had the finish time on the 2<sup>nd</sup> wheel for women and the 3<sup>rd</sup> wheel for men. After the experience of last year, let's revisit the discussion to see if it makes sense to have a standard rule that applies to both genders. This has the potential to shake up team dynamics quite a bit, both women and men could be affected. The hope is to move away from any sort of tiered rules of competition that are different for women and men.

Proposals:

- a) 2<sup>nd</sup> wheel for everyone
- b) 3<sup>rd</sup> wheel for everyone
- c) 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> wheel/3<sup>rd</sup> at Easterns (i.e. keep it the same)

## ECCC Season Pass

The brilliant mind of John Frey came up with the idea for a "ECCC Season Pass." The basic principle is that you pay a reduced fee for a pass that is good for entry into every season event. It is not without its challenges, but the hope is that there can be some process improvements while providing incentive for people to race more. Plus, it gives the MBA students of the conference a great case study to work on!

Benefits:

- a) People who race frequently will see a significant cost savings.
- b) Registration will be streamlined.
- c) Promoters will have access to funds much earlier to cover expenses.
- d) The average "races per racer" will likely increase.
- e) "It's already paid for, of course you're going to the race!"

Costs:

- a) Logistics: who will handle the funds and distribution?
- b) Calculus: work on the distribution formula needs to occur.
- c) What happens if promoters will get less entry fee money than they would otherwise?
- d) What happens if there is a budgetary shortfall?
- e) Can we find enough MBA students to figure it all out?