

# Grand Valley Youth Cycling Rider Handbook – 2026



In 2011, GVYC was born out of the desire to provide structure for Mesa County high school teams competing in the Colorado High School Cycling League. Growing from just eight kids and two volunteer coaches in one composite team, GVYC is now one of the largest and most widely recognized youth cycling organizations on the Western Slope of Colorado. Over the years, GVYC has seen tremendous success and we have: initiated a popular middle school program in the spring and fall, provided several girls only skills clinics, hosted a yearly community wide short track and dual slalom race series, earned multiple awards from the Colorado High School Cycling League including Outstanding Partner, Coach of the Year as well as other individual recognitions, and supported our coaches with scholarships for Wilderness First Aid training as well as brought in skills instructors to “train the trainers”.

Grand Valley Youth Cycling continues to grow, evolve, and develop innovative programs and opportunities for Grand Valley Youth and the entire cycling community to come together. We are excited to have you in our community!

Dave Grossman, Executive Director

# 1. Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to give an introduction and set expectations for the Grand Valley Youth Cycling organization and riders.

## 1.1 Mission Statement

The mission of GVYC is to develop an active biking community by providing youth with a safe and fun environment for achieving individual cycling goals, nurturing healthy lifestyles, encouraging community involvement and increasing opportunities for participation

## 1.2 High School Team Philosophy Statement

GVYC is a community: we train together and race together. GVYC is athlete centered but not just on one athlete; the entire program is our focus. Together we bring about the best in others by embracing mountain biking to develop strong bodies, strong minds, and strong character. What makes us different from traditional competitive sports is that we are all-inclusive: *No Tryouts, No Bench, Everybody Rides*, and for our race programs, *Everybody Races*. Additionally, GVYC balances competition with keeping bicycling fun. While in some programs riders compete in races and race strategy is taught, we keep our eyes on the long term goal of a lifetime of cycling, not the immediate podium. Each athlete is cheered and encouraged the same: they can be first in the state or a first time on a bike – we value the effort of all involved.

It's well known that bikes are good for both physical and mental health, therefore our mission to develop lifelong cyclists extends beyond just being good at riding a bike. GVYC aims to foster a safe, respectful, and conscientious appreciation and stewardship for the environment by engaging youth with the outdoors through cycling. We believe the bike can be a powerful tool for a student to learn tenacity, goal setting, and experience the satisfaction of improving a skill or fitness. Through trial and error in training, students are able to transfer these experiences to other areas of their lives.

## 1.3 GVYC Organizational Structure and Team Member Roles

GVYC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

**Volunteer Board:** A volunteer board of directors has oversight of our policies and financial management and ensures we have adequate resources to advance our mission.

Contact: [GVYCBoard@grandvalleymtb.org](mailto:GVYCBoard@grandvalleymtb.org)

**Executive Director:** Our executive director is appointed by the board to manage all administrative functions of GVYC, program development, public relations, sponsorship, fundraising and works with the board to accomplish goals for GVYC. Contact: [director@grandvalleymtb.org](mailto:director@grandvalleymtb.org)

**Head Coach:** Our programs each have a head coach.

**Coaches:** Our programs exist through the hard work, dedication, and skill of our coaches.

**Volunteers:** As an efficient, effective organization, we rely on volunteers to expand our capacities and enhance our capabilities.

## **High School Team Member Roles**

There are many different roles to manage a high school mountain bike team. Below are some of the job titles and volunteer roles:

**Parent/Guardian:** The role of the parent/guardian is one of the most important. Keeping your athlete healthy, feeding him/her nutritious meals, following up with school assignments, helping with transportation and just being supportive is the best help you can support GVMC.

**Head Coach:** The Head Coach plans and coordinates practice sessions. They assist with coach recruitment and coach training. The high school head coach has a Level 3 coach license from the Colorado High School Cycling League.

**Assistant Coach/Ride Leader:** Ride leaders are responsible for guiding and leading a group of eight or fewer student athletes. They follow recommended lesson plans provided by the head coach. Ride leaders communicate regularly with the Head Coach and verbally communicate with parents and student athletes on a regular basis. High school ride Leaders have met the requirements of a Level 2 coach license from the Colorado High School Cycling League.

**Support Rider:** The primary responsibility of a support rider is to support the ride leader, usually acting as a group “sweep” to keep the group together. For the high school season, a support rider has met the requirements to have a Level 1 coach license from the Colorado High School Cycling League.

**Parent Volunteer Coordinator** There is more to being on a mountain bike team than riding bikes. Help is needed to coordinate team dinners on race weekends and the end of season celebration. Planning other team events to keep the team spirit growing such as movie nights, hikes, skiing, community trail building days or other events are important.

**Sponsorship/Fundraiser Coordinator:** We have some incredible sponsors and have yet to tap into potential supporters and fundraising opportunities for the team. The coordinator of this committee helps to find, build and maintain sponsor relations and new fundraising opportunities with assistance from the Executive Director. Student fees primarily cover coach expenses (payroll and training) and additional funds raised help with race day support, end of year celebrations, and equipment needs.

**Media Coordinator** GVMC has a Facebook and Instagram account. This person posts content and manages social media accounts under the supervision of the Executive Director and coaches. This could possibly be a student athlete or social media savvy parent. We also have a team website and a blog. The media coordinator also sends race results to the GJ Sentinel after race weekends

**Equipment Manager** Our equipment manager organizes the team trailer, tent, work stands, A-frames, tools and supplies so that the trailer is functional and ready for race weekends. A volunteer to tow the trailer to race locations is also recruited. GVMC provides a fuel stipend to offset some of the cost of pulling our team trailer.

## **1.4 Sponsors**

GVYC is an independent, non-profit youth cycling organization. We do not receive funding from the school district; we rely on sponsors, grants, fundraising efforts, and rider dues to meet program goals.

Our wonderful sponsors love to hear from our student athletes, coaches, and families. Please consider dropping them a note or stopping into their business for a personal thank you for supporting positive youth development in our community. Current sponsors are listed on the GVYC Website and are featured in a variety of recognition efforts.

If you own a business or work for a company that may be interested in supporting GVYC, please contact [director@grandvalleymtb.org](mailto:director@grandvalleymtb.org)

## **2. Team Structure and Expectations of Team Members**

### **2.1 High School XC Team Structure**

Currently there are three high school teams: Fruita Monument, Grand Junction and Palisade. The Colorado High School Cycling rules state that for another high school team to form there needs to be at least 5 student athletes from that school who intend to compete in the race series. Therefore, we have students riding for these three teams who do not attend classes at these schools. The high school teams ride and train together, as well as share coaching and equipment resources. The individual high school teams go to races together and support each other. Rules and guidelines are set by team coaches and the Colorado High School Cycling League. GVYC and sponsor teachers work in the individual high schools and with respective school administrators to gain recognition and acceptance as a club sport.

### **2.2 Program Expectations: Have Fun, Be Respectful, Work Hard and Be Safe.**

- First and foremost, biking is fun, have fun! Smile, enjoy the world class mountain bike trails that we have here in the valley.
- Treat yourself and others with kindness, respect and empathy.
- Be attentive to your coaches, ride leaders, teammates, parents, other trail users, that sweet buzz of your new hub, tires on dirt, etc.
  - No headphones or speakers at practice.
- Make decisions that are safe and will help you and your teammates grow as riders, people, and community members.
  - For example: crowded parking lots and large groups are not appropriate places to practice your super sweet wheelie skills.
- Participate in scheduled practices.
  - If you can't make it to practice inform your coach directly by 4:00
  - Be prepared and ready to ride at the designated time, at your designated practice location.
    - Hydration/helmet/gloves/shoes/glasses
    - Tools/tubes/pump
    - Proper attire (be ready for hot/cold/wind/rain)
    - Bike in good working order
- **Community Service** Team members are expected to provide a minimum of 4 hours of community service to the team, or the larger Grand Valley Community
- GVYC follows standard biking safety protocols:

- Follow Rules of the Trail:
  - Mountain bikers yield to EVERYONE including uphill bike traffic.
  - GVYC riders are the nicest people on the trail, at all times. Be polite and greet everyone you pass. You are ambassadors for our program.
  - Stay on trails, keep single track single.



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- Follow Rules of the Road:
  - Be aware of your surroundings
  - Ride no more than two abreast
  - Use front and rear lights at dawn, dusk and after dark

## BICYCLE SAFETY / SEGURIDAD DE BICICLETA

*\*RI State Law*

Be predictable. Be visible. Follow the rules of the road.  
*Esté previsible. Esté visible. Sigán las normas de circulación.*



**SHARE THE ROAD.**  
**COMPARTE EL CAMINO.**



Obey all traffic signs and signals.  
*Obedezca todas las señales de tráfico.*  
 Ride in the same direction as the traffic.\*  
*Conduzca siempre en la misma dirección del tráfico.\**



Make eye contact with motorists.  
*Haga contacto visual con los automovilistas.*



Always use hand signals.  
*Siempre use señales de mano.*



Check the road behind you often.  
*Mire el hacia atrás constantemente.*



Do not ride on sidewalks if you are 13 years or older.\*  
*Manténgase fuera de la acera, si usted tiene 13 años o más.\**



Watch out for suddenly opening car doors.  
*Cuidese de puertas de auto que se abran repentinamente.*



Give pedestrians the right of way.\*  
*Dé a los peatones el derecho de paso.\**



Stay in a straight line.  
 Avoid dodging between parked cars.  
*Manténgase en una línea recta.*  
*Evite esquivar entre autos parqueados.*



Use the appropriate lane.  
 Do not stay in a right-turning lane when going straight.  
*Use el carril apropiado. No se quede en el carril de giro a la derecha si quiere seguir de frente.*



Always use lights at night and early morning.  
*Utilice siempre luces en la noche y al amanecer.*



Be careful at intersections.  
 Watch for turning vehicles.  
*Tenga cuidado en la intersecciones.*  
*Vigile para vehículos que giran.*



Wear a helmet. REQUIRED up to 15 years old and smart for EVERYONE.\*  
*Use un casco. REQUERIDO hasta los 15 años y la decisión inteligente para TODOS.\**

## **2.3 High School Mountain Bike Clubs**

GVYC endeavors to support high school mountain bike clubs in Grand Valley high schools. High school clubs are required to have a staff sponsor. This sponsor acts as a club leader to facilitate cycling activities for students at their respective schools. The high school mountain bike clubs are independent of GVYC. GVYC supports the development and growth of the individual school clubs. It is important to be involved in your school-based club to stay connected with your teammates throughout the year, create opportunities for school recognition (newsletters, yearbook, school announcements, etc), plan and attend your clubs activities. Participation in your school based club may be one of the criteria for earning a club letter. Contact your high school activity director to get in touch with the current high school mountain bike club teacher/sponsor.

## **2.4 High School Activity or Club Lettering requirements**

High School riders have the opportunity to earn a high school letter through GVYC. The basic components are regular participation in team events (practices and races), positive character traits such as respect, work ethic, safety, teamwork and a positive attitude, follow and respect GVYC and CO League rules, GPA of 3.0 or above, community service and participation in your school based club. A form is included at the end of the handbook to submit to the head coach for lettering.

## **2.5 Team Communication**

Our primary form of communication between the coach, student athletes and families is the website, however, communication may also be via email, phone, and text messages. GVYC may implement additional communication tools as needed.

## **2.6 Inclusivity And Participation**

The coaches and volunteers of GVYC want the program to be open and available to all eligible participants. However, parents/guardians and students should understand we are an independent provider. GVYC is not run by School District 51, nor are we under the umbrella of CHSSA. There may be cases where we are unable to provide special considerations for students with disabilities. Please talk with your ride leader or the Executive Director if your student needs special accommodations.

## **3. PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION AND FEES**

### **3.1 Financial Requirements**

Program fees pay for: coaching, team registration fees, coach training, fuel to get the team trailer to events, bike tools and supplies, first aid supplies, team camp(s) insurance, end of season celebration and many additional expenses.

Additional variable costs for each rider are: bike maintenance, equipment, team jersey or complete race kit if desired, travel to and lodging at race venues, entry fees to races, and more.

### **3.2 Registration Limits**

Program size may be limited for safety reasons.

Registration will open in advance of the season. Registration is first-come, first-served. A waitlist may be necessary if registration limits are met.

Program size will be based on the number of available, qualified coaches. For safety and ideal group dynamics the rider to coach ratio will be carefully managed.

If you are interested in helping out as a coach, or know someone that may be interested in helping, please contact the Executive Director [director@grandvalleymtb.org](mailto:director@grandvalleymtb.org) or the High School Head Coach.

### 3.3 Fundraising

We are in continuous fundraising mode. In the past we have held fundraisers at community race events (Rides and Vibes, Tour of the Vineyards, Grand Enduro), bike swaps, and hosted a short track series. These are fun events that not only help raise funds for the team but riders also get to hang out with their friends, have a good time and build community with our local cycling partners. If a fundraising opportunity arises, the Executive Director will assess the benefit and contact the team for help.

### 3.4 Scholarships

We recognize that at times the cost to participate in sports can really add up. GVYC strives to decrease the cost for all participants through robust fundraising. Your participation in team fund raising events helps everyone. However, even with those efforts, finances and personal situations may still be a barrier. GVYC manages a Scholarship Fund to assist riders in participating in a variety of ways. Applications for scholarships must be received no later than program registration deadline.

High School racers in the CO League may apply for a scholarship with the CO League for assistance with CO League fees.

## 4. Equipment

### 4.1 Training Session Equipment

**Each rider is expected to have the following at each training session:**

- A good working bike (it does not have to be expensive, just function well)
- Regular bike clothing and equipment
  - Helmet - A modern, certified helmet in good condition must be worn each and every time a rider is on a bike. There are no exceptions. This is true on race days as well. GVYC has helmets available (with notice) to help ensure riders are properly equipped.
  - Close-toed shoes
  - Sunglasses (yellow or clear lens glasses for when the sun has set or in dim lighting/cloudy days).
  - Gloves
- Multi-tool
- Pump
- spare tubes
- Patch kit and/or tire plugs
- Red and white blinkers -at a minimum (lights so you are seen - these don't help you see the road/trail in front of you)

- Headlamp or brighter bike light to help you see the trail/road in front of you
- Fluids (1 water-bottle per hour)
- nutrition

## **4.2 Early season bike check / Bike shop partners**

At the beginning of the high school fall season and at other times during a calendar year, GVYC conducts a bike check with each student to resolve minor mechanical problems and identify any larger safety concerns and communicates those to parents/guardians.

During the season, GVYC has discount arrangements with local bike shops. Information about these discount opportunities is available on the website.

## **4.3 Bike Donations**

GVYC occasionally has bikes donated to the program that may work as a loaner bike or “earn to own” by contributing time to GVYC through different volunteer opportunities. If you have a bike that you would like to donate to GVYC please contact the Executive Director.

Additionally, through an agreement with Gear Junction, outdoor gear, clothing, and bikes can be donated to GVYC by being dropped off at the Gear Junction location on Main Ave in Grand Junction and listed for consignment under the GVYC account. All proceeds from the sales of items under the GVYC account go to Grand Valley Youth Cycling. This helps GVYC financially without the need of having to store, clean, repair, list, and sell donated gear.

Donated items may qualify for tax benefits. Please contact the Executive Director with any questions.

## **5. Team Practices**

Information about program times, meeting and pickup locations, and ride plans are available on the website.

### **5.1 High School Practice locations**

Tuesday: Practice will meet at Wingate Elementary.

Wednesday Practice will either meet at Wingate Elementary or the Gunny Loop parking lot. At the first practice of the season your student will be assessed and grouped accordingly. These groups will alternate meeting at Wingate Elementary and Gunny Loop parking lot. The head coach will publish practice groups and schedules on the website.

Thursday: Practice will meet at Wingate Elementary.

Any changes in practice location will be posted at least 2 hours before practice on the website.

Saturday is usually at a different trail system within reasonable driving distance where we have the opportunity to explore more of our valley’s awesome single track.

### **5.2 Practice absences**

If your rider must miss a practice please communicate directly with your coach via a call or text or with the Executive Director at 970-239-1188.



## 5.3 Practice Days & Times

High School team practice is held on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursdays with optional rides on Saturday (on non-race weekends). Practice starts at 5:30 and ends at 7:30.

## 6. Race Weekends

Race weekends are fun and exciting, but they can also be a bit stressful - whether it's the first mountain bike race you are experiencing, or you are a seasoned racer. It really pays off to prepare in advance, keep travel gear in one place, look through the checklist early, and create a travel routine.

### CO League Race Weekend Registration

You must register for each race with the Colorado League the Monday before race weekend. Many racers register for all four races at the beginning of the season. The CO league has a NO EXCEPTION rule for late registrations; they also DO NOT offer refunds. However, you may be able to transfer your race registration to a future race in that season. Refer to the CO League rule book for details. <https://coloradomtb.org/rider/>.

### Race Weekend Absences

If you are not coming to a race due to illness or other unexpected event, let the head coach know ahead of time.

### Race Weekend Schedule

Here is a sample weekend schedule for Sunday Races:

- 9:00 Saturday morning - pack and prepare
- 12:00 Saturday - approx. departure time (drive times are approx 2-3 hours)
- 3:00 Saturday - pre-ride the course with coaches THIS IS INVALUABLE. Only registered athletes and coaches can pre-ride the course. Parent meeting/social in the team tent area - get to know one another.
- 5:30 Saturday - team meeting to talk about the course, race day updates, announcements
- Early to bed
- Sunday morning - pack-up and get to race site by 8:30 AM.
- 9:00 AM - Mandatory team meeting
- Races Begin!
- Podium at the end of the day around 4PM

Saturday races may require an early release from school on Friday. Plan and prepare accordingly with your teachers. Some students work with their counselors to adjust their schedules so their more difficult courses are scheduled in the morning and time away is easier to manage.

We ask that team members stay through the awards on race days which are usually around 4 PM. Cheer on all GVCY athletes and help pack up the team trailer.

## 6.1 Race Day Timing Countdown

All racers need to arrive at the team tent by 9 AM for the team meeting. The following is the countdown for **your own** start time. A schedule will be posted on the team trailer and assistant coaches will be available to help you if needed. Ultimately, it is YOUR responsibility to stay on schedule and be prepared for your event.

**3 hours before your Race Start Time: Eat a healthy, balanced meal. Here is an example:** If you have the first race of the day you can eat 2 hours before your race time and you might choose something simple like oatmeal, fruit, yogurt, etc.

**2 hours prior to your Race Start Time:**

Be at the race venue fed and hydrated. Take care of your feed-zone water bottles and race nutrition needs. (see below)

**1 h 45 min prior to Race Start: Equipment Check**

Secure race plate to the front of your bike with zip ties. Identify any last-minute bike problems that need attention - chain, tire inflation, brakes. Refer any problems to the team mechanic. Prep water bottle for feed zone and get your race food ready.

**1h 30 min to Race Start: Warm Up**

**30 to 20 minutes prior to Race Start: Meet with Coaches**

**20 minutes to :00 prior to Race Start:**

Be at race start 20 minutes before start time for staging.

**:00 GO!!! Reach your Personal Goal**

## **6.2 Race Category Placement, Scoring, Racing Rules, Etc**

Each high school rider and family is should be familiar with the [Colorado League Rulebook](#). Any requests to petition results or report a concern during a race must go to the team head coach FIRST, and then the coach will communicate with league officials.

Enduro riders should be familiar with rules for the race series or event they are competing in.

## **6.3 Jerseys**

If you plan on racing you must have a team based jersey for races. **GVYC no longer puts in a team order because managing inventory became too difficult. Please order your jersey via our Team Store on [Jakaroo.com](#). This is available via our website at [grandvalleymtb.org/Shop](#).**

## **6.4 Race weekend accommodations**

Race weekend accommodations should be secured as soon as possible once you get the race schedule. **Many families camp and others stay in hotels. Accommodations are the responsibility of each rider unless specifically arranged by GVYC.**

## **6.5 GVYC trailer**

Each race weekend, a parent volunteer is needed to haul the GVYC trailer to the race venue. A truck or SUV with a hitch (2" ball) is needed. Volunteers should keep track of fuel expenses and GVYC will reimburse them.

## **6.6 Race weekend carpooling**

If families are unable to transport their rider to the race, there are many parents with extra seats in their car. It has been a grassroots effort of reaching out to other parents for help or availability to carpool. A chat room on TeamApp is one way parents are asking for and offering rides to race venues or team practices.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

### **7.1 Volunteer Sign -Up**

We have a Parent-Volunteer sign-up link to “Sign-up Genius” on our TeamApp for race weekend support. See a need that is not met? Reach out to one of our amazing parent volunteer coordinators and let them know what you can do!

### **7.2 Race Weekend Volunteers**

Race weekends also have multiple opportunities to support the Colorado League race crew and event - such as directing cars to parking lots, course marshall, help with athlete staging prior to a race, crossing guards, and more! Each race weekend, the CO League provides a very detailed race flier. Within that flier is a link to volunteer sign-ups.

### **7.3 Other Volunteer Opportunities**

There is a place for everyone to plug in. If you aren't sure where you fit, contact the parent volunteer coordinator, Executive Director, head coach, or a board member.

## **GVYC Letter Criteria**

Rider Name		School	
Phone Number		Year in School	
Email		Race Category	

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPATION: Attends 75% of official practices and all regular season races.

GVYC Group Coach Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER: Regularly displays positive character in the form of respect, work ethic, safety, teamwork, and a positive attitude.

GVYC Group Coach Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

RULES: Always follows school, team, and CO League rules.

GVYC Head Coach Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

ACADEMICS: Current semester GPA of 3.0 or higher, with no grades below a C. This section must be completed within 1 week of submitting paperwork.

Current Semester GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Sig.: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Sig.: \_\_\_\_\_

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Course:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Sig.:\_\_\_\_\_

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Completes 4 or more volunteer hours during the current semester (can, but does not have to be through the MTB team)

Hours:\_\_\_\_\_ Administrator Signature:\_\_\_\_\_

Hours:\_\_\_\_\_ Administrator Signature:\_\_\_\_\_

Hours:\_\_\_\_\_ Administrator Signature:\_\_\_\_\_

Hours:\_\_\_\_\_ Administrator Signature:\_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL CLUB: Regularly attend and participate in school mtb club meetings and activities.

Teacher Sponsor Signature:\_\_\_\_\_