

Ontario Cycling 2025 Youth Upgrade Guidelines (Road/MTB/CX)

Background

This guide provides information on the upgrade/downgrade process for youth athletes in the Road, Mountain Bike Cross Country and Cyclo-Cross disciplines.

Purpose

To provide members, parents and coaches clarity on the ability and process for upgrading athletes within the Road, MTB, and Cyclo-Cross Ontario Cup Series. In addition, the guidelines are in place to ensure that developing athletes are provided an opportunity for a meaningful and developmentally appropriate competition when demonstrating a superior competitive ability to their peers in their current race category.

Each discipline's upgrade criteria and considerations are only subject to upgrades in that respective discipline and not transferable. Meeting the standard for a superior competitive ability in one discipline does not make an athlete eligible for upgrade in another discipline.

Eligibility

Road

Athletes already racing in the Ontario Cup Road Series (U17 or older) need not submit an upgrade request to change categories as these categories are self-seeding. However, athletes may be required to compete in a different ability category, if OC deems based on their skill, that they are more suitable for a different ability category.

New for the 2025 season, U15 riders have their own category at Road Ontario Cup events. Only second year U15 athletes (born in 2011) that are deemed "**Exceptional Circumstances**" and have clearly demonstrated a superior competitive ability to the U15 race field will be eligible to apply for an upgrade to U17+ categories A-D. No upgrades will be granted for Road OCup #1 and any athlete requesting an upgrade must have competed in a minimum of one OCup event in the U15 category prior to submission. First year U15 and U13 (born in 2012 and later) member upgrades will not be considered for the Ontario Cup Road Series. U13 riders (or younger) are encouraged to participate in Youth Road Events.

Note: there will be no upgrades issued for U15 riders in the Crit OCup Series.

Mountain Bike & Cyclo-Cross

Athletes in the U17 Sport or U19 Sport category may upgrade to U17 Expert or U19 Expert (respectively) without submitting a formal request as these categories are

self-seeding. Subsequently, if an athlete starts in the expert category and feels they are more suitable for Sport, they may downgrade without a request being required.

For those in the U13, U15, U17 Expert or U19 Expert age categories, these athletes may be eligible to apply for an upgrade to race outside their designated age category in Ontario Cup Sanctioned events only. Upgrades will be considered for athletes that are deemed "Exceptional Circumstances" and who have clearly demonstrated a superior competitive ability to their peers in their current age category.

An athlete who is approved to upgrade from U15 will only be considered for the U17 expert category. An athlete who is approved to upgrade from U19 Expert will only be considered for the Elite Category.

For youth riders' competition in the Ontario Cup Mountain Bike or Cyclo-Cross Series, upgrades within the same age ability categories are allowed (self-seeding). The chosen category should match the athlete's abilities.

Note: upgrades are not granted based on an opportunity to participate in another race but solely based on a lack of sufficient competition in the athletes' current OCup category.

Additional criteria that will be considered for upgrade includes

- 2 years of racing experience including in OCup events
- Number of years training under a certified NCCP coach
- Performance results at OCups and other major sanctioned events
 - Time gap to second place finisher
 - Strength of the competition field
- Impact on the current competition field if upgrade is awarded

Canada Cup (OCup #2)

Athletes are required to race in their age category at the Canada Cup (OCup #2) for Canada Cup categories U17 & U19 Expert. Upgrades to those categories are subject to Cycling Canada approval. Provincial categories U13 and U15 are eligible for upgrades subject to Ontario Cycling approval.

Cyclo-Cross

Athletes (starting with the U19 age category) are eligible to race in the ability category that best suits their skills at Ontario Cup Cyclo-Cross events without an approved upgrade.

For those in the U13, U15, and U17 age categories, these athletes may be eligible to apply for an upgrade to race outside their designated age category in Ontario Cup sanctioned events only. Upgrades will only be considered for athletes that are deemed "**Exceptional Circumstances**" and who have clearly demonstrated a superior competitive ability to their peers in their current age category.

Additional criteria that will be considered for an upgrade includes:

- 2 years of racing experience including in OCup events
- Number of years training under a certified NCCP coach
- Performance results at OCup and other major sanctioned events
 - Time gap to second place finisher
 - Strength of the competition field
- Impact on the current competition field if upgrade is awarded.

Defining a Superior Competitive Ability

The following are examples to serve as a guideline for what can be used to demonstrate an athlete having a superior competitive ability. Athletes that do not have performances similar to the following examples are recommended not to request an upgrade.

- Win a U15 Road OCup solo by 1 minute to 2nd place.
- Win a U15 Road OCup from a small group (2-3 riders) by 3 minutes to the second group on the road.
- Win a MTB/CX OCup by over 2 minutes to 2nd place.

Out-of-Province Riders

Riders from outside of Ontario can submit for upgrades for Ontario Cup events, however, they will need to demonstrate a clear ability to be competitive and have coach support. Out-of-Province riders are strongly recommended to compete in their current age/ability category prior to the requesting an upgrade gauge of their ability level vs. Ontario athletes.

Upgrade Process

Requests will be reviewed no later than 3 business days after the Cut-Off Date whenever possible (see table in upgrade request timeline section below). Requests that are approved will be communicated to the individual submitting the request to the email provided on the request form. Requests that are not approved will be communicated to the individual submitting the request. Athletes can submit an updated request after their next event for consideration.

Please ensure you understand all the steps in the process below.

1. An upgrade request must be submitted by the eligible cut-off date below for consideration. No exceptions!
2. Riders will be asked to supply the name of their cycling coach (should they have one).
3. Once the request has been submitted you will receive an email confirming receipt.
4. Ontario Cycling staff will reach out with the outcome of your request once a decision has been made.

Approval of the upgrade request is at the sole discretion of Ontario Cycling.

Upgrade Request Timeline

Road

Cut-Off Date for Request	Event	Event date
May 28 th , 2025	OCup #2 – Moonstone	June 8 th , 2025
June 25 th , 2025	OCup #4 - Lansdowne	July 6 th , 2025

Mountain Bike

Cut-Off Date for Request	Event	Event Date
April 30, 2025	OCup #1	May 10 – 11, 2025
May 7, 2025	OCup #2/Canada Cup	May 16 – 18, 2025
June 4, 2025	OCup #3	June 14 – 15, 2025
June 18, 2025	OCup #4	June 28 – 29, 2025

Cyclo-Cross

Cut-Off Date for Request	Event	Event Date
TBD	OCup #1	TBD
TBD	OCup #2	TBD
TBD	OCup #3	TBD
TBD	OCup #4	TBD

Provincial Championships

Riders must race in their appropriate age category regardless of having previously received an approved upgrade. The category a person should race is based on either:

1. The Provincial Championship category line of their compete membership
2. The National category on their UCI license.

Note: challenge memberships may be eligible in certain youth-based categories check the event technical guide for more information.

National/International Events in Ontario

National and International Events are run under a separate category eligibility level. For certain categories at these events, an upgrade may be required from Cycling Canada (or may not be allowed at all). Ontario Cycling upgrades may not apply to

your category at these events. Be sure to check the event technical guide for clarification

Unsuccessful Upgrades

Athletes who have been granted an upgrade but clearly demonstrate an inability to meet the level of competition in their new OCup category may have their upgrade rescinded by Ontario Cycling. They will be eligible to continue to race in the OCup category they previously raced in prior to the upgrade (if applicable).

Upgrade Penalties

Coaches/Athletes who submit more than two (2) unsuccessful upgrades within the season will be placed on the Upgrade Penalty List for the season and will lose the privilege of submitting upgrades for the remainder of that discipline season.

Upgrade Request Form

[Click here to access the 2025 Road/MTB/CX Upgrade Request Form](#)