

USA Cycling 2013 LA Summit

Notes by Jeff Poulin

From USAC Annual Report: NY ranks 4th nationwide in total racing licenses behind CA, CO, and TX

Saturday, 2 November

About 52 attendees including USA Cycling staff at USA Cycling headquarters, Col Springs

0800-0900 Steve Johnson, President & CEO: Welcome

- 2013 racing volume is down (total riders). The number one obstacle cited in surveys is “distance to races” with secondary obstacle “race entry fees”
- RaceClean- USAC paid USADA to conduct 264 tests at 46 events costing \$146,500, catching “6-12” potential positives. These are announced directly by USADA following the due process: (<http://www.usada.org/sanctions/>)
- Steve rang a positive note for the new UCI President Brian Cookson, noting that Cookson understands the entire world does not work on the European model
- In particular, Steve reiterated that the UCI will settle rule UCI Rule 1.2.019, which penalizes UCI license holders from racing non-USAC events, in the spring
- Challenges (details later) include getting more events, improving the customer experience, involving more women, protecting against bullying (see “SafeSport” at 11:35), consolidating licenses, and changing event permit fees.

9:00-9:35 Rob Borland, Chief Marketing Office: USA Cycling Strategic Planning

- Rob was hired Spring’13 to build the USAC brand and value to riders
- Rob presented on what needs to be done (build USAC image, build value, build membership, retain riders, build sponsors, etc.)
- At the elite level, the plan is to provide specialist coaches, skills training, wind tunnel testing, better training centers, etc.
- 40% of new license holders do not renew the next year
- There really wasn’t much detail on how or specific actions to accomplish what needs to be done (i.e., if riders don’t renew because races are too far away and the fees are too high, what is USAC doing to help encourage more races and lower fees?)

9:35- 10:45 Gordon Weldon, VP of Membership Services: 2014 Changes- Membership

- Licenses- proposed changes
 - Club and RD licenses remain \$150 (clubs still get one RD license free)
 - Clubs can renew for 2014 starting yesterday
 - Junior and Collegiate licenses are up \$5 to \$35
 - UCI support licenses- \$175
 - International / Pro licenses - \$175

- **USAC is moving to ONE LICENSE to cover all disciplines (no add-ons required), therefore an annual license will now cover road, track, CX, MTB and will increase \$5 to cost \$70 in 2014**
- Gordon stated the license price increase is the first since 2003.
- **Competitive One-day race licenses increase from \$10 to \$15**
- Gran Fondo One-day licenses also increase to \$15 but remain optional (but will provide accident insurance if purchased)
- Non-competitive one-day licenses are \$10 (needed for camps and clinics)
- Event Permits- proposed changes
 - NOTE: USAC asked attendees to not publish the proposed event permit price changes until USAC approves release. The following is a synopsis of the discussion.*
 - Need to simplify the permit fee structure, especially to eliminate the 7% prize list
 - Desire to spread cost more equitably across events (i.e., eliminate the current large jump in permit fee from D to C level if offering a \$2k prize list)
 - **USAC proposes to change to a flat permit fee for all events.**
 - Permits will cover the entire event, even over multiple day events
 - Various discounts will apply for use of licensed Race Directors, encouraging women's cycling, and using the USAC on-line registration system
 - Events that permit before the new rates take effect will pay the 2013 rates
 - A lively discussion ensued....
 - The consensus was the proposals will not be good for small E level races.
- Rebate Programs
 - In 2014, LAs will continue to get \$10/annual license rebate to fund the LAs (in NY, we have about 2,500 licensed riders so NYSBRA gets ~\$25k from USAC)
 - In the future, USAC plans to reduce the \$10/license rebate to LAs and replace it with reimbursement based on increasing racer days, thereby encouraging LAs to promote more races.
 - A lot of concerns were raised over this proposal
 - In addition, RDs that use the USAC online registration will get an annual bonus at the end of the year, starting in 2014 (like a frequent flyer program). This bonus may increase for RDs with higher than a C level license
 - USAC is considering a rebate for BAR (Best All-around Rider) programs, if using the USAC on-line registration system, submitting BAR results to USAC, using the USAC results program, etc.
- Race Director Program
 - USAC wants to move to a "Professional Race Director Model" where everyone putting on a race has an RD license
 - Last month's announcement that all clubs must have a C-level Certified Race Director to permit events in 2014 "did not go over well."
 - Based on the large amount of feedback, this will not take place in 2014. It will take place in 2015.

- Numerous concerns were raised, such as:
 - Most RDs are not “Professional RDs”
 - Many clubs have multiple persons serving as RDs for different events throughout the year but this model only considers having one RD per club

10:55-11:35 Shawn Farrell, Technical Director: 2014 Changes- Technical

- New Officials Assignment Tool (USAC’s version of Chris Constantino’s USAC Official’s DB)
 - USAC will release the new tool soon
 - The tool will appear on the “Permit Event” page on the RD’s and LA officials administrator’s USA Cycling web site tools menu
 - The tool will default to USAC’s guidelines for number of officials, desired rank, etc.; this can be changed
 - Eligible officials will get emails making them aware of the chance to work an event (note: I interpret this as meaning every licensed official in NY will get an email whenever an RD permits an event and advised Shawn that would be too much email)
 - Eligible officials will request to work the event from their USA Cycling web site tools menu
- RD Responsibilities
 - USAC is increasing the role of the RD
 - RD is responsible for course safety, technology needed, staffing levels, etc.
 - The RD is responsible for ensuring there is a method for getting accurate results . This means there is a method for scoring (i.e., keeping track of lapped riders such as with chips or pulling lapped riders or adequate judges) and finish order (i.e., such as with finish line camera or adequate judges) and publishing results (i.e., posting within 15 minutes and submitting results to USAC)
 - In short, the RD is responsible for the overall conduct and quality of the event.
- Assigning Officials
 - Officials’ assigner consults with the RD and assigns Chief Ref (in NY, the official’s assigner assigns the CR if the RD does not request someone by name)
 - In NY, the Official’s assigner is Alan Atwood, the NY representative to the USAC Regional Technical Commission (RTC)
 - The USAC assignment grid will be simplified
 - The USAC assignment grid is based on MINIMUM guidelines and assumes the RD has adequate scoring and/or timing in place (i.e., a results service with camera and computer)
 - Shawn reminded everyone that the USAC assignment grid is a guideline and can be adjusted as needed
 - RTC will no longer be involved in assignments (for example, in the past a NRC/NCC event would have the CR assigned by the National Technical Commission (NTC) and the CJ assigned by the RTC, with the rest of the crew assigned by the LA’s official’s assigner. The RTC is no longer involved.)

- In NY, we use the tool at <http://www.usac-officials.org/>. We will assess the new USAC tool as it develops
- The CR assigns the remaining crew, possibly assisted by the official's assigner.
- Official Licenses
 - New background checks are now required, cost about \$22 every 2 years.
 - Officials will be required to take "Safesport" training on preventing and dealing with athlete abuse
 - License renewals begin 1Dec.
 - Background checks take 1-3 weeks, so don't wait until the last minute!

11:35- 12:20 Jon Whiteman, Risk Protection Manager: Safesport Program

- Safesport is an abuse prevention program that developed as the result of past coach abuse of athletes in various sports
- The US Olympic committee mandated that all national governing bodies (NGBs) have a program to protect athletes
- Right now the plan is to identify risks, create a strategy, and communicate the plan
- NYSBRA will have to ID who needs background checks and have them done by Sep'14
- Persons NYSBRA identifies will need to take training on how to deal with reports of abuse, which will take about 1.5 hrs at no cost

1:45- 2:45 Todd Sowl, Chief Financial and Operating Officer: Insurance Changes and Q&A

- Good news- no major changes in 2014
- As always, Todd highly recommends clubs obtain the optional liability coverage for officers (\$125)
- Optional Bike Insurance is back and includes damage caused by crashing in a race (premiums range from ~\$175-\$500)
- Good discussion on the need to reduce the \$100 moto insurance fee, but no good solutions
- Todd explained the many reasons USAC's insurance is better than "3rd party" insurance for bike races. Reasons include coverage of all the things in bicycle racing that are commonly excluded by other policies.
- The Lexus-Nexus process for driver checks remains. There is no practical replacement for it.

2:45-3:30 Jeff Hansen, Regional Programs Manager: Online Post-Event form

- Jeff gave a demonstration of the on-line post-event paperwork available to Chief Officials
- The benefits are obvious (immediate, paperless submission with less chance for error)
- The CR still needs to mail in the physical one-day license forms and original waivers along with First Reports of Occurrence (accident reports)

3:45-4:30 Kathryn (Katey) Price, Staff Attorney: Increasing Women's Participation

- Open discussion on ideas for increasing women in the sport (which is part of NYSBRA's mission statement)
- Everyone agreed that increasing prize lists has little impact on registration
- One idea was to offer Cat 4a and Cat 4b fields (effectively 4b would be a women's Cat 5) for true beginners
- Offer Clinics:
 - Mother / daughter clinics
 - Women only clinics
 - Note that NYSBRA offers grants (usually \$250) for hosting rider clinics
- Ideas that USAC could use to offer RD's for Event Permit discounts:
 - Providing child care during women's race
 - Offering skills clinics on race day
 - More women show up this year than last year
 - Offering separate women's masters fields
 - Having unique prizes or podium ceremonies.

4:45-4:55 Wrap-up

Sunday, 3November

0830-0930 Kathryn (Katey) Price, Staff Attorney: Crisis and Risk Management

- Risk Management
 - Think Safety!
 - Have adequate signs, marshals, training, plans for what to do if "X" happens
 - Get signed waivers including from volunteers
 - **Save all waivers for 10 years!**
 - Train volunteers on how to marshal, interact with traffic, direct riders, etc
 - For NY, consider handing out the "Wheel Van Driver Instructions" located at: <http://www.nysbra.com/officials-information2/resources/>
 - Lots of discussion on waivers...
 - NY recommends juniors have their parents/guardians sign a bunch of blank waivers and put them in their kit bags so they always have a waiver when they go to a race, even with someone else.
- Crisis Management
 - Follow the plan you put in place
 - Secure the course (have volunteers up-course to warn riders; stop race if necessary)
 - Locate waiver, contact emergency contact
 - Complete First Report of Occurrence and submit to USAC within 24 hrs; sooner if serious injury
 - Have one person (i.e., the RD) handle all media and contact with injured party and their families; one voice

- Never discuss liability (i.e., who might be at fault)

9:35-noon All: Open forum

- How can LAs be notified of late changes to flyers? USAC will look into automating an alert to the LA
- Why raise the one-day license fee from \$10 to \$15?
 - USAC wants racers to buy annual licenses instead of “gaming the system” by racing on one-days
 - USAC wants to sell the one-days on-line and market those riders to buy annual licenses
 - What we really need is a cheap one-day license for true beginners and a not-cheap one-day license for people that regularly race on one-day licenses in lieu of an annual license
 - A lot of discussion in opposition of this proposed change
- Can the USAC Registration system ID one-days ? USAC will look into flagging the one-days in the download file
- Why raise the event permit fees for E races from \$25 to \$xxx?
 - The “7% of prize list” needed to be fixed
 - USAC views the change as revenue neutral
 - 80-90% of races are D and E level so will see a significant event fee increase
 - Suggestions included going to 3 levels of event permits (small, medium, large races) rather than one fee for all
- What news about RaceClean?
 - 9 LAs participated in 2013 (NY was the first to sign up and as a result USADA selected and tested Lou Maltese in Central Park, the Tour of the Catskills at Hunter Mountain, and the Chris Thater Memorial in Binghamton.)
 - The “Hot Line” for tips about suspect riders is an important tool for USADA
 - USAC is fully committed long term to the RaceClean program (so is NYSBRA!)
 - Contracts for 2014 should be mailed to the LAs before year-end
- Is there any plan for USAC to work with for High School MTB Race Leagues?
 - California is losing juniors to non-sanctioned High School MTB races
 - There is no official relationship with the organizers of these leagues and it is difficult to coordinate scholastic programs
 - The hope is HS MTB riders will continue to ride bikes and eventually become road riders
- More about UCI Rule 1.2.019
 - The rule will not be enforced until resolved, which is expected in Feb’14 as previously discussed
 - The US, Canada, and Great Britain all oppose the rule
 - USAC believes that the proposed resolution will be a good one
- What is the process the LA must follow to have people identified for the background checks?
 - It is an on-line process similar to the Lexus-Nexus process for driver license checks
 - USAC recommends the LA identify at least the President and one other
 - USAC will send instructions by 1Dec

- Note that this is the same process currently done by coaches and will be done by officials; people holding multiple roles only do the process once
- If anyone is suspicious that abuse is happening of any kind, immediately contact the police and USAC; do not investigate yourself
- Is there anything USAC can do to ensure RDs get a quality setup, especially from timing companies?
 - USAC is considering having a rating system for camera & results services
 - Suggestion to have USAC license or certify these services
- What is the rationale for USAC moving to a “professional RD model?”
 - Having qualified persons running races reduces risk
 - Having trained RDs reduces mistakes and increases quality / safety of events
 - The RD training to get the licenses helps teach a new RD how to put on a race
 - Every club gets one license free so it doesn’t cost anything
- Is there any effort underway to get Oregon’s bike racing association to become an LA?
 - Oregon has a different and incompatible philosophy than USAC
- What can USAC do to prevent sandbagging?
 - Can USAC calculate estimated upgrade points? Everyone wants this
 - USAC needs more info to do it properly, such as race distance
 - The crowd said we could supply that info
 - USAC will look into it
- What can we do to fix Lexus-Nexis (now called First Advantage)
 - First, DO NOT CHECK THE BOX about more info. You WILL get spammed badly
 - Lexus-Nexis does nearly all such checks in the US, there really is no other realistic option for doing motor vehicle checks
- Will CX Nationals go back to qualifying heats vs points for call-ups?
 - Points seem to be working fine

12:00 Wrap-up

NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE UNTIL USAC APPROVES

- Event Permits- proposed changes (Gordon Wheldon)
 - Need to simplify the event permit fee structure, especially to eliminate the 7% prize list
 - Desire to spread cost more equitably across events (i.e., eliminate the current large jump in permit fee from D to C level if offering a \$2k prize list)
 - Permits will cover the entire event, even over multiple day events
 - Average permit fee was \$168 in 2013... so,
 - **The proposed flat permit fee for all events will be \$125 per event**
 - A \$25 discount will be offered if promoter has a Level C Race Director License (B level or above in 2015)
 - A \$25 discount will be offered for growing women’s racing, criteria TBD

- A \$25 discount will be offered for using USAC's on-line registration (in addition to current discounts)
- You can add up the above discounts, potentially reducing permit fee to \$50
- Note that the nominal NY E-level event using BikeReg will increase from the current \$25 to at least \$75
- Events that permit before the new rates take effect will pay the 2013 rates
- A lively discussion ensued....
- The consensus was this will kill small E level races.