



# Cycling Fact Sheet

Priority Health Classic

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## PROFESSIONAL CYCLING RACE FACT SHEET

### Types of races:

Bicycle road races include multi-day stage races such as the famous Tour de France to Criteriums, which are races based on a circuit – usually less than a mile in length – and run for a set period of time. Criteriums, like the Priority Health Grand Cycling Classic, are the most popular form of road racing in North America. Typically the race runs through a closed-off city center.

### Professional vs. amateur – what the rankings mean:

Cyclists are ranked through the U.S. Cycling Federation (USCF) based on race results calculated using the USCF Results and Rankings Program. “Category 1” refers to professional cyclists, and Categories 2 through 5 are amateur rankings. Masters cyclists are age 35 and above. For a complete explanation, see [www.usacycling.org](http://www.usacycling.org).

### Watching the race:

The Priority Health Grand Cycling Classic is a criterium: Cyclists will circle a looped race for a set period of time. The cyclist who rides the longest distance during the specified time wins the race. Competition requires technical skills – especially the ability to take corners quickly and sharply, and riding safely with a large group in order to avoid crashing. In most Criteriums, cyclists reach speeds of up to 40 mph.

### Cycling terminology:

Like most sports, cycling has its own lingo. Here’s a list of common terms:

**Attack.** A sudden attempt to get away from another rider.

**Blocking.** When a rider tries to get in other riders’ way. This is a part of a team strategy to slow down other cyclists to allow other team members to get ahead in a breakaway.

**Bridge the Gap.** When a rider, or group of riders, tries to reach a group farther ahead.

**Breakaway.** When a group of riders get ahead of the pack (or peloton).

**Cadence.** Pedaling rate.

**Chasers.** Riders who are attempting to “bridge the gap” in attempting to catch the lead group.

**Circuit.** A track that is ridden more than one time during a race.

**Criterium.** A bike race in which cyclists ride on a circuit for a specified length of time or distance.

**Drafting.** Riding closely behind another rider in order to get into their slipstream. The lead rider expends up to 30 percent more energy than the following rider.

**Drop.** Getting left behind or losing contact with the group of riders.

**Field.** The main group of riders – also called the pack or peloton.

**Force the Pace.** When a rider goes harder than the rest of the pack to increase the pace.

**Gap.** The distance between groups or individuals.

**Hammering.** Steady, strenuous pedaling.

**Hook.** When riders use their wheels to hit rider(s) behind them – may be intentional or accidental.

**Jump.** A sudden acceleration, most often at the start of a sprint.

**Kick.** The final burst of speed in a race.

**Mass Start.** When all racers begin at the same time.

**Pack.** The main group of riders – also called the field or peloton.

**Peloton.** The main group of racers – also called the field or the pack.

**Prime** (pronounced “preem”). This “race within a race” gives cyclists the chance to win a prize for being the first to complete a specific lap.

**Slipstream.** The air pocket created by a moving rider. Other riders “draft” in the slipstream to conserve energy.

**Sprint.** A burst of speed to finish the race – usually involving more than one rider.

**Take a flyer.** When a rider heads out in front of the pack, usually alone.

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