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Introduction

Thank you for taking an interest in hosting a youth mountain bike race in your region. It is organizers such as yourself that continue to improve access to our sport for youth across the Province, and we are happy to work with you to make your event a success.

Please see inside a full Race Organizers Guide that will assist you through the process of hosting a Trailblazers Youth Racing event for the upcoming season.

Trailblazers Youth Racing Series format

What?

A provincially supported regional mountain bike series targeted directly at youth aged 16 and under (U17). This race series will occur completely separate from the currently-established Alberta Cup Series and offer a fun, low pressure alternative for youth looking to try out racing.

Where?

The ultimate goal of the series is to encompass each of the 8 Provincial Zones as outlined by the Alberta Summer Games – effectively the entire province of Alberta. The series will take on a “regional” format, with numerous pre-specified regions hosting independent Trailblazers series’ across the province (i.e. “Capital Region Trailblazers” encompassing Edmonton and Surrounding area)

Why?

Cycling is a popular sport amongst youth in Alberta, yet we continue to see extremely low numbers in youth racing. As a part of our youth initiative, we hope to offer this series as a FUN way to expose youth to racing. We feel that offering a series completely independent of the Alberta Cup will reduce the intimidation involved with being a first-time racer. Such a series will ideally encourage more Alberta clubs to offer youth programs in the coming years.

Who?

Racers: youth aged 16 and under
Organizers: Local volunteers and club members
Support: Alberta Bicycle Association

When?

The proposed series will occur ideally from the months of May through as late as September. The proposed format will see races happening during weeknights or on weekends based on venue and organizer availability. We feel that weeknight races will ensure that both kids and parents are available, not on weekend trips or vacations. Alternatively, weekend races may be offered based on organizer’s preference.

An ideal Regional Series will see a minimum of one race per month from the months of May to August.





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How?

Dedicated volunteers, clubs and organizers will be vital to this program's success. Although the ABA will stand behind the series and support it in every way possible, it will take local organizing to make the races happen.

Race Framework

Ability-based race categories

The Ability-based concept assumes that regardless of age, riders may be at different skill levels or development stages. Allowing riders to choose race difficulty based on their own preference/development will encourage competition for those who need it, and fun for everyone.

Upon registering for a race, riders will be given several distinct race course options to compete in. Each course will offer an increasing level of difficulty, providing a challenge for youth riders from beginners through to advanced Provincial-level competitors. Regardless of age and ability, riders may register for the race of their choice, although recommended age/course guidelines will be provided at registration (see below).

Race Categories

Below is a description of the categories that must be included in your Trailblazers Youth Racing event. In order for the series to be consistent across the province, it will be crucial that organizers include the below categories in their events at minimum.

For results, each race category should be split in to Male and Female gender classes. Depending on registration, the organizer will have the option of either a) starting the Female participants with the males of the same race category, or b) starting the females separately from the males.

Strider

The "Strider" category encompasses the youngest first time mountain bike racers.

Only those with strider and push bikes will be allowed to race in this category.

Recommended age for Striders is 6 years-old and under. The Striders Race should have a primary focus on fun, offering very few technical sections. Boys and girls will race together in this category. The race should be led and followed by experienced racers. The course should be easily accessible to parents wishing to watch.

Following the Little Rippers race, participants should be encouraged to observe the higher-level races.

Course:

- Small loop (several laps optional)
- Elevation: 95% flat. Small gradual climbs & descents are acceptable
- Should be majority doubletrack with little-to-no singletrack
- Optimal winning time: 10 minutes or less





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Little Rippers

The “Little Ripper” category encompasses the youngest first time mountain bike racers. Recommended age for Little Rippers is 8 years-old and under. The Little Rippers Race should have a primary focus on fun, offering very few technical sections. Boys and girls will race together in this category. The race should be led and followed by experienced racers. The course should be easily accessible to parents wishing to watch. Following the Little Rippers race, participants should be encouraged to observe the higher-level races.

Course:

- Small loop (several laps optional)
- Elevation: 85% flat. Small gradual climbs & descents are acceptable
- Should be majority doubletrack with little-to-no singletrack
- Optimal winning time: 20 minutes or less

Gnarly

The “Gnarly” category is offered for beginners. Riders in this category will be first-time racers from all age groups and graduates from the “Little Rippers” race category. The emphasis of this race course should be fun, with mild technical sections to challenge the riders’ abilities and introduce them to mountain bike racing. The recommended age group for this category is 9 to 12.

Course:

- Single loop
- Elevation: One or two gradual climbs/descents. No more than one steep climb and/or descent.
- Should offer an equal ratio of singletrack and doubletrack
- Optimal winning time: 25 minutes or less

Geared

The “Geared” category is offered for riders who have tried a Trailblazers mountain bike race in the past and are looking for a new challenge. The emphasis of this race should be fun, with increased technical skills development. Riders in the Geared category will primarily be graduates from the Gnarly category and older first-time racers. The recommended age group for this category is 11 to 14.

Course:

- Single loop
- Elevation: Primarily flat with several gradual climbs/descents. No more than two steep climbs/descents
- Should offer slightly more singletrack than double track (roughly 65% singletrack)
- Optimal winning time: 30 minutes or less



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Dialed

The “Dialed” category is offered for riders looking for the biggest challenge on race-day. Riders in this category will be graduates of the Geared category, or advanced first time racers. Technical skills will be put to the test in this category offering a mix of difficult climbs/descents and technical singletrack sections. The recommended age group for this race category is ages 13 to 16.

Course:

- Single loop
- Elevation: Mostly varying elevation with many gradual climbs/descents. Two or more steep climbs/descents
- Up to three-quarters of the race course should be singletrack
- Optimal winning time: 40 minutes or less

Race Category Table

RACE CATEGORY (M/F)	RECOMMENDED AGE	OPTIMAL WINNING TIME	DIFFICULTY
Strider	U7 (Ages 6 and under)	10 min or less	Beginner (Strider Bikes only)
Little Rippers	U7 to U9 (Ages 8 and under)	20 min or less	Beginner (Young Child)
Gnarly	U11 to U13 (Ages 9 to 12)	25 min or less	Beginner
Geared	U13 (Advanced) to U15 (Ages 11 to 14)	30 min or less	Intermediate
Dialed	U15 (Advanced) to U17 (Ages 13 to 16)	40 min or less	Advanced

Ancillary Events

Although the “race category” aspect of the Trailblazers Series will be structured and consistent across each region, we encourage the addition of ancillary events where possible. Ancillary events will re-enforce the “fun factor” which is of utmost importance in this series. Below is a list of ancillary event ideas, although any organizer is free to come up with their own unique format.





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Team Relay

Similar to the Alberta Summer Games mountain bike events, a relay race would be a great way to encourage teamwork, comradery, and FUN. The relay race could be held after all the races have finished on a shorter loop (perhaps the Gnarly loop).

Skills Clinics

Expert/Elite riders or coaches from the local area may be brought in to teach a skills clinic for youth before the events begin. This would be a great way to teach skills and promote immediate-use in the races after the clinic has finished. Skills clinics or games should almost always be offered at the “Little Rippers” level to make use of spare time.

Parent-Child races

It can be assumed that many of the children attending will have parents who ride at some level. Hosting a special “Father-daughter” style race could be a great way to encourage FUN and get parents more involved.

Games

Assortments of games, both on and off the bike may be a great idea to keep things fun and offer something different.

Registration Fees

Although the Alberta Bicycle Association has no policy stating a maximum dollar amount for registration fees, the recommended registration fee for Trailblazers Youth Races is \$5.00 per person. Keeping the cost low will eliminate a barrier to entry and increase the perceived value of the race to parents and participants alike.

Pre-Race Documents

Below is a list of pre-race documents that will be helpful in getting the appropriate information to the public regarding your event.

Promotional Posters

Promotional Posters outlining a full list of the Series’ dates, times, and locations will be designed and circulated by the Alberta Bicycle Association upon finalization of each region’s events calendar. Event organizers will be sent an allocation of posters, as well as local shops, schools and sport organizations. A digital copy of the race poster will also be added to the ABA website.

Event Schedule

Each specific event should post a schedule of the evening’s events. This information can be submitted to the ABA prior to the event for promotion on the website, but should also be posted as a hard-copy document at the event itself. The schedule should include:

- ✓ Registration Timeline
- ✓ Start times for each category
- ✓ Ancillary Event times (if applicable)





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- ✓ Rewards/prizing ceremony

Technical Guide

Organizers may submit a full document to the ABA outlining all relevant information for the event for posting on the website. This may take the form of a traditional tech guide. Helpful information to be included on the Technical Guide:

- ✓ Directions to the venue
- ✓ Race Schedule
- ✓ Parking Information (location & directions)
- ✓ Prizing Information
- ✓ Contact Information
- ✓ Licensing information
- ✓ Course maps
- ✓ Sponsor promotion

Although a Technical Guide for your event is not mandatory, it is recommended that each organizer provide one to answer any and all questions pertaining to the event.

Event preparation

Useful Equipment

The below table outlines a list of equipment that will be helpful in hosting a successful Trailblazers Youth Racing Event. For items that are not included in the ABA Race Trailer, it may be helpful to contact other local clubs/race organizers.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RECOMMENDED RACE ITEMS	IN ABA RACE TRAILER?
<input type="checkbox"/>	8'X8' Tent(s) (To be set up at registration, provides shelter from rain/heat)	YES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Race Radios (Assigned to organizer, reg. staff, course marshals & medical volunteers)	YES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Registration Table	YES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chairs	YES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pylons	YES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Generator	YES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marshal Vests	YES



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<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Marking Arrows	YES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wooden Stakes	YES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Podium	<i>NO</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	PA System	<i>NO</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refreshments/Food for participants (Assorted Fruit, water, etc.)	<i>NO</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clipboards	<i>NO</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stopwatches	<i>NO</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cash Box & change	<i>NO</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Race/Caution Tape	<i>NO</i>

Alberta Bicycle Association Race Trailer Rental

Trailblazers organizers will be offered free rental of the Alberta Bicycle Association Race Trailer. The ABA possesses two race trailers; one each in Edmonton and Calgary. Race Trailer rental is subject to availability as Alberta Cup Provincial Series races will be given first priority. Organizers are responsible for transporting the Race Trailer to-and-from the storage location and are expected to return promptly following the event. Due to the weekend nature of Alberta Cup races, weeknight Trailblazers races will have easier access to race trailers.

Race Plates

Race Number Plates will be provided to all Trailblazers organizers free of charge from the Alberta Bicycle Association. Organizers are expected to coordinate pickup of race plates prior to the event as well as return of leftovers for remainder of upcoming events.

Course Marking

Race courses should be marked prior to the start of registration for your event. If possible, the course may be marked several days in advance of the event. The ABA Race Trailer comes equipped with sufficient course marking signs for the entirety of your race course(s).

Courses should be clearly marked so that under the pressure of race conditions riders do not have any trouble determining where to go. Not all racers will be able to check out the course before the race so ensure that your course is properly marked. If there are any particularly difficult sections, mark them even more than usual and warn the racers at a pre-race meeting or on the start line. This will make them aware of tricky spots that could make them crash if encountered for the first time at racing speeds.





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Courses should be ridden by both advanced and beginner level racers to determine location of signs. All signs should be placed at a level lower than eye level for racers looking down while riding the course.

Promotion

Proper promotion of your event will be essential in attracting participants. Below are several ideas that can be used to drive added participation.

“Bring a Friend night”

As an Alberta Bicycle Association sanctioned Club event, Trailblazers races have access to free 1-time trials. Promoting your event as a “Bring a Friend night” will increase your registration and introduce more people to mountain bike racing. New riders may ride in their first event without purchasing an ABA General Membership, although will be required to do so at all subsequent events. More information on 1-time trials can be found in the “Insurance” portion of this document.

Cross-promotion with Municipal programs

Several municipalities offer recreational cycling programs for youth. The Youth Mountain Bike Series can offer a natural progression for riders looking to take recreational riding to the next level. Contact your local municipality’s recreation department to enquire specifically about what programs exist.

“Celebrity” appearances

Alberta is home to many local sport celebrities, and there are no shortage of cycling athletes who have achieved success on the National and International scale. Asking one of these athletes to attend your event could provide the extra draw to get more kids to your races. Whether the chosen athlete is asked to lead a clinic or simply attend and deliver a speech, this idea can certainly add value to your event.

Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers will be vital to your event’s success. Volunteer roles that should be filled are listed in the table below:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	VOLUNTEER ROLE
<input type="checkbox"/>	Registration Table (2 to 4 people – take registrations, sell and/or confirm General Memberships)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Marshals (regular course intervals, major course intersections)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical Volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Results Staff (2 to 3 people – finish-recorder, stopwatch volunteer/s)





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<input type="checkbox"/>	Announcer
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Registration Table

Two to three volunteers should be allocated to each event. These individuals will be responsible for:

- ✓ Distributing Race Plates
- ✓ Ensuring all riders sign-on
- ✓ Checking for/selling General Memberships
- ✓ Recording "First-time trial" riders
- ✓ Answering questions about the race

Course marshals

Course marshals will be responsible for monitoring all activity on the race course. Course marshals should be equipped with radios or cell phones in case of emergency. Course marshals will be expected to respond to any on-course emergency situations and divert race-routes as necessary. Course marshals will be responsible for ensuring that the general public does not interfere with the race by facilitating course-crossing where needed. Course marshals should be stationed at regular intervals along the course – ideally within line of sight of one another (although not mandatory).

Medical Volunteers

Medical volunteers equipped with basic First Aid certification *must* be on-site to respond to all emergency situations. All medical volunteers should be issued radios or cell phones linked directly to the race organizer. Medical volunteers will be expected to respond to all emergency medical incidents and fill out the incident report form as necessary.

Results Staff

Results staff should be present primarily to record the finishing order and finishing time of racers. This should include a minimum of two volunteers; one assigned to recording finish order, and another assigned to record the corresponding finish times.

Announcer

Having an announcer present at the event will improve communication at the event as well as results and podium ceremonies.



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Race-Day

Sign-on

For each Trailblazers Race, there should be clearly marked registration area. Registration staff must be present to check all riders for ABA General Memberships or Racing Licenses. Registration staff will also be responsible for issuing day-licenses to riders who are not current ABA members. The sign on sheet should record the following information:

- ✓ Full Name (First & Last)
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Race Plate Number
- ✓ Club Name
- ✓ ABA Member (Y/N)

Race-Finish Recording & timing

As there are no commissaires present at a Club-level sanctioned event, the timing portion of the event is not strictly regulated, nor are there any specific policies on how timing needs to be done. The most important aspect of results calculation for the event is correctly recording the finishing order of riders. An ideal situation would see finish-recorders working closely alongside a volunteer with a stopwatch. The “stopwatch volunteer” can verbally communicate finish times to the finish-recorder. As a summary:

- ✓ Finish recorder: Records the number plates in the order they cross the finish line
- ✓ Stopwatch volunteer: Communicates finish time corresponding with race plate number

Results

Final results must be posted in an easily accessible, visible area. Organizers should aim to have results posted no later than 15 minutes following completion of the race. Organizers are encouraged to send results to the Alberta Bicycle Association immediately after the event has finished. This will ensure that results get posted to the website and promoted promptly.

Race-day Documents

Below is a list of helpful documents that will help you to better communicate your event to parents and participants alike.

Schedule of Events

An easy to read 1-page schedule should be posted at the registration area for participants and parents alike to follow the evening’s events.

Sign-on Sheet

For each race category, the organizer should have a separate race sign-on sheet provided at the registration area.





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Event Results Sheet

The events results sheet will clearly communicate the names and finish order of participants.

Prizing

Prizing will not be made mandatory in the Trailblazers Youth Racing Series. It is recommended that the organizer provide things such as draw prizes and podium prizes at a minimum to encourage participation. The organizer may be as creative as they wish in distributing prizes.

Start Order

Categories should be started with the more advanced riders first, followed by beginner riders. This will ensure that advanced riders do not get held up by slower, less advanced riders should they be using parts of the same course. If completely separate race courses are offered for each race category, it will be the Organizers' discretion as to category start order. The ABA suggests the following start order for your Trailblazers race:

START ORDER	CATEGORY
1 st start	Striders (Completely separate course)
2 nd start	Little Rippers (Completely separate course)
3 rd start	Dialed males
4 th start	Dialed females
5 th start	Geared males
4 th start	Geared females
7 th start	Gnarly males
8 th start	Gnarly females

Male & Female categories may be combined for the start

As stated previously, the "Little Rippers" should be the first category to start, allowing them to participate in post-race activities, or to observe the other races happening around them after they've finished. Males & females will race together in the "Little Rippers" category.



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Alberta Bicycle Association Sanction

The Trailblazers Youth Racing Series will be considered “Club Racing” by the current Alberta Bicycle Association sanction guidelines. Details of a Club Race Sanction are:

Organizers of ABA Club races must demonstrate permission to use their designated venue, and must comply with ABA Organizers’ policies and applicable UCI, CCC and ABA Regulations. Following are features of an ABA Club Race

- 🚲 no commissaires assigned
- 🚲 no provincial upgrading points or Alberta Cup points awarded
- 🚲 no rider levy collected
- 🚲 event placement on ABA calendar, promotion of event by ABA
- ~~🚲 \$50 calendar fee levied for each race or series (waived)~~
- 🚲 insurance coverage via:
 - all participants are holders of UCI licenses or Alberta Citizen licenses; or,
 - all participants are general members of the ABA

In order for a rider to compete, they must obtain *at minimum* an Alberta Bicycle Association U17 General Membership. U17 General Memberships can be purchased [online](#) or on-site for \$30.

[General Membership registration forms](#) and [Insurance Waivers](#) will be provided to each organizer for youth wishing to sign-up on site. The U17 General Membership is a one-time purchase that is valid until the end of the current calendar year (Dec. 31).



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Insurance

As an Alberta Bicycle Association Club Sanctioned event, the following insurance coverage will be included for your event. Unique to the Trailblazers Youth Racing program, the ABA will purchase a Commercial Event Policy for the duration of the series, permitting non-member participants to take out “Day Licenses” for their first event.

Limits of Liability:

- \$5,000,000 per occurrence Bodily Injury and Property Damage
- \$5,000,000 General Aggregate
- \$5,000,000 Products & Comp Operations Aggregate limit
- \$5,000,000 Personal Injury
- \$2,000,000 Tenant’s Legal Liability
- \$5,000,000 non-owned automobile (non-owned & rented)
- \$10,000 medical expenses for any one person/accident

Rider Requirements

In order to race in a Club Sanctioned event, each participant must hold at minimum an Alberta Bicycle Association U17 General Membership. The only exception to this rule is for first time trial-basis riders (explained below).

General Membership forms and Waivers will be provided to the race organizer. The Organizer will be permitted to sell General Memberships on-site. All monies collected from General Memberships must be submitted to the ABA immediately upon completion of the event.

“First-time trial”

Any person registered for an Alberta Bicycle Association Club Sanctioned event for the first time may participate in the event without the requirement of purchasing a General Membership. This is permitted by issuing all first-time riders a Day License and having them fill out the appropriate [Day License Form](#). This is valid **only** for the rider’s first event – participation in any subsequent events requires the purchase of a full Alberta Bicycle Association General Membership.

Insurance Certificate

Upon finalization of the events calendar, the ABA will apply for a Commercial Event Insurance policy that will cover each event in the Trailblazers Youth Racing Series. This is done free of charge for all organizers in the series. The ABA requests that each organizer provide a list of names they would like to be included on the insurance certificate (i.e. landowner, local government, sponsors, etc.). A certificate will then be produced for each organizer in the series.





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ABA Support

The Alberta Bicycle Association will support organizers in the following ways:

- No calendar fees or rider levies
- Free rental of the ABA trailers (*note: subject to availability, organizer to pick-up/drop-off*)
- Placement on Upcoming Events calendar and Results
- Promotion via ABA social media, newsletters & poster circulation
- Provision of ABA staff when available
- Provision of Trailblazers logo & sponsor logos
- Provision of promotional posters
- Provision of race-plates
- Provision of event Insurance Certificate
- Assistance in schedule/tech guide building