

Dear Parents,

I know that there have been some concerns raised by parents regarding the proposed junior categories for the coming season and in particular the plan to race boys and girls against each other. I will try to address all of your concerns as best I can.

Our overall aim was to provide opportunities for exciting and meaningful racing – to encourage juniors to ride at a level that suited their interest and ability. Let me first explain how we came up with the format for the junior racing this season.

1. Last season our group of junior riders was split over eight categories. With the limited number of riders, that led to some small groups and sometimes just a single rider in a category. We therefore sought to reduce the number of categories to provide larger fields and increase competition in each category. So initially we moved from eight junior categories to six (3 boys and 3 girls).
2. We also recognized that, just as there are a range of abilities at the adult level, there can be a range of abilities in each junior age group. Boys and girls grow at different rates. Some prefer to ride a shorter distance; others want to push the envelope. We then decided to take the categories idea a step further and rather than define a category by age, define it by distance raced, to take into account the wide range of abilities and the developmental spread between juniors of similar age. This would allow a younger talented rider to compete against older juniors. It would also allow other riders to ride a shorter distance than perhaps their age might require, if they felt more comfortable. We felt that the fields would be larger and more competitive.
3. Further extension of this idea led to the consideration to combine the boys and girls groups since juniors will be encouraged to ride in a category based on their ability and physical development, irrespective of gender. This might mean, for instance, that a 13 year old boy may be racing a 16 year old girl and be evenly matched. The intention is that competition is increased and everyone benefits and, hopefully, the days when one junior rides around the course just to finish because they were the only rider to show up are eliminated (is this racing?). I have to believe that with only three categories we will have several riders racing in each every week therefore introducing our kids to cycle racing.
4. The goal is to encourage and allow those who want to improve to progress to a higher standard.

Based on my knowledge of the current group of juniors, I would expect to see the following groups racing together.

**Junior A:** Sophie Adams, Mark Godfrey, Justin Ferreira, Daniel Oatley, Isabella Arnold

**Junior B:** Molly Pilgrim, Charlie Pilgrim, Somer Froud, Annabella Doyle, Daniel Hetzel, Ryan Day, Elizabeth Jordon, Gabriella Arnold

**Junior C:** Jessie Godfrey, Courtney Day, de ste Croix boys,

Obviously there will be some juniors where the fit is not obvious. But we can discuss this with the parents to figure out the best fit depending on whether the child wants to challenge themselves and ride in the higher group or be happy just participating in the lower category.

I have to believe that looking at the groups above we could be in for some very exciting racing this season with several of the boys or girls capable of winning their category and the others being challenged to improve.

Although the plan is to score each race without reference to gender, it does not preclude us from possibly awarding, at the end of the season, a trophy for the top male and female rider in each category.

We are more than happy to discuss your concerns, but I hope that you will be supportive of this idea, and 'sell' it to your children as a positive attempt to make racing more enjoyable.

Regards  
Jeff Amaral  
On behalf of the racing committee.