



# SPC Cycling Handbook 2021 / Road Cycling and Mountain Biking



# Introduction

## Hi and welcome to SPC Cycling.

We compete in both Road and Mountain Biking at a Regional and National level. We aim to provide a safe, supportive and fun environment to assist your son(s) in their cycling sport, and to support them regardless of their ambitions.

Naturally, at SPC, we wish to be competitive, so training features strongly in our club.

# Communication

The club uses an app called TeamApp to help manage communications within the club. All news, events and communication is done on this app.

## To get the app

- Go to your app store and download TeamApp.
- In the app search for SPC Cycling.
- The app will ask you to contact the administrator to get access.

# Safety and comfort

Safety of our riders is our number one concern.

Unlike other sports that are contained within a defined field of play, training and races are often done on open roads or on challenging mountain bike trails. As such, we do everything we can to ensure the safety of our riders and below is some guidance on specific aspects, and how you can play your part in that.

## Helmets

These are a non-negotiable in SPC cycling. Whenever a boy is on a bicycle, whether casually riding around or racing, they must wear a helmet.

If you are buying a new helmet for your son, it is also recommended that you purchase a helmet that is MIPS approved, as the technology in these helmets is superior. A few extra dollars is well worth it for your son's skull and brain!



## Servicing your bike

If you have bought a second-hand bike, we strongly recommend that you get this serviced by a bike shop mechanic and checked for safety prior to participating in rides.

While we will teach the boys how to check their bike prior to each ride, a professional service and safety check is worth its weight in gold on a regular basis. Bike failure leads to an inordinate number of crashes.

## Road Riding Safety Equipment



### Hi-Viz:

The roadies do two weekly training rides on open roads. The easiest way to avoid having negative interactions with cars is to be highly visible. As such, having a Hi-Viz jacket or top is mandatory on all training rides. No Hi-Viz, no ride. Being highly visible can be by wearing a good colour (such as white, yellow or orange) or having reflective strips on your top half.

### Lights:

Like Hi-Viz vests, a flashing red rear light is mandatory on all rides. We also strongly recommend a flashing white front light, although this is not mandatory. No rear light, no ride.

### Tyres:

Literally where the rubber hits the road. If you are buying a second-hand bike, we would recommend that you get the tyres checked and replace if necessary. If the bike has not been used for a while, then the tyres may well have perished and could split during a ride.

Check your tyres for debris, such as shards of glass. They may embed and not cause a problem, but each rotation of the tyre will drive them deeper until they do cause a puncture. Tyre pressure is also important. Keep the tyres pumped to between 80 and 100psi for a road bike.

## Mountain Biking Safety Equipment

### Tyres:

The comments in Road Cycling above about tyres are equally applicable to mountain biking. A good set of tyres with plenty of tread, inflated between 25-30 psi, will help with comfort and control on the bike.

### Protective Gear:

Mountain biking is an inherently risky sport. Along with a helmet, we recommend that riders wear full finger gloves to offer some extra protection in the event of a crash.

Other protective gear such as elbow and knee pads are not required for XC racing events.

## Parent Participation on group rides

One of the great things about cycling is that, as parents, we can train with the boys. Not only does this help our health and fitness, but it also gives us the chance to share in something with our sons.

Parent participation also helps us with managing group rides as some of the younger riders have not developed the road sense required, so having shepherds and tail-end charlies always helps!

We would not be able to hold training sessions without parent participation so if you are able to – then volunteer to the coaching team.



# Road Bikes

If you are investing in a road bike, it can be terribly confusing as to what to purchase. There are different frame materials, different sizes and different gear configurations.

Before purchasing a bike it is worthwhile checking with the school community via Team App for bikes available for sharing or purchase.

Here are a few tips:

## Frame:

Aluminium is the most robust, lightweight frame material available and the most cost effective. Carbon fibre is becoming far more common, is far lighter but have a higher price point and harder to repair if they are damaged. For a starter cyclist, aluminium is likely the best option if buying second hand, as they are usually much cheaper and less likely to have been damaged previously.

## Size:

This is a tough one for a growing boy. The saddle height, stack height and reach can all be adjusted, so a good rule of thumb is to buy a bike that is large enough to grow into, but not so big that they cannot ride comfortably. There are several good bike fit websites that take your son's measurements and recommend a good size frame, however, remember that he might grow, so maybe go one size up if unsure.

## Pedals:

We recommend clipless pedals and shoes for road riders as these keep the foot in the right position and ensure an efficient delivery of power through the pedal. However, they can take some getting used to, especially unclipping at intersections. We will cover this in the learn to ride sessions (see below).

## Gearing:

Good quality shifters, derailleurs and brakes tend to be lighter, more durable and more reliable. As a minimum, we would recommend Shimano 105. While the lower level group sets are good, they may not be as reliable on a race day, the added stress is not helpful! We would recommend 10 or 11 speed, as you can change the cassette easily, which you may have to do (see below on Rollout).

## Rollout:

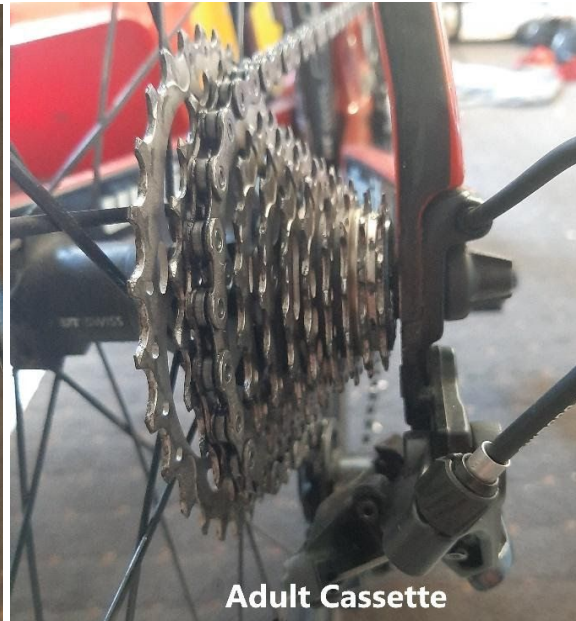
Road racing has a set limitation on the rollout for schools (i.e., how far the bike travels on one rotation of the crank in the hardest gear. This is far lower than standard road bikes. For example, a road bike with a 52-tooth crank and 11-tooth gear on the back has a rollout of over 10m. School cycling for all age groups up to U16 has a maximum rollout of 6.61m. Even U20 is limited to 7.91m. This is measured before each race and if the bike is above that, the rider is not allowed to start. There are two ways to solve this. First is to lock out as many gears as you need to at the rear until you have the right ratio. The problem with this approach is that you may wind up losing half your gears and have far less to use in a race.



The second option is to buy a school racing cassette, that is typically larger than standard cassettes. The smallest gear has 14 teeth, not 11. This allows you to be compliant (maybe only needing to lock out one gear if your large chainring is a 52) and allows you the use of most of your gears. School cassettes are most readily available in 10 and 11 speed, hence the recommendation to buy a 10 or 11 speed bike. If you have an 8 or 9 speed bike, then the cassette is harder to get hold of.



**School Cassette**



**Adult Cassette**

If you are buying a new bike, please make sure you tell the salesperson that it is for school racing, they will know what to sell to you that will stick to the rules.

# Mountain Bikes

Mountain Biking does not have the limitations with gearing that Road Cycling has. However, ensuring the bike is the correct size for the rider helps with comfort, control and speed.

## **Hard-tail or Full Suspension:**

Except for the North Island and National events, all mountain bike racing is classified as cross country (XC). As such, a hard-tail (i.e. front suspension only) is recommended although not required.

Suspension set-up is important, with most mid to high end set ups having multiple tuning options. Our coaches or some of our more experienced riders are happy to help you with the initial tuning.

If you are thinking about purchasing a bike, we recommend having a discussion with the team manager before you commit.

## **Bike sizes:**

Bikes come in a variety of frame and wheel sizes, so making the correct choice can be a little daunting. Frame sizes generally range from extra small (XS) to large. Wheel sizes are typically 27.5" or 29" and each have their pros and cons. Given the nature of the racing the boys will be involved in, it is best to avoid any wheel size smaller than 27.5".

## **Brakes:**

Disk brakes are standard on most mountain bikes and these are highly recommended.

## **Pedals:**

Clipless pedals are recommended for most forms of mountain biking. As with road riding, they can take some getting used to, but the benefits in terms of comfort and control are worth it. MTB pedals have a different set up to road pedals (ie: clips on both sides, greater degree of float, more robust soles on the shoes), so we recommend the use of mountain bike specific gear.

If you are riding flats (standard shoes) we recommend ensuring that the pedals have appropriate grip for riding in muddy conditions.

# Wind trainers

The road riders (or mountain bikers who wish to attend spin classes) need a wind trainer for spin and to warm up on race days. They are readily available on TradeMe at a reasonable price.

The club also had a few loan wind trainers if required. Some of the more serious boys use smart trainers, but these are not readily portable so not suitable for spin or races (they also cost a lot more!).





# Uniforms for competitions

## Road uniforms

Road cyclists compete in a specific SPC uniform called a skin suit. These are available to purchase from the club.

## MTB uniforms

Mountain bikers generally ride in their own riding shorts and are able to compete wearing the SPC PE top. There is a MTB specific riding jersey we will be placing orders for at the start of the season.

## Gloves

These are more for comfort than for safety but still need to be thought through. Good quality full-fingered gloves make riding on cold mornings so much more comfortable. There is also a safety implication, as frozen fingers are not that good for braking or changing gears.

## Glasses

Glasses are used variously within the club. On winter morning road rides, they can cut the chill from the eyes and sunstrike can also be uncomfortable.

## Shorts

When buying cycling shorts for either Road or MTB, it is recommended to invest in shorts with chamois padding. This eases discomfort on the more sensitive areas of a boy's anatomy, especially on longer rides. For roadies, lycra shorts are best, and for the MTB lads, shorts over padded lycra..

## Carrying gear

When competing, the road and mountain bikers may need to walk a long way to the race base. It is useful to have a handy box to carry the gear required and some parents invest in a hand-trolley to assist in this regard.

## Tools and spares

New parents do not need to invest in extensive equipment for racing. There will be a full tool kit available at all events should these be required.

These are generally not available for training, so it is important that the bike is well maintained as mentioned above. However, a bare minimum that each cyclist needs for training and racing will be spare tubes, tyre levers and a pump.

For MTB riders it is recommended to also carry a multi-tool and a speed link (temporary replacement chain link).



# Training

SPC host several training sessions each week.

The MTB riders usually train every Sunday morning, usually at Woodhill forest. For road races that are held on Sunday mornings training will move to a Sunday afternoon – so that road cyclists who also do MTB get to do training.

The road cyclists do two weekly training road rides on a Tuesday morning from SPC and on Saturday morning from Cornwall Park. The senior and junior boys ride separately on a Tuesday morning and we separate the boys into groups on Saturdays based on fitness and speed so that we can cover a range of abilities. Parent riders are crucial to make this possible. Juniors are encouraged to attend the Tuesday rides, and the route usually follows the cycle paths, so is safe. We have a weekly spin session on a Thursday afternoon using wind trainers. You will need a wind trainer for these sessions.

While these sessions are great support for the riders, we actively encourage you and your son(s) to do training outside of this if time allows, as their performances will be directly proportional to their training. You are also more than welcome to use TeamApp (see below) to plan unofficial training rides.

An important feature of training rides and racing is that each boy must take responsibility for themselves and their bike. They need to carry spares to cover for issues, the minimum being a spare tube, tyre levers and a pump. It is important that the boy and their parents learn how to do basic maintenance, such as changing tubes in the event of a flat tyre.

# Fundraising

The club subsidises entry fees and accommodation at the various events that we compete in. As such, fundraising is carried out throughout the year to ensure that we have the funds to be able to do this. These will be communicated via TeamApp and we encourage as many parents as possible to assist in this regard.

We host a MTB event (Waitawa) which allows the club a fundraising opportunity with a sausage sizzle.

# Events and Racing

Cycling New Zealand and College Sports manage the road riding season to coincide with the European racing season. As such, cycling in NZ is a winter sport. Auckland Secondary Schools Mountain Biking manage the MTB season. There are several SPC Events and organised races done during the year, as follows:

## SPC Cycling Muster:

This is where all new and returning riders meet up in February. New riders can try both road and mountain biking and the parents are offered information on the club and the events.

## SPC Learn to Ride (Road):

This is mandatory for new riders, regardless of how experienced they are. The sessions are run around the airport precinct on a Sunday afternoon and usually run for 4 weeks, starting in early March. The roads are in good condition and quiet and we run several games and rides to teach the boys how to ride in a group, how to draft and how to ride more effectively.

## SPC Annual Camp (Road/MTB):

Held at the end of term 1, the whole squad heads to camp for two nights. The location for this has traditionally been Miranda – however this year we will be exploring other options that will allow the ability to enjoy both Road and MTB.

We do a lot of riding and a lot of socialising. It is a good way for new riders to meet the older riders and to ride and hang out together. Dates for camp will be confirmed at the start of the school year.

## Auckland Schools MTB Series:



There are 5 races held during the season. The races are usually held at Riverhead, Hunua, Waitawa, Totara Park and Woodhill. The dates of these events are timed not to overlap with other cycling events. Event calendar will be provided early in the season and individual race details are provided prior to each event. The races are typically held on a Sunday morning.

SPC hosts the Waitawa event which is an opportunity for fund raising.

## Road Points Race:

The first road event of the year is run by College Sports and is held at Pukekohe Park raceway. This is an individual race, where the finishers are allocated points based on their finish on different laps.

## Road Team Time Trial series:

This series comprises 6 races, all run by College Sports and held at Pukekohe Park. These are spaced across the season. The format is a Team Time Trial with teams of between 3 and 5 riders. The time for the team is based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> rider's time, so team work is required. Riding a TTT is technical and we teach the boys how to ride in formation during the Learn to Ride and training rides.

## North Island Road Cycling Championship:

Held annually in Cambridge and run by Cycling New Zealand. This event is two days long and is held on the first weekend of the July school holidays. There is a Team Time Trial, a Road Race and a Criterium.



## North Island MTB Championships:

In 2021, the North Island MTB Championships are being held in Auckland from March 21-23 and will include XC, Relay, Enduro and Downhill racing. Details are available on Team App.

## Intermediate School Cycling Championship (Road):

Held each year in Taupo at the Taupo racetrack, this is a one-day event usually held on a Friday. It is the only race for Year 7 and 8 only and is the highlight for the middle school boys. There are two races, a Team Time Trial and a Criterium.





## Northern Tour (Road):

This is a two-day event held at Mt Wellington and Highbrook in September and run by Cycling New Zealand. There is an Individual Time Trial and Hill Climb on Saturday and a Criterium held on the Sunday.



## National Road Cycling Championship:

This will be held in Feilding in 2020. This is a three-day event run by Cycling New Zealand and is held on the first weekend of the October school holiday. There is a Team Time Trial, a Road Race and a Points Race.



## National MTB Championship:

This two-day event is held at the end of the year. As with the North Island champs, the Nationals are a multi-discipline event (cross country, enduro and downhill).

## Unofficial Aka Aka Race (Road):

In August, SPC often compete at the annual Aka Aka race. It is a cracker of an event, with a Team Time Trial and Road Race all on the same day. Parent racers are encouraged to ride with the Juniors for the Road Race. This race is run by Auckland Cycling and Counties Manukau Cycling Clubs.

Exact dates will be published to TeamApp once known.

# Finally.

We are here to help.

If you have any questions about Road Cycling, please reach out to Eddie Sella, Coaching Coordinator on 021 634 300 or [esella@ricoh.co.nz](mailto:esella@ricoh.co.nz). This is especially true for buying a bike, as those decisions are important and hard to reverse if you get it wrong.

If you have any questions about MTB, please reach out to Steve Maskell, Coaching Coordinator on 021565606 or [stevemaskell@gmail.com](mailto:stevemaskell@gmail.com).