

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

Background

This guide provides information on the upgrade/downgrade process for youth athletes in the Track, 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 Track, Road, MTB, and Cyclo-Cross Ontario Cup (OCup) 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

Track

Athletes that are second year U15 age group are eligible to upgrade in the Track OCup Series events (Track OCup #2 and #3). Athletes wishing to apply for a youth upgrade must compete at one OCup in the Cat E category to be eligible to apply. Each upgrade request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Upgrades will be granted for exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstance is defined as the athlete has very clearly demonstrated that they are no longer challenged within the youth category* and have demonstrated the physical, technical and tactical ability to be competitive for a podium finish within an OCup category.

*OC does not define this as simply winning a category

When completing the form coaches must indicate if they are upgrading for Endurance or Sprint events or both types of events.



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.

U15 riders have their own category at Road Ontario Cup events. Only second year U15 athletes 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 member upgrades will not be considered for the Ontario Cup Road Series. U13 riders (or younger) are encouraged to participate in Youth Road Events.

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 OCup 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’ competing in the OCup 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

- Two (2) years of racing experience, including 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
- 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 an MTB/CX OCup by over 2 minutes to 2nd place.

Out-of-Province Riders

Riders from outside of Ontario can submit for upgrades for OCup 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 three (3) business days after the cut-off date whenever possible (see the event tech guide for submission deadlines)

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.

Provincial Championship

Riders must race their age listed on their membership/license regardless of having previously received an approved upgrade.

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 Track/Road/MTB/CX Upgrade Request Form