

Women's+ Development Committee

BRAC Women's+ Racer Survey

Results Report

February 2019



Summary

The Women's+ Development Committee aims to inspire and provide skills to the women's+ (women, trans women, femme, non-binary) cycling community to encourage more participation in Colorado bicycle races in an inclusive environment. The Committee and BRAC (Bicycle Racing Association of Colorado) provides support for women+ relating to:

- Recreational riders interested in racing
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- Group rides, clinics, and events in relation to racing
 - Bike-related questions

The Women's+ Development Committee developed and sent out a 14-question survey to all BRAC-registered women racers in an effort to learn how best to serve female-identifying racers in our community.

We received 100 responses and are excited to implement our findings.

Summary

- Women+ choose to race Masters because they want to race against their peers for fair competition. They choose Masters or Categories depending on the time of the race.
- Women+ plan their season early (December - February) and adjust accordingly the week of races depending on energy levels, family commitments, or weather.
- Races women+ are more interested in: Safe, fun, and challenging courses (ex: Superior Morgul, Boulder Roubaix, Guanella HC, Beti Bike Bash).
- Races women+ tend to avoid: A lot of climbing, crits, if course feels unsafe, the distance to the race, and how they feel about the race organizer.
- Their reasons to not do a race: Cost, course (challenging, boring, sketchy), category grouping, weather, schedule (either their personal or the time they're slotted on race day), and distance to get to the race.
- Their reasons to race: Course (challenging, but not sketchy), environment (fun, not a bro-culture), location, and size of field.
- Their guesses as to why the higher level women's+ fields are not growing: Time to train; jump from 4 to 3 is big (essentially no Cat 3 fitness field); lack of mentors.
- How to encourage racers to keep racing: Acknowledge women+ (post more pictures, state champ jerseys in women's+ sizes); race reports written by/for women+; women's-only race/race series; women's+ clinics; female mentors; make racing fun/event.
- How to get recreational riders to start racing: Reach out to Triathlon field to get women+ interested in racing; clinics with mock races; offer women's+-only races; mentor program; make it fun; advertise.

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- How did they start racing: Through their husbands/boyfriends/friends.

Participants

The survey was sent out to all registered women+ in BRAC's membership which is roughly 500 women and girls. Of those, 100 women completed the survey. The following covers the 100 participants who submitted their answers.

Methodology

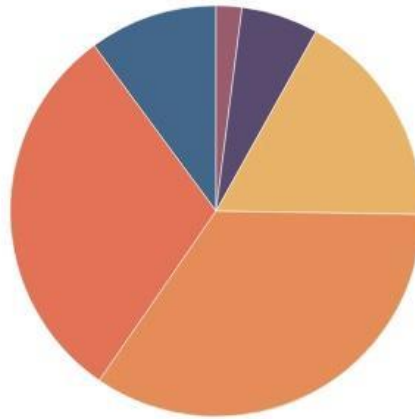
The survey was conducted using MailChimp's built-in survey. The survey collected two forms of data:

- *Qualitative*: Qualitative data including participant's comments
- *Quantitative*: Quantitative data including registered category, racing discipline, Master's categories, as well as general frequency of terms used.

Results

The results are broken out by category and listed by question.

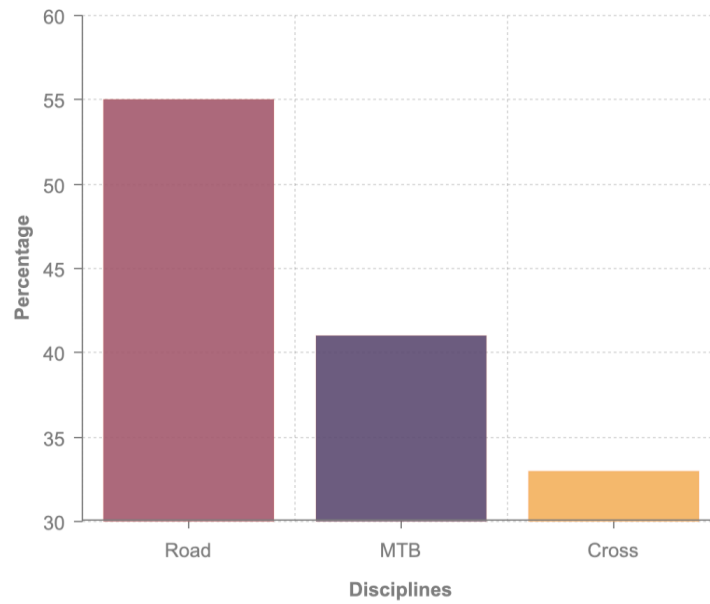
1. What is your category?



Pro	2	Cat 1	6
Cat 2	17	Cat 3	34
Cat 4	30	Cat 5	10

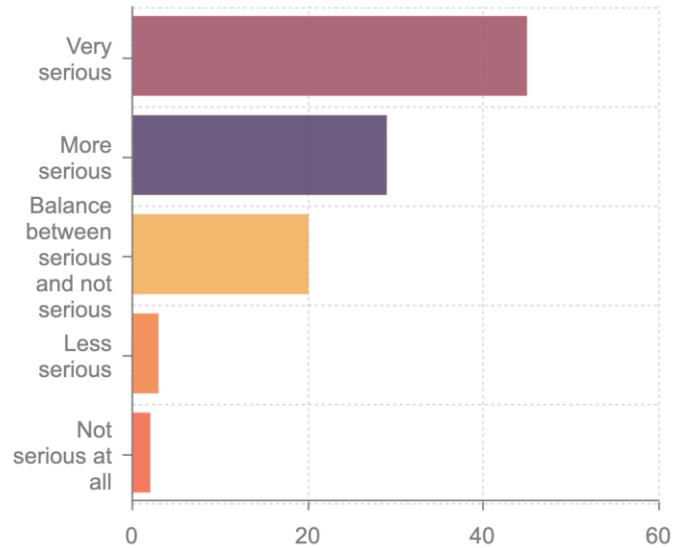
The highest response rate came from Cat 3 and Cat 4 women. This is our biggest audience and therefore, racers we need to focus on retaining.

2. Please rank the cycling disciplines by your enjoyment of racing them. 1 is your favorite.



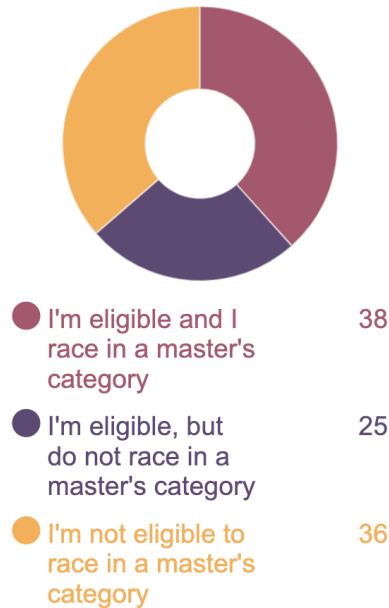
The majority of our registered racers race Road, followed by Mountain Bike, and then Cross. It's actually surprising to see Mountain Bike racers outweigh Cross racers since most mountain bike races in Colorado are unsanctioned and don't require a USAC license or BRAC membership to race.

3. Regardless of your category, how seriously do you take racing?



More than half respondents take racing seriously or very seriously, which means they are committed to training, to showing up with the intention of finishing, and racing their best. This is to say that women+ should be taken as seriously as they treat races. If women+ are committed to racing, race directors should be reciprocating that seriousness and level of commitment.

4. If you are eligible to race a master's category, do you choose to do so?



A little more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the respondents said they race in a master's category while $\frac{1}{3}$ of the other respondents said they are ineligible to race in a master's category. A little less than $\frac{1}{3}$ said while they are eligible to race master's, they do not, and instead race a senior category.

Women+ who choose to race Masters is because they want to race against their peers for fair competition. They want to race women+ their own age because they feel this is more fair than racing young women half their age in the Senior categories.

On the other hand, for almost as many women+ who race masters (38), there's nearly as many who would rather race against women in the same senior category (25). Likely, this is due to the different categories who can compete in a master's race (Cat 5 to Pro). Further, women+ choose Master or Senior categories depending on the time of the race that fits best within their schedule.

It seems as though women who are eligible to race as a master's category appreciate the ability to choose, whether that's for fair competition or what works best for their schedule.

5. In general, how do you make your season's racing plans? For example, do you plan the entire season in February, or do you look up each weekend as it comes to see if you want to do that weekend's race?

More women+ than not plan their race seasons well in advance, typically between December and February. BRAC rarely has races posted this early so it is likely that ,women+ are choosing races they already know to be challenging, fun, and safe. They have either already raced that particular course, or they have been influenced by their husbands, boyfriends, or friends as this is how most of them got into racing in the first place.

While women+ plan in advance, they will adjust their races the week or day of the race due to their energy levels (busy or stressful week and feeling depleted by the time the race comes), the weather (rain, snow, bad/unsafe road conditions), or family commitments throughout each weekend.

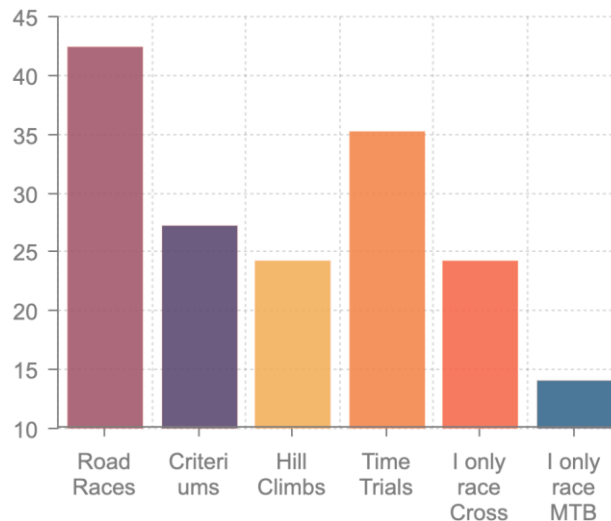
6. Are there any races that you specifically do each season? Which ones and why?

Superior Morgul, Boulder Roubaix, Guanella Hill Climb, and Beti Bike Bash were listed most often. It's interesting to see the different kind of popular races. Superior Morgul is a challenging course with a significant amount of climbing whereas the Guanella Hill Climb is only climbing. On the hand, while women+ tend to avoid dirt in races, they listed the Boulder Roubaix which is half dirt and then a mountain bike race.

7. Are there any races that you strictly will not do? Which ones and why?

For as often as they were listed as being a favorite, they're also dislike: Superior Morgul, Boulder Roubaix, and Koppenburg were listed as races women+ will not do. Crits were listed at least 18 times as being a race that is strictly avoided as well as courses with dirt/gravel. Finally, if a course is perceived as dangerous, unorganized, or there's a certain race director organizing it, most women+ will avoid it.

8. Do you gravitate toward a specific road racing discipline?



The most popular discipline is Road Races, followed by Time Trials and then Criteriums. If most respondents are Cat 3 and Cat 4s who race mainly road races and time trials, race directors would likely benefit by catering more to women at those races. Additionally, women+ prefer safe yet challenging courses. On the other hand, as seen by many comments regarding how unsafe Criteriums seem, it would be in race directors benefits to offer Crit clinics for their criterium races.

9. What are the 3 top reasons you decide against doing a race?

The top three most popular reasons to decide against doing a race for women+ were:

1. The weather (if it's cold, raining, snowing, etc.)
2. The distance to the race from their house.
3. The schedule (either their personal or the time they're slotted on race day [how Master's categories are grouped])

10. What are the 3 top reasons that make a race appealing to you?

The top three most popular reasons that make a race appealing to women+:

1. The course (challenging, but not sketchy)
2. The location of the course (mostly the distance from their house)
3. If the race is fun (the course, people, general vibe)

11. A high concern of Colorado road racing is that the higher level women's fields are not growing. Regardless of what category you race, what is your opinion on why this might be?

Women+ believe that the jump from a Cat 4 to a Cat 3 is too big as there is essentially no Cat 3 "fitness field." There are enough races that group Cat 3's with the P-1-2's that Cat 3's need to have the fitness of the P-1-2's if they're to keep up with the pack.

Another consideration is the time to train to be competitive in the high-level women's field. Women+ believe it takes a considerable amount of time to train and don't believe women+ have enough time to do it.

The third biggest assumption was lack of mentors for racers. There are a lot of nuances in racing that require understanding of safety and efficiency.

12. What do you think is a good way to encourage women who already race their bikes, to continue racing their bikes? What do you think is a good way to encourage women who ride bikes already but do not race them, to give racing a try?

A vast majority of women said to offer clinics to not only help current racers, but to gain new ones. If a top reason for women to race or not race a course is due to safety, education and practice could help alleviate the misconceptions about different race course safety.

14. Who or what got you to first give racing a try?

Most women+ learned about and started racing through their husbands, boyfriends, or friends.

Survey Text

1. What is your category? Please remember that your answers to this survey are important no matter what category you are. Higher category racers do not have more important answers than lower category racers. You are a woman, therefore your answers matter.
2. Please rank the cycling disciplines by your enjoyment of racing them. 1 is your favorite.
3. Regardless of your category, how seriously do you take racing? Remember, "serious" doesn't mean you're a Pro/Cat 1 or whatever. It means that when you start the race, you're fully invested in doing the best you can, to reach whatever result you define as success for you. You can be last place and still take the race serious; you can win and be very unserious.
4. If you are eligible to race a master's category, do you choose to do so? Why or why not?
5. In general, how do you make your season's racing plans? For example, do you plan the entire season in February, or do you look up each weekend as it comes to see if you want to do that weekend's race?
6. Are there any races that you specifically do each season? Which ones and why?
7. Are there any races that you strictly will not do? Which ones and why?
8. Do you gravitate toward a specific road racing discipline?
9. What are the 3 top reasons you decide against doing a race?
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