

What Women (Road Racers) Really Want Survey: Summary Spring 2003

Overall Summary

Because of the influx of women to road bicycle racing and the interest in keeping women in the sport, the NCNCA and Bay Area Women's Cycling decided to work together to survey women racers on what drew them to road racing and what they like most and least about the sport. The thought was that race organizers could then take this information and use it to improve the races and women's attendance at the races.

Introduction

We had responses from 65 women out of a total of about 450 current women racers. Most women who race found out about road racing through family or a friend (51%); most were inspired to start racing by a male (68%).

What keeps women racing? The good exercise (78%), the thrill of racing (77%), and the comraderie/friendship (71%). Only 5% said it was the prize money.

What do women like most about racing? When women's categories all race separately (83%), the race courses (46%), the friendly organizers (37%), the number of races nearby (37%), the Women's Points Series (35%), when the women's category 4 races have mentors (31%), and the length of the races (31%).

What do women like least about racing? When all the women's categories race together and are not picked separately (68%), when the categories race together (42%), and the prize money not being equal to men's (42%).

What would cause women to quit racing eventually? When racing became too much of a time commitment (48%), injuries (42%), and the women's categories racing together too much without being picked separately (31%).

Other comments... Junior girls and masters women should race separately where possible. Women would like to be treated as equal to the men racing with respect to number of races, length of races, prizes, and listing of race results. Some women would like a Women's 5 category again for safety reasons. Some women thought there should be more cycling clinics, possibly making them mandatory for upgrades.

Recommendations for Race Organizers

- *Stop holding races where all the women's categories race together and are not picked separately. This is the #1 preventable thing race promoters can change to keep women coming to the races (and probably draw more women to the races).*
- Create separate races for each category (1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, masters, and juniors) as often as possible; in particular, do not put category 3 women in with category 1s and 2s. If some categories must race together, pick them separately.
- Make prizes equal for men and women in similar categories.
- Keep having mentors in women's category 4 races; increase number of races with mentors if possible.
- Make your race part of the NCNCA Women's Points Series.
- Create an equal number of men's and women's races on each race day (have similar categories race together for men and women, if categories must race together).

- Consider putting on more races in new locations so that more women feel there are races near them.
- Keep doing what you're doing when it comes to the race courses and your friendly organizers.
- Create more women's masters' races and junior girls' races.
- List race results as fully for women as they are listed for men (list all the racers who finished, not just top 6 or 20).
- Make the length of races equal for men and women in similar categories.
- Consider putting on a "model race" which follows the survey's recommendations. Your race could be the go-to race for other race organizers.

Recommendations for Women Racers

- Because women racers tend to get into the sport through a friend or family member, consider introducing a friend or family member to road racing. If each woman convinced one friend to try racing, women's participation at the races would double.
- Consider encouraging your team to put on a "model race" which follows the survey's recommendations. Your team could be the go-to team for other race organizers.