



# AGE GROUP ROAD NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

## **11 March 2022 - Update for Age Group Road National Championships**

Following on from the update on 23 February, this correspondence is to update you on the planning for the 2022 Age Group Road National Championships.

This update, while being communicated by Cycling New Zealand is made with the full support of RTX Council and our host club, Hokitika Cycling Club.

As indicated earlier, the event will not be run while under RED Settings. The overarching reason for this is that we believe we will not be meeting our duty of care of all our stakeholders and within our PCBU responsibilities. For the event to go ahead as planned we would need to be ORANGE settings (based on the current framework guidelines).

To give the best chance for this event to go ahead, we will make the final decision on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 – approx. one month out. If there is confidence/guarantee from the government that the country will be in Orange prior to the event then it is the intent the event will go ahead. There are always unknowns that could change this decision but this is the intent.

If the event does not go ahead as advertised in April, it is the intent to postpone the event to later in the year. This will be confirmed on the 28<sup>th</sup> March but this is likely to be at the end of the year (October/November).

### **Important note for U17 and U19 riders**

We recognise the significance of pinnacle events like the Road Nationals for all our riders, but in particular those in the U17 and U19 age groups. In the past two years 80% of schools sport has disappeared from the calendar and there is wide understanding of the impact that this period has had on our younger members (including their education and other sports).

We acknowledge that events such as Road Nationals for these two age groups in this period provides a critical development experience and for the U19's exposure to UCI level racing and to support upcoming international campaigns and selections.

As such, we are working hard to confirm a racing opportunity for these two age groups (U19 and U17, Male and Female) which will include the Championship Road Races on the advertised weekend (23/24 April) if the main event does not go ahead. This is likely to take place at another South Island venue (more on this below) to minimise disruption to travel and logistically planning for those who had been planning on attending the Hokitika event. We are currently finalising the details so want to have these confirmed prior to announcing but we wanted to acknowledge that this is a particular challenging time for all and the pivotal development opportunities that these formative years in cycling provide. Details for this racing opportunity will be confirmed and announced on or before the 28<sup>th</sup> March.

## **In Summary:**

- **The event will not go ahead unless the country is in ORANGE**
- **This decision will be made on 28 March 2022**
- **The event will be postponed not cancelled.**
- **If the event is postponed, a separate race will be organised for U17 and U19 on the April date.**

Below are some likely FAQ's that you may have following this update.

### **Why do you need it to be in Orange?**

An event of this size and scale with a large amount of externally contracted essential services required to make this event safe and fair make it difficult for us to guarantee while we are all operating in the environment created by RED Settings.

At Red, we need to take action to protect our vulnerable communities and our health system from COVID-19. This environment also has significant wide spread community cases with hundreds of thousands of NZ'ers required to isolate which is putting pressure on a number of sectors and services. Bringing 600 riders and their supporters to a small town during this time and placing pressure on the existing services is not responsible. There is also significant concern that the critical services we need to deliver a safe and fair event may not be available due to these restrictions.

### **What needs to happen for the event to go ahead?**

We need to have confidence/guarantee that the risk to the country has reduced and the pressure on our health system, critical services and the community has also reduced. By being in ORANGE this provides us with this confidence.

### **Why don't you decide now so we just know?**

This was an option, but we, along with many of you are passionate and committed to making this work if we can. From previous planning, one month prior is the latest we can make the final decision so let's give it a go! We have indicated our timelines but you are able to make a decision at any time.

### **Why can't you just run the event in RED and use 'bubbles'**

Creating defined groups of less than 100 are one part of the much wider Covid Protection Framework requirements. However, meeting the requirements and the intent of the guidelines are also one part of responsible event management. There is also significant reliance on critical services that are already under a great deal of pressure.

We recognise that the event is still 6 weeks away and that there is likely to be some change in the Covid-19 response and the flow on impact to the community but we cannot guarantee that.

### **Why can't every one take a RAT test and only attend if they are negative?**

As above, it is a much broader decision that ensuring that those attending the event do not have Covid at the time. While there are still concerns that some of our stakeholders may contract Covid-19 while at the event and we know the physical and isolating impact this will have, we can put plans in place to reduce this risk. What we cannot plan for is for critical services that become unavailable at any time and for essential community services to be under pressure for the expected riders and supporters.

### **Why is the postponement date in October/November?**

Looking at a postponement date within the next month does not give this the best chance to succeed as we will be entering more wintery conditions and the likelihood of continued disruptions with Covid-19 and the Covid Protection Framework. This is also taking on board the significant feedback following the last time this event was required to postpone that October/November was a preferred option (as opposed to July).

### **I have already entered – can I get a refund if it doesn't go ahead and I can't do the postponement event?**

At the time of the next update with the final decision, we will notify all those who have already entered on their options. This will include a full refund, a transfer to the postponement date or for U17 and U19 a transfer to the new event in April.

### **Why isn't the 'new' race for U17 and U19 going to be in Hokitika?**

Together with our host club, we are fully committed to the postponement date later in the year and wanted to acknowledge the enormous amount of work that goes into these events. To ask them to do this effectively twice is not something we want to do. In addition, some of the same reasons as above, around the requirement to bring in a number of external contractors and infrastructure to deliver a safe and fair event makes this a cost prohibitive exercise along with the concerns around the critical services being available. The club we are working with has put forward a 'turn-key' solution, using an existing and tried course, their own STMS personnel and equipment, timing etc. As this is all provided by the club this enables them to 'scale up and down' at short notice and also offers more of a financially viable outcome and minimises the reliance on external contractors.

### **Why can't you do U15 or Masters at this new event?**

While we acknowledge that this is a pinnacle event for all our riders, simply moving the entire event to another venue just moves the issues above that have resulted in the event being postponed. To give the proposed event the best chance to succeed we need to be able to limit the size and scale of the event as this will be going ahead in RED settings.

This will keep numbers down to a manageable size and also assist with us being able to deliver the event within the new club's own infrastructure and resources (and the venue availability).

### **Why are you only going to offer a road race? What about the TT?**

While we value and recognise the status of the Time Trial, to give this new event the best chance to succeed within the time frames and constraints it was decided to concentrate on being able to deliver a road race. It is intended that the U17 and U19 Time Trial Championship race will still be offered at the postponed date.

### **Can U15 and U17 still race in October if this is our champs?**

Yes! We would love to see you back racing in October! It would be proposed that the U17 and U19 Time trial championship is still awarded and a non-championship road race will also be scheduled.

#### **In summary:**

**We appreciate and acknowledge the wide support we have had from the cycling community over the past 2 years with the impact of Covid-19 impacting all areas of our life including the way we take part in sport. From volunteer clubs to paid event staff, the challenges are the same. We are all in this sport for the love of cycling and seeing our members achieve their goals at races is one of the highlights of what we do and why we do it. To have these opportunities taken away from us all is incredibly disappointing and we do acknowledge this. It has however been disappointing to also be exposed to a minority in this sport who feel an incredible sense of self entitlement and are placing unrelenting pressure (and in some cases aggressive communication) when decisions are made that they do not agree with. We are not asking you to agree with all the decisions that are made but we do ask that you respect the process and that any communication is professional and not aggressively targeted.**

**We wanted to end this update by thanking all those who have continued to support our organisations and sport. In particular, the Hokitika Cycling Club who have been behind our planning from the start and are committed and excited to bring you a celebration of cycling in Hokitika, whether that is in April or at the end of the year.**

#### **Key Upcoming Timelines:**

**28 March 2022** - Final decision on the 'as scheduled' Age Group Road National Championships – including if applicable, postponement date, refund and transfer options and confirmation on any U17 and U19 racing opportunity.