

ECCC 2015
— Go Big Or Go Home —

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Proposed slate of changes and two year project to take ECCE to next level

- Rejuvenate MTB season
- Elevate Road season into a series of ultra high quality events
- Make the conference and all our races sustainable for the long term

Sections of this presentation:

- **Foundations & Motivations**
- **Components**
- **Critical Components**
- **Secondary Components**
- **Tertiary Components**
- **Further Thoughts**
- **Summary**

Underlying observations & theories

Overview of proposal

Must-do aspects

Should-do aspects

Could-do aspects

Longer term notes

Re-cap and conclusion

Foundations & Motivations

Diminishing Returns

The ECCC has made incredible strides over the past dozen years

Many improvements still to make, but rapidly settling onto a plateau

Significant increase in event quality, sustainability of events & conference is going to require significant changes

Quality vs Quantity

Not going to keep growing in numbers without investing effort

- ECCC participation solid but lower than in past
- All conferences & competitive cycling in general down

Serious adverse structural factors

- End of a cycling boom in America
- Economic recession

Reversing those trends will require significant changes

- Attack costs and workload for teams and promoters
- Raise quality of events for higher value, better retention

Focus on growth in and through quality

Conference structure is extraordinarily healthier than anytime before

- Many more volunteers behind the scenes making it happen

But still critically reliant on excessive effort from volunteers

- Extremely lucky that modern-era directors have had the ability to put exorbitant amounts of time into the conference
 - ▶ Something like ~24+ hours/week averaged across the year
- Extremely lucky that they've been widely skilled individuals
 - ▶ Repair timing electronics, sew leaders' jerseys, create high-functionality websites, write data mining programs, project detailed budgets, etc. etc.

Assuming the same for the future is a poor assumption

- Severely restrict pool of lead volunteers
- Risk decline in conference quality
- Not able to enable new initiatives and projects

We're currently significantly under-valuing our events

Races are extremely expensive and not at all fundraising vehicles

- Nearly all Road promoters lose money—often significantly
 - ▶ Hundreds to thousands of dollars lost by promoting teams, members
- Most MTB promoters break even or gain, but some lose significantly
 - ▶ Heavily subsidized though by downhillers, conference, volunteers

Races are also extremely difficult to organize

- Even MTB weekends are a considerable amount of work
- Quality Road weekends are an absurd amount of work
- Burden typically falls on one or a few people from promoting club(s)

Combined, these financial and human costs restrict pool of potential promoters, make races and seasons unsustainable, impair quality and safety

The ECCC is an (awesome!) community

It's in everyone's communal interest that races happen, and happen well

All need to pull together as a community to continue that

Already function that way in many respects

- E.g., several significant race expenses, such as season scoring, are billed as a function of rider participation
 - ▶ Designed and/or negotiated that way in part to socialize costs
 - ▶ Big races effectively subsidize smaller races

Need to take this concept even further

Components

Two year project to elevate collegiate cycling in this region

Make the conference sustainable over the long term

- Cannot count on steady supply of volunteers to lead the conference
 - ▶ Overwhelming time, flexibility, and financial commitments
- Need to reduce financial and organizational burden on promoters
 - ▶ Potential for substantial budget losses, extreme efforts

Better support strategic planning, long term efforts, conference-wide efforts

- Better data access, more stability in schedules and promoter contact
- More leverage for sponsorship and other arrangements

Raise the safety and quality of all events even further

- Safety: More planning and oversight, peoplepower, equipment
 - ▶ Promoters don't have organizational capacity to be 110% on safety
 - ▶ Every race very tight on course marshals, day-of volunteers
- Quality: Make each race and every rider's experience an *event*

Proposed plan has components in three categories:

- Critical: Has to be done to continue making progress
- Secondary: Possibly should be done to capitalize on effort
- Tertiary: Would be awesome, but not immediately necessary

Components roll out over the next two years

- Critical components take place immediately, for Road 2014
- Secondary enacted over next ~18 months, going into Road 2015
- Tertiaries happen anytime next 2 years as time permits, makes sense

Critical components are essentially an inter-twined package deal

- Most of them don't work without the others
- Others are more pick & choose, done as possible/sensible

Critical Components

All teams are required or expected to provide day-of volunteers for all races

Entry fees bump up, closer to market value but still highly discounted

- Ex. for Road: \$20 crits, \$25 road races, \$30 TTT; ITT/HC still \$10

Conference becomes co-promoter alongside host teams for all races

- Conference takes all the money, pays all the (recognized) bills

Conference establishes trained people to oversee registration at all races

Conference hires staff person(s) to co-promote events, guide teams

Secondary Components

Larger one-time re-investment in MTB timing equipment, software

- Software leveraged for utilization in Road season as well

Crowdfund/sponsorship drive/loan(s) for Road event equipment

- Hard fencing, etc., and transportation for it

ECCC absorbs half of ACCC: Maryland, D.C., Virginia, West Virginia

Tertiary Components

Instantiation of a fourth women's Road field

Open fields to all juniors, including those not on high school teams

Fall meeting expands to general conference for all riders

Critical Components

N.B.: These components are primarily about Road season at the moment

Desirable to apply to MTB, but very different picture there

- Most races aren't losing substantial money (though some are)
- Dramatically less burden on promoter
- Comparatively very few day-of volunteers required
 - ▶ Though most races should have more marshals
- Fewer resources to work with
 - ▶ E.g., not enough riders to generate funding for conference co-promoter

Most likely phased in differently for the two seasons

- E.g., might (almost certainly will) establish standard registration crew next MTB season, but could leave other components until later

All teams are required or expected to provide day-of volunteers for all races

Promoters constantly struggle to recruit enough course marshals

- Major stress point for organizers, safety issue for everyone
- Eliminates small teams from promoting, even with great venues

It behooves everyone to help ensure safety and quality of each event, and to enable a wider pool of potential promoting clubs

- Many teams happy to help marshal throughout the season and doing so
- Host Housing quid-pro-quo has helped quite a bit
- Still need to do more

Many possible mechanisms to enforce/encourage/enable

- Volunteering as a scored event included in team standings
- A separate team season standings for volunteering
- Entry fee rebates for marshaling, or other incentives (t-shirts, etc.)

Joe's hope and belief is that if we establish the expectation and have good mechanisms to make it easy, we don't actually have to enforce

- Make sure everyone is aware we need everyone to help out
- Just like teams view promoting as doing their part to the conference, marshaling should be seen by everyone as their duty to the conference

An easy-to-use online & on-site system for promoters to list and riders to sign-up for marshaling requirements would help highlight how much is needed, who's helping, and get more people doing it

- Also gives an easy, standard system to point to in flyers

Entry fees bump up, closer to market value but still highly discounted

Not set yet, but plausible example proposal for Road:

\$20 crits, \$25 road races, \$30 TTT; ITT/HC remains \$10

Currently seriously under-valuing and under-costing our races

- ECCC road race courses would easily be \$50+ for open races
- Even simple business park crits are all \$35–\$40+ in this region

From promoters' perspective, entry fees have been \$13 for over a decade

- Bump to \$14 was directly for \$1 increase in USAC insurance
- Bump to \$15 was directly for newly created \$1 ECCC surcharge

Many conferences, including those adjacent, are charging \$20, \$25, or more

Entry Fees (cont.)

Race fees are a trivial component of costs even with increases

- Completely dominated by travel costs
 - ▶ Just crossing the GW Bridge is \$15
 - ▶ Gas for even a small car for a typical weekend is easily \$100
 - ▶ Hotels never below \$60/night

If you're going to pay so much to travel, and spend so much time traveling, you may as well spend an extra couple bucks to make it more worthwhile

Entry Fees (cont.)

Higher entry fees are a deterrent to recruiting or retaining new riders, but...

- Enabled increase in quality could be what's necessary to retain more
- Could have a tiered scheme with lower prices for new riders

For already committed riders the extra expense should be clearly worth it

- Think of this as additional \$80+ for 8 full weeks of awesome racing and the many months of training to that racing
- If you're going to spend countless hours all winter training, and thousands of dollars on bicycles and equipment, isn't it worth \$5, \$10, or even more, if it makes the end goal, the race, more awesome?

Conference becomes co-promoter alongside host teams for all races

- Conference responsible for all finances
- Conference takes all the money, pays all the (recognized) bills
- Promoters no longer using club or personal funds to backstop races

Road promoters almost uniformly lose substantial money

- Another way small teams are eliminated from promoting
- For those that do come out ahead, it's not worth the effort and stress

Many MTB promoters make money, though some lose substantially

- But the conference/Road season is significantly subsidizing costs for officiating, timing, scoring, etc., unsustainably so over the long term
 - ▶ Even just the crew using hotels—a quite reasonable proposition—instead of camping or crashing on floors with teams would devastate profits

Race Promotion (cont.)

Unbelievable willingness from promoters to absorb losses into club budgets

Essentially zero potential for reward to offset the risk

- There's no business case to justify putting on a race

But it does benefit all of us to have races—that's the whole point!

Conference handling finances socializes all the risk and reward

- We all collectively pay what it costs for our races, rather than asking a subset of clubs to shoulder financial burden
- Races that do profit goes toward races that wind up losing

Conference taking the losses better enables doing the right thing

- E.g., adding a 4th Women's field is essentially demanding that individual promoters lose money
- But to the conference as a whole it could be worth it

Conference establishes point people to oversee registration at all weekends

- Regular in-house crew handles registration each week
 - ▶ Trained by the conference on procedures and practices
 - ▶ Committed to an entire season, potentially dividing up days/weekends
 - ▶ Works closely with—is possibly part of/managed by—scoring crew

1 or 2 people managing day-of registration, number handout, license sales

- Supported by promoter volunteers as usual, esp. in rush periods

Ah hoc form of this already at many races

- E.g., Caitlin overseeing Phlyer reg to ensure faster process, clear pay records, improved results sheets (many non-collegiate racers at Phlyer)
- E.g., Tim/Joe/Sully handling numbers when John Frey can't/would be a burden to riders (e.g., John w/ finish camera far from staging)

Consistent Registration (cont.)

Even with super streamlined ECCC check-in policies, registration is still a major point of contact between racers and event

- Behooves us to ensure it's a smooth, consistent, high quality one
- Centralization would also enable improved services
 - ▶ Credit cards for day-of reg and 1-day licenses; clear, formal receipts

Sloppy registration is a non-trivial financial and major liability issue

- Lost licenses, waivers are a potentially huge deal
- Promoters undercharging 1-days and eating cost (common occurrence)
- Poor records entails inability to verify everyone paid

Centralized registration crew also enables better data collection

- How many people sign up day-of? How many buy 1-days?
 - ▶ Latter would be really useful to know, difficult to do so currently

Even with extensive ECCC and USAC documentation available as well as conference leadership checking in on procedures on-site, there are problems

If conference assumes all costs and increased liability, it can't have this hole

Conception of standardized registration crew:

- 2–4 people total, ideally racers or otherwise traveling to races
 - ▶ *Great role for recent alumni, friends, significant others*
- 1 or 2 covering any given race day or weekend
- Collectively committed to covering the whole season
 - ▶ E.g., a pair might trade off morning/afternoon while not racing
 - ▶ Take turns on different weekends to not require 100% attendance
- Trained by conference, work closely with season coordinator & scoring
 - ▶ Supported, especially at rush times, by promoter volunteers
- Probably paid on order of \$50–75 for a full day per person
 - ▶ Not enough to cover travel costs, etc.
 - ▶ But great if you're going anyway

Conference hires staff person(s) to co-promote events, guide teams

- Seasonal, part time, but significant commitment
- Paid commensurately to that commitment
 - ▶ An actual—awesome!—job, rather than volunteer or stipend role

Objective is *not* to take over and promote races

Objective is to guide and teach team leaders, be the backbone ensuring critical tasks are done well and project is not overwhelming

- Putting on a race is a huge task, and the learning curve is massive
- Promoters getting overwhelmed is a problem in every way
 - ▶ Things get overlooked and races aren't as good, safe, or on-budget
 - ▶ Great races get dropped as promoters burn out
 - ▶ People don't want to take on promoting

If conference assumes all costs for races, then it needs to be intimately involved in planning to ensure they're on budget and high quality

Having a stable conference co-promoter also ensures better continuity

- High collegiate turnover and overwhelming workload ensures nearly all clubs fail to train next generation of promoters
 - ▶ Great but complex races get dropped—*looking at you, Beanpot!*
 - ▶ Constantly starting over from ground zero, never letting workload drop, never improving in quality from lessons learned

Co-promoter is also then well poised to collect critical data

- Currently extremely difficult to get budgets, etc.
- Even when we can they have different formats, are incomplete, etc.
- Makes it hard to answer important questions
 - ▶ E.g., are promoters just spending frivolously, or should reg fees go up?

Scope of role and entailed compensation are major details to develop

Feasible and desired at the moment is on order of \$10,000–20,000

- Couple months of part time commitment leading up to Road season

Co-promoter works to ensure race is on track, on budget, safe, high quality

Potential tasks include:

- Monitoring timeline and timely pre-race task & planning completion
- Tracking finances and approving expenses
- Vetting course designs and venue feasibility
 - ▶ All new courses already approved by an official, typically Alan
- Working with promoter on race distances, schedules
 - ▶ Already heavily standardized by conference, guided by Alan
- Helping develop marshal schedule and plan
- Filing permits, managing pre-registration, issuing post-race survey
- Ensuring documentation is being updated for future iterations

Promoting team is doing legwork to bring a race to their home

- Conference and co-promoter isn't going to just put on a race for you

Just a few of the many things still necessary, all of them time consuming:

- Finding feasible courses and venues
- Working with townships, police, venue owners
- Developing course control and marshaling plan
- Securing medical support, developing medical plan
- Recruiting local volunteers and host housing
- Arranging portajohns, volunteer food, hotel discounts
- Detailed race flyer, marshaling instructions (maps, etc)
- Course cleanup and marking
- Any necessary special arrangements, e.g., Easterns banquet
- Cash or in-kind sponsorships for any special bits (SRAM, jerseys, etc)

Alan Atwood is natural candidate given extensive promoter experience combined with already long & critical history volunteering with the ECCC

Crucially though there are a number of other conceivable candidates

- Being able to generate such a list is a key sign of sustainability
 - ▶ Alan's willing to & does *volunteer* much time, but could & would others?

Secondary Components

Larger one-time re-investment in MTB timing equipment, software

- Software leveraged for utilization in Road season as well

Invest in developing new low cost MTB timing equipment, scoring software

- Primary goal is making execution less labor & skill intensive
 - ▶ Improve and speed up logistics
 - ▶ Reduce training requirements
- Near-instantaneous live information, better *event*
- Improved photogates for gravity
- Potentially chip timing for scoring XC, tracking riders in gravity

Potentially fund in part through crowdfunding and sponsorship

Crowdfund/sponsorship drive/loan(s) for Road event equipment, software

- Hard fencing, finish line truss/banner, pop-up tents, etc.
- Transportation for equipment, in-house crew to setup/teardown

Major funding and operations issues here

- Needs a crew to transport, deploy, pack up

Crowdfund and sponsorship drive equipment investment

Crew funding has to be sustainable (i.e., ongoing budget/race fees)

Goal is to make every race both a higher profile “event” as well as safer

- Encourage growth in rider participation

ECCC absorbs half of ACCC: Maryland, D.C., Virginia, West Virginia

Carolinas are likely to form their own conference in near future

- ACCC may not be big enough to be viable without those teams/riders

Huge increase in field sizes, consistent race quality for ACCC riders

- Especially if ECCC takes these big steps toward even higher quality

Restore MTB scene in southern ECCC states

- More races closer to more riders

More venue options; some fantastic Road & MTB races in ACCC!

Not feasible to simply pile in all that geographic area

- Burlington to Richmond is so far, Google Maps recommends flights

Basic approaches in terms of executing seasons:

- Largely independent leagues: Two parallel schedules, standings
 - ▶ ECCC top level becomes umbrella organization directing and enabling two more or less discrete, separate sets of races & teams
 - ▶ Meet at occasional but more frequent dual-league events
 - ▶ Essentially franchising ECCC practices to ACCC
- Mega conference: One schedule, standings, lots of split weekends
 - ▶ Unified races in middle states, other weekends split north/south

Most likely is different approaches for Road and MTB

Road starts as a unified schedule in middle ground then splits

- ECCC has significant weather constraints on early season racing
- Racing starts mid-February in ACCC
- March mix of ECCC south + ACCC north
 - ▶ Pretty similar to current ECCC March schedule
 - ▶ Remember: Would be good to have more March options
- April split weekends north & south
- Points are obviously a tricky issue
 - ▶ Best X of Y season scoring? Combined weekends worth more?

MTB runs as two parallel schedules and standings

- Weather uniformly viable across both areas
- Schedule fairly constrained by fall semester start, nationals
- One schedule for PA, DE, NJ, MD, WV, MD, VA
- Another for NY, CT, MA, RI, VT, NH, ME
- Riders can race either, don't score points outside home league

Many issues and complexities, huge amount of work, lots of headaches

Very different cultures, basic approaches, and expectations

- E.g., mindset to and traditions of Intro and Women's races
- E.g., pre-registration and significantly standardized races

Staffing and training double the race-day volunteers and personnel

- This is by far the biggest concern
 - ▶ There's only one John Frey, Alan Atwood, Tim Manzella, etc.

Doubled equipment capital investments and maintenance

- Otherwise, e.g., who gets fancy MTB timing equipment each weekend?

Points and nationals qualifications

- Larger geographic spread alleviates some of these issues

Plus basic, mundane merger hassles—bank accounts, websites, etc.

Tertiary Components

Instantiation of a fourth women's Road field

Current scheme of Women A/B, C, Intro introduced for Spring 2010

- Boosted Women's elite (A) field size and quality, eliminated crippling barriers to upgrading out of lower category (B) while working within existing upgrade rules and sensible nationals policies

Has been really successful

- Saved Women's A fields from boredom, complete evaporation
- Gave the Bs an upgrade and training path
- Frequently great racing!

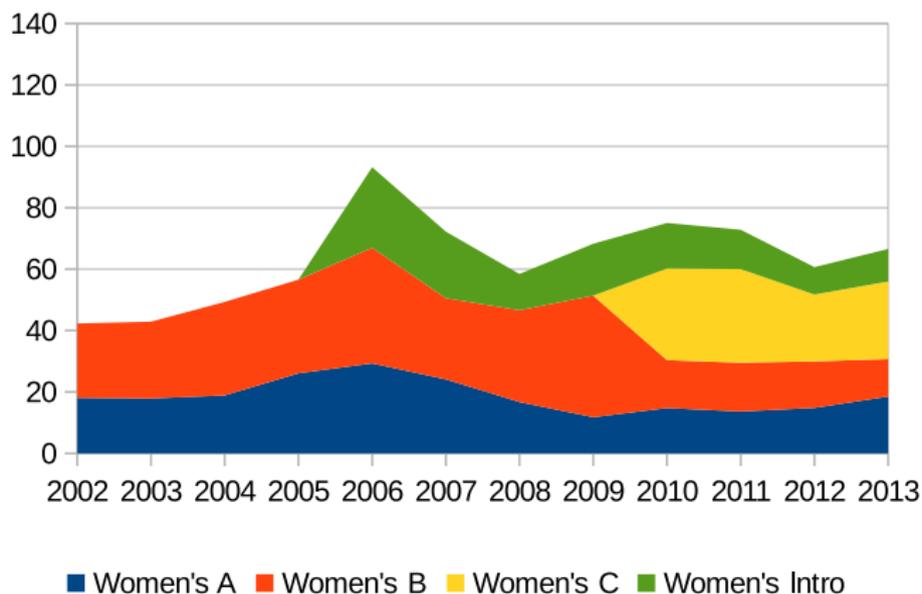
Starting to see growing pains

- Still a substantial gap going from C to A/B
 - ▶ Lots of incentive for nominal B riders to stay in Women's C
 - ▶ Reduces the quality of experience for both "actual" Cs and "C+" riders

Women's Road Fields (cont.): Field Sizes

On average there's about 65 women each Road weekend

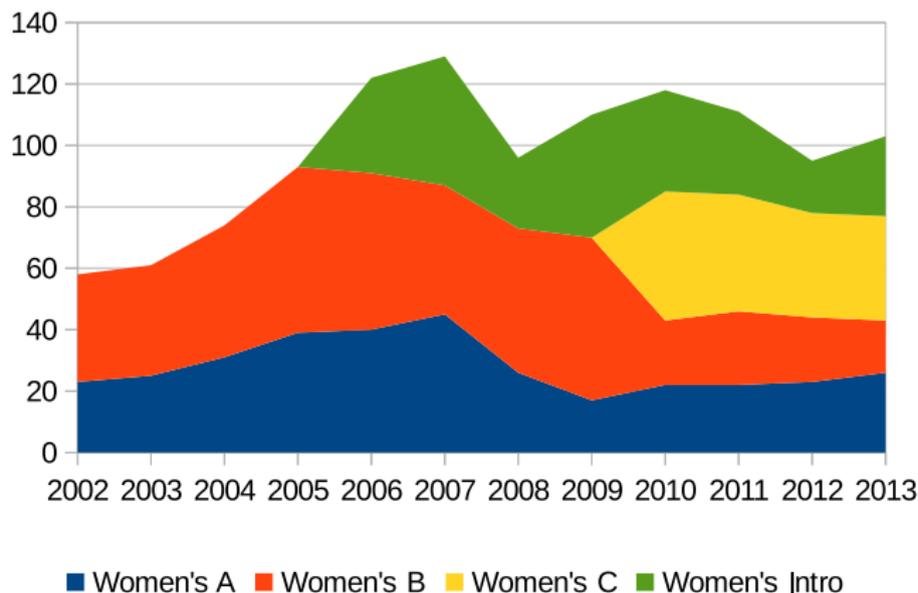
ECCC Average Women's Mass Starts Per Weekend



Women's Road Fields (cont.): Field Sizes

Sometimes there are as many as 100 women

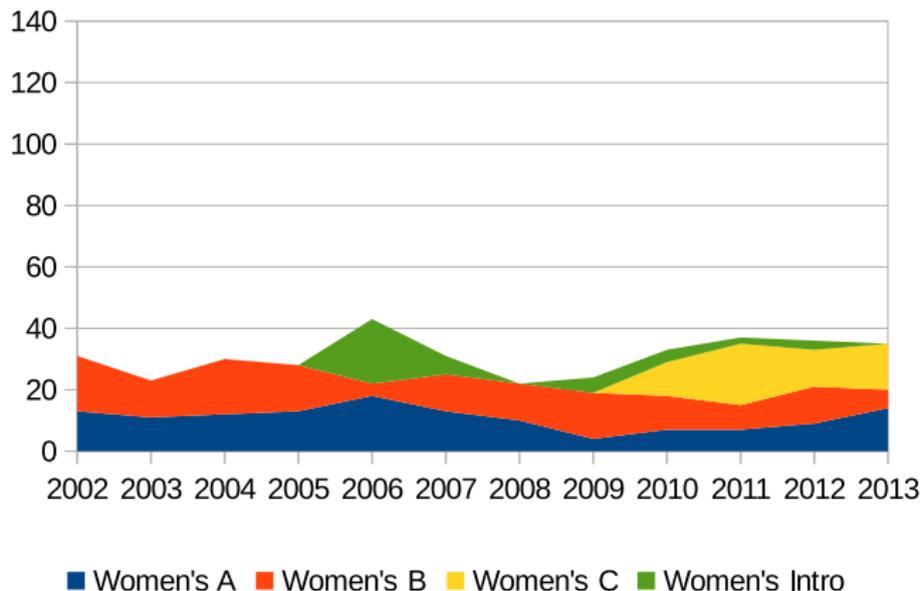
ECCC Maximum Women's Mass Starts Per Weekend



Women's Road Fields (cont.): Field Sizes

But other times there are as few as 35 women

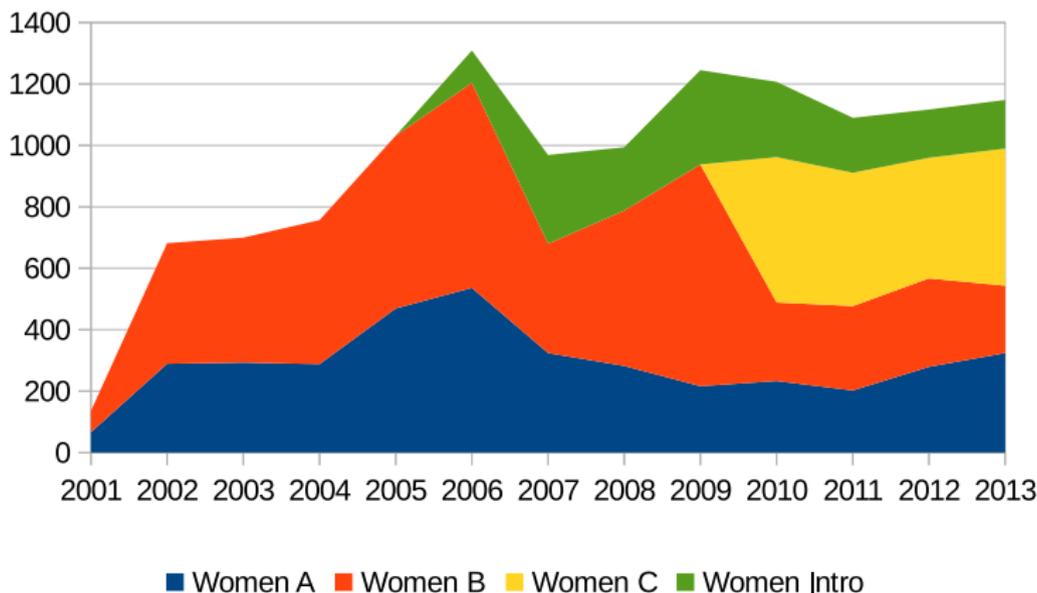
ECCC Minimum Women's Mass Starts Per Weekend



Women's Road Fields (cont.): Starts

There are predictably about 1100 women's starts each season

ECCC Season Total Women's Mass Starts

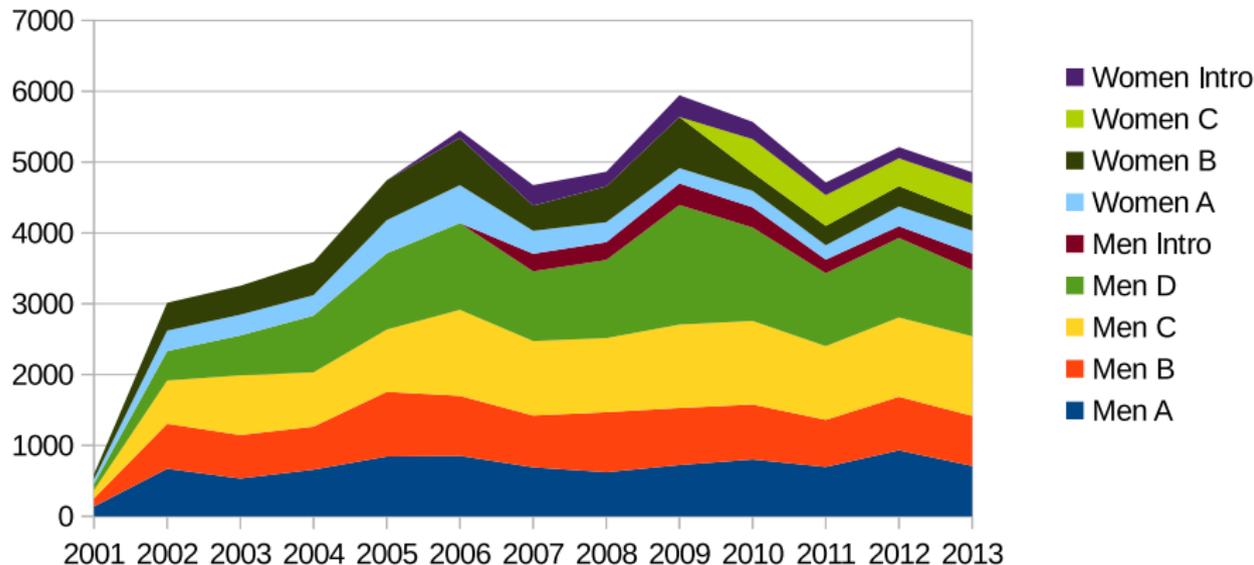


Women's Road Fields (cont.): Starts

About 23% of men's starts; women hold 20% of ECCC annual licenses

- Probably a disproportionate number of 1-days (more 1-off Intro racers)

ECCC Season Total Mass Starts



Women's Road Fields (cont.): Proposals

Three basic proposals so far, not mutually exclusive

Proposal 1: Add a fourth field between elites (A/B) and beginners (C)

Proposal 2: Allow women to move back and forth between categories at will

Proposal 3: Open all fields to general women racers

Proposal 1: Add a fourth field between elites (A/B) and beginners (C)

In this plan it probably makes sense to keep A/B and introduce D

- Nationals & upgrades as well as field size & race quality purposes

At what point can we support this, and at what point do we need to?

- Additional promoter costs are a serious concern here
- Conference taking on finances and absorbing losses helps enable

Sheer physicality and logistics needs to be accounted for

- How to work more fields into daylight hours at early races?

What is a minimum number of riders for a field to be worthwhile?

- Dividing into smaller fields could make experience even worse
- Notably though, women—especially beginner women—almost always opt for smaller, more ability-specific fields
 - ▶ Even when it makes little difference, e.g., in MTB where there's no notion of getting dropped, Bs prefer strongly to not start with As

Women's Road Fields (cont.): Opt In/Out

Proposal 2: Allow women to move back and forth between categories at will

Violates some existing rules, but whatevz...

Scoring is prepared to handle this (actually John's idea)

Proposal 3: Open all fields to general women racers

Concerns about significant problems with team tactics and field dynamics at some weekends in the upper categories

Impact on general scene vibe and attitude?

- Much less than open men, but...?

Open fields to all juniors, including those not on high school teams

Indications are that this should be very feasible

Shouldn't require anything significant from promoters

- Possibly an additional low-cost permit
- Additional/revised ECCC standard flyer boilerplate text

Fall meeting expands to general conference for all riders

- Workshops & presentations on training, racing, bikes, club leadership
- Parallel sessions for conference membership/planning meeting

Create an event to bring everyone together in the fall, get them excited and engaged going into the winter

Accelerate learning process for both racers and team leaders

Further Thoughts

ECCC currently operates within the framework of USA Cycling

- All races are USAC sanctioned, (more or less) follow rules, etc.

As ECCC gets more serious, the value proposition warrants monitoring

- Is it an efficient mechanism to meet our needs as we grow?
 - ▶ E.g., a major service USAC provides is insurance acquisition & oversight
 - Boring, unpleasant, but critical task → not well suited for volunteers
 - But if we're acquiring staff it might not be a hurdle to take on someday
 - Anecdotally, insurance probably acquirable at similar or lower costs
 - But are savings, if any, worth the effort?
- Note that this is not straight-up dollars in/dollars out
 - ▶ E.g., would be “easy” to quantitatively evaluate insurance solutions
 - ▶ But what is the value of riders having good races to do after graduating and moving on from the ECCC?
 - Culture shock and unmet expectations are already a huge issue in participation drop-off post-graduation
 - Ultimately, right now, USAC is the general agency for growing and improving competitive cycling nationally
 - Behooves us to participate in that as good citizens, within reason

Some top-level, primary services/products USAC provides

Event insurance: Absolutely critical

- Further, USA Cycling brand and status smooths many concerns

Rider insurance: Questionable value in our demographics?

- Plausible theory: Nearly all schools require primary health insurance that often—but not always!—renders USAC policy moot

Officiating network: Currently critical for Road, non-existent for MTB

- Building own Road network would be lots of work, expensive, risky
 - ▶ Small pool of officials means higher mileage, a significant cost factor
 - ▶ Smaller or minimal pool reduces redundancy, makes individuals critical
 - ▶ Both of these are problems in ECCC MTB season
- Motorefs in particular would be difficult to supply otherwise

Collegiate nationals: Someone's got to oversee and organize it

General cycling progress: You eventually need to leave the ECCC...

USAC also provides the conference about \$2,300+ in annual funding

- About 15% of ECCC annual budget (see 2013 review slides for details)
- Not directly based on license sales or other measure
 - ▶ USAC's total collegiate budget not strictly tied to input, operates program at a fairly substantial loss in pure dollar terms
- That funding not allocated proportionally by conference size
 - ▶ Conferences all face similar critical core costs regardless of size
 - ▶ ECCC has always recommended & condoned not allocating funds proportionally because of this—*Community!*

The ECCC collectively puts substantial money to USAC

- 14 race permits * \$50 = \$700
 - ▶ Future races also required to purchase \$100 race director license...
- 60 club licenses * \$50 = \$3,000
 - ▶ Club licenses probably increasing to \$75 or \$100 soon
- 900 annual rider licenses * \$30 = \$27,000
- 6500 race starts * \$3 = \$19,500
- And an unknown but significant number of 1-days at \$10 each
- Totals a good bit more than \$50,000 annually

Many of these costs are going to increase in the near future

ECCC conducts MTB races purely with its own volunteers & staffing

Road relies on USAC officiating network

- But winds up—and is happy—using same core crew week-in, week-out

Someone does need to coordinate cohesive rules

- But racing rules are actually a fairly minor issue
- And the ECCC drives a lot of positive rules innovation
 - ▶ Equal women's points, Intro clinics, aero restrictions, MTB team relay, integrated high school, mixed-field upgrade points, and on and on

Frequently constrained by national rules and policies

- Club & rider licenses are—unnecessary?—barriers to participation
 - ▶ Unfortunate to make new rider pay extra \$10 at first race
 - ▶ Technically they'd also have to get a club license beforehand...
- Other examples: Expensive Canadian UCI license requirement; antiquated MTB self-sufficiency rules; possibly inappropriate UCI transgender policy; UCI CX licenses conflict with regional MTBs; etc.

This is a hugely complex topic with many aspects

- Insurance, officials, upgrade reciprocity, nationals, etc...

No immediate action necessary or desirable

But a topic for thought and discussion throughout and after this project

- Again: Is it an efficient mechanism to meet our needs as we grow?
 - ▶ Yes: Great!
 - ▶ No: More work to do—either change the system, or change the system
 - ECCC varies wildly back and forth between super-engaged and not
 - Historically ECCC and alumni have been incredibly significant factors in and successful at improving USAC, collegiate & otherwise, shaping it to meet our vision for everyone's benefit—it's hard, but it's doable
- Important: Not an immediately quantitative question, have to consider and evaluate carefully, accounting for the whole bigger picture
 - ▶ What would be the value of the only good races being ECCC races?

NICA is a prominent umbrella organization for high school racing

Presents a compelling example of investing in quality events

- Entry fees are fairly high, often \$40 for XC MTB?

Somewhat difficult to see how to align with ECCC efforts

- E.g., NICA chapter forming in New York, other potentials
- Season timeframes do not line up, & ECCC moves around too much
- Open to anything though; one-off race collaborations?

Other existing high school leagues, particularly in north

- Have had them out to some Road and MTB races
- Very different culture and baseline though

Conclusion

By and large ECCC is doing great

- Major quality gains over past decade
- Huge structural problems improved greatly over last 5 years

Going to keep getting harder to maintain status quo, let alone do better

ECCC 2015 is a cohesive, multi-year proposal to radically alter the entire model of organizing bicycle races and elevate the ECCC to a whole new level

But it's just a proposal, we all need to collectively determine potential details, evaluate possibilities, settle on a course of action

You and your team need to be engaged in this

Do it for love.

Make it happen.