



Glossary of Organizations, Acronyms and Cycling Terms

Organizations and Acronyms

BC - Bicycle Colorado. The non-profit organization that has advocated for safe bicycle riding around Colorado for the last 31 years.

BRAC - Bicycle Racing Association of Colorado. The former name of Colorado Cycling, which was absorbed into Bicycle Colorado on Jan 1, 2023.

KHMTT - Karen Hornbostel Memorial Time Trial Series. Held at Cherry Creek State Park for about 30 years, the course is an individual time trial that raises money for the Cancer Fitness Institute, BC and other great causes.

RMCCC - Rocky Mountain Collegiate Cycling Conference. The local USAC conference for collegiate racing in Colorado. The conference has road and mountain events, and their calendar is integrated with the BC calendar.

USAC - USA Cycling. The national governing body (NGB) of bicycle racing in the USA. USAC has a two-part mission: support and grow local racing, and also field elite athletes and teams for the Olympics. Based in Colorado Springs (as are a number of other NGBs).

UCI - the Union Cycliste International. The international governing body of bicycle racing. Based in Switzerland.

Cycling Terms

Categories - USAC assigns racers to categories based on skill level. Beginners are Category 5 (ie 'Cat 5') and progress up to Category 1 by achieving results. Professionals are above Category 1 racers.

Downhill Mountain Bike - DH - Much like a downhill ski race, DH is a solo-start mountain bike discipline that uses a downhill course on a dirt trail that takes 3-5 minutes to complete. The fastest time wins. DH courses often have big features, logs, rocks and roots. Very rowdy. Requires moderate fitness and a very high skill level (and lots of courage).

Drafting - riding closely behind another rider to gain an aerodynamic advantage.

Criterium - a type of mass-start race that uses a small paved circuit, such as around city blocks. Fast and kind of furious, criteriums have lots of speedy corners and require quite a bit of speed and bravery. Race duration is 30-90 minutes depending on category.

Cross Country Mountain Bike - XC - a mass-start mountain bike discipline that uses multiple circuits or a big loop of dirt roads and trails. Courses often feature big climbs and singletrack descents. Very fitness-intensive and requires a moderate to high bike skill level. The Colorado High School League is based on XC racing.

Cyclocross - CX - a type of mass-start race that is held on a 2-3k circuit of mixed surfaces, like grass, pavement, sand and mud. Courses often feature barriers and stairs to force athletes off their bikes. Races are 30-60 minutes long depending on the race group. CX is intense and very fun. A great racing discipline for kids and beginners. Also noted for beer and bacon.

Enduro - a gravity-based mountain bike event that uses timed sections to determine a winner. The winner will complete the timed sections in the least amount of time. Requires moderate fitness and very high skill level (and lots of courage). In concept, similar to a Gran Fondo.

Gran Fondo - a fairly new type of competitive cycling event. Usually held on the road but can be on dirt as well. Instead of a mass start race in which all athletes in a group start at the same time and race for the full distance of the event, Gran Fondos are like a big organized ride with timed segments. For the results, athletes are only concerned with their efforts during the specific segments. Gran Fondos are easier on event directors, easier to permit, and easier to police.

Gravel Racing - A mass start event held predominantly on gravel roads. These events are often very long distances. Gravel is currently a very popular event type. This discipline is still in its infancy, but is quickly becoming more professional and regulated much to the dismay of the pioneers of this type of riding. Very much the cool, new kid on the block.

ITT or TT - Individual Time Trial - a type of race in which the athlete is sent solo off the start line. The winner is the fastest person to complete the course. Drafting is not allowed. Time trials can be held on flat roads, uphill or even on mountain bikes. A very nice way for a beginner to experience bike racing.

Omnium - a multi-event race (i.e. a road race and time trial) in which the overall winner is determined by points earned in each event.

Race Groups - Race groups are constructed based on Category, Gender and Age. ie 'Senior Women Cat 4', or 'Master Men 40+'. Colorado racing has a large number of race groups, which poses challenges for beginners, event directors and officials.

Race Officials - Races that are sanctioned by USAC need to have licensed USAC officials. Much like any other sport, race officials are in charge of an event. They run the official clock, assess penalties and manage the race day according to USAC standards.

Road Race - a mass-start race held on roads. These roads can consist of a big loop, an out-and-back, or short road circuits that are completed a number of times. Road races often feature big climbs and fast descents.

Stage Race - a multi-event race (ie: a road race and time trial) in which the overall winner is determined by the rider with the least accumulated time. (ie: the Tour de France overall winner in the yellow jersey.)

Team Time Trial - like an individual time trial except that you ride with your teammates. You can draft your teammates but not another team. Speeds are very high and riders rotate through their team to take pulls at the front. Not recommended for beginners!

Track Racing - held on a banked cycling track (aka velodrome), there are tons of different events for all athletes. Track racing is rarely visible in the USA outside of the Olympic games, where it is very important to USAC because of all the medals on offer. There are team, individual, time trial and mass start events of different distances.

Velodrome - a cycling track with banked corners, often seen in the Olympics. There are about 20 functioning velodromes in the USA. Colorado has two: one in Erie and one in Colorado Springs.