

British Cycling Rider Development Programme explained

Cycling Development Programmes

British Cycling has a wide range of programmes designed to support riders of all abilities from the occasional rider through to Olympic champion.

Below is a description of the programmes and how riders can progress through them. Although you can race from age 6 this information is directed at those of you from age 10 preparing to race more seriously.



Go-Race and Go Ride Racing

Go-Race events are 'informal' races aimed at novices of all ages – children and adults who have never really raced before.

It is an entry-level bike race that provides a stepping-stone between our Saturday club sessions and regional level cycling competitions. You can race a Go-Ride event without a license

Go-Ride Racing (GRR) events are slightly different. They are for children who are new to the sport have never really raced. Regular racers are not allowed in order to attract newbies to racing.

Typically a GRR event will have 2 or 3 quick fire events say a 1 lap time trial followed by a 5-lap race and a team race so that every rider has 3 bites of the racing apple.

Go-Ride racing gives you the chance to compete in a real race environment against other riders of the same age and ability. Once you have gained confidence and learned more about racing then you are ready to make the step up to open regional competition.

We do Go-Race mtb races over the summer. Other events include the novice races before the cyclo cross races and the Monday night track training races.

There are lots of Go-Ride races within the South East but we tend to just do the regional racing!

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Cyclo-Cross

London/South East Cyclo-cross League runs on Sundays from September to February and is open to all abilities with racing for under 10s, 12s, Youth (U14/16) There are also team and regional Championships within the League

We do training sessions here at HH for technique and race prep. There is also the London and South East Champs where you can ride for the regional champions title.

There are team events where riders get a chance to represent the South East region - The National Champs.

And there's the prestigious National Trophy Series. Riders from across the UK's cross leagues and regions do battle at six venues across England and Wales between October and January.

Mountain Bike

The Gorrick an MTB organization put on several events - all national:

Autumn Classics Just 2 races, held Sundays - venues change every year

Saddle Skedaddle - A five event open cross-country race series held on Sundays during January to April.

Road

Under sixteen's ride on what are called closed circuits. Regional circuits include:

Crystal Palace Redbridge and Hillingdon Cycle Circuits

Goodwood Motor Circuit Fowlemead Country Park

Members do The Crystal Palace Crits held every Tuesday from May – August. There are also races at Hillingdon, Fowlemead and Redbridge

How do I become part of the talent team?

British Cycling with club support has created a clear rider development path. See below for an explanation of each level.

RSR

Talent team coaches – ours is John Scripps will talk with club coaches about local riders who they feel have the ability to benefit from the Talent Programme. Talent coaches run 'Regional Schools of Racing' sessions that riders showing potential will be invited to. HHYCC coaches nominate riders for these sessions.

Talent Programme

In the Talent Programme from 13 to 16 years old you will be assigned a coach who will prescribe training and racing to fit around your education. You'll need to commit to completing and returning a training diary and attending approximately 4 camps of 4 to 7 days during the year (in school holiday time). Opportunities may also arise to race overseas.

Olympic Development Programme

The Olympic Development Programme is for junior riders 16 to 18 years old. A discipline specific coach will coach you. You will have training and racing schedule set around your educational needs and you commit to completing and returning regular training diaries. Residential camps are held in school holidays, and there are opportunities to represent Great Britain internationally

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U23 Academy Programme

In the U23 Academy Programme riders normally commit to full time residential focused training. Many of the disciplines have their base in Manchester, with the men's road riders also having a summer base in Italy. Riders still completing A levels can be considered and a non-residential programme can in some circumstances be put in place by the Academy coach.

Podium Programme

In the Podium Programme, riders receive all the coaching, equipment, clothing needed to be a professional rider. Though racing predominantly internationally they live independently and are responsible for their own training programme.

Now read on for what each entails.

Regional School of racing

Regional Schools of Racing (RSR) are run by British Cycling Talent Team Coaches as part of the British Cycling rider development plan. John Scripps is our Talent Team Coach. RSR are aimed at those riders who show potential Under 14's and Under 16's.

Show potential? You are already racing at local and regional level.

RSR are not a selection for the Olympic Talent or Development Programs, but aimed at giving aspiring riders the best opportunity to learn more about bike racing in their chosen discipline.

The keyword is application. It's a tough programme and competition for places is high. It's not just about the racing. It's about your attitude, commitment and preparedness.

At this stage it's important to understand the sort of effort, application and behavior the talent coaches are expecting. A good rider is not necessarily the strongest or fastest at an RSR. It's a rider who applies themselves fully to the session objectives and is willing to both listen and learn.

The talent team coach will also run up-skilling sessions – open to a wider section of the club but riders are still nominated.

How to get noticed and nominated for RSR

The regional track Omniums, National series, and National Championships results (in all disciplines) are a sure fire way to get noticed. (See above)

British Cycling Regional Talent Coaches will invite clubs to nominate riders who they feel show potential in a given discipline. Each RSR will have specific session objectives and these are detailed in the session plan sent out with nominations/invitations. They will also be covered during the initial rider briefing at the RSR.

HHYCC Nomination Process

Club coaches (as a group) decide who should be nominated based on the level of the RSR session and the ability of that rider. Coaches decide who is putting the work in at club sessions or races. The only exception to this is when John directly invites riders from our region.

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When there are more club nominations than places available John decides who attends with list by rider priority (as decided by club) or if a rider is nominated that will struggle with the session based on previous RSR or previous races he will discuss with coach.

Parents/Riders should contact who nominated them to confirm if they have been picked or not. Riders should regard RSR as an achievement and be thankful to club coaches for the opportunity.

Wherever possible, it is important that communication from John to the rider is through the nominated coach.

The most effective way for the new talent development programme to work is to involve coaches in the riders' development for RSR as much as possible, which John thinks will not happen if he communicates directly with parents. If anyone needs any clarification on how the process works talk with a coach or please don't hesitate to call John or send an email.

Olympic Talent Team Programme

The Olympic Talent Team Programme is designed for youth riders ambitious for success in any Olympic discipline in the sport of cycling. You must believe you have what it takes to make it to the Olympic podium.

The Talent Programme is regionally based for both coaches and riders. Talent Programme riders are typically aged from 13 to 16 years old are in the zone and with the ambition of making it onto an Olympic podium.

The TP coaches have the skill, enthusiasm, imagination and commitment to help develop riders with the goal of making them ready for the next step - the Olympic Development Programme (ODP).

They are amongst the best in the country with the skills and experience to be able to identify the areas where a young rider most needs to improve to challenge for the top.

These coaches know exactly what the coaches in the older age group programmes (Olympic Development Programme, Olympic Academy Programme) are looking for from a young rider. They will assist a rider in gaining the skills and fitness required to compete for a place in the next step to the Olympic podium.

What happens once I get to this stage?

We kind of lose you to the next level of coaching gods. You will be assigned a Talent Programme coach who will prescribe training and racing to fit around your education. You need to commit to completing and returning a training diary and attending approximately 4 camps of 4 to 7 days during the year (in school holiday time). Opportunities may also arise to race overseas. And of course you come back and help coach other rising riders.

Olympic Development Programme

The Olympic Development Programme (ODP) covers all Olympic disciplines: Road, Track, Mountain Biking and BMX for first and second year juniors (16 to 18 year olds).

Places on the programme are discretionary and decided every autumn. There is a no closed door policy and riders who are performing at a high level can be invited to guest with the programme at other times of the year. Some will go on to join the programme. Contact the team to find out how to apply to be a guest at a Camp. (Details to follow)

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Throughout the three Cycling Olympic Programmes the aim is to create competition for places and strengthen the squad. However to maintain the quality of coaching the number of riders in the ODP is strictly regulated.

Riders are given training programmes based around their education and other pressures. With some riders at school and others not, the programme of training and racing varies from rider to rider. Longer Training Camps are held during holiday periods: the amount a rider can learn at these is quite phenomenal.

ODP endurance riders have the chance to race in Europe and similar opportunities are being created as the programme develops.

The ODP provides riders with the support they need to become world class athletes. They have access to a network of support which is shared across cycling's Olympic Programmes. Whether it is advice on sports science, nutrition, injuries, or recovering from an illness, the Olympic Programmes have the best possible advice available.

Dedicated ODP coaches coach ODP riders on a one-to-one basis. They also have access to coaches who work with the senior team (Olympic Podium Programme) particularly in the lead up to major Championships.

Riders are provided with various equipment including bikes. There is also grant funding available to help with costs of training, getting to races, etc.

The ODP is part of a clearly defined progression route for riders:

The pathway begins with the Talent Team, where raw talent is identified.

The most talented riders progress to the ODP then on to the Under 23 Academy and ultimately the Olympic Podium Programme. This pathway ensures that talent is identified early skills are learnt young and that at senior level more time can be spent on conditioning and not wasted on "catch-up" technical development.

What the coaches are looking for in athletes is a strong work ethic, self-discipline, commitment and skill. Sheer physical ability is not enough on its own. The willingness to work on weaknesses and an open mind to advice and coaching are essential.

As well as progressing riders to the Academy Programme, the ODP's goals are also to win medals at major championships such as the European or Junior World Championships.

The Olympic Academy (Under-23) Programme

The Olympic Academy Programme (OAP) riders are typically aged 18 to 23 and exceptional athletes with the clear potential to become world-class performers. The programme aims to add the final technical polish, whilst building up training loads to those likely to be experienced by the senior elite athletes.

The Olympic Academy Programme (OAP) aims to deliver riders to the Podium programme who are ready to win medals at World Championships and Olympics. The programme has Men's Endurance, Sprint, Women Endurance, BMX and

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Mountain Bike Cross-Country elements. (Always defined by current Olympic disciplines)

Since it started the programme has taken talented riders and advanced them to new levels. Riders live the lives of full-time professional bike riders seven days a week. They are required to be disciplined, committed and focused.

They are required to live close to the programme's base in Manchester and there are many aspects of the Academy life which could be likened to going to University: it's often the first time riders have lived away from home; the skills development and learning experiences they go through are preparing them for adult life in their chosen career; they find themselves having to get on with strangers in a strange environment; and they are often making decisions for themselves for the first time.

However, there's probably more at stake day-to-day for members of the programme than for any university student: the new challenges thrown at them have to be tackled against a background of high levels of self-discipline and year-round performance expectations. Of course, for the aspiring professional cyclist, sacrifices of lifestyle are a small price to pay in return for a chance to chase personal goals.

For most, the programme has a heavy Track bias, reflecting the availability of medals at Olympic level. However, with the recent move towards a winter Track season, riders with Road ambitions have ample opportunity to showcase their skills on the Road through the summer, when much of the Academy's focus is on Road Racing.

As with the whole cycling programme, from Talent Team through to Olympic Podium Programme (senior GB team) there is a gradual move from skills training to physical conditioning. The first year in the Academy is usually heavily skills-focused, but as rider progress they will find themselves experiencing the progressive workload increases that they will have to handle if they are to succeed at the very highest levels.

Olympic Podium Programme

Riders in this programme are seasoned world-class performers with a track record of success at the highest level. Athletes are full-time on the programme and generally based near the team's Manchester HQ. Athletes may also be members of professional (trade) teams, receiving additional support from the programme.

The Olympic Podium Programme (OPP) is dedicated to supporting mature, highly skilled elite athletes as they aim to win medals in major competitions, such as European, World and Olympic Championships. The programme has Men's Endurance, Women's Endurance, BMX, Track Sprint and Mountain Bike Cross-Country elements.

Many of the athletes are members of professional "Trade" teams in addition to their membership of the programme. For many, particularly male and female endurance and Cross-Country Mountain Bikers, riding for a Trade team is an

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essential part of their preparation for major events, giving them access to the volume of racing and level of competition necessary to achieve the technical and physical conditioning required for major championships.

Much of the GB Team's endurance Track success has been built on the Road Race miles put in by the riders. In contrast, the Track sprinters compete relatively infrequently, but spend large amounts of time on specific technical training and conditioning in the gym.

Many athletes live close to the programme' base in Manchester, though their racing commitments take them round the world.

Bradley Wiggins is one of them. So is Shanaze Reade. They all started out like you. Ordinary kids loving the bike with a burning ambition to get there. They did. So can you.

Useful Links

You will find lots of racing here:

<http://www.southeastcycling.co.uk>

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