



Bristol South Cycling Club

How to series...How to enter a road race.

A road race is over a set course in which the all riders depart together, and try to get ahead to arrive at the finish line before other competitors. The pace of the race varies depending on the tactics of the riders who use the terrain to their advantage in order to leave the remainder of the field behind.

You will need your regular road bike, ensure the gears and brakes are working properly. It is compulsory to wear a helmet. There are 3 main organising bodies, The League International, The League of Veteran Racing Cyclists (40+ years), and British Cycling; as the latter have the largest number of events, which are categorised by ability too, these are the entry details described below. If you are under-18 years, you need to ensure the race you are entering accepts riders of your age group, and your bike will be restricted as to the highest gear you can use (to protect growing joints which are not fully formed until you are 18 years). You should join British Cycling, and get a race licence too.

Note: British Cycling membership runs for 12-months from the date you join, but your UCI race licence is valid only in that calendar year to December 31st. So doing both at the start of January means you are covered for the whole year. There are a variety of membership options available but if you intend to compete regularly then 'silver' with 'race licence' is a good choice.

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/membership?gclid=CN2o-5fCktECFUmHswodaz0HtQ>

You need to have paid your Bristol South membership subscription too to enter races as a club rider; the club 'year' is from 1st September to 31st August, at less than £1/month.

http://www.bristolsouthcc.co.uk/djk/Club_Info/join_bsccl.php

The races are categorised from new rider (4th category), through to experienced riders (1st category) and then pro-teams (Elite category). Races are arranged to allow riders of similar abilities to compete against each other, such as cat 4 only, cat 3 and 4, cat 2-3-4, cat E-1-2, etc. Licence points are awarded to the winner and top finishers, with more points awarded and more riders included as the difficulty of the race increases. Your licence points accumulate to promote you to a higher category.

Closed Circuit Races

These events are not on public roads, but at places such as Castle Combe motor race circuit and Odddown Cycle race track, Bath.

Sometimes you do not need to enter in advance; just turn up on the day, and sign on the entry form, near the start. Do not forget to take your race licence along; this is handed over when you sign on the entry form, and returned to you after the event has finished. Race entry fee is typically £10 of which £4 is paid to British Cycling as their event levy.

It is advisable to get there early, to ensure you know where the route goes, get both your race numbers pinned on, and ensure you do not miss the riders briefing and the race start.

Road Races

These are races which run on open roads, you need to plan ahead a lot more. As the race uses public roads the size of the field is limited to typically 80 riders; many more riders may apply so the organiser will determine who gets to race. Your planning should include not only selecting races which will suit you and your team mates, but where you are likely to meet the entry criteria for the event too. These details are shown on the 'Summary' and 'About' tabs on British Cycling website as explained below. Furthermore, enter several events over different dates so if you are not selected for one particular event, the next one will not be too far into the future. When you apply you can choose to be a reserve too, which means if any of the original field drop out you can be selected as a replacement. As a last resort the organiser may have a few places available after all the reserves have been allocated, available to on-the-day entrants as late as 30-minutes before the race is to start.

You need to enter in advance. The normal cut off is 21-days before the event, but think 3 to 4 months ahead as some race quotas are filled very early. On the day, sign on the start sheet at the HQ. Do not forget to take your race licence along; this is handed over when you sign on, and returned to you after the event has finished. Race entry fee is typically £25 of which £4 is paid to British Cycling as their event levy, the remainder covers the cost for motorbike outriders, lead cars, commissaires, service vehicles, first aid, judges, marshals, the HQ hire and some prize money, a total budget of around £2000 for a low-key event.

It is advisable to get there early, to ensure you know where the route goes, get both your race numbers pinned on, and ensure you do not miss the riders briefing and the race start.

Entering the Race

To find your race visit the British Cycling website, and proceed as follows;

BC home page <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/>

On your first visit – join up if you are not a member

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/membership?gclid=CN2o-5fCktECFUmHswodaz0HtQ>

On subsequent visits you are able to log-in via the tab on the top right of the BC home page using your BC membership number and your password.



You can browse the 'events' tab from the top ribbon on the web page

[News](#) [Events](#) [Campaigning](#) [Education & Coaching](#) [Insight Zone](#) [Membership](#)

or go there directly at

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/events/home?gclid=CPi8mc7jktECFa0V0wod6uwBJA>

To find an event held locally, you can use the criteria in the selection box:

Keywords:	<input type="text"/>	ROAD or CLOSED CIRCUIT
Events Near:	<input type="text"/>	Bristol
Within:	<input type="text" value="Range (any)"/>	100 km

Click **FIND**

Look for the Map Tab on the right side of the screen and turn this ON to show the HQ locations

Map:

On Off

If you want to know more about any of the events filtered click on the 'enter' tab at the right side for that event

ENTER >>

If the event you want is not open yet the tab on the right side will say

Coming Soon >>

Having selected an event , more details are shown on the '**SUMMARY**', '**ABOUT**' and '**ENTRY FEES & RACES**' tabs

From here you can **ENTER** , or **ENTER ONLINE** , or go back and try another event.

That's it. Your entry is made.

You will receive an e-mail from the organiser, usually 3 weeks prior to the event, confirming the race details, HQ location, course route, your start number and timings. Make sure you get to the HQ in plenty of time. You should aim to arrive with enough time to complete the steps below and complete any warm up you want to do. You will need to:

- sign on a paper start-sheet, and hand in your race licence
- collect both your race numbers and pin on using the pins provided
- confirm you know where you are going
- check for any last minute safety advice which should be next to the signing on sheet
- make sure you know your way to and from the start/finish and how long it will take
- attend the riders briefing at the HQ before the start

Top Tips:

1 Ride safely: when racing on the open roads you still need to follow the Highway Code and beware of others who might be on the road. Follow instructions given by the race commissaire, marshals and motorcycle escort (NEG). When the race convoy vehicles want to get past you they will beep their horn; move over to the left and let them through, they are there to help safeguard the event.

2 Training: you need to be able to complete the race distance, but also keep up with rapid changes of pace to stay in contact with the main bunch of riders. As you have planned your race entries so far in advance, use the time ahead to get as fit as you can. There are a variety of schedules, programmes and acronyms, but in summary you need to both improve your strengths and limit your weaknesses to avoid being caught out on the day. Your focus should be on Specific High Intensity Training Efforts, when you are full of these it will be you dishing it out to those in the bunch straining at the rear. Training does not mean trying to raise the speed of the club run by 10 mph; put in separate high speed efforts and 'recover' with your Sunday ride to the café.

3 Team mates: train and race with your team mates. You help each other get fitter and work together during the race to help there too. When your team mate has made an attack, you have the excuse not to help chase him down, and even accidentally-on-purpose soft pedal to disrupt the chase group. If he is caught again, you will have had more rest than others in the bunch so it is maybe your turn to try a breakaway next. Remember the other teams will be doing it to you, so watch out.

4 Do not forget to eat and drink: despite all the excitement you need to frequently top up your energy levels. You will not last the full distance on breakfast alone.

5 Look ahead and keep alert: not everyone can ride in 10th place in the bunch, getting some shelter but close enough to not be respond quickly to changes in pace or splits in the field. However, those at the back have to brake harder to allow for the bunch compression at corners and narrows and accelerate for longer move back up; it is harder all round at the back. If there are obstacles in the road such as potholes, the riders at the front should point them out to those behind whose view will be obscured, do the same to pass the information back to those behind you.

6 Know what is coming up next: a recce of the route will show you where to go, and the lay of the land. On the day there will be flags by the roadside to give information at follows:

Red flag = warning at hazard/ junction

Black flag = stop!

Union flag = start; but a red/white chequered flag showing means the start is 'neutralised' for a short while. Withdrawal of the red/white flag from a lead car, or red/white flag with black border = km zero, race starts

Black arrows on yellow background, pointing to left / right = junction ahead make a turn

Blue flag = start of hill climb/sprint segment

Green flag with white border = 200m before end of hill climb/sprint segment

White flag = prime line, end of hill climb/sprint segment

Distance marker 1000m to go = finish coming up

Yellow flag = 200m before finish line

Black/white chequered flag = finish line

7 Punctures and repairs: call out and raise your hand /arm to indicate to riders behind you are stopping, wait on the left side of the road for the service vehicle and wave it down. If you are full of beans chase back on, otherwise its back to the HQ for an early cake.

8 Crashing out: 80 guys riding full tilt in close proximity, at some point a minor hiccup will magnify through the bunch and a pile up will occur. Know it now, and know it will hurt your body and your wallet to varying degrees. You won't be claiming off the rider in front, the commissaires, the marshals or anyone else; make good your own equipment and get back on with it. You do not need the latest pro-team, electric gizmo, full carbon wonderbike to start racing, but it will cost you small fortune to keep fixing it up so check the depth of your pockets before getting carried away.