Chapter I
General Regulations

(d) Senior/Elite riders have a racing age of 23 through 29.
(e) Master riders have a racing age of 30 and over. However, master riders may choose to hold elite status. Professional riders are always considered Elite and not Master even if they are over 30.

1D. Rider Categories

1D1. Riders are assigned to one of the following categories with smaller numbers representing increasing rider proficiency and ability:
(a) Road, Track, and Cyclo-cross: 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for men; and 4, 3, 2, and 1 for women.
(b) Mountain Bike: 3, 2, 1 and Pro. A MTB rider with a Pro category must hold an international license.
1D2.
(a) Rider categories are assigned by USA Cycling based on a rider's experience and performance. Riders are assigned to the lowest ability category until a higher category has been earned**.**
(b) For MTB, a rider may choose to be a category 2 or 3 without having to earn points. Once such a choice is made, the rider may not drop back to a lower category without first requesting and receiving a downgrade.
(c) Categories indicate cycling abilities relative to riders of the same sex without regard to age.

1E. Rider Upgrading and Downgrading

1E1. General Information

(a) Rider upgrades are handled electronically through USA Cycling via the rider's online account. The request will be sent to the person responsible for the area and/or category.

(b) Only races permitted by USA Cycling or foreign races permitted by a UCI affiliated National Federation will count for upgrading.

(c) *Riders who are more than halfway through a series may request a waiver of a mandatory upgrade so that they may finish out the series under the conditions below:*

(i) The series is covered by a single permit and one race director.
(ii) The request is approved by the race series director and USA Cycling.
(iii) The waiver is granted for a maximum of three event days.
(iv) Such a waiver may only be used once per rider per category.

Note that for MTB series, subsections (i) and (iii) are not applicable.

(d) *Points for all voluntary upgrade requests may only date back to January 1, 2012.*

1E2. Road Upgrades

(a) Guidelines and Notes by Category:

5-4: Finish 10 massed-start races.

4-3: (1) 20 points; or,
(2) experience in 25 qualifying races with a minimum of 10 top ten finishes with fields of 30 riders+; or,
(3) 20 pack finishes with fields over 50.
30 points in 12 months is a mandatory* upgrade.
USAC-sanctioned rider Camps and Clinics that are approved by the Local Associations for upgrading will count a maximum of 3 upgrade points when upgrading from category 4 to category 3.

3-2: 30 points
40 points in 12 months is a mandatory* upgrade

*2-1: 35 points***

50 points in 12 months is a mandatory* upgrade

* Junior riders are exempt from the mandatory upgrade rules on the road.

** For category 1 upgrades, only 10 of the points may be earned in races that are part of a training series or may be earned in master's races.

(b) USA Cycling may add additional requirements for upgrading at their discretion. Any such changes shall be made available on the website.

(c) USA Cycling sanctioned and approved rider education clinics (at least half day), will count as three qualifying races for category 5 to 4 upgrades up to a maximum of 5 qualifying races. It will also count as 3 upgrade points for a category 4 to 3 upgrade. Riders upgrading to cat 4 will receive two race-days credit for participating in a mentored-race experience, where the mentor is at least a cat 3 rider and has been approved by the Local Association.

(d) Qualifying Distances for each category

To qualify for upgrading points, races must meet distance standards shown below. Races shorter than the minimum distance do not qualify for upgrading. However, if a road race is less than the road race minimum but above the criterium minimum, it will count for upgrading using the criterium points schedule.

Category	**Class**	**RR**	**Criterium**
5 – 4	Men	15 mi	10 mi/20 min
4 – 3	Men	25 mi	15 mi/30 min
	Women	25 mi	15 mi/30 min
	Junior	25 mi	15 mi/30 min
3 – 2	Men	50 mi	20 mi/40 min
	Women	40 mi	15 mi/30 min
2 – 1	Men	80 mi	30 mi/60 min
	Women	50 mi	20 mi/40 min

(e) Points awarded for Criteriums

	Number of Starters			
Placing	**5-10**	**11-20**	**21-50**	**50+**
1	3	4	5	7
2	2	3	4	5
3	1	2	3	4
4		1	2	3
5			1	2
6				1

(f) For the table above and those that follow, note that if the field contains mixed categories (e.g., cat 3-4), then the number of starters is the number of riders that are the same category or higher as the person requesting the upgrade (e.g., in a cat 3-4 combined field, all riders count for a 4→3 upgrade, but only the 3's count for a 3→2 upgrade.

(g) When categories are combined, such as in a 3-4 race, the finish place is always the raw finish across the finish line, not taking into account the category of the rider. In other words, the category 3 riders are not subtracted out so that the category 4 rider appears to have a higher finishing place. The only time a category is subtracted out for this purpose is if the prize lists were awarded separately for a combined field.

(h) Points awarded for Road Races

	Number of Starters			
Placing	**5-10**	**11-20**	**21-50**	**50+**
1	3	7	8	10
2	2	5	6	8
3	1	4	5	7
4		3	4	6

5	2	3	5
6	1	2	4
7		1	3
8			2
9			1

(i) Points awarded for Stage Race G.C. (Cat 3 → 2 and Cat 2 → 1 upgrades only)*

	Number of Starters			
Placing	**10-19**	**20-35**	**36-49**	**50+**
1	5	7	10	20
2	3	5	8	18
3	2	3	6	16
4	1	2	5	14
5		1	4	12
6			3	10
7			2	9
8			1	8
9				7
10				6
11				5
12				4

13	3
14	2
15	1

*For points earned in stage races, GC and stage placings both count for points, but only up to a maximum of 20 points for a cat 1 upgrade or 15 points for a cat 2 upgrade from a single stage race.

1E3. Road Downgrades
(a) A rider who wishes to downgrade may request a downgrade online. Such requests will be evaluated individually.
(b) In no case will a rider be allowed to downgrade to category 5.
(c) *A rider will not be downgraded in the same year that he was upgraded.*
1E4. Track Upgrades
(a) Track upgrades and downgrades are made through the Local Associations and Regional Coordinators**.** All track upgrades are processed using the following criteria:

Cat. 5 to Cat. 4	Complete a velodrome class or 4 race days
Cat. 4 to Cat. 3	5 race days and 20 points
Cat. 3 to Cat. 2	5 race days and 25 points
Cat. 2 to Cat. 1	5 race days and 30 points

Points:
National championships, Category A, B, or C track race will be 7,5,3,2,1 for each event.

For all other events, upgrade points are 5,3,2,1 and are based on an omnium of the event's races. If the race ran individual events but did not award omnium prizes, the points are still allocated as though they had run an omnium.

USA Cycling sanctioned and approved rider education clinics (at least half day), will count as three qualifying races for category 5 to 4 upgrades, up to a maximum of 5 qualifying races. It will also count as 4 upgrade points for a category 4 to 3 upgrade and 3 upgrade points for a category 3 to 2 upgrade.

(b) Additional Considerations:

1. Ten-person field minimum for upgrading from categories 3-5, and twenty-person field minimum for upgrade to category 1.
2. Fifty percent of upgrading points and number of times raced will be carried over to the next year. Points do not carry over to the next category.
3. When upgrading to a category 1, points earned need to be from more than one velodrome.
4. A "race day" is defined as one full day of racing. A race day can include a number of events such as a kilometer, sprints or time trial, but it only counts as one race day.
5. Omniums will be counted for upgrading if at least half of the events on the omnium were massed-start.
6. Women and Juniors earn one point for every five race days when upgrading from category 4 through category 2.
7. Races exempt from upgrading are Youth races and races of more than two categories (i.e., "A" and "B" races).

(c) With the approval of USA Cycling, riders who are Pro or category 1 on the road may be upgraded to category 2 on the track, and riders who are category 2 on the road may be upgraded to category 3 on the track, without first having to begin at category 5 for men and category 4 for women.

1E5. Track Downgrades:
(a) A rider who wishes to downgrade may request a downgrade online. Such requests will be evaluated individually.
(b) In no case will a rider be allowed to downgrade to category 5.
(c) *A rider will not be downgraded in the same year that he was upgraded.*
(d) A rider may be downgraded by an administrator for the following reasons: unsafe riding, lack of ability to compete in current category, or lack of placing within current category.

1E6. Cyclo-cross Upgrades and Downgrades
Cyclo-cross categories are upgraded similarly to road category upgrades using the system below:

(a) Requirements for upgrading:

5-4: *Experience in 10 races is a mandatory upgrade.*
4-3: *Voluntary upgrade with 10 points. Fifteen points or two wins if the field had at least 30 competitors is a mandatory upgrade.**
3-2: *Voluntary upgrade with 15 points. Twenty points or two wins if the field had at least 30 competitors is a mandatory upgrade.**
2-1: *Voluntary upgrade with 20 points. Twenty-five points or two wins if the field had at least 40 competitors is a mandatory upgrade.*

**Juniors are exempt from this mandatory upgrade*

(b) Points awarded for Cyclo-cross Races

	Number of Starters			
Placing	**5-10**	**11-20**	**21-50**	**50+**
1	3	4	5	7
2	2	3	4	5
3	1	2	3	4
4		1	2	3

5	1	2
6		1

(c) USA Cycling may add additional requirements for upgrading at their discretion. Any such changes shall be made available on the website.

(d) Cyclo-cross Conversion

Cyclo-cross (CX) categories may also be upgraded by conversion from a rider's earned road or mountain bike (MTB) cross country (XC) category. If during the season, a rider upgrades his or her road or XC category, the cyclo-cross category can be upgraded to match the road or XC category shown below by request of the rider or by request of the administrator.

CX category based on road or XC category		
Road Category	**MTB XC Category**	**CX Category**
Pro/1	Pro	1
2	1	3
3	2	4
4 or 5	3	4

1E7. Mountain Bike Upgrades

(a) Riders may advance as quickly as they wish up to category 2.

(b) Guidelines and notes by category

3-2: Five top-five finishes is a mandatory upgrade.

2-1: Five top-five finishes is a mandatory upgrade. Riders may choose to upgrade with two top-five finishes

1-Pro: Riders may be eligible to be upgraded to Pro after two top-three or three top-five category 1 finishes according to finish time (including all classes in category 1) at USA Cycling National MTB Calendar Events.

Upgrades will be based on a rider's placings in a rider's category. AMBC and international events may also be considered. Overall finish times are factored into upgrade requests. Riders must submit their upgrade requests through their USA Cycling online membership account.

(c) For mandatory upgrading purposes, classes must consist of the following competitors:

Class	**Men**	**Women**
Junior 15-18	10	5
Senior	15	10
Master age 30-39	15	10
Master age 40-49	10	5
Master age 50+	5	5

(d) *USA Cycling reserves the right to upgrade Category 1 riders to Pro at any time.*

(e) USA Cycling reserves the right to downgrade riders from the Pro category at any time.

(f) Riders who finish in the top-five in the Category 2 and 3 categories at the US National MTB Championships must move up to the next higher category immediately. Category 1 riders who place in the top-three in the 19-24, 25-29, and 30-34 age groups will automatically be eligible to upgrade to Pro for the remainder of the current season and following season. Riders must verify that they wish to upgrade to Pro by submitting an upgrade request through their USA Cycling online membership account.

1E8. Mountain Bike Downgrades
A rider who feels he has advanced too quickly or is otherwise no longer competitive in his category may ask for reclassification by submitting a written request to USA Cycling identifying his results and reasoning.

1F. Clubs and Teams

1F1. Annual Registered Clubs and Teams
Riders may belong to the following types of clubs or teams in various cycling disciplines:
(a) *UCI Pro Teams*
(b) *UCI Professional Continental Teams*
(c) *UCI Continental Teams*
(d) *UCI Women's Teams*
(e) *UCI Mountain Bike Teams*
(f) *UCI Track Teams*
(g) *UCI BMX Teams*
(h) *USA Cycling Domestic Elite Road Teams*
(i) *USA Cycling Domestic Elite MTB Teams*
(j) *USA Cycling registered cycling clubs*
(k) *USA Cycling registered cycling teams*

1F2. Temporary Teams
Riders may also, from time to time, be members of the following types of teams for a particular event:
(a) *USA Cycling National Team*
(b) *Regional Team*
(c) *Composite Team*
(i) To eligible to be part of a composite team, riders should have a letter of release from the club/team listed on their license.

1F3. Cycling clubs and Teams may register with USA Cycling on an annual basis. Club or team registration requires the paying of an annual fee described in the Schedule of Fees.