



SPC Cycling Handbook 2024 / Road Cycling and Mountain Biking



Welcome to SPC Cycling.

The SPC Cycling Team competes in both Road Cycling and Mountain Biking at both 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.

Riders can participate in either or both Road Cycling and Mountain Biking. The local competitions are organized so that they are held on different weekends – allowing riders to compete in both disciplines.

Regular training features strongly for both Road Cycling and Mountain Biking.

Both disciplines hold team training on the weekend – with Road Cycling generally held on a Saturday morning and Mountain Biking on a Sunday morning.

Road Cycling has early morning training rides during the week and Spin Training is also available for both disciplines during the week at school.

All training days and times will be posted in TeamApp.

Team communication

The club uses an app called TeamApp to help manage communications within the club. All news, events and communication are done through the 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.
- Let the administrator know which riding discipline you're interested in (Road Cycling or Mountain Biking) to get signed up to notifications

Safety

The 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. Safety information for each discipline is included in the relevant guide.

SPC Cycling Muster

The SPC Cycling Muster is held at the start of the school year. It is intended to enable all new riders to try both Road Cycling and Mountain Biking – and get to meet some of the existing team riders. At the muster parent coaches and parents of existing team riders will be available to provide information on the club, training, and the events.

The SPC Muster is usually held at Totara Park – and the date is provided on the school website and in TeamApp.

If you do not have a bike but want to give it a go before committing, then let the team managers know before the Muster. A small number of bikes may be available to borrow.

Parent participation

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 something with our sons.

Parent participation also helps us with managing group rides as some of the younger riders have not developed the road or trail 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.

Competition

Throughout the year the team participates in several School competitions.

School competitions are well managed and safe for all new riders – and are focused on fun for new riders to help develop their skills and confidence in competing.

As a member of the team you are expected to participate in school competitions. The club will work with parents and boys to help prepare them for events.

Bikes

All riders will need to provide their own bikes to participate in training and competition.

If you need help with what type of bike to purchase for your son, check out the Road Cycling and Mountain Biking guides, or put a note on TeamApp.

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 often leads to training hold ups or unnecessary crashes.

Uniforms

Road Cycling and Mountain Biking have an approved uniform for participating in all competitions.

Full uniform details are included on the school website.

Fees

The school charges fees for both Road Cycling and Mountain Biking. These are listed on the Cycling Sports page.

Fees go towards competition entry fees, uniforms, and coaching – and will be charged to the school portal.

Fundraising

The club subsidizes entry fees, accommodation at the various events that we compete in, uniforms, tents, and equipment.

Fundraising is carried out throughout the year to ensure that we have the funds to be able to subsidize equipment, tents and activities as required. Fundraising activities will be communicated in TeamApp and we encourage as many parents as possible to assist in this regard.

If you are interested in helping out with fundraising or have access to materials or services that could enable fundraising, then please get in touch through TeamApp.

We try to host an MTB event each year (BBQ) which allows the club a more significant fundraising opportunity.

Team Managers

If you have any questions about Road Cycling, please reach out to Kathryn Collins on KatCollins24@gmail.com

If you have any questions about Mountain Biking, then please contact Steve Maskell, Coaching Coordinator on stevemaskell@gmail.com.

Road Cycling Guide

Road Cycling Training

The Road Cycling team does two weekly training road rides and a spin session. The senior and junior boys will be separated during training rides to ensure that they are suitably grouped based on age, fitness and experience. Parent riders are crucial to make this possible. Juniors are encouraged to attend the road rides, and the route usually follows the cycle paths, so is safe. The exact days and times for these sessions will be communicated via TeamApp.

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 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.

We have a weekly spin session on a Thursday afternoon using wind trainers. You will need a wind trainer for these sessions.

Wind trainers

The road riders 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!).

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 TeamApp 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).

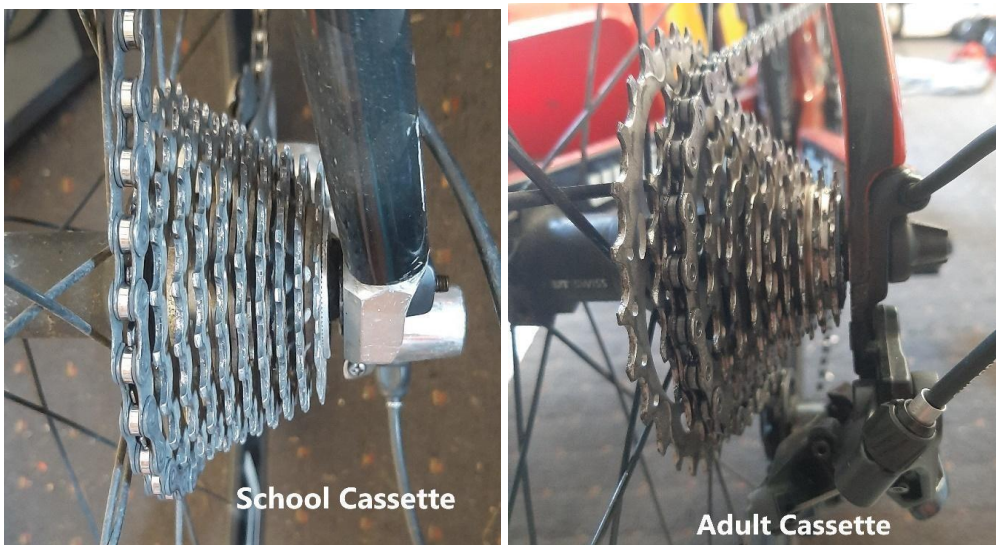
Gearing

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. 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.



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.

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.

Equipment

Helmets

These are 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!



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.



Road cycling uniforms

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

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.

Shorts

When buying cycling shorts for Road, it is recommended to invest in lycra shorts with chamois padding. This eases discomfort on the more sensitive areas of a boy's anatomy, especially on longer rides.

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.

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. There are several SPC Events and organised races completed during the year.

SPC Learn to Ride (Road Cycling)

This is mandatory for new riders, regardless of how experienced they are. The sessions are run around the airport precinct or at Unitec 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.

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. Full details will be published in TeamApp.

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 3rd rider's time, so teamwork 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. Full details will be published in TeamApp.



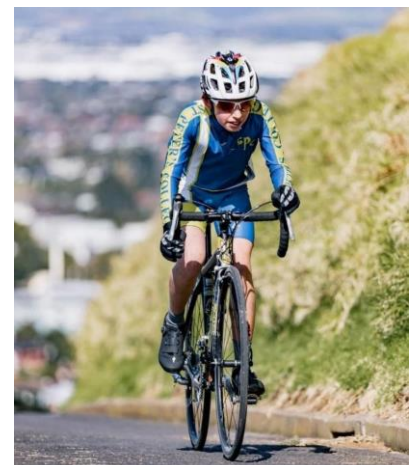
North Island Road Cycling Championship

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. Full details will be published in TeamApp.



Northern Tour

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. Full details will be published in TeamApp.



National Road Cycling Championship

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. Full details will be published in TeamApp. In 2023 this event is likely to be held in Christchurch.

Mountain Biking Guide

Mountain Bike Training

Mountain Biking usually trains every Sunday morning during term times. The majority of training rides are held at Woodhill – although we do vary location dependent on upcoming races at other locations. Other locations include Riverhead, Hunua, Waitawa and Totara Park.

Training times and location will be confirmed in TeamApp

We separate the boys into groups based on fitness and speed so that we can cover a range of abilities. Parent riders are crucial to making this possible. If you can ride then please let us know so we can plan training sessions.

While these sessions are great support for the riders, we actively encourage you and your son to do training outside of this if time allows. The boys performances will be directly proportional to the amount of training they do.

An important feature of training rides and racing is that each boy must take responsibility for themselves, their equipment and their bike. They need to carry spares to cover for any issues on the trail, the minimum being a spare tube, tyre levers, pump and speed link (for broken chains). 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.

It is also important to maintain your bike between rides. This includes cleaning the bike, cleaning and lubricating the drive train (chain and derailleurs), checking for wear and tear on cables, tuning gears and checking for loose bolts and suspensions.

Mountain Bikes

For Mountain Biking it is important to ensure the bike is the correct type and size for the rider. This will enable comfort, control and speed.

Hardtail or full suspension types

Riders are able to participate in competitions on either a hardtail or full suspension.

The majority of school mountain bike competitions are classified as cross country (XC). As such, a hardtail (i.e front suspension only) is all that is required to participate. This is a great bike to get started with as it is lighter than most full suspension bikes.

You do not need a full suspension to compete – however full suspension bikes are able to be used for all competitions.

If you are new to the sport and 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. It is very important to try a bike before purchasing to make sure it is the right size for your son. Bike retailers have handy guides on their sites to help you understand what is the right size for your son.

Wheel sizes for Mountain Biking are typically 27.5" or 29". Given the nature of the racing the boys will be involved in, it is best to avoid any wheel size smaller than 27.5".

Frames

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 has a higher price point and harder to repair if it is damaged. For a starter rider, aluminium is likely the best option if buying second hand, as they are usually much cheaper and less likely to have been damaged previously.

Brakes

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

Pedals

School riders can ride either clipless pedals (SPD) or flats in mountain biking.

Clipless pedals require specific shoes and allow the rider to be more securely 'clipped' into pedals (they are called clipless or SPD pedals and shoes to differentiate them from the toe clips that you used to find on bikes) .

They can take some getting used to, but the benefits in terms of comfort and control are worth it. MTB clipless pedals have a different set up to road pedals (ie: clips on both sides of the pedals, greater degree of float, more robust soles on the shoes). You

will need specific mountain bike clip pedals – it is not recommended to use Road cycling clips.

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

Equipment

Recommended equipment for Mountain Biking.

Helmets

These are non-negotiable for all forms of 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!



Uniforms

There is an approved MTB specific riding jersey available from the school sports office.

Gloves

These are recommended for comfort and for safety on the trails. 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.

Shorts

When buying cycling shorts for MTB, it is recommended to invest in shorts with chamois padding or chamois inserts for shorts. This eases discomfort on the more sensitive areas of a boy's anatomy, especially on longer rides.

Water and nutrition

All riders should have a water bottle (they can carry on their bike) or a hydration backpack to ensure they keep hydrated for training and competition.

For training rides we recommend energy bars, bananas and other snacks to keep energy levels up.

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.

A minimum that each cyclist needs for training and racing will be spare tubes, tyre levers and a pump. It is also recommended to also carry a multi-tool and a speed link (temporary replacement chain link). If you are a parent rider accompanying their son then only one set of equipment is required.

Mountain Biking Events

Auckland Schools MTB Series

Auckland Schools MTB Series holds 5 races during the year – with the first race usually starting in March.

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.

The 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.



North Island Schools MTB Championships

In 2023, the North Island MTB Championships are being held in Rotorua from April 14-16 April and will include XC, Relay, Enduro and Downhill racing. Details will be available on TeamApp.

National MTB Championship

This two-day event is held on 4 October 2023 - 7 October 2023 in Blenheim. As with the North Island champs, the Nationals are a multi-discipline event (cross country, enduro and downhill). Details will be available on TeamApp.

Other competitions

There are a number of competitions that are not affiliated with College Sports that are students can compete in during the year. These include the:

- Whaka 25 / 50 /100 / October
- 2W Gravity Enduro
- 440 Enduro
- WCRC Enduro

Other competitions that are suitable will be shared with the team in TeamApp.

Although these are popular with boys on the team – these are not official school events and they are the responsibility of parents to organise and supervise their sons.