



VELO CLUB VENTA – JUNIOR/YOUTH NEWSLETTER (1)

February 2021

Welcome to the first newsletter from Velo Club Venta aimed specifically at keeping our youth and junior riders informed about upcoming training, racing and social activity at VC Venta.

It has been a difficult twelve months with very little cycle racing or training due to the coronavirus pandemic, however, with a glimmer of light now starting to appear, we thought it might be a good time to introduce a newsletter to keep you informed and updated as racing and training will hopefully be returning in the near future.

One advantage of lockdown has been the huge increase in people cycling and as a club we have several new members, young and old. If you are new to the club or considering racing for the first time we are here to help you unravel some of the mysteries associated with cycle racing.

My ambition is to produce a monthly newsletter specifically for our junior and youth riders with details of upcoming events as well as race reports and maybe even the occasional in-depth interview with some of you lot. I hope you find this useful.

Stuart Gilmour – VC Venta Youth Racing Officer

Name The Newsletter

This is the very first edition of a VCV junior/youth newsletter but it needs a name, so, let's start with a challenge. I want you to come up with a name for the newsletter. Get those creative minds working and if you have a suggestion about what we could call the newsletter please email racing@vcventa.co.uk with your suggestion. The winning suggestion will become the new title for the newsletter and a small prize will be awarded to the winning entry. I look forward to reading your suggestions. Good luck.

Who Is Who At VC Venta

Velo Club Venta is a traditional amateur cycling club and all activities and management of the club are undertaken by volunteers. If you are racing or training for any discipline at VCV, below are some of the people that you may come across.

Toby Leyland is the race team manager with overall responsibility for all things racing, supported by a sub group which includes:

Darren Lyons (time trials), Malcolm Cross (cyclocross), Joanne Clarke (Ladies) and Stuart Gilmour (youth riders).

Richard Sambrook-Smith has this year taken over as head Go-Ride coach and is also a driving force behind the increased interest in mountain bike training and racing. Richard is supported at go-ride sessions by more than ten club coaches trained to at least British Cycling Level 1.

Monica Hampson is the club safeguarding and welfare officer.

Contact details for all of the above can be found on the club website here:

<https://vcventa.co.uk/about-vcv/contact-us/>

What Discipline Can I Ride As A Member Of VCV

Velo Club Venta members race in just about every cycle discipline that you can think of with the exception (probably) of cycle speedway and BMX. The two most popular type of event by the number of participants are probably cyclo-cross (CX) and time trials (TT) closely followed by road and circuit racing (Road), track racing at the velodrome (Track) and also mountain bike racing (MTB). The road, TT and MTB seasons all run in the summer from approximately March to September. CX and indoor track events then generally take over for the winter months. There are some overlaps with some summer track and CX races and some winter TT events but very loosely the cycle year is split in to these two seasons. As winter begins to disappear and hopefully with the end of lockdown not too far away I am going to concentrate a little more this month on road, TT and MTB training and racing.

Kit Matters

The turquoise and lime green VC Venta kit is instantly recognisable on the roads around Winchester and stands out from the pack in bunch races and CX. We have several businesses who support the club through sponsorship.

Ideally, we ask those who race competitively to wear kit that shows the names of our main sponsors on it, however, kit showing the sponsors names is only obligatory for National races. VC Venta also stock plain club kit without sponsors logos and this is acceptable for nearly all youth racing. Ultimately I have never known anybody to be disqualified from a youth race for wearing the wrong kit.

The club are currently in the process of re-designing the race kit and will be switching from Kalas to our new supplier Castelli in the very near future but I am told that if you require unsponsored club kit, we do have good stock level of most items. You can see what type of kit is generally available by visiting the club website here:

<https://vcventa.co.uk/membership/club-kit/>

Email our club kit man Nick Richens with any specific enquiries about club kit at:

clubkit@vcventa.co.uk

Jargon Busting

Cycling like every sport has its own technical language which if you are new to the sport can be a bit confusing. Age categories which of course are important so that you enter the correct race at any event where you want to compete can be a little confusing.

Time Trials – Most time trials in England and Wales are organised by Cycling Time Trials (CTT) and are not British Cycling (BC) events.

Youth riders is a term used for all riders up until the actual day of your 16th birthday. You then become a junior from the day of your 16th birthday up to and including 31st December in the year that you reach the age of 18 years old.

The category that you enter in a TT is determined by your age on the actual day of the race. Many race organisers will split youth riders in to different sub-age groups, for instance a specific category for 14/15 year olds, a category for 12/13 year olds and so on.

Road and Track Events – British Cycling oversee road and track racing and classify riders differently to CTT. The age group is based on your age on 1st January and that age category then applies for the whole year. The 2021 age categories are divided as follows:

Junior for 2021 is the age group for all riders born in 2003 & 2004

Youth A (Under 16) for 2021 is the age group for all riders born in 2005 & 2006

Youth B (Under 14) for 2021 is the age group for all riders born in 2007 & 2008

Youth C (Under 12) for 2021 is the age group for all riders born in 2009 & 2010

Youth D (Under 10) for 2021 is the age group for all riders born in 2011 & 2012

Youth E (Under 8) for 2021 is the age group for all riders born in 2013 onwards

MTB - Age categories are called a slightly different name again for MTB (because nothing is really simple in cycling). In MTB the age categories are determined as follows:

Under 12 any rider up to 12 years old on 31st December 2021 (born in 2009 on)

Juvenile (Under 14) is the age group for all riders born in 2007 & 2008

Youth (Under 16) is the age group for all riders born in 2005 & 2006

Junior (Under 18) is the age group for all riders born in 2003 & 2004

Cyclo-cross - CX is predominantly a winter sport and consequently has a different cut off point to move between age groups and is based on school year groups. Current age groups up to 31st August 2021 are as follows:

Under 12 – Up to 31st August In The Year Of 12th Birthday (current school years 7 & below)

Youth (Under 14) – From 1st September in the year of your 12th birthday to 31st August in the year of 14th birthday (current school years 8 & 9)

Youth (Under 16) – From 1st September of the year of your 14th birthday to 31st August in the year of 16th birthday (current school years 10 & 11)

Junior (Under18) – From 1st September of the year of your 16th birthday to 31st August in the year of 18th birthday (current school years 12 & 13 or 6th form equivalent)

That was simple wasn't it? The way that events are entered on the British Cycling website means that you cannot normally enter the wrong event for your age but if you have any doubts about what age group you should be entering please do ask by emailing the racing@vcventa.co.uk mailbox.

Coaching

Most of our young racers progress from go-ride coaching which the club runs in three six week blocks during the year. Go-ride coaching is theoretically aimed at all riders under 18 but in reality, our oldest riders participating in go-ride are 13-14 years old. British cycling describes go-ride as follows:

“Go-Ride is British Cycling's development programme for young people. The programme provides a fun and safe way to introduce young riders to the world of cycle sport and provides a platform to improve bike handling skills.”

VC Venta hope to run three blocks of go-ride training in 2021. Provisional dates have been set with the first block hopefully beginning in April. Watch this space for more details as lockdown ends and we know what (if any) coaching we can resume.

Leaving go-ride is only the start of your coaching pathway however with most young racers then attending British Cycling Development Centres. VC Venta do not host a BC development centre ourselves. The majority of our riders travel to the purpose built cycle circuit at Odd Downs near Bath. Development centres are generally two hour coaching sessions, more endurance based and focussing on race skills and scenarios. Development centre sessions are also held at Palmer Park in Reading, Lee Valley Velopark and many other locations. All development centre sessions can be booked online via the British Cycling events page and are open to youth A (under 16) and youth B (under 14) riders.

Although I have said that VC Venta do not run development centres, I am provisionally planning a one off development centre style coaching session for Sunday 11th April at South Winchester Park & Ride. This will be a two hour endurance based training session for youth A & youth B riders (although juniors would also be very welcome). This will also include an off the bike session for your parents covering topics like, entering events and locking down gears for those who are new to racing. More details to follow when we know that any covid restrictions will enable us to run this session.

The club when normal activity resumes have club runs every Sunday and various training rides on other days. Part of the plan for 2021 is to introduce youth and junior specific group rides and/or chain gangs. This is a work in progress with the coaching team to see how best this can be delivered safely. More information to follow.

Road Racing In 2021

We do not really know yet what racing is going to be allowed in 2021 but organisers are planning events in the hope that near to normal racing will be allowed.

The National Junior and National Youth Series are a series of races held around the country throughout the year. Entry is open to all, although there is a selection criterion should events be oversubscribed. The first rounds for both the junior and youth series are both to be held in Loughborough. Entry is now open for the junior men and womens races on Saturday 8th May and the youth series then kicks off on Bank Holiday Monday 31st May. Entry details are here:

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/events/details/237287/Loughborough-Cycling-Festival---National-Junior-Series>

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/events/details/237289/Loughborough-Cycling-Festival-incorporating-National-Youth-Series>

The Winchester Criterium sadly has been cancelled this year so will not go ahead in 2021. This was always a great day of racing in the heart of Winchester and a focal point for many of our young racers. It was also the event that decided the South Region Closed Circuit Champion. This year the regional championship will instead be the Southampton Sporterium which is already open for entries. The date of the event is currently showing on the BC events page as Saturday 19th June but it has literally just been re-scheduled for Saturday 4th September 2021. This could be a fantastic day of racing on a fast city centre circuit around central Southampton. The Southampton Criterium will also be one event forming part of a South Region Youth Series in 2021. Enter here:

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/events/details/213921/Southampton-Sporterium---Criterium->

I will include a (provisional) calendar at the end of this newsletter but one other key date for you roadies is a day of youth racing which VC Venta are organising at South Winchester Park & Ride on Sunday 25th April. This will also be a round of the South Series for 2021. Come and support your club by racing on a circuit that will be familiar to many of you. Entries will open on 15th March on the BC events page.

I am hoping that there will be plenty of opportunity to race in 2021 and I know a full season of Wednesday evening races are planned at Portsmouth Mountbatten Stadium but also some weekend and evening racing at Odd Downs, and three further Sunday dates at South Winchester Park & Ride. More details to follow next month.

Time Trials

The end of lockdown #1 saw all sorts of restrictions on cycle racing, however, one discipline that ran nearly as normal were time trials. Time trials are usually organised and run on “open” roads, so roads where you still have to consider and be aware of other traffic. The minimum age for competing in a time trial on an open road is 12 years old although competitors under 12 may compete in events that are held on closed roads or off the public highway (parks, motor racing circuits etc). Last year several VC Venta riders travelled to Goodwood Motor Racing Circuit where regular TT's were held. Events are again planned for Goodwood, this year on a Tuesday evening and running every 2-3 weeks. There is also a weekly series at Castle Combe circuit in Wiltshire. These are a great introduction to time trials for young riders as closed circuits obviously provide a safe traffic free circuit.

VC Venta this year are hosting two open road TT events as well as our own club time trial series during the summer. The first open event that we are hosting is on Sunday 18th April on the HCC283 course which is out near Alresford. Details of the VC Venta event are here for road bike entries:

<https://www.cyclingtimetrials.org.uk/race-details/22841>

and here for TT bike entries:

<https://www.cyclingtimetrials.org.uk/race-details/22479>

We are also as a club promoting a hill climb in September but more about that later in the year.

One other TT event which is really important for youth and junior riders is the National Youth Championship (South Region) which is on Wednesday 2nd June and being held on the P164 course at Lyndhurst. This event is only open to riders who will be under 17 years old on 31st August 2021. Enter here:

<https://www.cyclingtimetrials.org.uk/race-details/22753>

The time trial calendar for the whole year is managed by Cycling Time Trials rather than British Cycling. Their website is here:

<https://www.cyclingtimetrials.org.uk/>

Navigating events can be a confusing process so if you need any help do not hesitate to ask

Cyclo-Cross & MTB

Cyclo-cross is a huge participation discipline at VC Venta not least because of the massive enthusiasm of our head CX coach Malcolm Cross. CX coaching has historically taken place at Peter Symonds College on a Wednesday evening throughout the year. A new venue is potentially being sought but Malcolm is keen to return to some training as soon as lockdown permits. This will potentially be at Farley Mount to begin with but Malcolm will update as soon as we have some guidance on club activity returning.

I did say that CX was primarily a winter discipline, the exception however is “Battle in the Bowl” which always has a huge VC Venta participation and takes place at the stunning Matterley Bowl near Winchester. The date this year for Battle in the Bowl is Sunday 23rd May and you can expect to read a lot more about this in the next few weeks and months. Those early birds amongst you however, the event website is here:

<https://www.trailbreak.co.uk/shop/cxsportive-events/battle-in-the-bowl-super-cx-2021/>

VC Venta are relatively new to the discipline of MTB. MTB coaching now forms a group in our go-ride coaching sessions and there is a strong desire to get more riders involved in the Southern MTB series. The first round is hopefully planned for 4th April in Reading but all details about the series can be found at the event website here:

<https://eventrexuk.com/southernxc/>

Forthcoming Calendar Dates (Provisional)

Sunday 28th March – BC Development Centre, Odd Downs, Bath

Sunday 4th April – Southern XC MTB Race At Checkendon, Reading

Sunday 11th April – VC Venta Development Centre, S Winchester Park & Ride

Sunday 18th April – VC Venta Open TT – Old Alresford

Sunday 18th April – VC Venta Go-Ride (Spring Term) Begins

Sunday 25th April – VC Venta Day of Youth Racing, S Winchester Park & Ride

Tuesday 4th May – Glorious Goodwood Circuit TT, Goodwood Motor Racing Circuit

Saturday 8th May – National Junior Series (Men & Women), Loughborough

Sunday 16th May – VC Venta P&R Crits 1 of 3, S Winchester Park & Ride

Sunday 23rd May – Battle In The Bowl, Matterley Bowl, Winchester

Monday 31st May – National Youth Series, Loughborough

Wednesday 2nd June – National Youth Championship (South) Youth TT, Lyndhurst

Sunday 6th June - VC Venta P&R Crits 2 of 3, S Winchester Park & Ride

Sunday 20th June - VC Venta P&R Crits 3 of 3, S Winchester Park & Ride

Saturday 4th September – Southampton Sporterium Inc. South Region Circuit Champs

Sunday 26th September – VC Venta Hill Climb, Warnford

Please, please be aware once again that all of these calendar dates are provisional and subject to further guidance from BC and CTT to allow these events to go ahead.

Useful Links

Velo Club Venta Website: <https://vcventa.co.uk/about-vcv/>

Velo Club Venta Members Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/VentaRacing>

British Cycling Website (Events): <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/events/home>

CTT (National) Website: <https://www.cyclingtimetrials.org.uk/>

CTT (South District) Website: <http://www.southdc.org.uk/>

Battle In The Bowl: <https://www.trailbreak.co.uk/cx-sportive/battle-in-the-bowl-super-cx/>

Southern MTB Series: <https://eventrexuk.com/southernxc/>

I think that really is just about all for now. There are still so many unknown factors about what racing may be able to go ahead over the coming weeks and months but I think everybody involved in cycling is hopeful that 2021 will see more opportunity to race across all disciplines than we have seen during the past year. I am also really excited to see so many youth and junior members in the club and hope that we can really expand not only the number of people racing and training but also introduce more social rides and activities for our younger members. In the meantime until organised coaching and racing can resume.....Keeeeeep riding.

If there is anything you would like to see or any topics that you would like covered in future editions of the newsletter please email me at: racing@vcventa.co.uk

*****Also, don't forget to send your suggestions for a newsletter name to:
racing@vcventa.co.uk*****