

Greetings Juniors!

We are getting excited to start practices in several weeks. Our first practice is on Tuesday, March 28, and the first race is on Saturday, April 1. This email is FULL of stuff you need to know, so please read it carefully and flag it for easy reference later. I will also upload it to the [Team Resources](#) webpage. Matt McNamara will be the Director of our Academy program again this year, and we have a great coach team with head coaches Shaun Giebel and Justin Kast.

**Two Practice Groups** – We will have two different practice locations for our practices, which are a combo of Academy and Selects juniors. We have split the juniors into the White group and Blue group – See attached to see which group you are in. (Note: Neither is the fast group or slow group! It's a mix of all ages and abilities in each group.) There is the possibility for movement between coach groups and even between practice locations if needed to get our juniors in practice groups that are well suited for their mountain biking growth.

**WANTED: Team Parent** – Do you want to get more involved in a non-cycling way? We need someone who is organized, good at communicating, and has a positive attitude. Please reply to this email or email me at [Jessica@AvoutRacing.com](mailto:Jessica@AvoutRacing.com) if you are interested getting more involved with the team in this role. The Team Parent will help with jersey and bell distribution at the beginning of the first practices, remind people to RSVP, bring celebratory snacks occasionally (first or last practice or some other time), help assemble a few families to help with the team oasis for races.

**Schedule** and much more will be in TeamSnap. **Download the TeamSnap app** to your phone if you haven't already. Practices are not mandatory. If you can't make a practice, that's ok! Just indicate your 'no' RSVP in TeamSnap. I will be getting the practice schedule in TeamSnap over the next couple of weeks once we have all our permits in hand. Practices will be Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30pm – 7:30pm. In general, one day a week will be in Ken-Caryl and the other will be somewhere else. The White group and Blue group will go to the same places generally on opposite days.

**Timing, be punctual!** – Our start time is 5:30pm, so please arrive about 15 minutes beforehand so that kids are ready to ride at 5:30pm. (Make sure you check TeamSnap so you know where you are going!) Our end time is a little flexible but will generally end at 7:30pm. The coach will let you know if it is going to be different.

**Practice Cancellations** – Weather in Colorado can be volatile! We will cancel practice if it will be 45 degrees or below at start; if there is an active storm/precipitation; or if there is lightning proximity (within 5 miles). We will notify via TeamSnap – please check for last minute cancellations especially when weather is iffy.

**Team clothing/kit** – You should hopefully get your order from Castelli before the first practice so that you will have some awesome team bike clothing to wear for practice (if you want). We will also hand out the jerseys included with registration at the first practice (or once they arrive).

**Equipment needed for practices –**

- Bike in good working order
- Properly fitted helmet in good condition and less than 5 years old
- Sunglasses and/or clear/amber glasses (some form of eye protection is required)
- Bike gloves (preferably full finger)
- Closed-toe shoes
- Water
- Tube to fit your bike
- Pump or 2 cartridges + inflator
- Multi tool
- Tire levers
- Jacket/layers (*it gets cold quickly in the evening!*)
- Small snack (but be sure to eat before coming to practice so you aren't starving!)
- Bike bell (see Bells note below)
- Needed medications (epipens, inhaler)
- A way to carry it all – in jersey pockets, bike bag, and/or small camelbak/hip pack

**Allergies/Medical Issues** – Be sure to inform me and your kid's coach of any allergies or medical issues that might impact them during our practices.

**Bike in Good Working Order** – This is huge. In next week, be sure to **clean and lube** bikes and make sure tires are pumped up and holding air. (Tubeless tires – add fresh sealant!) Then have your kid get on their bike and test out all the gears and the brakes and make sure everything is working properly. If it isn't, be sure to get those issues fixed before practice. Bike shops will get backlogged as spring approaches, so don't wait until the last minute. Check that the wheels are well attached, and the quick releases are well tightened – sometimes they will rattle loose on bike racks. You don't want your kid's wheel falling off while they ride. We are hosting a bike check on March 27, 4-6pm, at Mike's Bikes if you want to have your bike checked out – See TeamSnap for details.

**Parent volunteers** – We love when parents want to be involved, and we will use parent volunteers to help us have a second adult in each group in addition to a coach. If you are interested in riding along with the juniors, please indicate that when you RSVP in TeamSnap. (Details coming soon!) We need to be sensitive to group sizes when we ride and can only have 2 adults per group. Come ready to ride and if we don't need your help, you can go on your own

ride that evening! (Note: Ken-Caryl trails are private and cannot be used by non-residents for riding or hiking if you are not with an Avout Racing group.) If you are riding with the team, consider riding with a different group than your kid. Or, if you are riding in your kid's group, we encourage you to not ride right near them. Kids generally ride better without a parent nearby.

**Bells** – Our returning juniors should have their Timber bells from last year. Please be sure they are properly attached to your bike for practices. For our new juniors, please put a bell on your bike if you have one. We have bells to give out to anyone without a bell. You can choose from the bolt-on or quick release model. If possible, we ask that you pay \$15 for them (MSRP is \$25 <https://www.mtbbell.com/>) via Zelle (303-378-6417) or Venmo (@AvoutRacing, last 4 digits of cell are 8242), with purchase protection turned OFF.

**Ken-Caryl Residents ONLY** – Residents are required to have a tag on your bike when riding in Ken-Caryl during juniors' practice. This is part of our permit requirements to be allowed to use Ken-Caryl trails, so please be sure to put on your KC or KC/WS trail tag when you come to practice. If you aren't a Ken-Caryl resident, you are allowed to ride the KC trails as part of one of our groups during practices, but not on your own any other time. (This is very important.)

**Code of Conduct & 5 Respects** – We task ourselves with not just creating great cyclists but also great human beings! With this, we take the Code of Conduct and our 5 Respects seriously and teach these to the juniors throughout our sessions. When you wear the Avout Racing kit, you are an ambassador of Avout Racing. Please be sure to yield properly (hikers and horses always have right of way, followed up uphill riders). When you are on the trail, spread sunshine and rainbows to all the users you encounter with kind words and proper trail etiquette. It is essential to represent Avout Racing and all mountain bikers well! You signed the Code of Conduct at registration, and I encourage you to go over with your junior again here: <http://avoutracing.com/team-resources/>

**Picture in TeamSnap** – It would be helpful to the coaches if your kid's profile had a good recent picture of them. Go to the TeamSnap roster, click on their name, click edit and take a picture of your child to add to their profile.

**Races** – While the Academy program is a race-focused program, races are not mandatory. Signing up for races is separate from our organization. You can sign up for the races that interest you and work in your schedule. See attached for a list of recommended local races to check out (also on the TeamSnap calendar). The yellow races are highly recommended. The blue races are team supported travel races. If you plan to attend any of these races, reach out to [Mick@AvoutRacing.com](mailto:Mick@AvoutRacing.com) to find out more information and get tapped into team support (and bike transport if needed). We encourage you to map out the races you plan to do, and identify them as A, B, or C races. A Race - FOCUS races, the ones you most care about. You get up to 3 of these per year! B Race - Target race, used as part of the build to your "A" races. C Race - Third tier importance. Weekly races are often "C" level as we train through them vs

resting and getting "A Race Ready". Many juniors will have MTB Nationals and Colorado MTB States as A races. Also see attached for a handy Perfecting your Race Process pdf to help you get race ready!

**USA Cycling License** – All juniors will need a USAC junior race license/membership. Use code RATTLER23 for \$25 off a license. You should get a license ASAP before racing any USAC sanctioned races this year (like The Bear on April 1) so that your points from that race will help you get a better call up to the start line at MTB Nationals.

<https://memberships.usacycling.org/products/junior>

**Strava** – If you have a way to track your riding with a bike computer, GPS watch, or phone, you should consider signing up for a free Strava account. Strava is a GPS based training interface that is great keeping track of your riding progress and knowing what your friends are up to also. Be sure to request to join our “club” on Strava.

Phew! I know that was a lot of information. Be sure to read it a couple of times, maybe print it, and share it with your whole family. Also see the pre-season checklist below to help you get prepared. (Be sure your junior is part of this process at an age-appropriate level. Kids 12+ can do this on their own! We are teaching some self-sufficiency with their bikes.) As always, please reach out if you have any questions.

Let's ride!

Jessica Mullins

**Avout Racing Team Manager**

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Jessica@AvoutRacing.com

**Keep Reading on the Next Page for a Preseason Checklist**

## Preseason Checklist

- Buy USAC Junior Race License/Membership
- Download TeamSnap to phone
- Clean bike
- Lube bike
- Check that tires are holding air (tubeless tires – add fresh sealant!)
- Tighten bolts, especially wheels
- Go on a ride and make sure bike is shifting and braking properly
- If needed, take bike to a mechanic to fix any of the above issues
- Check fit and condition of helmet, buying a new helmet if necessary
- Accumulate all needed gear:
  - Properly fitted helmet in good condition and less than 5 years old
  - Sunglasses and/or clear/amber glasses (some form of eye protection is required)
  - Bike gloves (preferably full finger)
  - Closed-toe shoes
  - Way to carry water (water bottle or camelbak) + snack (be sure to eat before practice)
  - Tube to fit your bike
  - Pump or 2 cartridges + inflator
  - Multi tool
  - Tire levers
  - Jacket/layers (it gets cold quickly in the evening!)
  - Bike bell (see Bells note below)
  - Needed medications (epipens, inhaler)
  - A way to carry it all – in jersey pockets, bike bag, and/or small camelbak/hip pack
- Contact me with any allergies or medical issues
- Add picture in TeamSnap roster profile
- Ken-Caryl Residents – put tag on bike for Ken-Caryl practices