Cycling Official Rules

Special Olympics Michigan

Events Offered

- Three Wheel Bike
  - 250M Time Trial
  - 500M Time Trial
  - 1K Time Trial
  - 3K Time Trial
- Two Wheel Bike
  - 500M Time Trial
  - 1K Time Trial
  - 3K Time Trial
  - 5K Time Trial
  - 5K Road Race
  - 10K Road Race
- Unified
  - 3K Unified Time Trial
  - 5K Unified Time Trial
  - 10K Unified Time Trial
  - 3K Unified Tandem Time Trial
  - 5K Unified Tandem Time Trial

Uniforms

- Uniform: The recommended cycling uniform is a jersey, cycling shorts, and cycling gloves although this uniform is not mandatory. Shorts should be mid-thigh in length. If wearing long pants, only form fitting pants may be worn (i.e. spandex). Clothing should not be too big or too loose as to get caught in the bike while riding.
- Athletic shoes are recommended, ensure that laces are tied and not of excessive length. Bicycle “click-in” shoes are allowed
- The tournament director will have the final say on what shorts and/or pants will not be allowed.
- The SOMI logo must be on all jerseys worn during competition.
- Hats, jewelry and demin may not be worn during competition.

Equipment

- Equipment: All bicycles and helmets must pass a safety inspection on race day prior to competition. Inspections will be conducted on race morning by a qualified bicycle mechanic on site.
- If a bicycle is deemed unsafe, the bicycle will not be allowed on the course. If adjustments need to be done, they must be done before the inspection period is over. Athletes whose bikes do not pass inspections will be disqualified.
- Any standard bike that complies with the safety standards may be ridden.
- Adaptive bikes may be used in time trial events if they do not impede other riders or cause an advantage, the bikes must pass safety inspection.

Equipment

- Bicycles must have two working brakes to be used during competition.
- Helmets are required and must meet ANSI or SNELL safety standards and must be fitted properly. Helmets must be bike helmets and not helmets from other sports.
- Bicycles with handlebars with forearm supports or forward/upward extensions may only be used during time trial events.
- It is the coach and athlete's responsibility to bring equipment that is in working order. Any repairs needed are the responsibility of the coach.

Races

- SOMI offers the following races for Cycling State Competition
- Three Wheel Bike
  - 250m Time Trial, 500m Time Trial, 1k Time Trial, 3k Time Trial
- Individual
  - 500m Time Trial, 1k Time Trial, 3k Time Trial, 5k Time Trial, 5k Road Race, 10k Road Race
- Unified
  - 3k Unified Time Trial, 5k Unified Time Trial, 3k Unified Tandem Time Trial, 5k Unified Tandem Time Trial, 5k Unified Team Road Race, 10k Unified Team Road Race

FOR ALL DIVISIONS

- To qualify to register for 5k events, the athlete must be able to complete the race in 18 minutes or less
- To qualify to register for 10k events, the athlete must be able to complete the race in 26 minutes or less

Races

- Time Trial: Consists of an individual racing against the clock. Racers will start individually at 20-second intervals. The race line-up will typically start with the racer with the slowest qualifying time first and the racer with the fastest qualifying time last. This is an official event, not a qualifying race for another event.
- Road Race: Consists of racers all beginning together in a mass start. For multi-lap courses everyone will finish on the same lap as the leader.

Races

- Each athlete may enter up to two events. Athletes competing in Unified events may not enter individual traditional events.
- Qualifying Scores must be submitted for all races prior to attending State Cycling Finals. Scores should be submitted using minutes, seconds, milliseconds.
- Example: 12 minutes 29 seconds would be – 12:29.00
- The finish line for all races should stay the same. Start lines will vary based on race distance.

General Rules

- All riders must be in the staging area 30 minutes prior to their event. Start time is forfeit time. If not present at start time you will forfeit
- Riders will start from a stationary position. The rider may be held with their feet on the pedals for the start but may not be pushed. Drafting and taking pace (side by side) is not allowed in time trials unless it is a team event. Partners can draft each other, but not other teams. Separation between two bikes should generally be at least 3 bike lengths, unless passing.

General Rules

- The starter shall countdown to the starting time using both audible and visual countdowns for each rider. (15 seconds, 10 seconds, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Go!)
- The start is by a starter gun, whistle or beeper system. Hearing impaired racers may be given a visual cue to indicate the start.
- The race shall be declared finished when the front tire of the bike crosses the finish line.
- The finish is determined by placing/order of crossing the finish line.
- Coaches are not allowed on the track.

General Rules

- No racer may use or carry radios for communications with other racers or coaches.
- The use of headphones of any style is not allowed while racing or training. However, racers with certified hearing impairments may use hearing detection and amplifying devices.
- Racers will wear entry number bibs during competition. Numbers will be placed on the front of the handlebars facing forward, on the racers back facing backwards and on the racers helmet on the right side facing out. The bib with the timing chip will be placed on the handlebars.

General Rules

- Racers who experience mechanical problems may change any part of the bicycle, or the entire bicycle, to finish a race. Assistance is allowed in this circumstance.
- A racer remounting their bike following a crash or mechanical problem may be pushed up to 10 meters but may not make any progress while not on their bicycle.
- In the case of a mechanical problem the racer may push the bike to the finish line to finish the race.
- For Tandem Teams, but riders must be touching the bike at the finish line.

Unified Team Events

- Unified Team events will include the 3K and the 5K Time Trial and the 5K and 10K Road Race. This will include a two-person Unified Sports Team. (1 Athlete and 1 Unified Partner). The team's place will be determined when the last competitor's front wheel (partner or athlete) crosses the finish line.
- Two-wheel bicycles must be used for Unified races.
- Athletes and Unified Partner teammates must stay a maximum of 3 seconds apart during the race, or the team will be disqualified.
- Unified tandem events will include the 3K and 5K Time Trial. The athlete or partner may assume the driver (front) or stoker (rear) position on the tandem.

Divisioning

- A time must be submitted for each event an athlete is registered for. Separate divisions will be made for 3-wheel bicycles. Any athlete using these bikes must be identified at registration time.

Practice

- Athletes should begin practice 8-12 weeks before the state culminating event and should practice regularly
- It is recommended to have coaches/chaperones available to ride with/alongside the athletes
- Facilities – Trails, large parking areas (schools, churches, office complexes), cycling or race tracks, Parks and rail trails
  - It is important to cone off or make entrance and exit areas inaccessible to cars during practice sessions

Safety

- It is important for athletes to have well-fitted equipment and bicycles
- Athletes should understand how the bike works, brakes, shifting, etc.
- Athletes should have a strong understanding of mounting and dismounting the bike.
- Athletes should wear a helmet at ALL TIMES, practice, home practice and competition
- When practicing it is important for all athletes to understand the importance of roadway safety
  - Look both ways, pay attention to traffic signs, etc.

Bike Terms

- **Brake Levers**: Mechanisms attached to the brake arms, which clamp the rim during braking.
- **Brake Pads**: Rubber pads attached to the brake arms, which clamp the rim during braking.
- **Cassette**: The set of gear cogs on the rear hub; also freewheel, cluster or block.
- **Chain**: The flexible metal link between the rear wheel and the front chain ring. It transmits the power from the pedals to the rear wheel.
- **Chain Rings**: The front gear wheels that drive the chain. One to three speed bicycles have one chain ring; ten to sixteen speed bicycles have two chain rings. Bicycles with more speeds than that have three.

Bike Terms

- **Chainstay:** Small tube running from bottom bracket back to rear dropouts.
- **Cleat**: A metal or plastic fitting on the sole of a cycling shoe that engages the pedal.
- **Clincher:** Tire and tube separate, and the tire expands under pressure to grip the sides of the rim like a car tire.
- **Drivetrain**: Components directly involved in making the wheel turn: chain, crank set and cassette.
- **Dropout:** Open-ended fixtures at the fork ends and at the convergence of the seat and chain stays, which receive the axels of the wheels.
- **Drops:** Lower parts of a turned-down handlebar, also called the hooks.

Bike Terms

- **Foot Brake**: Mechanism that stops the rear wheel when pedals are pushed in reverse.
- **Freewheel:** The cluster of gear wheels attached to the rear wheel, which provides a variety of gears.
- **Handlebars:** The bicycle's steering apparatus.
- **Mudguards**: Fenders.
- **PSI**: Abbreviation for pressure per square inch.
- **Rim**: Outside section of the wheel, around which the tube is inflated. Usually steel or aluminum.
- **Saddle**: The bicycler's seat.
- **Toe Clip**: Toe piece attached to a pedal, which holds the foot on the pedal.

Riding Terms

- **Breakaway:** The leading rider or group of riders who have broken away from the pack or peloton.
- **Bunch**: The main cluster of riders in a race, also the group, pack, field or peloton.
- **Cadence**: The pedal revolutions per minute.
- **Chasers**: A group of riders ahead of a peloton trying to catch a breakaway.
- **Circuit**: A course that is ridden two or more times in a race.
- **Downshift**: To shift to a lower and larger cog on the rear, smaller chain ring on the front.
- **Drafting:** Riding closely behind another rider in the slipstream to decrease wind resistance. Enables the rider to maintain speed with less effort.

Riding Terms

- **Echelon:** A form of the pace line used in a crosswind: Riders line up offset to the lead side of the rider in front so the pace line stretches across the road at an angle or echelon.
- **Field Sprint:** The sprint for the finish line by the main group of riders.
- **Jam:** A period of hard fast riding.
- **Jump:** A hard acceleration out of the saddle.
- **Overgearing:** Using too big a gear for the terrain or for one's conditioning.
- **Peak:** A relatively short period of time during which maximum performance is achieved.

Riding Terms

- **Spin-Ability:** to pedal at the cadence.
- **Take a Flyer**: To go very early in a sprint.
- **Time Trial**: Time trials pit indoor riders against the clock, with the goal to cover the course distance in the short amount of time. The course is usually straight out for the 500 meter to 1km distance and out-and-back for the 5km thru 25km.
- **Turn Around:** The point where riders reverse direction on an out-and-back time trial course.
- **Upshift**: To shift to a higher gear, smaller cog or larger chain ring.

10 Top Cycling Technique Tips

10. **Pedal with flat feet:** Some people think of keeping their heels down, and some point their toes towards the sky. A couple of analogies are to picture the linkage on an old steam engine and visualize your foot as the linkage come up and staying flat throughout the revolution of the wheels. The other is to picture an equestrian rider, riding a horse with heels down, while toes are in the stirrups. Toes down is a no, no.

9. **Get on the pedals early:** This means you start pushing forward on the pedals before they reach the top of the arc or 12 o'clock. With your feet flat to slightly toed up/heeled down you'll be able to increase your power band from two to three hours if you look at the face of a clock. With left foot, start pushing at 10 o'clock instead of one o'clock. With toes down it is very difficult to start pushing before the pedals reach 12 o'clock.

8. **Focus on the push phase of the pedal revolution as it is where you produce the most power:** People tend to focus on getting through the dead spot, as if scraping mud off the bottom of their shoes. They spend so much time pulling up and focusing on the weak part of the stroke they forget to push on the pedals, which produces your most power and speed.

10 Top Cycling Technique Tips

7. If you ride with your hands on the tops/flat part of the bars, ALWAYS WRAP YOUR THUMBS: Many people slipped off their bars at the worst time or silliest time, depending on how you look at it, because they didn't have a grip on the bars.

6. Change your hand position on the bars every few minutes, practicing to produce power in the drops, on the hoods, and/or on the tops: This will allow you to adapt neuromuscularly and be able to produce the necessary power when slicing through a head wind or climbing a steep hill.

5. Visit your doctor for an understanding of your cardiovascular fitness and blood work: Getting your cholesterol checked and practicing a cardiac awareness and prevention lifestyle will improve your riding immensely. In addition to knowing your true risk for heart disease, know the warning signs for a heart attack so that you can avoid it.

10 Top Cycling Technique Tips

4. Go slow to go fast!: If you are a rider looking to gain improvement, do a field test or visit a physiologist to help you determine your lactate threshold power and heart rate, and train to improve it. Training in your easier zones below lactate threshold will make you faster all around in the long run or ride, as the case may be.

3. Use your gears and switch them before you get on the hill and have all the tension on the chain and cogs: All that popping and grinding and inability to shift gears under load is normal. You wouldn't shift your manual transmission car without putting the clutch in, so why would you shift a bike without letting up on the pedals a bit? And that goes for shifting in and out of the front chain rings as well as changing cogs on the rear cassette.

10 Top Cycling Technique Tips

2. Keep your head up, and relax your elbows, shoulders, and hands slightly: Keeping your head up too high, with all the tension in your hands, neck, arms, and shoulders, will give you some aches and pains that are unnecessary and put you at risk for erratic handling of the bicycle in adverse conditions. Being loose allows your bike to respond just the right amount to stones, gravel, or wind. Looking where you are going is pretty obvious. After all, you wouldn't walk down the street in NYC looking at the sidewalk just in front of your feet as you'd get mowed down by other pedestrians, taxis, or cars.

1. Perhaps the most important thing to improve a rider's comfort is the position of the saddle: Having a saddle flat to slightly up will keep you from sliding to the front and allow you to be supported by the saddle in the places intended. You may have to lower your seat slightly from where it is now if you notice it pointing down, but you'll also notice all that pressure on your hands, neck, and back gets alleviated a bit.