

Handbook for Promoting a Mid America Time Trial Series (MATTS) Time Trial

The purpose of the WI/IL Cycling Association is to promote safe, inexpensive, grassroots bicycle racing in Illinois and Wisconsin for cyclists of all ages. We strive to provide racing opportunities that:

- Allow new/inexperienced riders who may have never been in a race before, a safe, friendly, unintimidating format to give bike racing a shot.
- Give senior riders options to continue to compete with others closer to their age group and ability level – we have many riders still competing well into their 70’s, 80’s and even 90’s.
- Provide experienced riders accessible, inexpensive chances to train, refine skills and stay sharp.
- In particular, the Mid America Time Trial Series (MATTS) provides all riders the ability to race Time Trials – the “Race of Truth”. Time Trials are simply the best way to experience bike racing for the first time. They are the safest format because riders do not have to deal with an unpredictable “pack” of other riders. And, they are great for experienced riders for building and improving fitness as it’s just you against the clock. You’ll set a PR with your first event and can easily monitor progress by watching improvements in your speed and power output against yourself.

We’re more than a club event in that we provide officials, insurance, structure and awards. But, we’re not trying to be the Tour de France. There will not be many of the “frills” that you find at other larger events. We want to keep our events as simple to run as possible for promoters and as inexpensive as possible for our participants.

This guide is intended to help cycling clubs organize and promote fun, safe, and successful Mid America Time Trial bike races.

Please feel free to contact the WI/IL Cycling Association board if you have any comments or suggestions that might benefit area clubs. We all benefit from having a calendar filled with great races!

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Note, Bob Lundberg also runs American Bicycle Racing (ABR) <http://www.ambikerace.com/> . ABR sanctions our races and provides officials.

The MATTS Season Schedule

The MATTS racing season runs from April through October with outdoor races. We are also planning on including an indoor/virtual series in January through March.

The race schedule is planned in the late fall/early winter. Bob Lundberg has led the process for years keeping the master calendar and soliciting interest and dates from promoters. We plan to formalize this process in the future but for now, please work with Bob if you are interested in promoting a race (abrlund@gmail.com, 708-532-7204) and/or want to firm up a date for the coming year.

Our objective is to publish a “planned” schedule before January 15 each year. We’re finding that racers are planning their schedules earlier and earlier. Other races are publishing confirmed dates and opening registrations six to nine months ahead of their race dates. If we don’t have our schedule out and registration open early, we’ll miss out on many potential participants.

Club Commitment

Holding a great race requires a commitment from an entire host club. Time trials are generally easier to manage than road races and criteriums however, it’s very difficult for one person to put on a great bike race. You’ll need to have an organizing committee willing to devote time over a period of months, as well as many other volunteers.

Make sure that your cycling club understands the overall effort required in putting on a race and that everyone is interested. The task is not impossible, but should not be taken lightly -- be prepared to work hard and learn a lot. It is also very rewarding and a lot of fun when done as a team effort.

If your club is very small, consider partnering with another club. They can help with providing volunteers, promoting the race more broadly than you can on your own and just getting them behind it will guarantee a foundation of racers to participate.

Delegation, Volunteers and Tasks

Delegating the myriad tasks associated with hosting a race is critical to success. The following list of jobs is a good starting point when matching volunteers to tasks. Someone must be assigned to each of these important duties, though some people may handle more than one task (for example one planning task and another on race day). Larger clubs will be able to select members for more specific tasks.

Race Director

This position is responsible for the overall setup of the event and conduct of the event staff, including in part choosing the course, getting permits from municipalities and American Bicycle Racing (ABR), and overseeing the processes of marshaling, hospitality, and course setup and cleanup, to name a few. This person will also work with ABR to be certain officials are scheduled.

Volunteer Coordinator

This position is responsible for the recruitment and management of volunteers for duties within the race, such as course marshaling, registration assistants, course setup and cleanup, and officials/scoring support.

Registration Coordinator

This position is responsible for setting up the registration process in BikeReg, coordinating the on-site registration process, assigning numbers and start times and publishing them for racers prior to the event. If cash will be accepted on-site, this person will accept and manage the cash and be certain to have change available.

Media/Promotional Coordinator

This position is responsible for publishing race information, before and during the event, to the prospective and registered racers, general public, local governments and agencies, and overall driving participation in the race – other clubs, triathletes, local bike shops, runners etc. The Media/Promotional Coordinator will also work with the Race Director to solicit sponsorships.

Course Coordinator

This position is responsible for the setup AND teardown of the racecourse. The Course Coordinator will work with the Race Director, ABR representative and officials to make certain the course is well marked with signs and is as safe as possible (i.e. sweeping corners, marking bad pavement spots etc.) and that there are volunteers at all corners and intersections.

Selecting the Course

Time Trial courses can take many forms including out and back, loop or just about any shape. The MATTS events are typically 10K, 20K, 30K or 40K but do not need to be exact distances. A course that can be easily adjusted to offer a 20K option for the very young and the older riders and a 30K option for those in the middle can be an attractive option for racers.

Safety is the utmost importance so courses should be in locations where there will be minimal traffic, minimal cross roads and stop signs and offer smooth road surfaces. A clockwise loop which eliminates left turns which force racers to cross the traffic lane can be preferable.

Other important considerations include adequate parking, a good location for race HQ/on-site registration and rest rooms. A wider road area for the start and finish like that provides space for officials to park a car and for riders to line up for the race is critical.

Courses located nearer to population centers tend to attract more participants than the most remote courses.

Budget

You will want to begin a budget for your race before you first place your bid date. Make sure that your team won't lose money by holding the race. A good race can reap decent financial rewards for your team, but this requires careful planning and sponsors. You want to carefully estimate your attendance, as this is your primary income. The biggest expenses will probably be police and port-a-potties (don't skimp here, as both are critical to having a good race), but don't forget the little things. Past examples of race budgets are included in Appendix A.

Some budget items to consider:

Income

- Entry fees (~\$30)
- Late fees (between \$5-10)
- Sponsorships

Expenses

- ABR permit - \$XX
- Insurance (\$X per rider per day)
- Officials
- Venue rental fee (school or other public building)
- Medical support
- Police
- Printing flyers, race packets, proposals
- Phone use (the organizer will appreciate reimbursement)
- Rentals (port-a-potties, tents, scaffolding, etc)
- Barricades, signs, and other equipment for course marking
- Refreshments & lunch for all volunteers

(See Appendix A for additional expense items)

Course Inspection

All first-time race venues should have a course inspection prior to race approval. This should happen no less than 8 weeks before race day and will be conducted by ABR (or designee). The inspector will provide feedback and any changes that need to be made in order to approve the course for racing. Items such as the number of marshals, local law enforcement needed and mitigations for any hazards on the course such as railroad tracks or pot holes. Any existing courses that have significant changes in it will also be subject to inspection by the Chief Referee.

Course Markings

For road races and time trials, the following key spots should be marked on the course:

- Staging - where the riders will stage prior to the start of the race.
- Start line

- All turns should be clearly marked as well as “no turn” if there is a question
- 1km to Finish & .5K to Finish
- Finish line

Planning Timetable

6+ months before the race (as early as possible) – usually November/December:

- Read this handbook and make sure that your club is up to the task of hosting a race
- Pick a desired date
- Select the race course(s) and Identify backup venue(s)
- Start the process of getting permission to hold the race, which includes at minimum:
 - Check with local police and/or highway department for permission to use roads (permission from both may be required for some on events)
 - Check with local business for conflicting events
 - Check with local government offices (town council, dept of traffic & parking, etc.)
- Reach out to Bob Lundberg at ABR to confirm date and schedule course inspection.

4-6 months before the race:

- Get a spot on the MATTS and ABR Calendars
- Set up a race budget (see Budget section above for general info, and Appendix A for samples)
- Contact ABR to confirm availability of officials.
- Have the race course(s) approved by ABR.
- Contact potential sponsors for cash or product
- Make a flyer to distribute promoting the race
- Set up online registration through Bikereg.com.

2 months before the race:

- Make sure that all of your venue permits have been approved
- ABR Cycling Event Permit should be filed at least 8 weeks out from the start of the event.
- Verify the number of police officers assigned to your race
- Check your race budget to make sure that expenses will be covered

4 weeks before the race:

- Stay in touch with all police departments
- Stay in touch with all local organizations
- Maintain a folder with all race permits that you will bring to the race
- Obtain permission to use facilities for the race (parking, restrooms, locker rooms, etc.) order port-potties if needed.
- Find access to electrical power if needed at the start/finish
- Obtain medical support services
- Notify all residents and/or businesses who will be inconvenienced by the race
- Inform the media (good team promotional value, write something yourself if necessary)
- Recruit needed volunteers.

2 weeks before the race:

- Have an all-hands meeting to see if everything is ready and progressing as planned
- Identify any potential issues and divide the work to accomplish any remaining tasks

The week of the race:

- Inform residents and businesses again (they will have forgotten, and don't want a surprise)
- Hold a call for race marshals / support workers so they know what to do
- Obtain all necessary equipment for the race (signs, start/finish supplies, brooms, etc...)

2 days before the race:

- Check in with police departments to confirm scheduling and details
- Check in with all local organizations to confirm scheduling and details
- Gather race setup supplies (brooms, shovels, registration supplies, etc. - see Race Day Supplies & Suggestions section for details)

1 day before the race:

- Sweep the course of sand, glass, and other debris, paying special attention to corners
- Put up signs directing racers to parking
- Get \$1's, \$5's and \$10's for change

Race day:

- Sweep the course again
- Finish course setup (check that corners are still clean, cover sewer grates with plywood, put up course signs, etc.)
- Deal with any course obstructions like parked cars that need to be moved
- Make sure that you bring all of the permits to the race
- Set up registration area (table, chairs, cashbox WITH CHANGE, pens, plenty of all entry and license forms, etc.)
- Set up start / finish areas (put line on road, put up 1K and 500K signs.)
- Remember to bring snacks for volunteers.

After the race:

- Clean up
- Return all borrowed supplies
- Send race summary to sponsors and media

Basic Race Policies

There are some basic policies that all ABR races need to follow:

- Everybody gets to race
- XXXX
- XXXX
- Port-a-johns or other restroom facilities must be available near start/finish and/or parking area

- Rough rule of thumb: At least one port-a-john per 75 racers
- Extra TP! More than whatever amount you think!

Flyers

See appendix for flyer template. Add info for working with Andrew Alcala if in place for another year.

Schedule

Template to be added with suggested order of racers

Volunteers

You will need:

- Corner marshals
- Registration workers
- Volunteers to go out and sweep the course the evening before the race
- A cleanup crew to make sure all facilities are left in good order (trash collection, sign pick up)
- Ask service organizations, or service fraternities/sororities. They will need a lot of advance notice, but are often looking for things like this to do. Talk to the local Boy Scouts, high school teams, etc.

Race Day

Race Day Supplies & Suggestions

Things you will need to have at the race (see the section on Supplies for more details on some items):

- Marshals (lots of them, in shifts)
- Vests for course workers
- Tables and chairs for registration
- Preregistration materials
- Cash box
- Numbers and pins
- Blank release forms
- Pens
- Clipboards
- Port-a-potties (if you don't have indoor facilities)
- Duct tape to mark finish line on road
- 1 K and 500 meter signs for road or circuit races

- Brooms (for last minute corner sweeping)
- Tent or some similar shelter for officials and registration in case of poor weather
- Food for marshals, workers, and officials (very important!)