

Are You a Competent Racer?

A Checklist for New and Novice Racers

Adapted from USAC Athlete Competency Statement, 2003

This checklist is associated with the first 2 years of racing experience, typically USAC Cat 4 and 5 racers. Athletes coming from other sports, could increase the conditioning and training recommendations to match their ability levels.

The focus in this phase should be on:

- ▶ Exposure to the sport
- ▶ Introduction to all disciplines of racing
- ▶ General fitness
- ▶ Development of racing skills
- ▶ Some competition

Use this checklist to see how many racing skills you have mastered, and to identify areas in which you still need experience to achieve competency.

Competition

- Knows and abides by rules of USAC, CRCA, and race promoter
- Is familiar with the patterns and general strategy of the event
- Develops proper warm up pattern for the event
- Competes in appropriate races
- Competes in quantity of events
- Participates in competitions for the purpose of skill development
- Understands basic format for each event
- Understands basic tactics for each event
- Trains using race situations
- Knows the course before training rides or races

Conduct

- Demonstrates good sportsmanship
- Respects opponents, coaches, officials and teammates
- Develops on good communication skills
- Demonstrates good time management skills
- Demonstrates good personal organization
- On time for all training sessions and competitions
- Has necessary equipment for the training session or competition
- All equipment is in proper working order
- Understands being part of a team/Club and how actions and behaviors affect others
- Avoids misbehavior
- Takes responsibility for attendance, preparation and performance
- Contributes to group activities
- Cooperates with others

General Conditioning and Fitness

- Focusing on overall development
- Focusing on conditioning
- Total training volume 8–15 hours
- Eats an athlete friendly diet (high carbohydrate, moderate protein, and low fat)
- Understands poor diet can adversely affect performance
- Identifies healthy foods and eating habits
- Makes informed decisions about pre, during and post race training foods
- Understands the importance of proper hydration during training, competition and rest

- Remains properly hydrated
- Develops a pre-race routine of effective habits
- Develops effective training habits for successful race preparation

Goal Setting

- Develops measurable and specific goals with a time frame
- Develops short-term, intermediate and long term goals
- Understands that outcome is not always the best measure of a goal
- Develops result, outcome, process, and performance goals
- Reviews goals on a frequent basis

Health

- Maintains healthy and safe lifestyle
- Avoids use of banned performance enhancement products
- Practices preventative medicine such as wearing sunscreen
- Understands the difference between soreness pain and injury pain
- Can recognize potentially dangerous situations
- Communicates honestly about possible injuries
- Receives medical clearance before returning to training following injury or illness

Psychology

- Maintains a positive athletic lifestyle
- Develops social skills through cycling
- Balances life and racing
- May use imagery to practice chosen outcomes

Psychology (cont.)

- Integrates both result, process, and performance goals in training and racing
- Understands mistakes are a part of racing
- Focuses on controllable elements of racing
- Keeps competition in proper perspective
- Accepts defeat and learns from it
- Understands relationship between nervousness and performance
- Understands relationship between relaxation and performance
- Understands and controls one's effective and ineffective arousal levels
- Uses positive self-talk and reduces negative self-talk
- May develop one or two specific cues to help concentration and focus
- Actively attempts to improve and learn
- Focuses on task at hand

Safety

- Obeys all NYC traffic, Central Park, and CRCA laws, rules, and guidelines
- Understands clothing selection for all conditions and the impact of proper clothing
- Wears a helmet when commuting, training, and racing

Racing Skills

- Mounting and dismounting the bike
- Proper mass start clip-in technique
- Balanced riding when looking over either shoulder

- Ability to ride with no hands in a controlled manner
- Drinking from water bottle and hydration system while riding, in all conditions
- Eating while riding, in all conditions
- Out of saddle riding technique
- Gears and gear selection based on event, course, etc
- Gear shifting
- Ability to use front and rear brakes effectively, in all conditions
- Emergency braking methods
- Bunny hopping
- Proper cornering techniques
- Touching drills with a partner
- Bumping drills with a partner
- Wheel touching recovery
- Safe drafting technique
- Race safely in a peloton or group
- Riding safely in small group pace lines and echelons
- Fast pace line ride with at least 5 riders
- Participates in 2x2 riding
- Maintains contact with peloton
- Stays close to front of peloton
- Knows how to receive a wheel change from neutral support

Training Knowledge

- Correct bike fit and position
- Basic cleaning and bike repairs
- Focuses on skill development
- Develops skills needed for cycling

- Understands the basic components of a training session
- Understands & uses a systematic training plan
- Understands periodization
- Understands intensity and recovery
- Understand the difference between “hard” and “easy” days
- Understands the importance of rest
- Uses a proper warm up
- Uses a proper cool down
- Uses a proper flexibility program
- Develops specific warm up plans for training and competition
- Understands metrics (HR, power, etc.) and training zones
- Develops methods to monitor training
- Training diary
- Keeps medical records to assist in monitoring of training and health

Sponsorship/Club skills

- Recognizes importance of developing positive relationship with the media, sponsors, Club
- Thinks about how statements will be received before speaking
- Cleaned up with fresh jersey or jacket (with sponsor logos) before media or podium presentation
- Speaks positively of competitors
- Displays sponsor logos prominently
- Thanks sponsors
- Interacts positively with sponsors, media, fans, and racing community