

## Executive Summary

In order to fully characterize the current and potential female membership of USA Cycling, this study was commissioned to design and analyze a 2013 survey of that population, and present findings and recommendations in this summary report. The primary data used were generated through an updated survey of female cyclists, both USA Cycling members and non-members that was conducted using a web-based questionnaire. The survey instrument included 55 items in eight categories:

- a. socio-demographics (9 items)
- b. participation history (20 items)
- c. motivations (11 items)
- d. participation constraints (6 items)
- e. event preferences (9 items)

A total of 4046 questionnaires were started and 2872 (71%) were completed and useable for data analyses.

The overall analysis of these surveys' data focused on three main areas: (I) the level of female participation in recreational and racing activities, (II) the preferences of female participants and favored characteristics and constraints of events, and (III) the reasons for joining/not joining/renewing USA Cycling membership. The following describes some of the notable findings for each area of concern:

(I) *Participation*. The participant related questions yielded the following key findings:

- 72% of the respondents indicated that they were members of a cycling club
- 57% of the respondents indicated that they participate in cycling races and 69% indicated that they participate in recreational events (36% do both, 10% neither).
- In terms of inspiration to begin participating in events, "**Friends**" was the dominant source cited by respondents for both Recreational (35%), and Racing (29%) participants. However, when considering initial participation in the sport (Recreation), many individuals still reported "**starting on their own**" (22.8%).
- About 1/3 of the respondents to the questionnaire indicated that they don't currently race
- Of all the respondents, the most cited primary discipline was Road (63%), followed by MTB (16%) and Cyclo-cross (9%). The most common open response was commuting/transportation (~1.5%)

(II) *Preferences/Favorites/Constraints*. In terms of event participation preferences, respondents indicated these in several ways.

### ATTRACTIONS:

- For both racing and recreational events, **personal accomplishment** was rated highest in attractiveness for participation. **Fitness benefits**, and **social interaction** rated highly compared to other factors
- Understandably, in terms of attractiveness, **prizes** and **formal competition** were rated as less attractive for recreational events compared to races, and **scenery/exploration** were rated as more attractive for recreational events.

### FEATURES OF FAVORITE EVENTS:

- When respondents recalled their favorite events, for both racing and recreational events, **atmosphere, course, friends, and length of the event**, were rated in the top four reasons for why the event was their favorite.
- In contrast to the favorite recreational events, the favorite racing events also emphasized participation levels in general, i.e. **amount of other women there, amount of people there overall, categories offered**, and **field size** all rated highly in terms of importance.



*PARTICIPATION CONSTRAINTS:*

- In terms of constraints to participating in racing events, the reasons were relatively dispersed with the most common primary reason being **not enough time** (21%). The only other reasons exceeding 15% were related to “first timer” constraints, i.e. **do not know how to get started**, and **no beginner level races**.
- For participants who indicated that they participate in fewer races than they used to, **time** was again one of the top constraints, while **job/employment commitment**, **injury**, and **family obligations** also rated highly (25%+) in terms of primary reasons for competing less.
- When choosing the constraints that respondents believe discourage women from participating in general, **job/employment commitment**, **time**, and **family commitments** again reccur at the top of the list, with **cost** dominating them all. Attendance/access factors were often cited as well, e.g. **races combined with other ages/categories**, and **lack of other women racing in my category**.
- One difficulty that has become clear through this constraint analysis is that the female contingent of cycling participation is extremely diverse and complex in terms of participation constraints.

*(III) Membership.*

- The number of respondents holding a USA Cycling license was 72%, while 10% were unrenewed members, and 11% had never been a member.
- Of the reasons (primary and secondary) for not renewing their license, they were dominated by budgetary or leisure time constraints (5), The most common reason cited outside of this general category was **lack of other females in my category or age group** followed by **injury**, **no races close to where I live**, and **lack of races that include my category**.
- In terms of continued membership and racing participation in future years, many design elements of the events, i.e. **course**, **proximity**, **categories**, **race length**, **safety** ranked highest in importance, while the disposition of competitors, **friendly women to race against** was similar or equal rival to these top reasons.

Further description of the data collection, results, and charts follow. An appendix includes complete open responses.

**Contact**

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## Report for 2013 USA Cycling Female Cyclist Analysis

### BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

USA Cycling membership has enjoyed robust and steady growth in its membership and license holder numbers over several recent years. However, the female contingent of the membership has remained low (~14%) relative to the U.S. population at large. In order to most effectively serve this segment of the population and to develop potential new members, we seek to fully characterize the motivations for participating in cycling events/races, preferences for continued participation, and motivations for joining and renewing USA Cycling membership among this group. This analysis focuses on female cyclist demographic characteristics, their history of cycling participation, their motivations for cycling event participation and/or joining USA Cycling, and their preferences with regard to event experiences.

### DATA

The data for this report were obtained from a membership survey conducted in late 2013. Previous overall membership data (2013) are occasionally used for comparison.

#### *Internet collection*

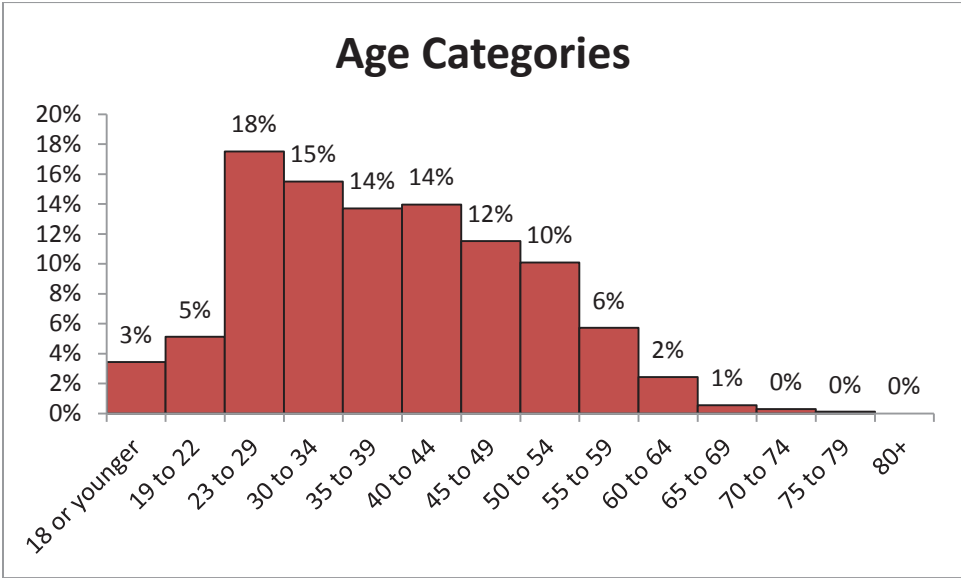
As with any questionnaire that samples using internet collection techniques, there is always the potential for selection bias from two main sources, non-responders, and members of the population of interest (overall membership) being systematically excluded from the sample. The non-responders would be individuals receiving the survey solicitation and choosing not to participate. The individuals excluded from the sample would be those members who may not have internet access, or an email address not included in the member database. If either of these classes of individuals had significant differences in the measured constructs, there would clearly be a bias present in the sample. However, although the data were collected via a web linked questionnaire and these concerns do exist, we feel fairly confident that there will be limited bias in the following examined constructs. It is difficult to argue that many of the variables listed in this questionnaire would be subject to severe bias (or differences) across responders and non-responders. Where this may be a concern, it is discussed in the report. A future inquiry could include a snail-mail version to sample some non-internet users to statistically establish that there are no significant differences or resulting bias.

#### *Responses*

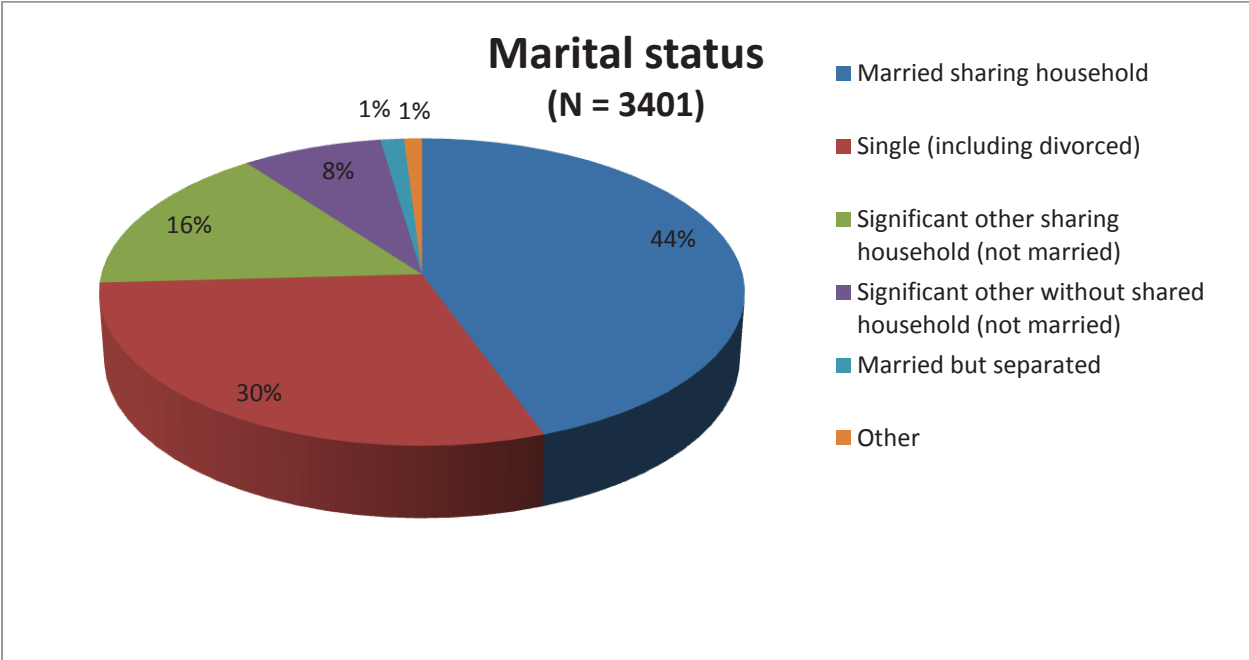
In terms of responses to individual items, this does vary throughout this questionnaire. This can arise either through incomplete/abandoned questionnaires, or through conscious non-response. While several questionnaire items required responses, other items that might be viewed as sensitive information (e.g. race/ethnicity) allowed for non-response. Additionally, some questions were only posed to a subset of the respondents, e.g. cyclists who indicated they currently race, or cyclist who have never been a USA Cycling member. Therefore, the responses to individual questions in this study ranged from just about 200 to 3738 (100%) completion. 4046 questionnaires were started and 2872 (71% completion) questionnaires were fully completed. Wherever possible, variations in the response rates are noted. Further item analysis could be conducted in the future to guard against any individual item bias OR the possibility that respondents abandoned the survey because of its length.

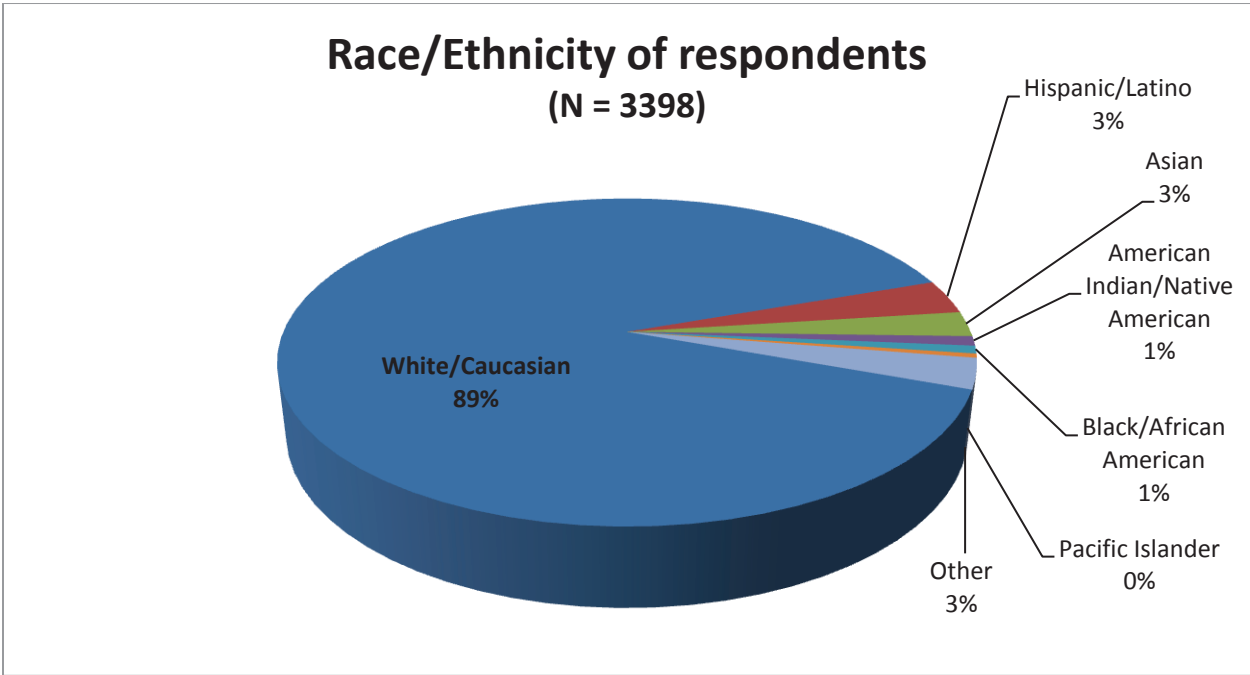
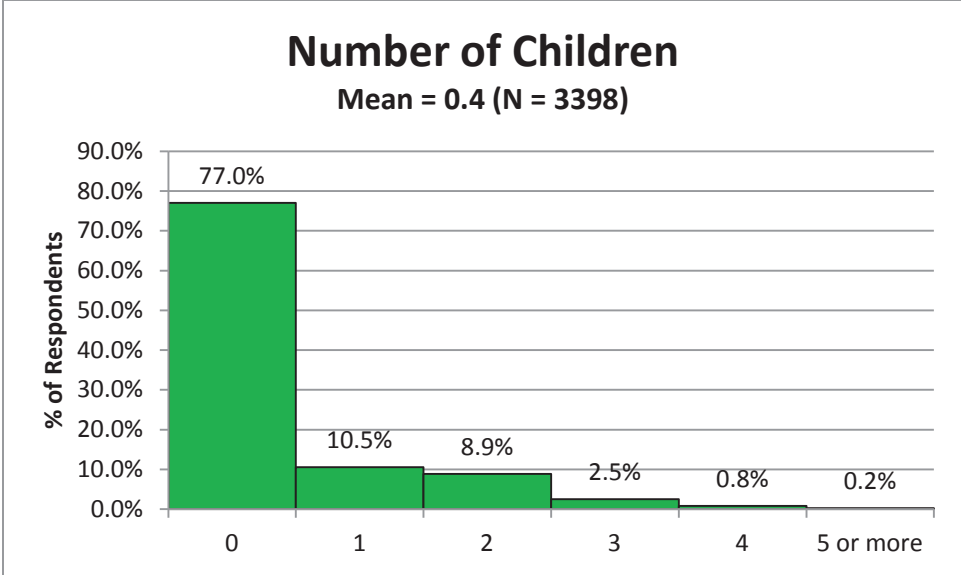


### DEMOGRAPHICS

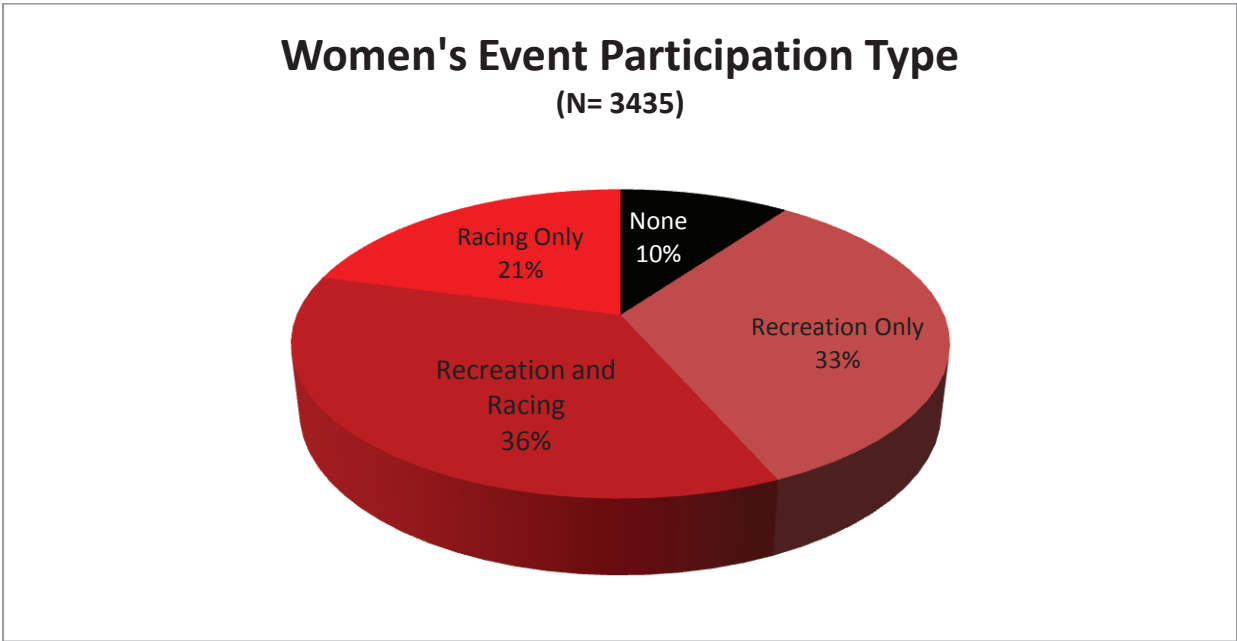
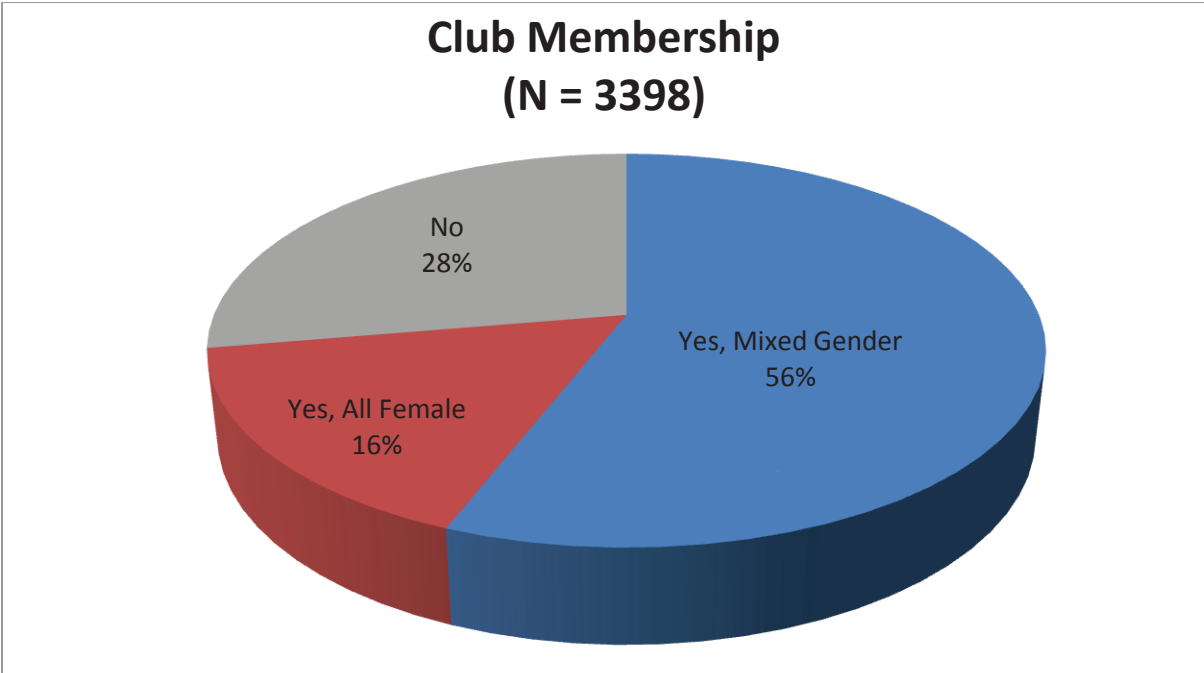


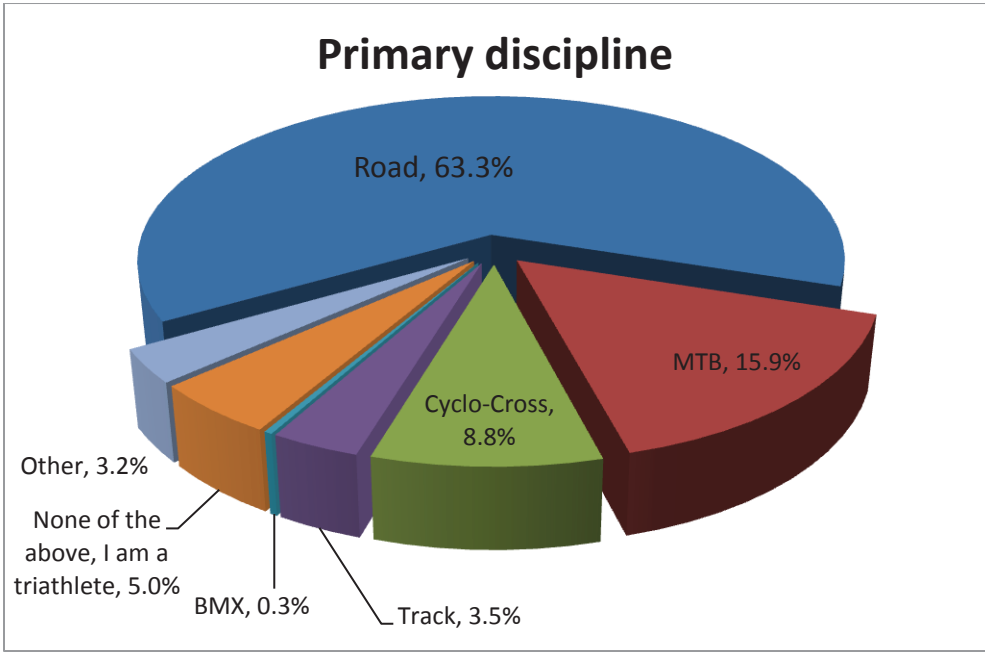
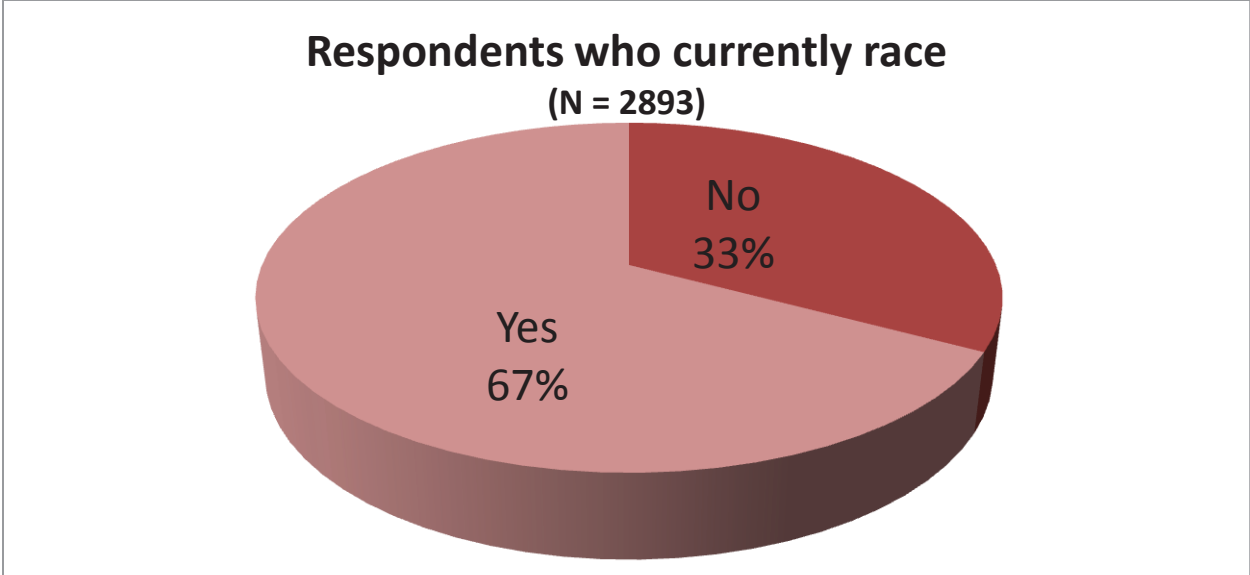
Median Age Range: 35-39 years old(Average age not calculated due to categorical nature of question)

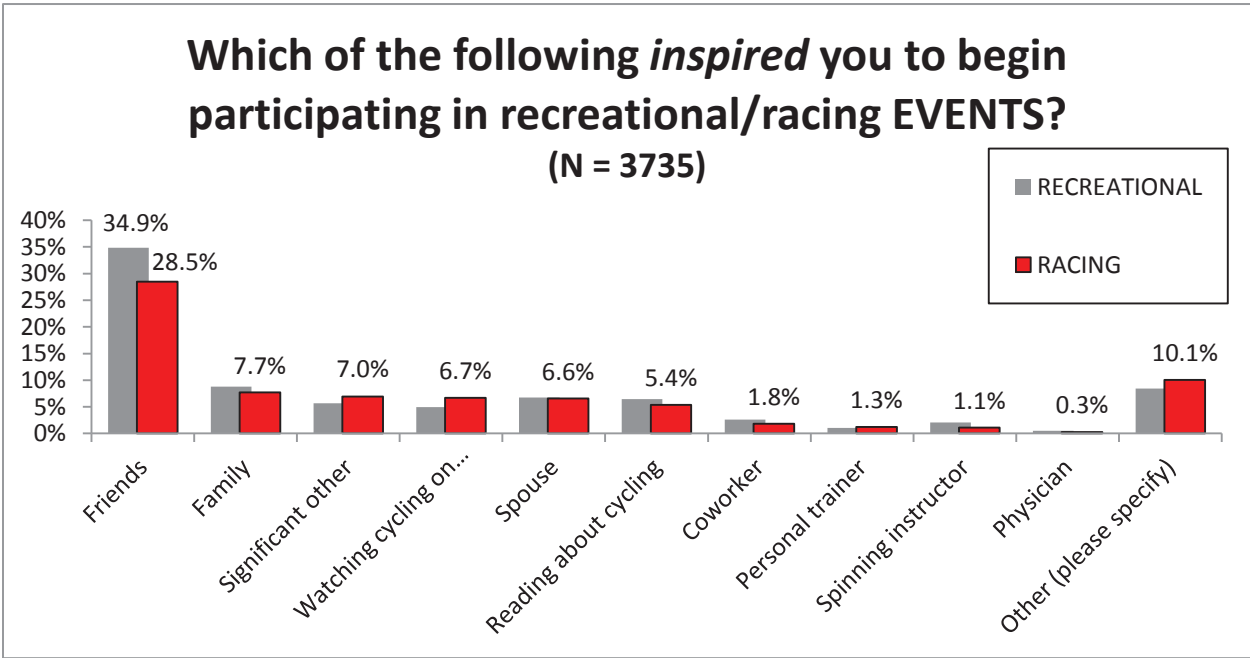
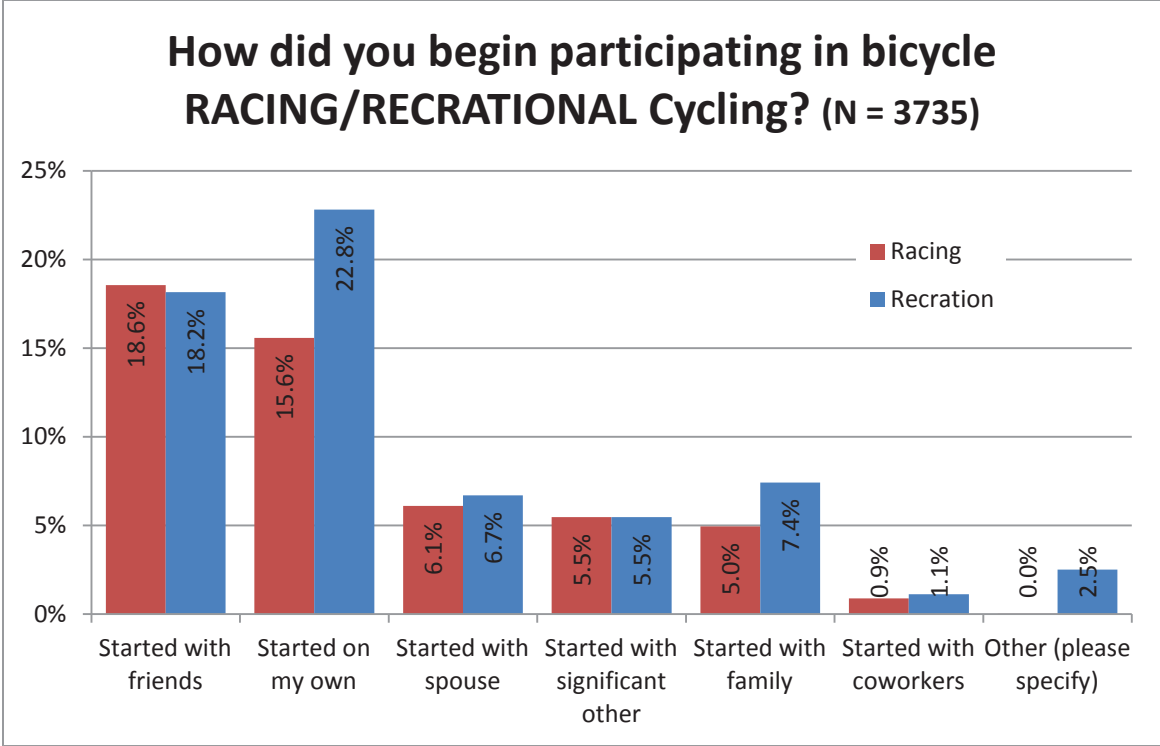




**PARTICIPATION**

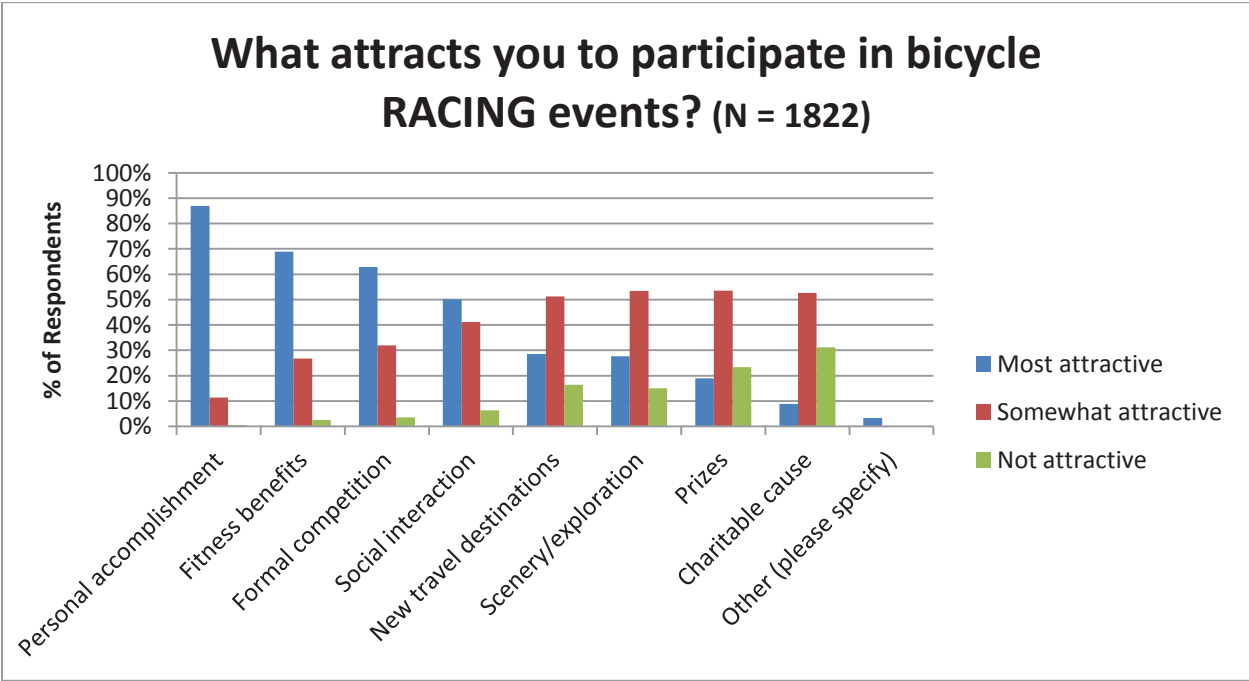
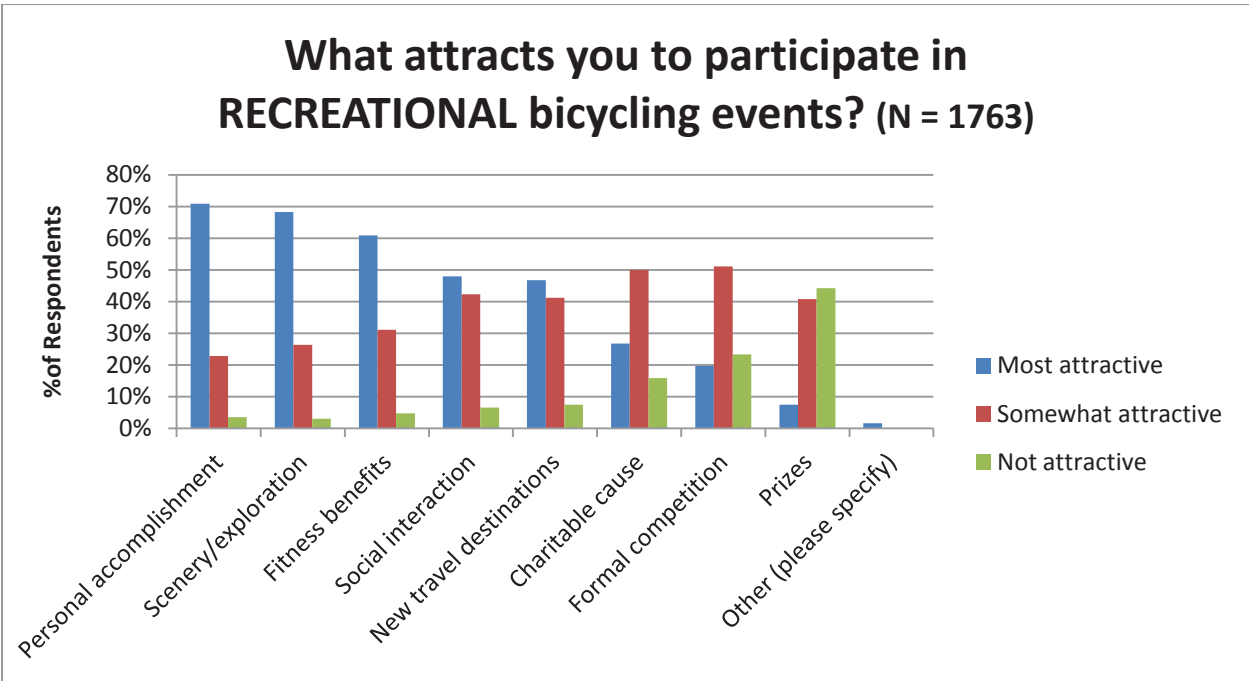




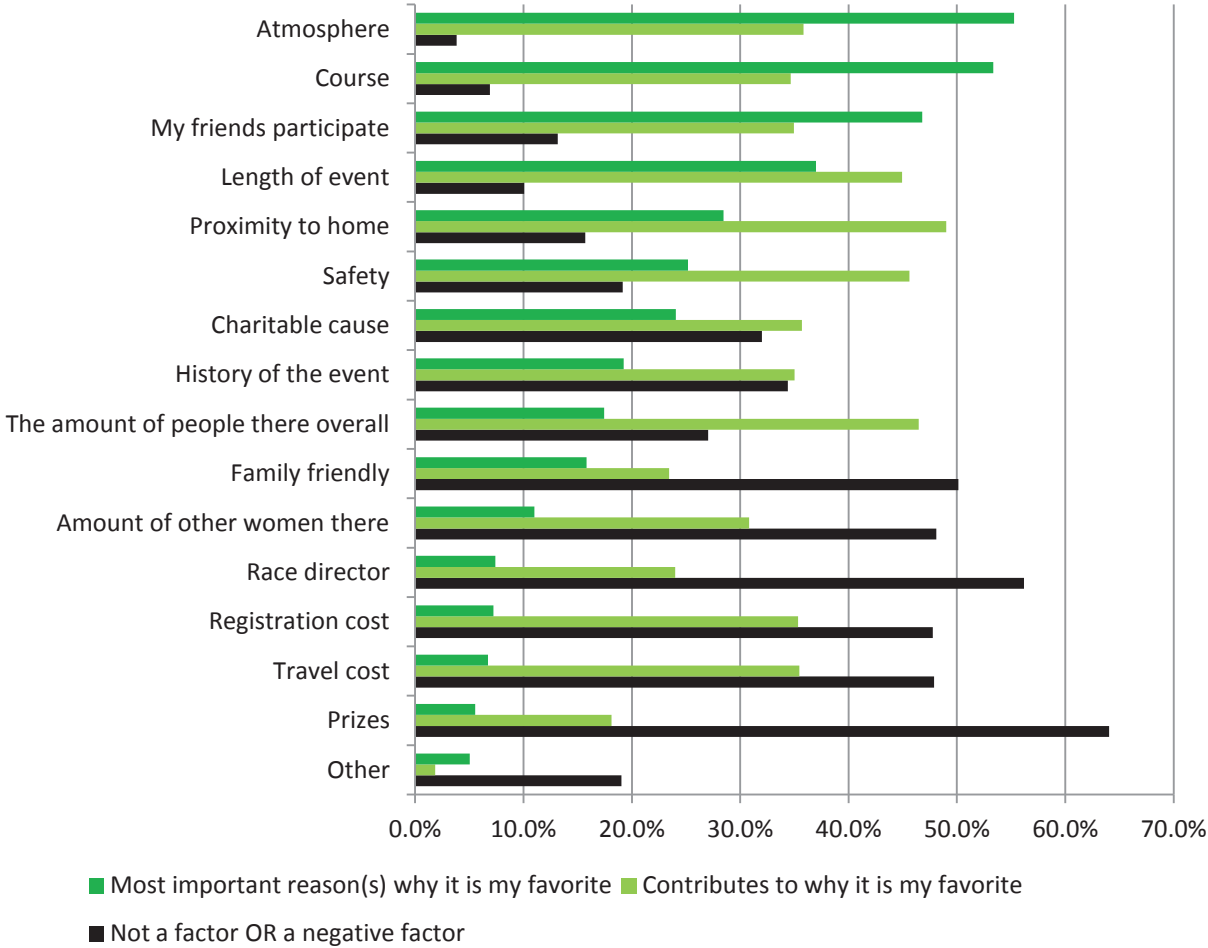




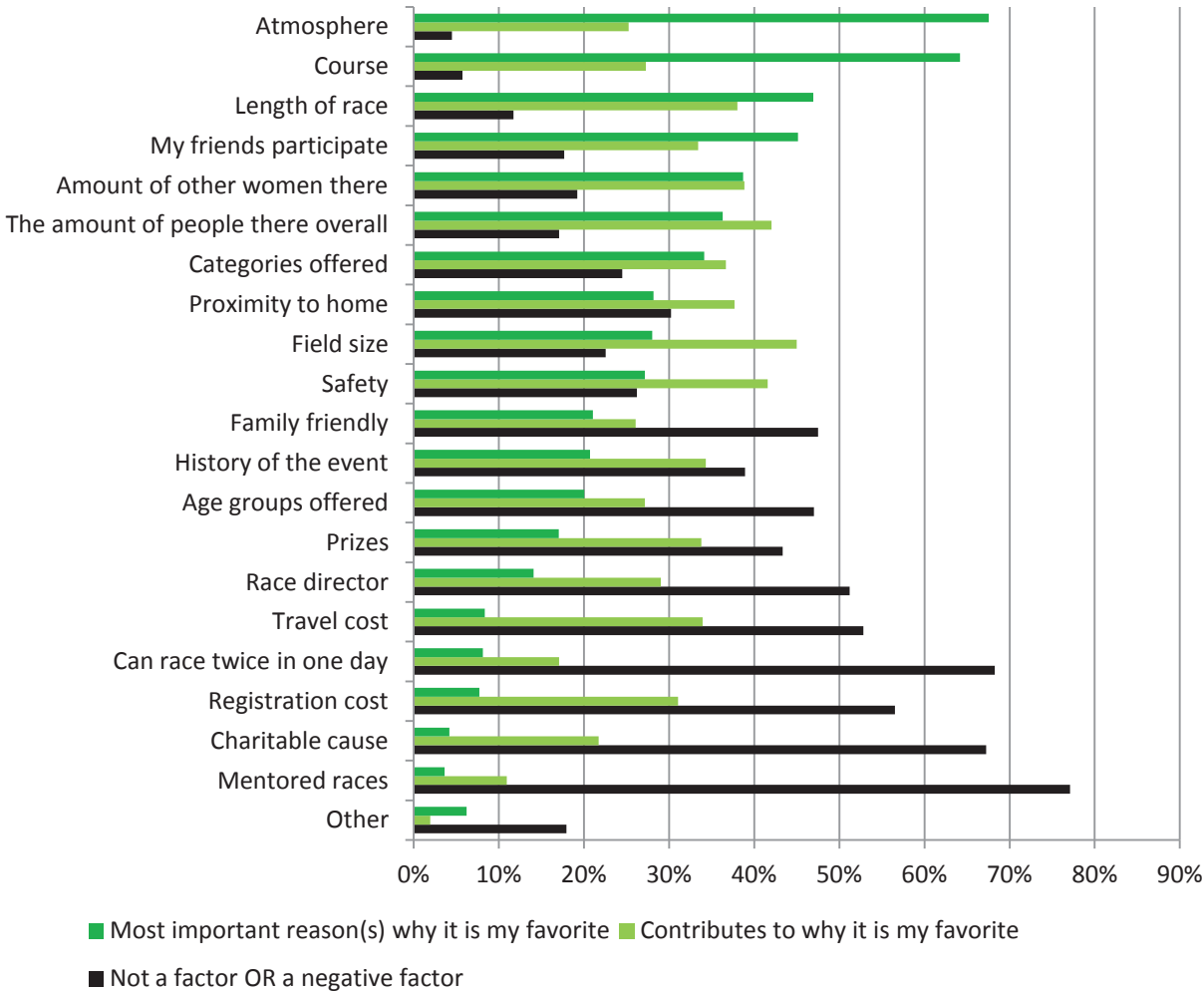
PREFERENCES



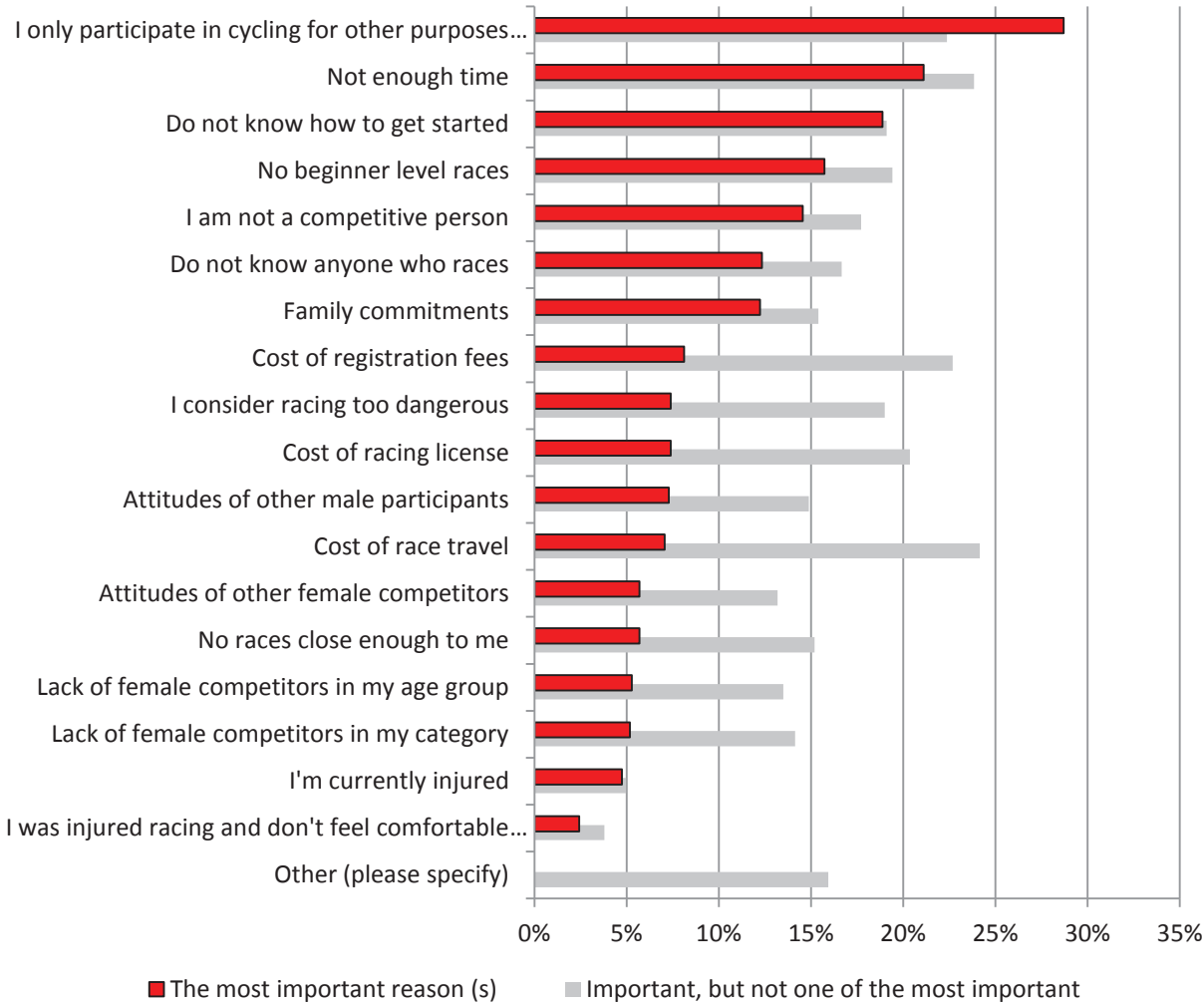
### Aspects of my favorite RECREATIONAL event. (N = 1771)



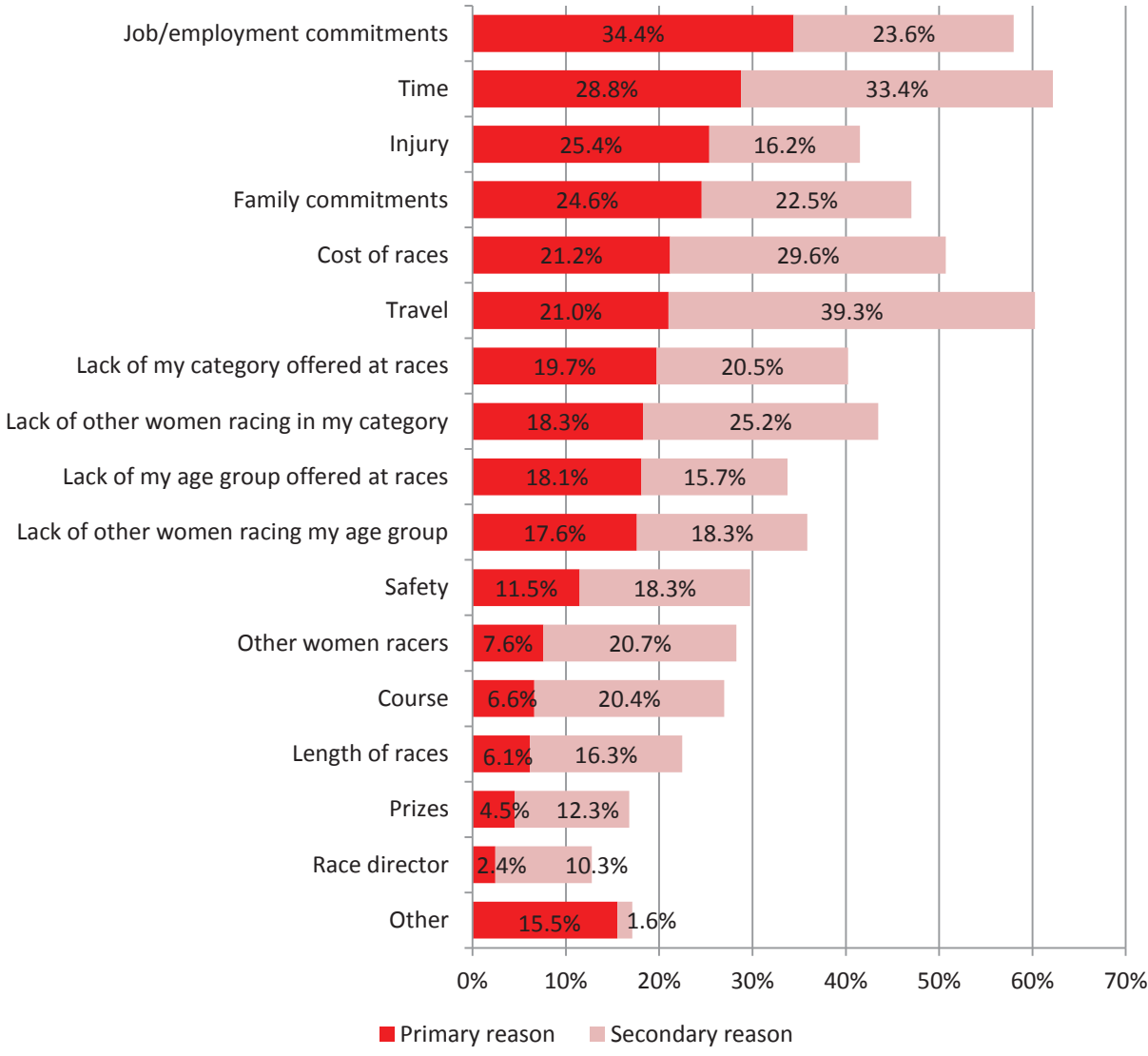
### Aspects of my favorite RACING event. (N = 1691)



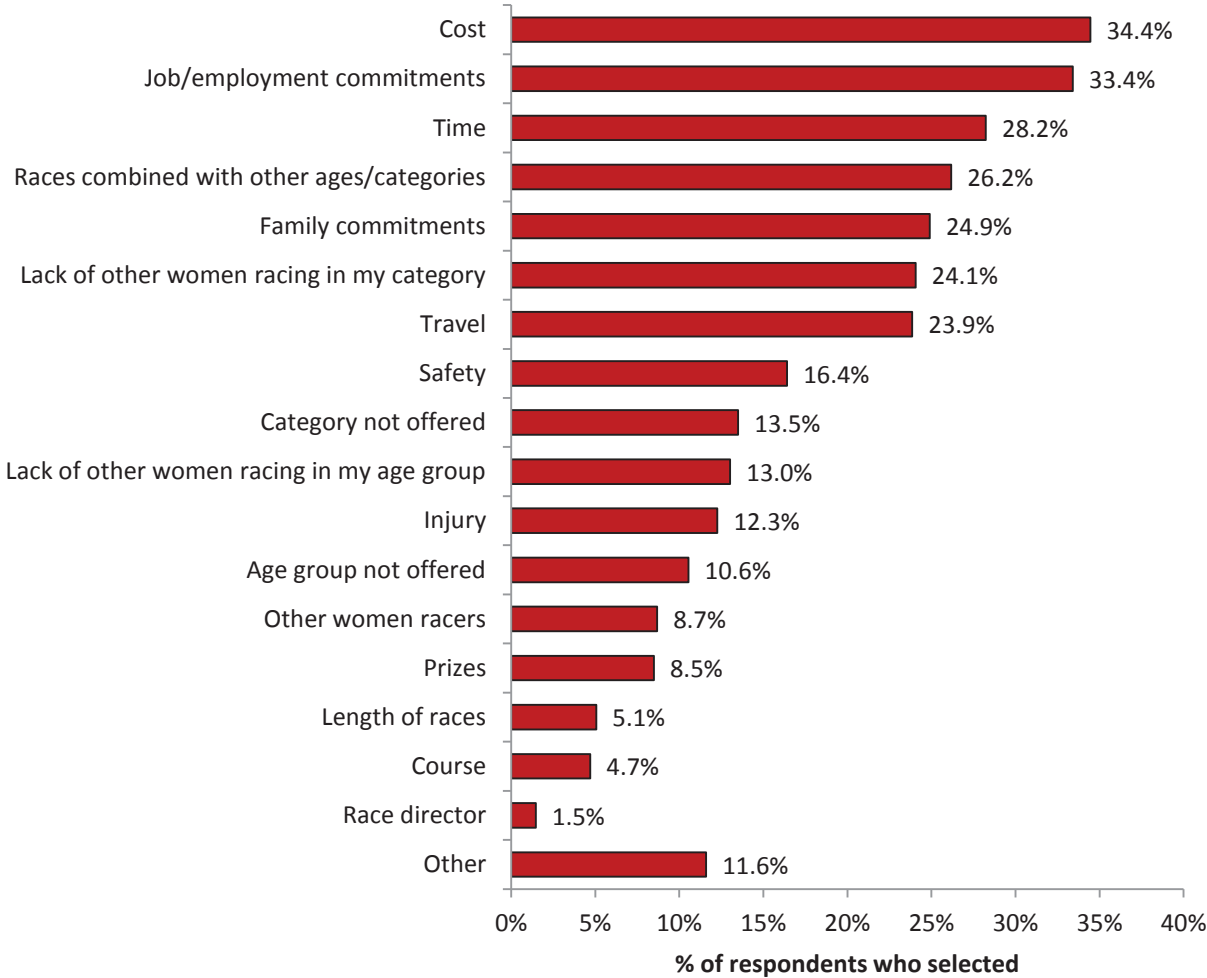
### Reasons for NOT participating in RACING events. (N = 948)



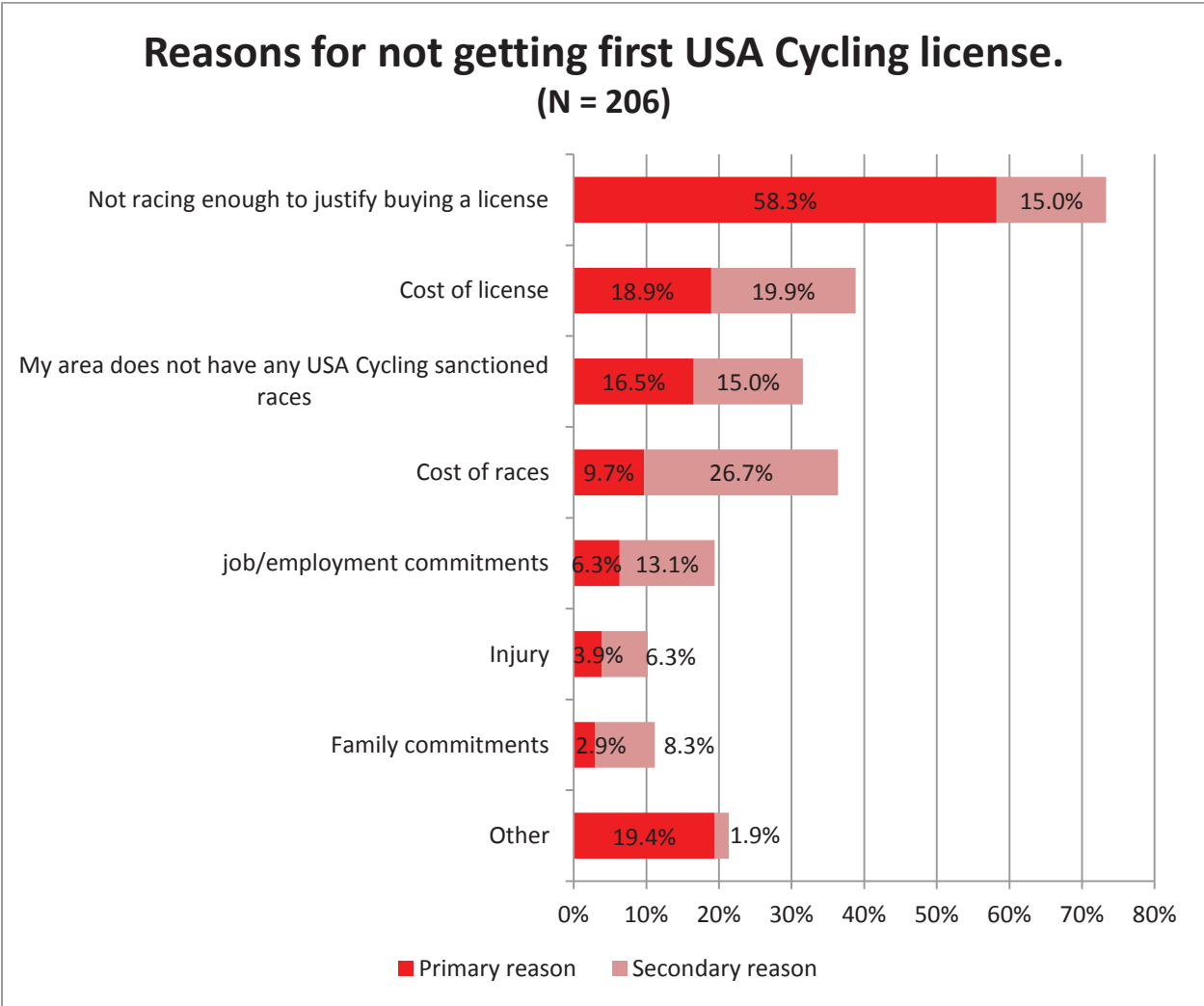
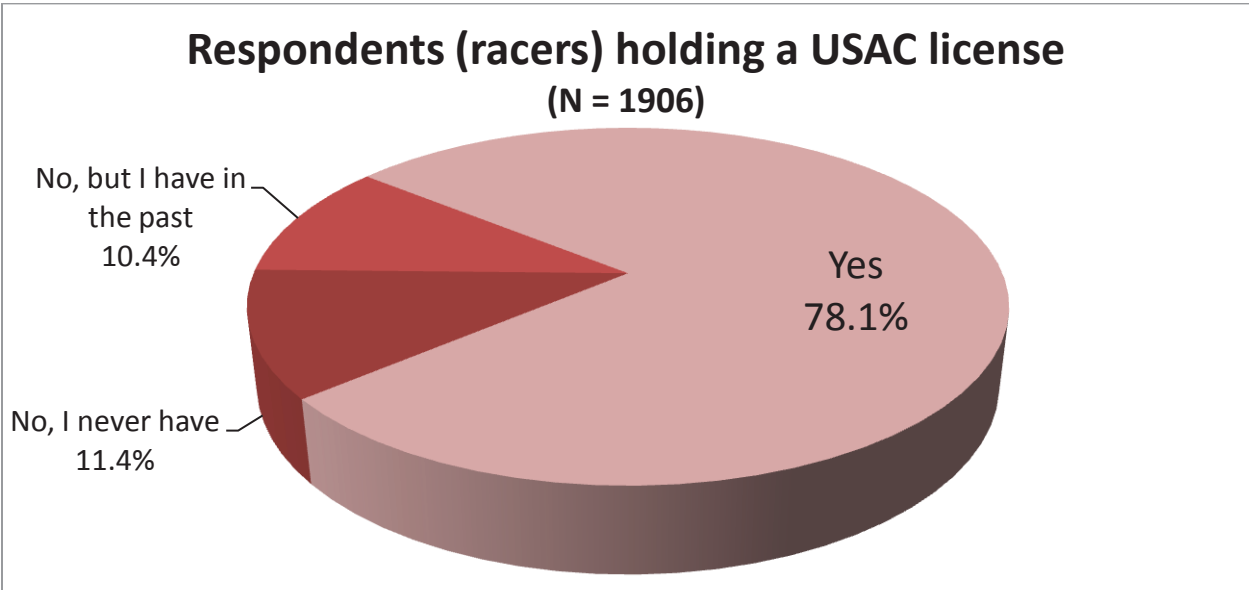
### Reasons for participating in races less than I used to. (N = 619)



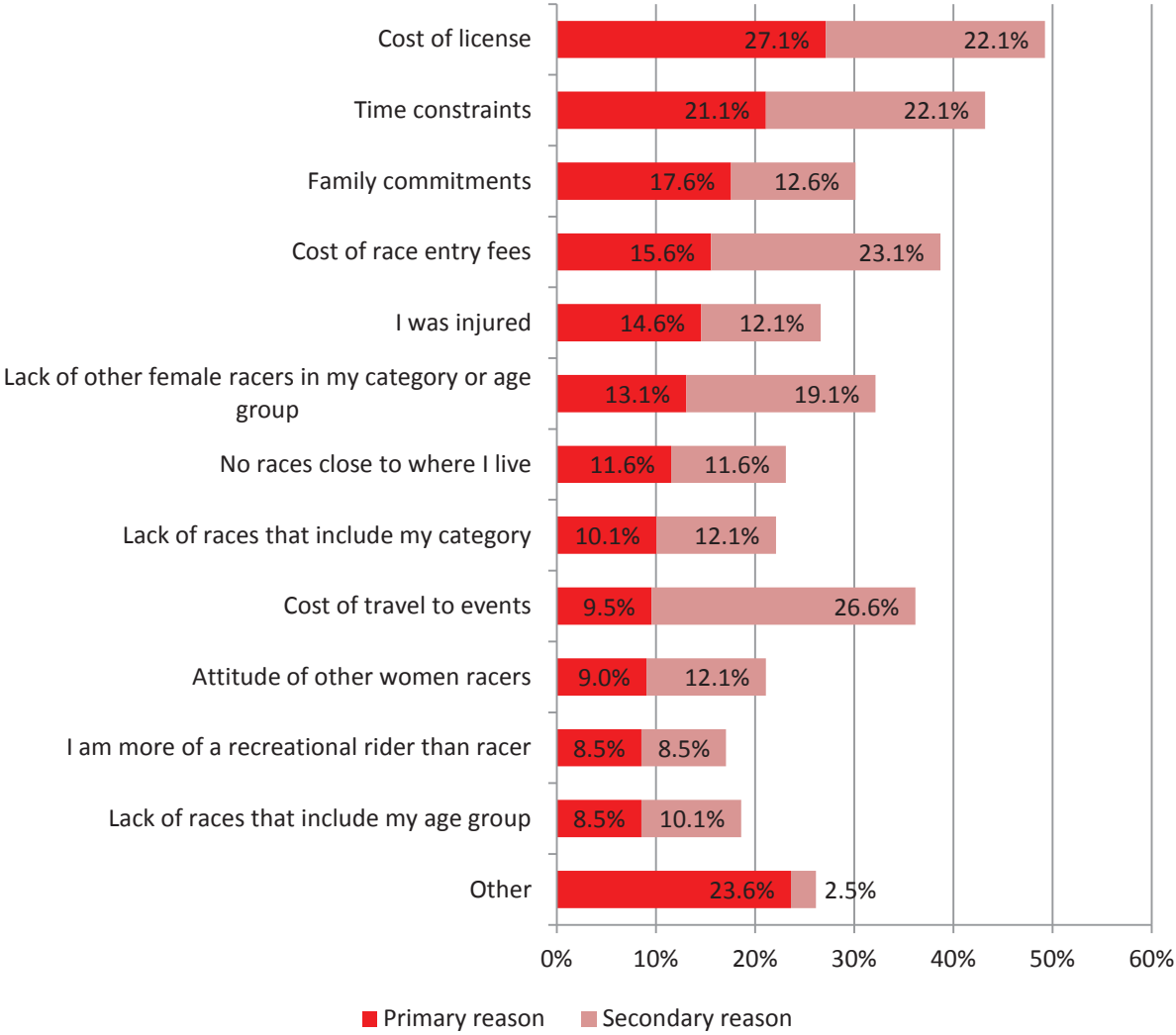
### Top 3 things discouraging you (or other women) from racing? (N = 2511)



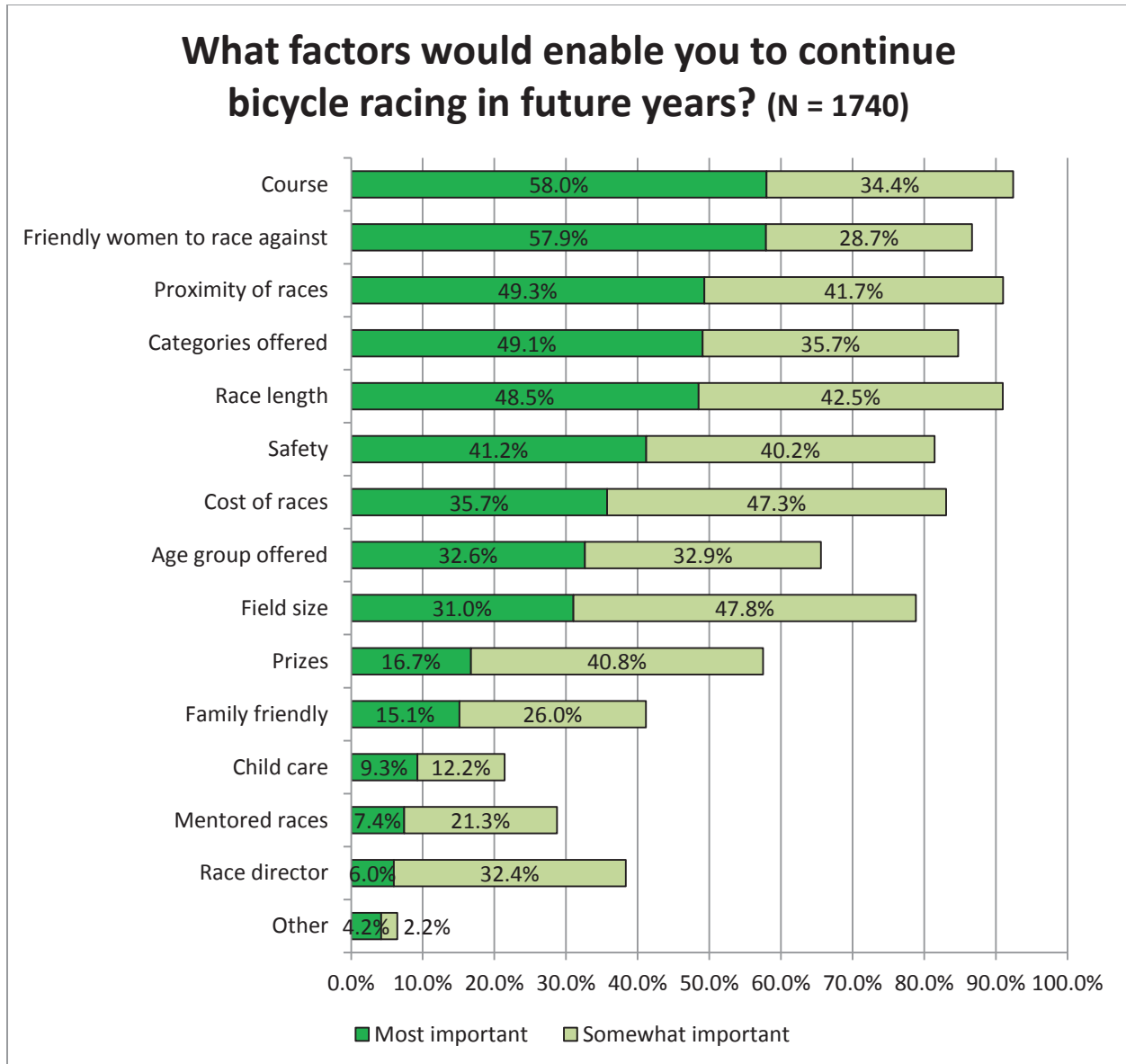
MOTIVATION TO JOIN/RENEW (RACING LICENSES)



### Reasons for not renewing USAC license. (N = 199)







**Open responses**

When asked to report, “What do you think would encourage more women to participate in bicycle racing?” respondents returned a broad range of suggestions (N = 2064). These responses were categorized wherever possible based on the frequency of the subject matter. Of the top concerns discussed, the top 5 most commonly cited were:

- 29% Category Issues (combining, age ranges, beginners racing against professionals)
- 6% Prizes/Payouts (most often seeking equality to males)
- 6% Programs/Skills/Education (for newest competitors)
- 5% Social elements (Friendly atmosphere, welcoming, attitude)
- 3% Fun (vs. competition)



When asked, “*What other things might cause you to race more frequently?*”, similar categories were constructed from the 1913 responses. The top 4 most cited personal constraints were,

- 9% Distance to races
- 9% Cost
- 5% Family/Job constraints
- 4% Category issues

When asked, “*What would add value to bicycle racing for you?*”, the respondents (N = 1557) indicated these 5 most frequent desires,

- 11% Category Issues (combining, age ranges, beginners racing against professionals)
- 10% Social elements (Friendly atmosphere, welcoming, attitude)
- 6% Prizes/Payouts (most often seeking equality to males)
- 6% Events (more and closer)
- 4% Fun (vs. competition)

## **ABOUT THE RESEARCHER**

*Daniel J. Larson, PhD*

Dr. Larson currently serves as Lecturer in the Department of Health and Exercise Science at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Larson’s research focuses on sport economics and specifically the economic issues in the sport of cycling. Dr. Larson functions as the coordinator for the project/report.

