



## 2016 Cog Set Youth Race Series FAQs

Cycle racing can be a bit confusing. We hope these FAQs will help – and if they don't, please contact Sue [holdensue@gmail.com](mailto:holdensue@gmail.com) with your (less frequently asked) questions!

### What is the youth race series?

It's a series of weekly races: in 2016 we will run races every Wednesday at Salt Ayre from 13<sup>th</sup> April to 13<sup>th</sup> July. We organise it to give cyclists up to the age of 16 a chance to race together. Last year 97 children took part, and 60% of them were members of Cog Set.

### How much does it cost to ride each race?

The entry fee is £3 per rider per race. Half of the fee goes to British Cycling (BC), the rest is used for track maintenance, prizes not funded by our sponsors, and race expenses. Everyone who runs the races does so as a volunteer, without payment.

### Does each rider need a race licence?

No, if a rider doesn't have a British Cycling race licence they just pay an additional £1.50 each time they race. This fee goes to BC to pay to insure the rider for the race.

### How do I get a British Cycling licence?

Race licences are free for under 12s and youth cyclists (aged 12-16). However, to have a race licence you need to become a *member* of British Cycling: go to [www.britishcyclingt.org.uk](http://www.britishcyclingt.org.uk) and enter 'youth membership' in the search box.

If your child is a member of Cog Set or any other BC affiliated club, their first year's (silver) membership is FREE!

After your free year, silver membership costs £13 for under 12s and £21 for youth riders (aged 12-16) – or £11.70 and £18.90 respectively if you pay by direct debit. You can also pay more for gold membership, which comes with more benefits.

### What age category is my child in?

British Cycling's age categories span two calendar years (from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December). For 2016 they are as follows:

Rider born in	Category
2008 or later	E (under 8s)
2006 or 2007	D (under 10s)
2004 or 2005	C (under 12s)
2002 or 2003	B (under 14s)
2000 or 2001	A (under 16s)

Note, BC points and our league race points are awarded to boys and to girls in each age category.

### How long are the races, and when do they start?

The race lengths and approximate timings are as follows:

Time	Age categories	Race length
6:30pm	Ds & Es (U10s & U8s)	4 laps (3.2 miles/5.1 kms), no primes
6:45pm	Cs (U12s)	9 laps (7.2 miles/11.6 kms), with primes points at end of lap 5
7:15pm	As & Bs (U16s & U14s)	18 laps (14.4 miles/23.2kms), with primes points at end of laps 6 and 12

Note, riders who get lapped by faster riders end up riding less far (this is explained under the heading *How can I prepare and support my child to race.*)

### Why is my child racing against much older children?

We don't have enough time (or patience) to run five separate races, for the five age categories. So Ds and Es race at the same time, over the same distance, as do As and Bs. *However*, in

terms of places and scoring they are only racing against the children in the same age category and of the same sex as themselves. We use different colour race numbers so they can know who is which category.

### What is 'gear restriction'?

Gear restriction is the practice of preventing youth riders from using high gears when racing. British Cycling uses gear restriction to:

- Give all riders in the same age category the same maximum gear (making the racing fairer);
- Reduce the risk of injuries caused when riders use too high a gear;
- Encourage riders to use race tactics, and to learn to ride well in lower gears.

We test each bike's maximum gears by rolling it (backwards!) for one full rotation of the cranks, to see if the distance covered is within the maximum allowed for the rider's age category for road racing. This guide explains the what/why/how of gear restriction in more detail:

[http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc\\_files/volunteer/Youth\\_Gear\\_Restrictions\\_for\\_Riders.Parents.pdf](http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc_files/volunteer/Youth_Gear_Restrictions_for_Riders.Parents.pdf)

To help parents we will be offering to help restrict your child's bike's gears at Cog Set Saturday sessions before the 13<sup>th</sup> April.

### What do we need to bring?

- ✓ Child plus their willingness to ride!
- ✓ Child's bike with gears restricted (please do not turn up at a race hoping someone will do them for you: it's too busy and stressful).
- ✓ Cycle helmet, adjusted to fit properly (see <http://www.wikihow.com/Choose-a-Bicycle-Helmet>)
- ✓ £3 + British Cycling racing licence or £4.50

### What do we need to do at the race?

- Take great care when you are near the track: the riders go anticlockwise (when warming up and when racing) so if entering from the carpark please look left. Supervise young children and dogs, and teach older children they may only cross when there are no oncoming riders.

- You don't need to register in advance: just turn up. Please arrive *at least 20 minutes* before your child's race begins.
- Get your child to queue up (near to the containers) with their bike in its highest (hardest) gear, to get their gears checked. Once checked, they will be given a token to show that their gears are OK.
- Go to the registration desk (which is where Tom's refreshments stall is at a Saturday session).
- Say hi! Tell us if it's your child's first time and if they need any extra encouragement.
- Fill in the registration chart and sign it.
- Hand over the gear checking token, race fee and BC licence if you have one. You will get a race number in return.
- Pin the race number on the child's *lower back* so that when they lean forward to ride the number is visible (and not obscured by long hair). We need to be able to see the numbers to know the results of the races!
- If you have arrived before any races begin, your child can warm up on the track.
- Get your child to the race start when invited to do so by the commissaire (race judge); they need to wait by the registration desk or on the central green until they are asked to line up.
- Shout support during the race, to encourage your child and others! (Keep any criticisms to yourself!)
- When the race finishes, take the race number back and get your licence back in return.
- Once you have been a couple of times, please offer to help out. We cannot run the races without parents and other adults helping with various tasks – some of which are very easy. If everyone mucks in then each parent only has to help 2 or 3 times during the series.

### How do you score the races?

For 2016 we are going to award points in our series league in each age-and-sex category as follows: first place gets ten points, second gets nine points, down to ninth place who gets two points. All other finishers score one point.

At the end of the series we add up each rider's points to determine the final results. Each rider's total is the sum of their best 9 scores out

of 13 events. We do this so that riders can have some weeks off, or can suffer a puncture or other mechanical, without ruining their overall placing.

For A and B riders there are also British Cycling points to be won by those who hold a BC licence. If there are ten or more riders in a category racing then first place gets ten points, second gets eight points, down to ninth and tenth place with one point each. If there are fewer than ten riders then it is three points for first, two points for second and one point for third.

### **How do we find out the result of each race?**

Hopefully you'll be watching! Usually the race officials agree the results at the trackside, but sometimes we have to go home and squint at video footage to decide.

We try to update our league tables soon after the race, and put them on to the Cog Set website [www.cogset.org.uk](http://www.cogset.org.uk) and on [www.velouk.net](http://www.velouk.net) for all to see. (Do contact [holdensue@gmail.com](mailto:holdensue@gmail.com) if you spot a mistake: we are but human.)

As and Bs can also see their BC points and ranking on BC's website.

### **What are 'primes'?**

Primes (pronounced 'preems': French for 'bonus') are races within a race. They are there to spice things up in the longer races.

The primes points are separate to the race points, with separate prizes; tactically, some riders may decide to focus on winning primes points rather than winning the actual race.

The C race will have one prime (end of lap 5) and the AB race will have two (end of laps 6 and 12). We may also occasionally have on-the-spot primes (in the form of small edible gifts) for the DE race, to liven things up a little for the younger riders.

Scoring for the primes competition is by age category, but not by sex. (Male or female, the rider has to be in the first three to win points).

The first rider over the line at each prime gets 3 prime points, second gets 2 points and third gets one point.

As with the race points, the scoring is cumulative, with each rider's total at the end of the series being the sum of their 9 best scores.

### **What facilities are at Salt Ayre race track?**

There is some car parking near to the track, by the containers, or you can use Salt Ayre's car park (no charge).

We now have flushing toilets inside one of the containers near to the track - alternatively use the toilets in the sports centre.

When it is raining we put up gazebos to protect the paperwork on the registration desk and the race officials. They do not provide enough shelter for all the spectators, so please bring an umbrella!

We do not provide refreshments at the races series (except for the final event, when we all bring food to share), so bring any food and drink that you may need.

### **I'm not sure if racing will suit my child. How can I tell?**

If your child enjoys the racing activities at Cog Set then they will probably enjoy these races; the main difference is that there are children from other clubs at the Wednesday races, which makes them more competitive.

Cliché though it is, taking part is the main thing, not winning! A minority of one boy and girl wins each week in each age category, so it's important that the others enjoy the competition, even if their battle is for, say, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> place.

### **How can I prepare and support my child to race?**

- Be positive about them joining in, rather than needing to win.
- Tell them that riders improve as they come more often: children who initially finish a long way behind others end up finishing with them, or in front of them, later in the season.
- Make sure their bike is in good working order, and the tyres are pumped up.
- If they have never ridden around the circuit before, arrive in time to do that.
- Explain that if their race gets strung out, they should ride on the left (the inside of the

track) and overtake other riders on the right.

- Help them pick a suitable gear before the race begins; sometimes riders are slow because they are in too low a gear but don't know how to change up.
- Ask them to listen to the commissaire's instructions, and then ride once he starts the race.
- Make sure they know how many laps there are in their race. Show them the board beside the finish line which tells riders how many laps they have left to ride.
- Explain that they may get lapped. This is when the fastest riders overtake them. This is normal – there is no shame in it!
- Explain that when they hear the bell being rung as they ride past the finish line it means they have one more lap to go.
- Explain that if they are lapped then they will ride one less lap than they expected. (If they are lapped twice they will ride two laps less). This is because the race finishes on the lap of the fastest rider; their last lap becomes everyone's last lap. But we ring the bell for each rider so that they know it's their last lap.

### What is pre-registration?

There is no need to register in advance: you can just turn up. But to reduce queues at the first event (when everyone is signing on for the first time) it's helpful if people email their details to [holdensue@gmail.com](mailto:holdensue@gmail.com). Then I can type them on the registration form, and all you have to do is pay and sign. To pre-register, just let me know the following information:

- Rider's name
- Club or team (if you have one)
- Category (ie A, B, C, D or E)
- Date of birth
- BC licence number (if you have one)
- Email for communications re the series
- Phone number to use in case an unaccompanied rider is injured

### What are the prizes?

To be eligible for any prize at the end of the series, participants must have ridden at least 7 events.

The race prizes for As and Bs are a mix of tokens from The Edge Cycleworks and cash from Ask Peter (our two sponsors). The prizes for As and Bs are cash.



We are no longer allowed to give out cash prizes to Cs, Ds and Es – British Cycling has stipulated that for those categories prizes must be medals or similar. So we will need to figure out a way to affirm their achievements without falling foul of this new rule.

We also give some fee payback to each rider who has more than a certain number of points. The cut off for this will depend on how much money we have left over from race fees and how many points the riders have!

There are also prizes (small gifts) up for grabs for parents who help out a lot!

### Anything else?

Do ask Cogsetters at a Saturday session if there's anything you are unsure about, or email Sue on [holdensue@gmail.com](mailto:holdensue@gmail.com).

We do hope you'll come and join in if you are able: cycle racing isn't only something we can watch on the TV or at the roadside, it's quite easy for children to get involved and do it themselves. And for younger children it's a chance to see the older lads and lasses - who don't attend Saturday sessions – in action; many stay on after their own races to watch!