



International downhill racing 2025 - Information meeting

Thursday 30 January 2025
8:00 pm

Article posted on 20 January 2025 from the Cycling Ireland Off-road Commission

▶ **WHY YOU MUST ATTEND THIS MEETING**

- ▶ Do you have questions about the best races to target in the UK and Europe?
- ▶ Are your sights set on competing at the UCI Downhill World Series?
- ▶ Do you want to represent Ireland in the UCI Downhill World Championships but are unsure of the criteria?
- ▶ And just what exactly do recently introduced UCI rule changes mean for the future?

This document is an
amalgamation of the
presentation and answers to
questions raised

New rules from the UCI

- ▶ The Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) and WHOOP UCI Mountain Bike World Series promotor, Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD) Sports, announced changes for the discipline of mountain biking that will be key to its continued development.
- ▶ These changes were to take effect on 1 January 2025
- ▶ These changes only affect Junior and Senior riders. They do not affect Youth riders.
- ▶ The following pages show some of those rules

New rules from the UCI

- ▶ UCI Mountain Bike World Series Teams - maximum 20 teams (max 4 riders per race and category)
- ▶ At each round up to 8 additional UCI Teams can get an opportunity to race as wildcard team (max 4 riders per race and category).
- ▶ **National Federations will retain their designated quota.**
- ▶ Qualification for the UCI Mountain Bike World Series will not be limited to teams: individual riders may also qualify if they meet specific ranking criteria, or if they are reigning National, Continental, or UCI World Champions in their format.
- ▶ Moreover, new Continental Series will be introduced, in close collaboration with the five Continental Confederations, creating yet another pathway to qualify. This will give riders across the different continents the chance to participate, promoting globalisation and competitiveness. More details on these new Continental Series will be revealed soon.

New rules from the UCI

- ▶ From 2025, all Elite downhill riders will compete in a Qualifying 1 (Q1) round, with the top 20 Men Elite and top 10 Women Elite proceeding directly to the final.
- ▶ All remaining riders will compete in a Qualifying 2 (Q2) round, where the top 10 Men Elite and top 5 Women Elite will secure their spot in the final.
- ▶ The protection status regulation will be removed, meaning that riders will no longer get preferential treatment because of their previous or current season's results.

New rules from the UCI

4.1.006

Downhill – DH

Except for the UCI World Championships, **UCI World Cup and Continental Series**, downhill events are open to all riders aged 17 or over.

At the UCI World Championships, ~~and~~ at the UCI World Cup **and at the Continental Series**, separate junior events must be organized for men and women (aged 17 and 18).

For all other downhill events on the international calendar, the UCI points are awarded in relation to the riders' time and not to their category. To ensure that this rule is correctly applied, only one combined result needs to be sent to the UCI.

Comment: When a junior downhill rider would score the best time at the national championships, (s)he must wear the elite jersey. The junior jersey is not awarded in this case.

*(text modified on 1.07.12; 1.10.13; 4.04.14; 1.01.17; **1.01.25**)*

New rules from the UCI

- Continental Series (CS)

- Upon consultation with the respective Continental Confederation, the UCI will appoint a certain number of events to be part of each Continental Series in accordance with the dedicated document published by the UCI.

§ 7

Transport

4.3.025

The organiser must provide transport capable of carrying ~~400~~ 250 riders and their bikes per hour to the top of the course.

(text modified on 1.01.25).

New rules from the UCI

Category	One of the below mentioned criteria needs to be fulfilled
DHI - men elite (aged 19 and over) DHI - women elite (aged 19 and over)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="970 386 1893 465">1. UCI MTB WORLD SERIES TEAM, maximum 4 riders per race and category<li data-bbox="970 472 1893 594">2. 8 UCI MTB TEAM wildcard, maximum 4 riders per race and category decided one month prior to the event<li data-bbox="970 601 1893 722">3. Any rider ranked in the top 50 of the last UCI DHI individual ranking before the event entry closing date (one month prior to the event)<li data-bbox="970 729 1893 851">4. The national federations may enter a maximum of 3 supplementary riders per category. These riders must wear national team clothing.<li data-bbox="970 858 1893 979">5. Top five riders of any round of a Continental Series, limited to 1 round of the current UCI MTB World Cup (Golden Ticket)<li data-bbox="970 986 1893 1108">6. Top five riders from the final standings of any of the Continental Series of the previous year, Elite (from 2026)<li data-bbox="970 1115 1893 1236">7. Top five riders from the final standings of any of the Continental Series of the previous year, Junior (if progressing into Elite category) (from 2026)<li data-bbox="970 1243 1893 1322">8. Current UCI World Champion, Continental Champion, National Champions

New rules from the UCI

DHI - men juniors (aged 17 and 18)
DHI – women juniors (aged 17 and 18)

1. UCI MTB WORLD SERIES TEAM, maximum 4 riders per race and category
2. 8 UCI MTB TEAM wildcard, maximum 4 riders per race and category decided one month prior to the event
3. Any rider ranked in the top 100 of the last UCI DHI individual ranking before the event entry closing date (one month prior to the event)
4. The national federations may enter a maximum of ~~6~~ 4 supplementary riders per category. These riders must wear national team clothing.
5. Top five riders of any round of a Continental Series, limited to 1 round of the current UCI MTB World Cup (Golden Ticket)
6. Top five riders from the final standings of any of the Continental Series of the previous year, Junior (from 2026)

7. Top five riders from the final standings of any of the Continental Series of the previous year, Cadet (if progressing into Junior category) (from 2026)
8. Current UCI World Champion

Downhill race levels

- ▶ World Championships
- ▶ European Championships
- ▶ World Cups
- ▶ Continental Series

For Junior and Elite riders registration is through the federation

We shall call these 'restricted entry events' for this document

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- ▶ iXS European Downhill Cup (mostly C1)
 - ▶ iXS Downhill Cup (mostly C2)
 - ▶ European Class 1 (C1) races
 - ▶ European Class 2 (C2) races
 - ▶ British Series (BDS) Class 1 (C1) races
 - ▶ British Series (BDS) Class 2 (C2) races
 - ▶ Irish Downhill Series / Irish National Championships

Riders can register themselves

International racing

- ▶ Although there are many great downhill races taking place in Ireland, riders who have ambition to represent Ireland on the world stage will need to target races outside of Ireland.
- ▶ The level of competition is higher, the course lengths are longer, the events are more challenging.
- ▶ To begin it is better to target events where the rider will get two runs (qualifier and final).
- ▶ If you are aiming for some of the restricted entry events* then international racing is compulsory. There are no specific events to target (qualifiers) or number of events. The criteria would be based on time and demonstrated performance capacity & progression in UCI ranked races (more details further down in this document).

*Restricted entry events : Continental series, World Cups, European Championships, World Championships

Youth events

- ▶ 2nd year Under 16 riders with ambition to race restricted entry events in their 1st year Junior are advised to gain race & training exposure on Continental Europe wherever possible as a stepping stone development and progression up from racing in Ireland solely.
- ▶ There are international events for younger riders (Rookie cups etc.)
- ▶ Parents can register for these events without having to go through Cycling Ireland.
- ▶ It will be important to aim for the right level of race, one that the young rider will get a positive experience from.
- ▶ The pressure of international events should be weighed up against heading to one of the bike parks in Europe for a week and just simply riding the big trails.
- ▶ These events can also provide much needed experience for the parents around the logistics of getting to and from the event.
- ▶ We are hearing that trade team scouts may be watching to see how the younger riders are getting on and whether they have potential in the future.

How do Irish riders gain an entry to restricted entry events?

- ▶ In order to gain access to the restricted entry events* riders need to prove they have experience of riding at top level races and of producing results at those races.
- ▶ We would look at results from the year to date (or from the previous season if it is an early event).
- ▶ We have provided target FTC (Fastest Time in Category) for these events (see the next pages).
 - ▶ **Achieving the target FTC does not guarantee an entry into the top level races.**
- ▶ Irish race results on a stand alone basis will not be considered as relevant in assessing rider performances as UCI ranked races.

*Restricted entry events : Continental series,
World Cups, European Championships, World
Championships

Fastest time in category

- ▶ The FTC calculation is a tool to measure a performance.
- ▶ Example: If the fastest rider in the category takes 3 minutes (180 seconds) to descend the hill, and rider X takes 3m 30 seconds (210 seconds), then rider X is 17% slower
- ▶ $\frac{210}{180} = 1.16666 = 117\%$
- ▶ The higher the level of race, the wider the margin of FTC that would be considered.
- ▶ The advantage of this system is that the strength and depth of the competition is removed as a factor. So it doesn't matter if a rider finishes 57th out of 100 or 17th out of 30 or 4th out of 10, the important information is how quick they were compared to the rider who won the category.

Suggested FTC for 2025

This is a minimum target level

Level of race	FTC	Winner's time example	Target time
World Cups	15%	3:30	4:01
Continental Series	14%	3:30	3:59
European Class 1 (C1) races (iXS EDC)	12%	3:30	3:55
European Class 2 (C2) races (iXS EDC)	10%	3:30	3:51
Fort William	12%	3:30	3:55
British Class 1 (C1) races / other European	8%	3:30	3:47
British Class 2 (C2) races / other European	6%	3:30	3:43

Cycling Ireland jerseys

- ▶ If you have been granted an entry to one of the restricted entry events* you will need to wear the national jersey.
- ▶ These are held at the Cycling Ireland headquarters.
- ▶ The jerseys are **loaned** out to riders and must be returned after the race.
- ▶ The national jerseys are not supplied for other level races.
- ▶ If you are successful in being approved to race in a restricted entry event this is considered a National Team selection and you are representing Cycling Ireland and your Nation. As such a Cycling Ireland TMA (Team Member Agreement) must be signed in advance of entry being made and all conditions adhered to thereafter.

*Restricted entry events : Continental series,
World Cups, European Championships, World
Championships

Funding

- ▶ There is currently no funding from Cycling Ireland for riders travelling to international races. This is in line with other cycling disciplines within Cycling Ireland and across other federations.
- ▶ The Cycling Ireland Off-road Commission (ORC) leads and funds off road disciplines including DH MTB and is allocated an annual budget by Cycling Ireland. Based on the requirements of the discipline, the ORC will support DH MTB where the need is identified and strategically aligned with CI. The ORC on an ongoing basis, seeks additional funding from CI towards growing the discipline of DH and will actively continue to explore more opportunities for DH MTB development.
- ▶ Riders are encouraged to communicate with each other to share resources, share accommodation, transport etc. in order to reduce costs.
- ▶ Riders are also encouraged to seek local sponsorship through community shops and businesses as well as their local council. It is best to prepare a CV of your cycling achievements.
- ▶ Ultimately riders are trying to market themselves on the “big stage” so that a trade team (trade development team) may pick them up. On the trade team riders would get bikes, mechanic support, nutrition etc.

What to do before racing abroad

- ▶ Obtain your Cycling Ireland licence. Add in a passport style picture if you haven't already done so.
- ▶ Include the “International” add-on (See the next page for additional information).
- ▶ Review your personal travel insurance. Ensure you specifically include downhill racing. This would be important for some countries where they may use helicopter transfers off the mountain.

- ▶ In the lead up to the race, aim to have plenty of rest, eat well, stretch. Try to limit the pressure put on the rider.

International add-on

- ▶ To confirm what an International Racing Licence offers, refer to CI website <https://www.cyclingireland.ie/get-involved/membership/insurance/#239>
- ▶ If an Irish rider has an international endorsement on their licence it covers them globally with our 3rd Party and Personal Accident insurance as long as they are in UCI events, or UCI approved National Federation events - not riding any spurious events that CI can not stand over the standard of the events - we know UCI and national federation events are to a standard. This is only outside Ireland if you have international authorisation.
- ▶ With regard to contact numbers from CI insurers -
- ▶ Chubb Assistance 24 hours a day- Underwriter Chubb Insurance - Policy number: IEBOTA11648 Telephone: +353 1 4401762 E-mail: IRLclaims@chubb.com
- ▶ The personal accident policy will offer a benefit towards medical expenses and capital benefits etc. but you will need invoices or receipts and a claim form, they wouldn't usually deal directly with a hospital in an emergency situation.
- ▶ Below is CI Insurance Account Manager if you are having any particular difficulties:
- ▶ Anthony Murphy - Arachas Insurance - 0873725975

How to register for the British Downhill Series (BDS)

- ▶ Register with British Cycling on <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/>.
- ▶ Find out when race entries are opening.
- ▶ Be ready to register as soon as entry is open. These events sell out quickly.
- ▶ There should be an international rider category.
- ▶ British Cycling are not holding places for Irish riders.

BDS or iXS

- ▶ It turns out that it seems to be just as expensive to travel to the British series as it is to travel to a mainland European event.
- ▶ If there was a choice, then the recommendation would be to go to the mainland European events as the calibre of race would be higher.

What spare parts to bring with you to races

- ▶ It is wise to bring a selection of parts that will fit your bike
 - ▶ hangers, chain, brake pads
 - ▶ spare tyres.
- ▶ If possible a spare frame and/or a set of wheels.
- ▶ Don't forget to bring your tools, pump, oils etc.

What is the procedure if you do want to apply to compete in one of the top races (1)

- ▶ First you will need to identify the race you are looking to register for.
- ▶ Find out when the registration opens and closes.
- ▶ Contact the commission secretary secretary@offroadcyclingireland.ie well before registration opens. Provide details of your race results for the season to date (or for last season for early season events).
- ▶ The commission will work with the High Performance Unit to assess whether the race you wish to attend would be “right” for you.

What is the procedure if you do want to apply to compete in one of the top races (2)

- ▶ If you get the green light you will then be asked to complete a form which asks for your details, details of the event, details of your Team Manager and any other supporting staff.
 - ▶ The form will also ask where you will be staying for the event. This is VERY IMPORTANT for any potential drug testing.
 - ▶ This form should be completed before registration has opened. Contact the commission secretary when you have completed the form.
- ▶ The details from the form are passed onto the High Performance Administration Manager. This staff member then registers the rider, their accommodation and any support staff.
- ▶ Once you have been registered, the UCI would then contact you with further information.

Coaching

- ▶ All riders should consider coaching as part of their development.
- ▶ This can be at club level, regional level or national level.
- ▶ The Cycling Ireland Off-road Commission would organise training sessions with specialised coaches. Development areas: strength and conditioning, bike mechanics, bike skills, nutrition, racing mind-set.

World Championships

The pinnacle of racing



World Championships

- ▶ Currently the rider categories for the World Downhill Championships would be
 - ▶ Elite men, Elite women,
 - ▶ Junior men, Junior women
 - ▶ Under 23 categories are meant to come in by 2026.
- ▶ The UCI would allocate between 3 to 7 entries for each of the above categories for all nations.
- ▶ The allocation is described on the next page.

World Championships

► Rider allocations - details from the UCI below

9.2.034 For the Men Elite, Women Elite, Men Under 23 and Men Junior XCO events and the Men Elite and Men Junior DHI events, the maximum number of riders (apart from reserves) for each team is determined on the basis of the classification by nation of the previous year's world championships, as per the table below:

Nations ranked	Maximum number of riders (except reserves)
1 to 10 and the host nation	7
11 to 20	6
21 to 30	5
31 or after	4
Unranked nations	3

9.2.036 The ranking by nations for the mountain bike world championships is calculated by adding the points scored by the 3 best placed riders of each nation. The system for awarding points is based on the total number of rider starting in each category, with a maximum of 300. If 100 riders start, the winner will score 100 points while the 100th placed rider would score 1. Should some starters not be given a finishing position, the last rider to be classified shall score the points for his or her position without taking account of the unclassified riders. Example: if 100 riders start and 80 riders are classified, the last of them will score 21 points.

Criteria for World Championships

- ▶ World Championship Selections are a formal process as per CI National Team Selection policy which is published here: <https://www.cyclingireland.ie/downloads/CyclingIrelandNationalTeamSelectionPolicy15.01.2025.pdf> Please familiarise yourself with this document should you hold ambition to seek selection at World Championship level.
- ▶ Riders must have IRELAND on their licence.
- ▶ Results window would be from **1 February to 6 weeks before the World Championships**. This would allow for periods of injury.
- ▶ Race times and seeding times to be considered.
- ▶ Just because a rider achieves the criteria, it does not mean they are guaranteed an entry. It is not an automatic selection.
- ▶ However, if a rider does not achieve the criteria, they will not be considered for selection.
- ▶ There is **no obligation** to send riders just because they are national champions.
- ▶ There is **no obligation** to fill all available spaces.
- ▶ There is **no obligation** to send females or juniors if they don't achieve the criteria.

Going forward

- ▶ The Off-road Commission is looking to host some further group calls with riders / parents looking to travel abroad to race downhill.
- ▶ If you have any questions, send an email to downhill@offroadcyclingireland.ie