

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: This is my first Race, what Category should I ride in?

Below is breakdown of the different categories for

Youth (age 13 – 18) and Adults

There are multiple different race categories based on your age and skillset. For first time adult or youth racers (over the age of 13) you will race in the C race. The C race is a shorter race designed to challenge riders while allowing you to develop the skills needed to move up to the more experienced categories.

Riders in the C race are allowed to ride mountain bike style bicycles.

Kids & Juniors

Kids U11 and under race in the kids category. U13 racers with less experience can race in the kids race if they are not comfortable racing in the C race.

How Long is a Race?

Each category has a target time for how long that race should last. In your category you will complete as many laps as you can in that time, the winner being the one who crosses the finish line first. Here are the target times for each category:

Kids – 20 minutes on a modified kid's course

Cat 4 or "C RACE" – 30 minutes (male and female)

Cat 3 or "B RACE" – 40 minutes (male and female)

Cat 1 / 2 or "A RACE" – 60 minutes (male and female)

A lap on a typical cross race takes between 7 and 10 minutes to complete (courses will have lap lengths of 2.5-3.5km). Prior to the start of the race, the commissaires will inform all riders of the length of their race (time) and approximately how many laps. Most of the time the length of the races for the lead rider is just shy of the target time for the category, but sometimes the races are longer, it all depends on the course conditions that day.

During the race, the officials will hold up a card at the finish line with the number of laps remaining. The last lap is indicated to all riders with the ringing of a bell, commonly referred to as "the bell lap". After receiving the bell, the next time the racers cross the finish line their race will be complete.

What happens during a race?

In the A, B and C races the race participants will be seeded in rows of between 5 and 8 across and 24 deep, according to cup points, regardless of gender. If you are late for the call up you will lose your seeding position and you will be moved to the back of the pack.

Once all riders are on the start line, the race official (commissaire) will go over some details regarding your race including an estimate of how long the race will be and how many laps they are anticipating.

The commissaire will then prepare the field for the start of the race, tell you how many minutes and then seconds remain before the race will begin, and then they will start the race.

If you have a mechanical problem with your bike during the race (including a flat tire), the only place you are allowed to make repairs is in the pit area. The pit area will be marked.

You can leave tools, spare wheels, or a spare bike in the pit area if you want. If you need to make a repair or change a wheel, you can only do this in the pit, and you can't leave the course (i.e. take a shortcut) to get there – so you may need to get off your bike and run on the course to get there.

You cannot receive any outside assistance during your race, including being handed water or food as sometimes happens in cross races. Exceptions for taking water may be made by the commissaire in especially hot weather.

Each time you cross the finish line the commissaire will hold a sign counting down the remaining laps. On the last lap they ring a bell, the “bell lap”. This is the last lap of the race.

How do I find out where I finished in the race?

Cyclocross uses Zone4 for timing of races. Real-time tracking of racers is available at each race and results are available immediately after a race. You can find the link to Zone4 on the registration page you used to sign up for the race. Final results are usually posted within 24 hours on the MCA website.

What does a typical race day look like?

Although the schedule can change from race to race, below is a typical race day:

- Organizers will release a schedule of when the races are scheduled for and when riders can access the course for pre-riding (see below for information on pre-riding).
- Registration for Cyclocross races is done online. There is no race day registration.
 - o This is because all racers need to be entered into the system and assigned a timing chip for the race. This is all done in advance of race day.
 - o Information about upcoming races, including links to registration pages will be posted on the MCA website as soon as it is available.
- Riders will sign-in at the registration table and pick up their timing chip (which must be attached to your front fork).
 - o We recommend you pick up your chip at least 1 hour before your race.
 - o Sign-in and chip pick up closes 30 minutes before the start of each race.
- You will be required to show your current race licence to the race officials when picking up your timing chip.
 - o Due to insurance regulations, you may be turned away at registration without proof of a current valid licence.
 - o If you arrive late (less than 30 minutes before the start of your race), there is no guarantee you will be allowed to start in the race. Permission to race MAY be granted by the commissaires or race organizer and they may exercise the right to penalize the racer at the start line. This is typically in the form of being seeded at the back of the seeded racers.
- You MUST wear your race numbers (assigned and provided by the Manitoba Cycling Association) pinned to the back of your jersey.

- Your race numbers will be pinned to each shoulder and your back. If you are unsure where to pin it you can always ask another rider or the team at the registration table.
- If this is your first race and you do not already have a number one will be assigned to you by the commissaires at the registration table. We recommend that you arrive early to pick up your number and attach it to your jersey.
- Returning racers who are riding in the same category as the previous year, are expected to use the same numbers as the previous year, unless otherwise directed.
- Pre-riding the course can only be done during designated times. Pre-riding a course allows you to become familiar with the course and try different lines to find the one that works best for you.
 - The schedule for pre-riding will vary from race to race but all events will post their race schedule, which will include the schedule of pre-ride times, in advance of race day.
 - You **MAY NOT** ride the course while another race is in progress, this puts other riders' safety at risk and will result in your disqualification from your race.

Remember, helmet use at all Manitoba Cycling Association races is MANDATORY (this means on your head and fastened). You must wear your helmet at all times, even during warm-up/cool down and in the parking lot.

What do I need to bring to a race?

Everyone is different, so you might want to bring things that are on this list, leave some things off, or add things that aren't on the list.

- Your race licence (**you must have your licence with you to race**)
 - Some races have day permits that can be purchased to allow riders to try racing for the first time. Information about a day permit will be provided by the race organizer as part of the information they put out about the race.
- Your race numbers – if this is your first race, you will be assigned a number at the registration table by the commissaires.
- Tools, a pump, and spare inner tubes (if you don't have many tools, don't hesitate to ask your fellow racer).
- Water & nutrition (if you stay and watch others race it can be a long day. It's always good to have some food and water)
- Clean/dry clothes for after the race
- Bug-spray and sunscreen
- Extra cycling clothes if the weather changes
- A lawn chair is a good idea, so you have a place to sit as you wait for your race to start
- Eye protection (suggested but not required)
- Proper cycling shoes (no sandals or open-toed shoes)

You Will be Provided...

- Your race numbers, with a few pins, if you are a new racer
- A fun time racing with others
- There will always be a medical official present during the race

Need help - just ask

New racers sometimes find the pre-race time a little intimidating with the “pre-race jitters”. If you are not sure about something, feel free to ask fellow racers or a race volunteer. Most are very friendly and willing to help.

Can I move up a category?

The category system is designed to keep the races safe and competitive for ALL racers. The Cyclocross Director and the Chief Commissaire reserve the right to move up racers. Move-ups are based on average lap times. If your average lap times would have placed you in the top 20 of the faster category at the same event, you will be moved up to that faster category for the remainder of the season.

Racers will be notified of a move to a higher category by the Cyclocross Director in advance of the next race. If you have already signed up for the next race before you receive your notification, that is okay. The Cyclocross Director or the Chief Commissaire will move you to the appropriate category after informing you of the move.

Can I move down a category?

Racers who feel they can no longer compete at their current level are **encouraged** to request to move down a category. We are all out here to have fun, and if you no longer feel competitive in your current category, we will work with you to make sure you are put in the category that best fits your skill set. If you would like to move down a category, please email your request to the Cyclocross Director or call the Executive Director at the MCA office.

Your request will be reviewed, and if it is approved, the Cyclocross Director will email you to inform you that your request has been approved, and the MCA office will issue you a new MCA license, if necessary.

It is important to note that you cannot move yourself up a category without approval. Additionally, no category moves will occur on race day. Race day is very busy for the organizers and the commissaires.

Organizing bike races depends on the hard work of volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering to help, consider joining the CX committee and help CX racing grow in Manitoba.