



REPORT ON UPGRADE GUIDELINES

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Executive Summary

Hellyer Park uses a unique system for upgrading riders. This report looks at the policies in force at Hellyer, Alkek, and the widely used USCF guidelines. The current standing of riders at Hellyer is reviewed and compared to local road racers and other tracks.

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REPORT ON UPGRADE GUIDELINES

Background

The NCVA has not adjusted its upgrade guidelines in quite some time. One major purpose of upgrade policies is to allow riders to compete at an appropriate level when visiting other tracks, especially for regional and national-level competition. Championship events require riders to reach a certain level in order to be eligible to participate. Therefore, the NCVA needs to keep up with what other tracks are doing. Also, there has been a surge in new racers over the last couple of years, and since the NCVA's mission is to develop new riders, it is our responsibility to monitor their progress through our system, which includes the upgrade system.

This report looks at the policies in force at Hellyer and elsewhere and the available recommendations from ATRA, and the current standing of riders at Hellyer compared to elsewhere.

Sources

This report was prepared by Brian Krause based on e-mail exchanges with ATRA President Kathy Volski of the Alkek Velodrome, our neighbors Candi and Mike Murray at Alpenrose, and Casey Kerrigan of the NCNCA, and Hellyer Park results from the last three years. Information from other tracks' websites was also included.

Policies at Hellyer and Elsewhere

There are three different policies considered here:

- ⇒ Hellyer's current policy.
- ⇒ The ATRA guidelines, which are used only at Alkek.
- ⇒ The most popular policy is the USCF variant of the ATRA guidelines, used by several tracks (Southern California, Colorado Springs, Blaine, Frisco, Kenosha). This is what's printed in the USCF rulebook, and reproduced on several track websites.

As far as I can tell, there is no other policy used at more than one other track. Alpenrose bases upgrades on the discretion of the track manager. Trexlertown has its own system based on performance in individual races, not omniums. Northbrook and Kissena send riders to nearby Kenosha and Trexlertown if they aspire to compete elsewhere.

CATEGORY 5

Hellyer Park stands out for having Category 5 as a racing category. In fact, on Wednesday nights, it is sometimes the largest field. Nearly every other track grants Category 4 standing to a rider who completes a safety class similar in duration, and presumably content, to three of our Saturday morning sessions. Category 5 riders at Hellyer Park would be considered Category 4 riders at almost every other track; riders who place in races against beginners are allowed to count those results as they upgrade to Category 3.

UPGRADE POINT AND RACE DAY REQUIREMENTS

Of the tracks that use omnium-based upgrade point schemes, almost all use the USCF variant of the ATRA guidelines. The only difference is that under the USCF scheme, upgrade points are awarded five places deep, 5-4-3-2-1, while under the ATRA scheme, used only at Alkek, upgrade points are awarded four places deep, 5-3-2-1. Also, Category 4 riders at Hellyer and Alkek earn one upgrade point for every five race appearances, but this is not part of the USCF rules.

Hellyer uses the same four-deep scheme as Alkek, but the upgrade points and race day totals differ. Hellyer requires 10 race days in a category, but the other two schemes require only five.

Hellyer riders need only 15 points to upgrade from Category 4 to Category 3, compared to 20 points in the Alkek or USCF schemes. This is five points easier than upgrading at Alkek. Since more points are available in each omnium under the USCF scheme, this is proportionally about the same.

The point totals are the same for moving from Category 3 to Category 2, but there are fewer points available each night at Hellyer and Alkek.

Guideline	Omnium points for regular/championship	Upgrade points (and race days) required			
		5 ⇒ 4	4 ⇒ 3	3 ⇒ 2	2 ⇒ 1
Hellyer	5-3-2-1/7-5-3-2-1	0 (5)	15 (10)	20 (10)	25 (10)
ATRA (Alkek)	5-3-2-1/7-5-3-2-1	N/A	20 (5)	20 (5)	30 (5)
USCF	5-4-3-2-1	N/A	20 (5)	20 (5)	30 (5)

FIELD SIZES

Hellyer’s minimum field size requirements are also unique, as shown in the table below.

Guideline	Minimum field size for upgrade			
	5 ⇒ 4	4 ⇒ 3	3 ⇒ 2	2 ⇒ 1
Hellyer	8	10	13	18
Alkek	N/A	10	10	20
USCF	N/A	10	10	20

RACING OPPORTUNITIES

Since most racing at Hellyer takes place under an A/B/C system, and B races generally are only used for 4 ⇒ 3 upgrades, riders aiming to upgrade to Category 2 have to win A races against Hellyer’s top riders to earn points.

Since Friday night racing attracts Category 3 riders to the B group, not all Friday night B omniums result in upgrade points being awarded to Category 4 racers.

No other track seems to offer racing for all categories two nights a week throughout the season. It is especially unusual for beginners and Pro/1 racers to have two nights a week for racing. Women and masters can often choose from among many possibilities. Sometimes, riders can race up. For

example, Colorado Springs has midweek Category 4 races, but Category 4 riders are welcome to race in the Category 3/4 group on Friday nights, too.

UPGRADE COMMITTEES

Hellyer Park seems to be the only track with an upgrade committee of five members. At the other extreme, Alpenrose has a single coordinator. Kathy Volski at Alkek says that she makes upgrade determinations almost exclusively according to point totals, though there is a committee of four members; Candi Murray at Alpenrose says she goes by feel, upgrading riders after they score successive wins, for example.

Rider Standing at Hellyer and Elsewhere

LICENSED RIDERS

The table below shows the license categories for track racers at Hellyer. It includes everybody who scored at least one omnium point from 2001 through 2003 on Wednesdays or Fridays, with their license category taken from the USCF database in fall 2003. Road licenses for Northern California at the end of 2003 and track licenses for Alpenrose at the end of 2003 are also given.

Percentages are given, showing how many riders are at or below each category where it could be determined. (The percentages in parentheses indicate percentage of men and women.)

Category	Hellyer 2001–2003				Northern California road 2003				Alpenrose 2003	
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Overall	
Pro			4	100%						
1	1	100%	9	98%	22	100%	68	100%	67	100%
2	1	95%	26	92%	48	94%	303	97%		
3	6	90%	47	76%	99	82%	558	84%	35	56%
4	12	60%	32	48%	224	57%	601	59%	49	32%
5			47	28%			732	32%		
Unknown	11		96							
Total	31	(11%)	261	(89%)	393	(15%)	2262	(85%)	151	

The USCF database includes other track riders with categories higher than 5 who do not appear in the table above. Among men, there are 13 such Category 1 riders, 60 Category 2 riders, 64 Category 3 riders, and 464 Category 4 riders, some of whom may have Category 4 standing from before there was Category 5.

The upgrade committee at Hellyer doesn't keep track of upgrades, but statistics are available for the other two groups for 2003.

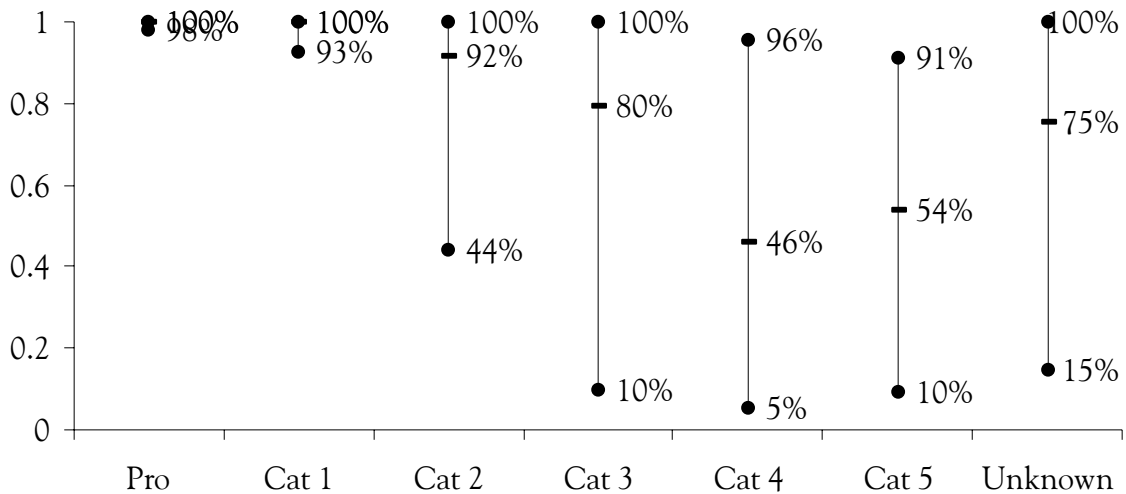
	NCNCA road upgrades 2003	Alpenrose track upgrades 2003
3 ⇒ 2	35	5
4 ⇒ 3	127	15
5 ⇒ 4	241	
Downgrades	5	

The NCNCA has recently announced changes in how upgrade points are awarded in Category 3 races to make the number of 3 ⇒ 2 upgrades issued in 2004 about half the number of 4 ⇒ 3 upgrades.

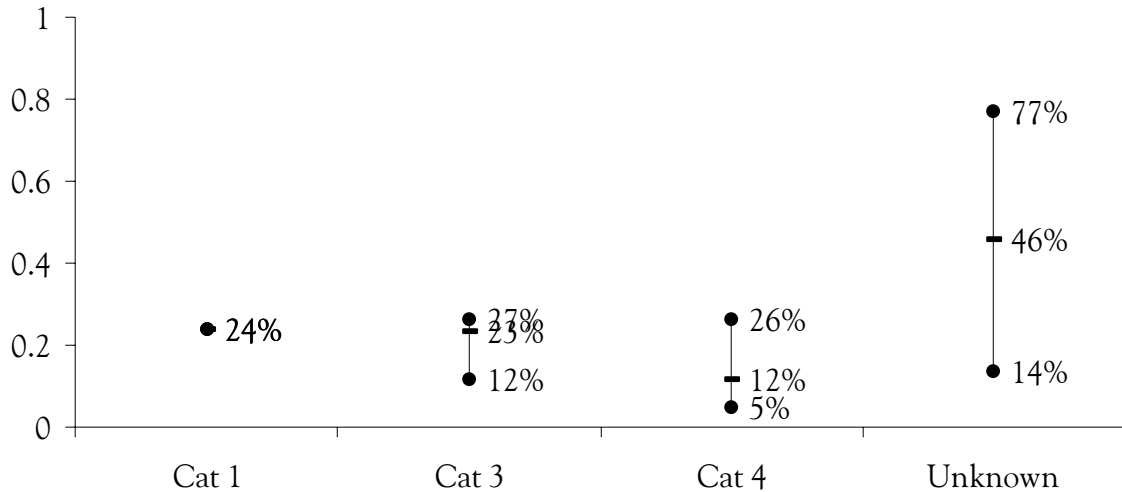
LICENSE CATEGORIES VS. RECENT PERFORMANCE

The charts below represent all riders who placed at least three times in the last three years. Their best performance in their most recent three races was represented as a percentile. That is, a rider who won the A's is at the 100th percentile. A rider who won the B's, assuming equal field sizes, would be at the 67th percentile, and a rider who won the C's, assuming equal field sizes, would be at the 33rd percentile. Actual turnout numbers were used to calculate the percentiles. The chart shows the range of best-of-three performances, and marks the median of best-of-three performances.

The chart below shows the performance of **men** at Hellyer related to license category.



The chart below shows the performance of **women** compared to license category. Note that no Category 2 women have scored points more than three times at Hellyer in the last three years.



Recommendations from Terry Shaw

1. Eliminate Category 5 as a racing category, but keep careful track of Saturday morning class attendance, since this will become the new upgrade path from Category 5 to Category 4.
2. In addition to the minimum field sizes set by adopting standards, establish the following **maximum** field sizes for the sake of safety:

Category 4 (C)	Category 3 (B)	Category 1/2/Pro (A)
15	20	36

Messages from Kathy Volski

INITIAL MESSAGE

Brian:

There is a standard, cause I wrote it. We adopted the guidelines below - oh I would say 5 - 6 years ago. (Yes ATRA has been around that long!). I do know that some tracks have added their own style - for example I think Northbrook has an unsportsmanlike clause. But for the most part, this is the foundation of the program.

I have found that having a point system is essential in removing any thoughts of favoritism and what I call "social upgrading". Social upgrading is upgrading a rider just because he wants to race with his friends and he thinks he is at a particular level. This generally happens between Cat. 3 and Cat. 2 - mostly with Masters.

Points take away the, "Kathy won't upgrade me because she doesn't like me" situation. I just tell a rider how many points they need to earn and put the responsibility back onto the rider. I am pretty aggressive when it comes to upgrading - when you have the points - you move up!

The other issue we deal with is the strong road rider who doesn't race the track all that often. Upgrading on the track deals both with strength (winning points) and experience (number of races). The experience side is just as important as the strength especially as you move up the scale.

One of the reasons why I proposed a standard scale is that everyone seemed to be doing something different. Ideally, a Cat. 3 at Hellyer should be the same as a Cat. 3 rider here at Alkek. How some riders from Mississippi were upgrading to Cat. 2's on the track was beyond me. (Again social upgrading).

It is not my intention to keep someone racing "down" a category. It is my intention through the upgrading system, to ensure safe racing - knowing that riders have the skills to compete at a particular level.

A word about juniors and women. They are tough - especially women. We have enough junior's here that making a 10 person field is not an issue. Our juniors often race their Sr. Categories as well and earn upgrade points via senior racing. Women on the other hand is another problem. I will upgrade women "outside of points" as I call it because there are so few women.

Cat. 1-3 Women race with the Masters and Cat. 4 Women race with the juniors. We are just starting this, this year, so we will see how it works. I look how the women race; their skill level; and their experience on the road - again it is all based on a safety concern. Can a Cat. 3 women handle herself with the guys....

I think it is important to have an upgrade committee who makes decisions on requests for upgrade when a person doesn't have enough points. That doesn't happen too often here, because people know that I am pretty strict on the points. But there are occasions where people request an upgrade - most of the time so that they can compete at nationals or lately the World Cup Qualifiers. My committee is made up of myself; my Official of the Year; and my Rider of the Year. I will say that rarely (if ever) have we disagreed.

I have never downgraded someone, but the rules are there just in case.

Another important aspect to upgrading is for the tracks to talk to each other. If you have a rider who tells you that he/she has been racing at Alkek - or where ever - drop a quick email and ask. We had one guy recently that wanted to upgrade to a Cat. 3 because he was a great kilo rider and wanted to make the Olympic team. To do so he needed to ride the World Cup qualifiers. He told another track that he raced at Alkek. When I looked into my database (we have to keep pretty strict records of attendance for the city), I showed him coming to the track only once during a public riding session. They denied his request pointing out that he had plenty of time to do 5 races here and be able to get the upgrade by the Frisco WCQ. We'll see.....

Well, I hoped this helped. Let me know if you have and other questions or concerns.

Kathy Volski
Alkek Velodrome Manager
281-578-0693

Upgrading The Alkek Velodrome upgrades cyclists on the track only. The upgrading procedure is as follows:

Cat. 5 to Cat. 4 Class graduate
Cat. 4 to Cat. 3 5 race days and 20 points
Cat. 3 to Cat. 2 5 race days and 20 points
Cat. 2 to Cat. 1 5 race days and 30 points

Additional Requirements:

Ten person field minimum for Cat. 3-5 and 20 person field minimum for upgrade to Cat. 1

Upgrade points for national championships, Cat. A or B track race will be: 7,5,3,2,1 for each event. For all other events, upgrade points are 5,3,2,1 and are based on an omnium.

Youth races do not count towards upgrading.

All upgrading points and number of times raced will be carried over to the next year.

Riders can earn one point for every five times raced.

A rider can only upgrade one category per season.

Automatic upgrades: The top 4 Cat. 4's in the Rider of the Year standings will be upgraded to a Cat. 3; the top 3 Cat. 3 riders will automatically upgrade to a Cat. 2; and the winner of the Cat. 1-2 Rider of the Year will automatically upgrade to a Cat. 1.

Riders may submit a request for upgrading which will be reviewed by the Upgrade Committee. The Upgrade Committee consists of Kathy Volski, Alkek Velodrome Manager; Dean Shafer, Official; Richard Lamb, Cat. 1 Rider.

In the interest of safety, the Alkek Velodrome reserves the right to downgrade anyone who does not have the bike handling skills for their particular category. A rider may be downgraded for the following reasons: unsafe riding; lack of ability to compete in current category; or lack of placing within current category.

FURTHER CLARIFICATION

Thanks for getting back to me so quickly. Do you mind if I share this publicly on the Hellyer mailing list?

Not at all...

Can you account for the differences between what you have below and what's printed in the USCF rulebook? I just realized they're different. (Which is newer? Why the difference?) The USCF rulebook:

I didn't realize they made a change. Nobody tells me anything! :) Sure wish they would have touched base with me though, just so everyone could be on the same page. Maybe I am expecting too much - I'm just the ATRA president after all. I would guess that the USCF rulebook is newer. Like you said, it looks like the main difference is the points, for championships. Not sure why the difference but I'm not bothered by it.

Also, it doesn't say anything about automatic upgrades or ROTY points.

That's something I do at my track.

It was suggested at the board meeting that there must be more to the ATRA guidelines than what you sent below. For example, people seem to believe that there is a rule somewhere that says a Cat 3 rider needs to race at another track in order to get a Cat 2 upgrade. Could you confirm that the guidelines below are the complete word from ATRA on the subject? (They'll believe you more than they'll believe me.)

Hmmmm, seems to me we did talk about that. Although, I don't have it written (it probably should be), that is one thing that I look at when upgrading someone from a Cat. 3 to a Cat. 2. The reality of the situation is that is always the case because someone who is at that level will have ridden Frisco or a Nationals - so they would have ridden at another velodrome.

I did some quick research and found that the "guidelines" were approved at the ATRA meeting in 1998. I can not find an exact copy in my files here - I may have some at home - needless to say I would go with the USCF Rulebook to start and add the Cat. 3 points shall come from at least two velodromes.

If we get rid of Cat 5, we're also going to have an interesting situation that puts what was most of our B group back at the bottom, racing against the newcomers who will no longer have their own races. As a B rider, I'm not very objective about how to solve this...

Why get rid of Cat. 5's? I would say; Cat A's are Sr. 2's (You would have to deal with someone being a Cat. 1 on a case by case basis); Cat. B's are Cat. 3's; Cat. C's are Cat. 4's. Anyone who has never ridden/raced on a track is a Cat. 5. Since it only takes a class (or clinic, the rules don't say how long the class has to be), people move quickly from 5 to 4. What do you think?

Seems to me, I need to put upgrading on the ATRA schedule again! Thanks for the heads up on the USCF rulebook. Oh, the other thing that is VERY important - have your guidelines in writing before you do ANYTHING!.

Kathy Volski
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