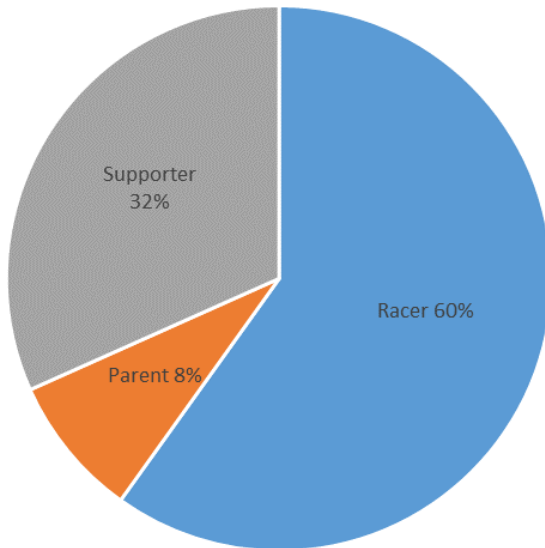


## National MTB Series 2017 Survey - Results

The survey was run online through SurveyMonkey and responses collected between 26 May and 3 June 2016.

### Who completed the survey?



344 individuals completed the survey. Of those, 60% race XC or DH, 8% are parents who give up their time for bike racing, and 32% aren't actively involved but wanted to give feedback.

64% of all respondents were either XC racers, parents of XC racers, or supporters of XC. There is an opportunity to increase engagement with DH racers in future.

Of those who identified as racers, 22% have never raced a national series event. Despite never having raced a national series event, their level of engagement is high enough that they elected to complete the survey, which suggests there is a level of interest in such events that has the potential to

be converted to participation. It is likely that these people will be watching our progress carefully over the coming months and that this is a prime opportunity to recruit them to national level racing.

### What matters most?

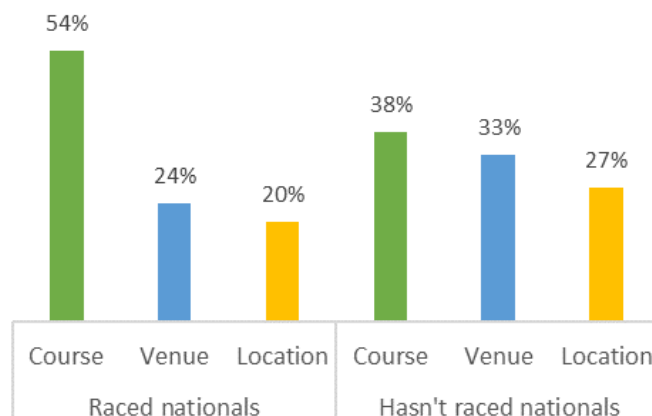
The survey asked respondents to rank three elements in order of importance. The elements were:

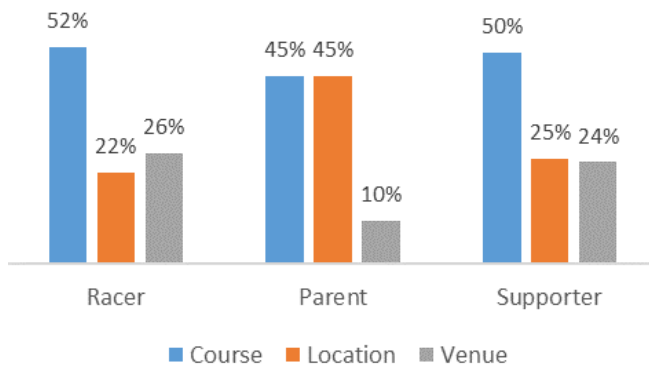
Course: racing on a technical course that is similar to what you would expect at a World Cup.

Venue: having a race village with finish gantry and cool vibe.

Location: having the race located near a main travel hub or airport.

More than half of experienced national racers rank the course as the most important element of the three. Those who haven't raced a national series event rank the three elements more closely together, with course and venue highest and closest. This suggests that these racers are attracted to a more holistic experience. The atmosphere of the race village and race course are both critical elements to attracting these people.





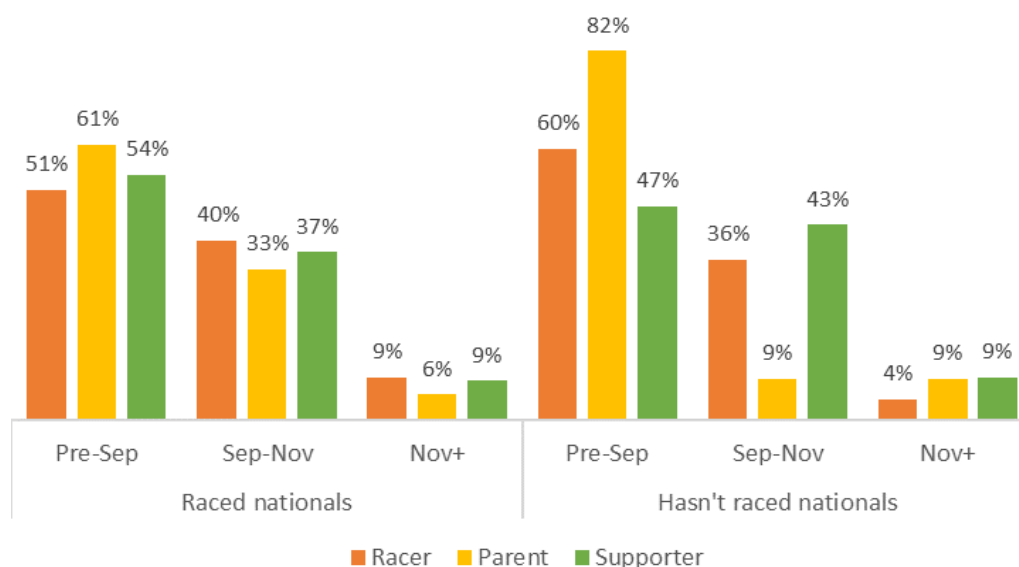
Of the three elements surveyed, parents have a unique view of what is important. While they agree the course is the most important element to a race, they rank the proximity to a main travel hub (accessibility) equal to the course, and are least concerned with the venue and atmosphere. This suggests that a key way we can support our juniors is to ensure the location is given sufficient consideration. The rest of the responses do support this with almost even ranking of venue and location.

### The sooner the better...

Respondents were asked when they preferred to start planning for their national series races. They were given three options: before September, from September to November, and after November.

The results tell us that people prefer time to plan. November is too late for over 90% of respondents and over half would prefer to know dates and venues before September. Parents in particular, with nearly 70% preferring the earliest option, prefer time to plan and organise. Comments from respondents provide a number of reasons for preferring early information including booking of travel and accommodation, arranging leave from work, making family plans, scheduling training accordingly and organising at club level.

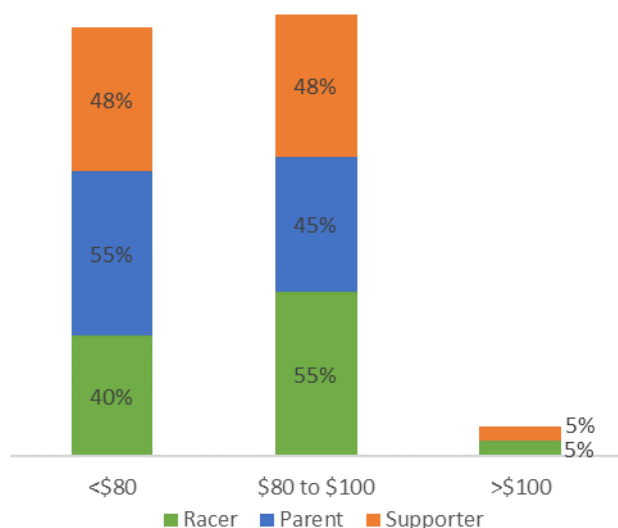
Among those who have never raced a national series event, those in supporting roles are slightly less concerned about early information, but racers and parents have an even stronger preference for information before September. In order to make national series races attractive to new-comers it is even more important to release information before September.



## Show me the money!

Mountain bike racers will part with sometimes eye-watering amounts of money where their equipment is concerned. The flip-side of this is that events must deliver considerable value for money. Race opportunities abound all over the country and national series events are run during the same summer period when many other events are on. The survey reveals some key things racers expect of a national series event. When asked about what they are prepared to pay for a well organised, high quality national series event with prize money on offer, they are prepared to pay for it, within reason.

### XC Entry Fees



Raising XC entry fees over \$100 should be avoided. Only 5% of respondents are prepared to pay this much, and nearly half of them are supporters, not racers. There are no parents prepared to pay \$100 entry fees and the preference is for under \$80.

A slim majority is prepared to pay between \$80 and \$100, but with nearly half preferring entry fees under \$80 there would be significant risk in exceeding this by much.

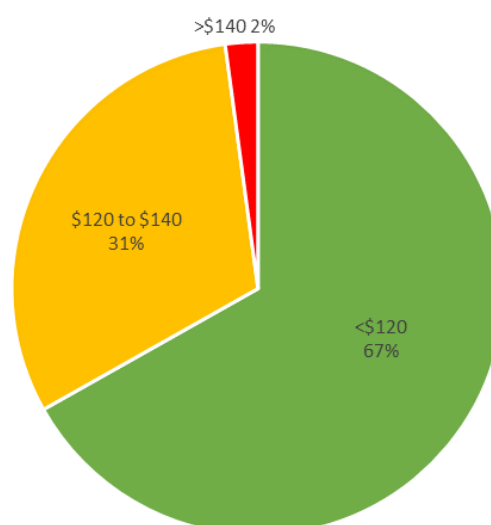
An interesting difference is that racers who have not raced in a national series event before are the most prepared to pay in the

\$80-\$100 range (61%), though there is also a large proportion (30%) who prefer under \$80. It is also important to consider that this group values a different experience than existing racers and it is likely they factor this in to their responses, especially when considering the entry fees of large, professionally run events that they are likely to have experienced. This does suggest that if the quality and experience of events improves there could be justification in increasing entry fees, but that immediate increases might scare away existing racers.

### DH Entry Fees

There were only 4 respondents prepared to pay more than \$140 for DH events. All 4 are national series racers. Over two thirds of all respondents think they should pay entry fees less than \$120.

Based on survey responses, there is high risk in increasing entry fees much above \$120. It is recommended that reasons for the higher cost of DH racing are clear, and any increase in 2017 be explained in terms of the benefits to the racers.



## Preferred Race Locations

A cross section of locations that have hosted national series events recently and in the past were provided for respondents to select from, and a free-text field was provided for suggested alternative locations. Outcomes by region and discipline are below.

The tables to the right show the cumulative score for each location based on each being ranked from most preferred (1) to least preferred (4 or 5), so lower scores are most preferred. Note that not all respondents ranked both disciplines and some only ranked those in the North or South Island. Also included in analysis of the percentage of outright #1 ranking. While not shown visually, there is some discussion of these results in the commentary, where relevant.

### North Island XC Locations

Rotorua is strongly preferred based on both average ranking and outright distribution of #1 rankings. Wellington is a strong second preference. Hawkes Bay and Te Miro have reasonable support based on average ranking but few top rankings, meaning few people would race their as a first option.

Rotorua	310
Wellington	511
Hawkes Bay	605
Te Miro	619
Manawatu	727

There is little support for the Manawatu as a race location.

Racers who have never raced a national series event show strong support for Rotorua. This is consistent with then general trend, and given the number of events that take place there, is likely that they have participated in other events and would prefer to return there than risk somewhere new. This does present a challenge in recruiting new racers, but if their first national series event is a positive experience it is likely to open the door to other locations.

### South Island XC Locations

Based on average rankings, Christchurch is preferred, but both Nelson and Wanaka received more #1 rankings (non-national series racers show the highest levels of support for these locations, national series racers score all three within five points of each other).

Christchurch	431
Wanaka/Queenstown	439
Nelson	440
Dunedin	626

Dunedin received little support regardless of respondent or racer type.

### North Island DH Locations

There is a very clear preference for Rotorua. There are similar levels of support on average for Hawkes Bay, Auckland and Levin. Levin has the highest #1 ranking rate of the three, at 14% among racers, although the lowest average score of the three.

Rotorua	219
Hawkes Bay	417
Auckland	441
Levin	464

### South Island DH Locations

The strongest support in the South Island is for Wanaka/Queenstown. Christchurch and Nelson also both have reasonable support that stronger based on average rankings than outright #1 ranking, meaning the strength of their support comes from the accumulation of lesser rankings rather than over all preference.

Wanaka/Queenstown	312
Christchurch	402
Nelson	416
Dunedin	492

## **Additional Locations**

Following is a brief summary of alternative locations that were raised by respondents:

- Taupo: 20 for XC, 8 for DH, 7 not specified.
- Auckland: 10 for XC (an additional 2 specifically Hunua, 1 each Woodhill and Riverhead), a further 2 not specified and one for Auckland (but close to the city) also not specified.
- Mt Hutt: 8 for DH, 5 not specified.
- New Plymouth: 3 XC, 1 DH, 3 not specified.
- Whanganui: 2 XC, 7 DH, 2 not specified.
- Tauranga: 4 XC
- The only other raised more than twice is Wellington for DH. Long Gully was always popular but never long enough in duration, and the land owner has revoked access in recent years. The only other DH course (Maidstone) is under 2 minutes for winning race times and current development being undertaken is unlikely to extend this.