

My First Bike Race

What the rest of the pack wishes you knew but was afraid to tell you...

A USAC WEBINAR



Kristen Dieffenbach, Ph.D., CC AASP

Miles to Cover Tonight

- Considering a race?
 - Before your first race
- At the races
 - During the race
- After the race



By Jeff Mallett

To Race or Not to Race...

We just can't help it




30000 or more strong Madison Road Race, a 47-mile amateur men's held in Buffalo, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society

Bike Racing in America

- Track racing – Madison Square Garden
 - Marshall W. "Major" Taylor
- Long distance records
- First Mountain Bike Race
- ABLA → USCF → USA Cycling
 - Amateur Bicycle League of America incorporated in 1921

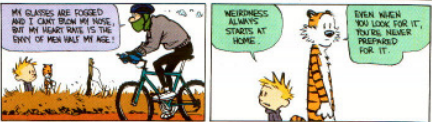


Before Your First Race




"If you've never watched a race, don't. Just enter."
-- Jacquie Phelen

Why Race?



Calvin & Hobbes by Bill Watterson



Tundra by Chad Carpenter

Why Race?

- Cardiovascular benefits
- Low impact on joints
- Improve body composition
- Enhance muscular strength
- Enhance endurance
- Increase energy
- Enjoy the outdoors
- Great family activity
- Improve mood
- Competition

"BICYCLE RACERS LOVE LIVING ON THE EDGE. THEY NEED TO KNOW THE EXTREMES OF THEIR PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS, AND ENJOY LIVING BEYOND THEM."
- ERIC HEIDEN

"There's a feeling that you can only get from racing and finishing - the feeling of pushing yourself beyond what you're capable of doing in training. It's about achieving the ultimate physical accomplishment - and you can't feel that on the sidelines" --Ned Overend

"I like cyclocross because it's a spastic scurry just like my life."
-- Lisa Mubich

"Racing for me acts as a form of meditating. It raises my self-esteem and gives me great satisfaction - just knowing that I'm overcoming big odds and doing something that most women wouldn't do. I'd rather be out riding my bike than shopping in a mall!" -- Kathy Sessler

Getting Started



Types of Racing – Pick your Pain

Road Racing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criterium • Time Trial • Road Race <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circuit • Point to point 	Velodrome (Track racing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole 'nother webinar
Mountain Bike Racing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-country (XC) • Downhill 	Cyclocross Racing (CX) BMX Racing Other & Off the beaten trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collegiate categories • Ultras

Where does a beginner start?

- Road, Cyclocross, & Track Events
 - Men - category 5 event
 - Women - category 4 event
- Mountain Bike Events
 - Men - category 3 event
 - Women - category 3 event
- Collegiate Racers
 - Self selection but suggested to start in D/E (men)/ D/C (women)
- Juniors (under 18 years old)
 - Special junior only events
 - Can race in adult category 5 (men) or category 4 (women)

**Unsure about racing?
Consider starting with a
community cycling event
or charity ride first**

USAC Racing License

One day
\$10 a day - sign up at site
Can only race in the entry level category

Seasonal Racing License


- \$60/year per license
 - \$30 for juniors under 18 years old
 - \$30 for collegiate season only (collegiate racers)
- Yearly license (Jan 1 - Dec 31) - not prorated
- Purchase at www.usacycling.org
- Print a copy of your receipt in case license doesn't arrive in time for race

My USA Cycling – membership perks

- Personal online account
 - Be sure to fill in emergency contact here!
- See upcoming events in your area
- Keep track of your results and rankings
- Access to exclusive member benefits

Where to Race

- USA Cycling Race Lists
<http://www.usacycling.org/>
- Local Race Lists
 - Check at your local bike shop
 - Local fitness newspaper/magazine
 - Regional websites



Joining a Team

Do I need a team?

- Community
- Car pool
- Mentors
- Discounts

Finding a team

- Local shop
- Ask around

What not to expect from a team

- The pro experience!!

Proper Bike Fit for Racing

- What kind of riding will you be doing?
- Consider your flexibility & history
- Stand over height
- Distance to the handlebars
- Safety and comfort
- Have a professional help you & test ride!
- Fit the bike to you – not you to the bike!
- Don't copy a pro fit

Are you in shape?

- If you are new to training, it's been awhile, or have any health concerns—see a doctor first.
- Can you go the distance? Have you?
- Know the course and prepare for the challenges.

What to Wear to Race



Cycling Shorts

- Fitted
- Padded
- Different leg lengths

Kit should be

- Clean
- Intact



Cycling Jersey

- Fitted
- Pockets in back
- Zippered front
- Sleeves

More Things to Wear

- Shoes – sneakers vs. specialty shoes
- Socks – deal with the tan lines
- Gloves – wear them
- Eyewear – A MUST!
- Sunscreen – A MUST!




- Cotton
- The 'pro' kit
- Sleeveless shirts
- Hairy legs
- Underwear



Mandatory Gear Helmet!

- How old is your chapeau?
- The importance of proper fit
- Helmet care
- Must be worn at **all** times when on bike at sanctioned races (even on your spin to check in)



Optional Gear to consider...

- HR monitor/ power toys
- Jacket/ vest
- Arm & leg warmers
- Skull cap/ hat
- Full fingered gloves



Is your bike in shape?

<p>Is your rig race-worthy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your equipment reliable and good shape? • Have a professional check up • Learn what to check 	<p>Night before a race</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually check tires • Handlebar, wheel skewer & brake bolt tightness • Lube (not overlube) chain • Check tire pressure
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



Things You Should Know BEFORE You Race



Calvin & Hobbes by Bill Watterson

Things to Practice *(please...)*


- Getting into your pedals
- Riding a straight steady line
- Eating and drinking safely
- Passing safely
- Cornering
- Holding a wheel properly
- Descending
- Changing a wheel out/flat
- Standing smoothly
- Shifting smoothly

How to practice?

- Make it a part of your daily training
- Take a skills course
- Create your own skills course
- Ride rollers
- Ask an experienced rider for help

What your cheering section should know....

- Stand clear of the course
 - Hay bales and barricades are there for a reason
- Be enthusiastic!
- No help allowed – *except* proper feed
- Do **NOT** cross the race course in front of riders
- Volunteer help is almost always welcome
 - check in at the registration desk first



Know the race rules

USA Cycling Rule Book in effect at ALL USA Cycling sanctioned events

Full rule book at http://www.usacycling.org/forms/USAC_rulebook.pdf

Recognize the officials




At the Race



Your Race Bag – Pack the Night before!

Always In Your Race Bag

- Health insurance card information
- Important phone numbers list
- Safety pins
- Water bottles
- Ibuprofen / allergy meds/ inhaler etc.
- Dry t-shirt
- Plastic bags – for wet soggy stuff
- Patch kit & spare tubes
- Multi-tool or travel tool box
- Small bottle of chain lube
- Waterproof sunscreen
- Chamois cream

Personal Stuff Not to be Forgotten

- Racing license
- Money / checkbook
- Signed waiver (especially if minor)
- Cell phone

For the Race


- Jersey
- Undershirt
- Team shorts
- Gloves
- Helmet
- Shoes
- Socks
- Sports bra (if applicable)
- Pre mixed or ready to mix bottles/ hydration system
- Food (for pre, during, & post event)
- Glasses and spare lenses
- *And don't forget even if the weather is warm – especially for spring and fall races!!*
- Rain jacket
- Arm/leg/knee warmers
- Warm jacket for warm up
- Tights
- Warm hat

For Post Race

- Dry change of clothes – including socks
- Towel, rubbing alcohol, baby wipes, etc. for cleaning up

Getting there

- NO last minute position or part changes
- Consider taking a cooler
- Double check bikes are secure on the rack
 - And don't forget to put the front wheel in!
- Arrive early – parking may not be easy
- Be extra mindful of cyclists as you approach race area
- Come early to watch other races



Checking In


- Pre-register – many races fill up
- Sign in early – they will not hold the race
- Have your license in hand, cash or check made out
- If you ride your bike – wear your helmet
- Provide an emergency contact who is available during the time of the race
- Beware the swag bag samples

Pinning on your race number

- **Do Not** crumple, cut, fold, spindle or otherwise alter your race numbers!
- Check at registration for how numbers should be pinned to jersey or put on bike
- Be sure to pin on well and to only outer layer
 - Do it yourself with jersey off
 - Have someone else do it while you are in forward aero position (meet someone new?)
 - 6-8 pins minimize wind flap
 - Be sure it is visible and doesn't interfere with pocket access

Pre Race Bike Double Check

- Tires pressure?
- Front wheel secure?
- Water bottle cages secure?
- Brakes free?
- Computer working?



What to take with you in the race...


Patch Kit


Levers


Tube


Bottle(s)


Pump*


Multi tool

Things to leave behind

- Cell phone
- Camera
- Pump* (*depends on type of race – see if it is allowed)
- An obsession with HR or power numbers

Key Rules To Know (just a start)

Road Riding

- Yellow line rule
- Wheel van?

Mountain Biking

- No outside help
- Passing



DON'T MISS the pre race instructions – listen carefully!!

Unsure? Unclear on a Rule?
Ask the Officials

criterium Racing

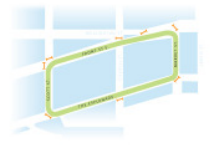
- No pump on bike
- Free-lap rule

General

- Feed zones
- Mixed fields

Pre race personal preparation: Know the course

- Inspect the course
 - Look at the map
 - Walk part or all of it
- Check last few miles to the finish
- Check the starting 'hole shot'
- Note a finish landmark



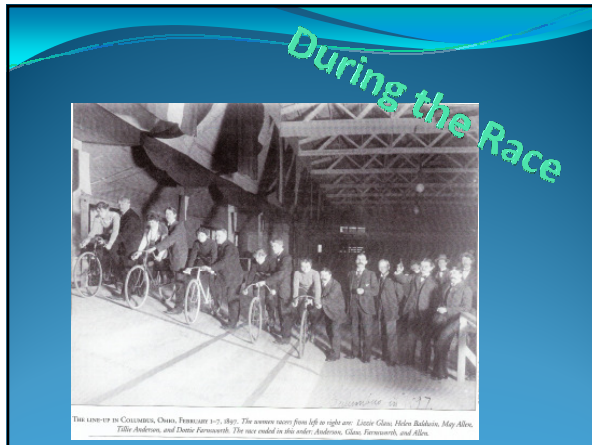
NOTE: DO NOT interfere with other races & stay off the course if other races are in progress! And **NEVER** ride backwards on an open course!

Pre race personal preparation: Fueling Up

- Ideally proper race nutrition and hydration starts several days before a race – full tank
- Hydration
 - Have warm up bottles and race bottles
- Nutrition
 - A quality meal
 - A pre race snack

Pre race personal preparation: Warming Up

- Warm up well
 - Ideally should start at least 1 hour prior
 - Try to get to start line ready to go
 - Have a practiced warm up routine
 - Take a trainer?
 - If it is very cold or very hot, consider a kit change between warm up and the start of the race
- Plan to get to the starting line 10-15 minutes before the start
 - Yes, a front row position is key for a great start but be sure you are confident about your start!
 - Stand next to bike until last minute – stretch if possible



Who's in charge?

- Chief Referee, Commissaire, Course Marshal
- Get to know them
- Be respectful
- Their word goes!



Ready, Set,

- Listen carefully to the start official for pre-race instructions
- The start
 - "Riders ready" and a gunshot.
 - DON'T mess with starting your computer
 - Concentrate on riding forward
- Pay attention to those around you and keep your eyes up
 - (Don't panic if you can't get clipped in right away – ride the top of the pedal to get some speed up)
- Be prepared for a fast start. Hold on and the pace often settles in.
- Avoid the back of the field.
 - Crashes
 - Getting gapped off

Between points A and B

- Stay hydrated no matter how long the race is
- Nutrition is key for races 1 hour or longer
- Try to stay in the pack and on a wheel
- Strive to stay in the top 1/2 to 1/3rd of the pack
- Don't be a hero
- Be proactive rather than reactive
- Avoid sudden or unexpected movements
- Keep your eyes open for obstacles and be sure to alert others
- If you get dropped, keep going
 - but stay far right and obey all road signs

Between points A and B- part 2

- In a criterium race, riders off the back may get pulled for safety- respect and obey the official
- Be prepared for mid race 'races'. Stay near the front even if you aren't going for the prize
 - Primes (lap prizes in criteriums) -- As the pack passes the start/finish the officials will announce a prime prize for the first rider across the line next lap.
 - KOM/QOM (top of the hill prize in road events) --will be announced and noted on the race map prior to the start of the race.

Race Etiquette

Ride Smoothly

- Shifting
 - Know your gear options
 - Avoid shifting under tension
 - Know how to finesse shifters
- Braking
 - Feather the rear
 - The front has main stopping power - use with care
- RPM/ cadence
 - Strive for steady spin

Pack Etiquette & Safety

- Never sit up or take both hands off bars in pack
- If you need to remove a layer or do something complicated → go to back!
- Keep your cool
- Communicate
- Don't overlap wheels/ half-wheel
- Maintain a steady pace
- Point out hazards
- Don't brake without warning
- Maintain a steady line
- Obey the yellow line rule
- Don't be a dangle

Nutrition & Hydration

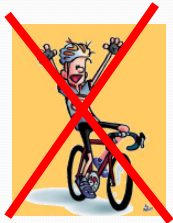
- Nutrition
 - What to eat?
 - How much?
 - When?
- Hydration
 - What to drink?
 - How much?
 - When?

What do I do if....

- I have a flat or other mechanical?
 - Wheel van/ free lap/ fix it yourself?
- I have to drop out of the race (DNF)?
 - Let the race officials/registration know
- I crash or someone else crashes?
 - On site medical care
 - Check bike carefully if considering getting back on
 - Criterium - may be eligible for free lap
- I feel that something was unfair or against the rules?
 - Talk with the lead official after the race
 - Official protest time ends 15 minutes after results are posted
 - Stay calm, be respectful

Wrapping it up – safely!

- Lap Cards are used in circuit, mountain bike and criterium races
 - When cards show 1 to go & bell is rung → Next lap finish!
- Hold your straight line going into the finish
 - Do NOT** dive, swerve or throw your bike.
 - Do NOT** take your hands off the bars
- If you are out of contention for the finish
 - Do NOT** sprint.
- Stay alert to those around you



After Your First Race



The race isn't over until...

Don't bug the officials for results, they will be posted in 10-20 minutes.

Be respectful and calm if you have a question or concern

If you feel something inappropriate happened in race, must protest within 15 minutes after YOUR finish

There is a 15 minute protest period AFTER results are posted if you feel the results are incorrect.

After the race

- Cool down properly
- Get out of chamois asap
- EAT/HYDRATE
- Don't forget the 'thank you's'

Honest post race evaluation

- Keep it in perspective!
- Meet other riders – introduce yourself
- Getting dropped isn't the end of the world
- Watch and learn
- Talk to others
- Keep a log



Don't forget the post race bike care

- ❖ Clean
- ❖ Lubricate properly
- ❖ Replace cables and brakes?
- ❖ Inspect frame



Choose a shop to do it for you if you must but knowing your own bike is important...


Don't feel ready yet?

Everyone, even the elite riders, are always learning...

Things you can do to become a true student of the sport

- Hire a coach
- Enroll in a clinic
- Join a club
- Read a book
- Watch races
- Most importantly –

Get Out and Ride!!!!



Your Dad'll give your bike back when he realises he won't qualify for 2012....

© Original Artist
Reproduction rights obtainable from
www.CartoonStock.com

Ultimately, bike racing is a sport of passion and of patience....



Remember
We all start somewhere

Thank you

Please feel free to contact me with any questions
kristen.dieffenbach@mail.wvu.edu

