



**MOUNTAIN BIKE AUSTRALIA**

Mountain Bike Australia Limited  
(MTBA Limited)  
ACN 616 027 153

Policy on Junior Participation in  
Mountain Bike Events

**Distribution**

MTBA Chief Executive Officer

MTBA Staff

All MTBA Members & Affiliates (available via MTBA website)

**Review History**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Reviewed By</b>	<b>Date Endorsed</b>	<b>Content Reviewed/ Purpose</b>
1.0	17/2/2010	Tony Scott	17/2/2010	Author – distributed to Committee & Clubs
2.0	26/6/2010	Tony Scott	26/6/2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rectified inconsistencies in graphic</li> <li>• Distributed to Committee</li> </ul>
3.0	6/10/2011	Tony Scott	6/10/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Split up XCO and Endurance requirements</li> <li>• Adjusted race times for XCO for current UCI</li> </ul>
3.1	1/9/2012	Tony Scott	1/9/2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee Endorsement</li> </ul>
4.0	19/10/2017	Bob Morris & Evan James	1/11/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough review and update</li> </ul>

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy statement is to define what MTBA considers to be an appropriate minimum age for participation in mountain bike events. It also gives guidance to parents and event organisers as to the maximum duration and distance of events to be held for each age group.

## Coverage

The MTB events that are currently included in this policy are Cross Country - Olympic format, multi-lap (up to 24hr) endurance format, XC marathon format and Gravity Enduro. This policy is only applicable to these activities.

## Introduction

An increasing number of those participating in these events are junior aged, that is under the age of 18 on race day. This, together with the introduction of a children's membership has created the need to be more active in defining the limits of accessibility of our young members to these events. This policy covers participation from 3 to 18 years of age.

MTBA currently formulates guidelines for junior MTB cycling according to best practice and with consideration to the guidelines implemented by world-leading cycling organisations. These guidelines are applicable for all endurance formats with regard to maximum distances and expected durations for riders.

With increased junior participation and the active courting of school involvement by race organisers in some endurance mountain bike events, MTBA needs to ensure that junior participation is at a level that is appropriate, based on the best information we have.

For the best physical and skill development of junior participants, consideration must be given to factors related to growth and maturation when assessing readiness for progression in training and competition followed by specialisation and intense training.

MTBA recognises that young people differ from adults in a number of important physiological areas and are not able to tolerate the same stresses. This includes: -

- Shorter attention spans;
- Less developed lactate energy systems;
- Less effective body cooling mechanisms;
- Less developed ability to monitor their own fatigue levels;
- Heightened risk of dehydration;
- More susceptible to heat and cold distress;
- More susceptible to fractures, particularly during the growth spurt when bones are lengthening and are relatively porous; and
- More susceptible to injuries to the growth plate of bones caused by high contact forces or repetitive loading in some sports.

Consequently training and competition must be conducted differently for young people.

In the context of endurance mountain bike activity, MTBA will recognise the developmental aspects of juniors by:

- encouraging appropriate participation in endurance mountain bike events as part of a team structure for younger aged juniors; and
- implementing age restrictions in the specialised area of solo and individual competitions.

The former will serve to develop the basis for long-term participation in mountain biking through the development of life skills (such as communication, concentration and commitment), learning about responsibility and discipline, learning how to work with others in team environments, learning to cope with success and failure, developing a sense of community, loyalty and cohesion and finally, helping some gifted young people become aware they are role models for others. As age increases specialisation founded on the groundwork of earlier team participation will provide a structured pathway towards elite competition.

## Endurance Mountain Biking

Age Group	Participation Characteristics	Comments
3 - 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities place an emphasis on fun group learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Each session no longer than 15 minutes.</li> <li>• Genders are not separated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sessions and activity managed by an accredited adult.</li> <li>• Sessions are conducted in full view of parents or responsible adult.</li> <li>• Focus on reward for participation.</li> </ul>
8 - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities place an emphasis of fun group learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Each session no longer than 30 minutes.</li> <li>• Genders are not separated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sessions and activity managed by an accredited adult.</li> <li>• Sessions are conducted in full view of parents or responsible adult.</li> <li>• Limited competition aspects.</li> </ul>
11 - 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total training per week between 2hr and 5hrs, each session no longer than 1.25hrs or 30km on road.</li> <li>• Training activities place an emphasis of skill development; bike handling and race craft.</li> <li>• Maximum of 1 race per week.</li> <li>• Race distance limited to 10km.</li> <li>• Genders are not separated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sessions and activity managed by an accredited adult.</li> <li>• Club level competition only - either intra-club or inter-club.</li> </ul>
13 - 14 (U15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total training per week between 3hr and 8hrs or between 40 and 100km on road.</li> <li>• Each session no longer than 2hr or 60km.</li> <li>• Activities place an emphasis of skill development; bike handling and race.</li> <li>• Maximum of 1 race per week.</li> <li>• Race distance limited to 20km.</li> <li>• Genders are separated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sessions and activity managed by an accredited adult.</li> <li>• Club level competition only - either intra-club or inter-club.</li> <li>• State and National level competition.</li> <li>• National Championships.</li> </ul>
15 - 16 (U17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total training per week between 6hr and 14hrs or between 150 and 350km on road.</li> <li>• Each session no longer than 4hr or 90km.</li> <li>• Activities place an emphasis on both skill development and physical conditioning with some specificity in training in 16th year.</li> <li>• Maximum of 1 race per week.</li> <li>• Race distance limited to 30km.</li> <li>• Genders are separated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sessions and activity managed by accredited adult.</li> <li>• Club level competition only - either intra-club or inter-club.</li> <li>• State and National level competition</li> <li>• National Championships.</li> </ul>

17 - 18 (U19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total training per week between 8hr and 18hrs or between 240 and 550km on road.</li> <li>• Each session no longer than 6hr or 160km.</li> <li>• Activities place an emphasis on both skill development and physical conditioning with some specificity in training in 16th year.</li> <li>• One race per week.</li> <li>• Race distance limited to 50km.</li> <li>• Genders are separated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sessions and activity managed by accredited adult.</li> <li>• Club level competition only - either intra-club or inter-club.</li> <li>• State and National level competition.</li> <li>• National Championships.</li> <li>• International Competition.</li> </ul>
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Time limits for riders competing in multi-lap endurance formats are as follows:

Age Group	Total race duration
11-12 (U13)	1 hour
13-15 (U15)	2 hours
15-16 (U17)	2 hours
17-18 (U19)	4 hours

These time limits are per day of competition. Therefore a rider of 16 years of age could complete 2 hours on the first day of a 24 hour race, and 2 hours on the second day, when riding as part of a team.

## Gravity Enduro Events

The introduction of the Gravity Enduro format has necessitated an addition to the MTBA Junior Policy. MTBA recognises these events are a rare opportunity for families to compete together. This format consists of short stages (3-10 minutes) with non-competitive transition stages between. While the total competition time is well under the time limits stipulated for endurance events, the whole event duration may exceed the time limits. In this case the distance limits set for XCM style events will apply.

Exceptions may be granted where the rider is accompanied at all times by a parent or guardian. The rider must also check in with marshals prior to commencing each stage to ensure the rider is fit to continue the event. The minimum age for participation in Gravity Enduro events is 11. Race organisers are to provide a shorter course for unaccompanied young riders to ensure distance limits are not exceeded.

### Exceptions

Exemptions to this policy may be gained by applying to MTBA in writing. To be successful the rider must have written documentation from an accredited cycling coach who has coached the junior aged athlete in a professional capacity for at least 12 months, that the young person is capable of riding outside these policy constraints. The supporting documentation will include:

- Permission from the rider's parents or guardians;
- A statement that the rider's coach has read and understood the provisions and concepts of this policy;
- All contact details for the coach, including appropriate details of qualifications to make the assessment for a change in policy application;
- Any previous exemptions granted for the rider;
- History of the rider's performance in other similar events;
- Statements on the rider's training regimen; and
- Reasons why an exemption should be granted in respect to the rider's future development.

In such cases where a rider does not have an accredited cycling coach or has not been under a coach for 12 months, supporting documentation may be supplied from the rider's current coach/skill instructor/ride group leader.

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