



Fairbanks Cycle Club

PO Box 83424, Fairbanks Alaska, 99708
<http://www.fairbankscycleclub.org>

Event Hosting - The Basics

Thanks for putting on an FCC ride/race! Here's about all you really need to do:

1. Talk to an FCC Board Member about the course.
2. Promote the event.
3. Get prizes together (optional).
4. Get volunteers for timing, start area, on course, etc. (for races)
5. Get refreshments (optional).
6. Mark the course (for races).
7. Put on the event.
8. Create press release with interesting blurb and results, and post in FCC Forum (for races)
9. Take down the course (for races).
10. Return all paper materials, results, press release, course markers and all other FCC property to club officer.

That's it. The rest of the following pages are just details about the above steps.



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Course Selection:

Generally, this is the first thing to do. Most of the time, it is the inspiration for the race or ride in the first place. You think, wow, this would make a great course, I should put on a race here!

Figure out the start area, the finish area (often the same place as the start, but not necessary) and parking/staging.

It's a good idea to look at the course well ahead of time, so you know if there are any issues like road damage or paving, or a house being built in the middle of a trail.

If yours is a off-road race, that's about it. Talk to a FCC Board Member (preferably the person in charge of permitting and insurance) and let them know your plans. There might be a few changes to make, but maybe not.

If your race/ride is a road event, be really sure of the course. Drive or ride the whole thing and know where the intersections, stop signs and yield signs are. Make a sketch of the course showing start / stop, parking, the intersections and such. Chat with the board member in charge of permitting. Getting the permits can take a while, so try to give six weeks lead time.



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Promotion:

Promoting your event should be done no less than two weeks in advance, sooner if you feel like it. The more you promote it, the more folks will attend. Put up flyers at all local bike shops, and at athletic centers. Send a written bit of hype to the News-Miner a week or so before the event, along these lines:

"The Fairbanks Cycle Club's (-race-name-here) is scheduled for December 1st, at midnight. The course is 700 miles long and follows the Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers, with a side trip down the Nile. Entry is free to club members, and \$5.00 for non-members. Meet at the big parking area near the lodge in Circle at 11am for registration. For more information, visit the FCC website at www.fairbankscycleclub.org."

Make it sound good, and make it sound appealing to the crowd that you are targeting.

Be sure to tell everyone you know about it, send emails, use social networking, etc. Be creative, and if you find that something worked particularly well, tell us.

Be sure to contact the club officer or volunteer(s) in charge of the club website so that they have up-to-date info on your event.

Prizes:

Get creative. Sure, everyone can use new tubes, degreaser, lube, etc. Keep in mind that people like to eat (gift certificate to Gambordellas?), read (gift certificate to Gullivers?), and go shopping (gift certificate to Fred Meyers?). The more imaginative you are, the better.

If you can, have enough to go around, so that everyone gets something. It's fun to give stuff to your participants.



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Volunteers:

Casual rides generally don't need any volunteers. Short mountain bike races will just need two or three folks on timing, road events will also need people at trick intersections and turn-around points, and longer races need all that plus you may want some aid-station volunteers.

It's best to err on the side of having too many volunteers rather than not enough. Just be sure to reward your volunteers with snacks, beverages, and some prize booty, so they'll agree to help again in the future.

Make sure your volunteers understand their duties clearly. FCC has high-visibility orange vests that volunteers can wear. Ask your club officer about getting these vests with the course markers.

Refreshments:

What good is any sort of an event without food and drink, right?

The longer the event, the more elaborate your offering should be. Keep the weather in mind. If it is damn hot, bring cool refreshing drinks and fruit on ice in a cooler or two. If it is damn cold, consider hot beverages: coffee, tea and hot chocolate.

Some ideas – melon, pineapple, bananas, oranges; cookies, chips, pretzels; fruit drinks, water, soda, even beer; ice cream if you can manage it. We've even seen sandwich fixings and hot dogs, brats and hamburgers on a gas grill. Potato salad? Why not?

You don't have to go all out, but the better the offering, the more fun people will think that they had.

The club will generally reimburse your refreshment expenses (within reason), so don't think that this all has to come out of your pocket.



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Mark the course: (day of event, one or two days before)

This is vitally important. You do NOT want people making the wrong turn or getting lost.

If your event is a simple road ride (from UAF Patty Center to Old Nenana Highway on the Parks Highway and back, for example), you probably don't need to mark it, if your riders are all familiar with the area, and there isn't a huge crowd. If you expect 50 or more riders, half of whom you don't know, consider at least a turnaround sign or cone.

Road races need at least start and finish cones, cautionary signs for vehicular traffic so that motorists are alerted to bicycles on the road, and possibly even some direction arrows or chalk markings on the roadway. You can generally mark a road race mere hours before the race, because you can drive the entire course.

Mountain bike races should have the start and finish clearly marked, and a generous dose of direction arrows and pin flags throughout the course. Typically, a mountain bike race course is marked the day before the event because it takes quite a while to accomplish. Just be sure to leave adequate time between marking and the race. You don't want the racers catching up with the marker.

When marking a course, don't use anything permanent like paint, and don't destroy or harm people's property. If you are crossing private property, be sure to get the owners permission.



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Put on the event:

You've done all the preparatory work, now comes the fun part: the event itself. If it is just a ride, skip down to "Rider's Meeting".

If race registration is at 6:30 PM, be at the registration area at 6 PM. Some folks will arrive early, and you need setup time.

Everyone has to be a club member, which they should have already taken care of online. People who aren't members must sign the "Entry and Release Form" and pay \$5.00 (insurance fee). You may opt to have everyone sign an "Entry and Release Form".

Stuff to have on hand: release forms, bib numbers, sign-in form, and race results forms, and some blank paper. Bib numbers are handy to assist your timing crew in identifying racers. Clipboards are handy, as is a table. See the FCC website for forms, see a FCC officer for other materials.

Rider's Meeting

As people are signing in, tell them what time the rider's meeting is at. A few minutes before the meeting, after everyone is signed in and paperwork is done, yell "Rider's meeting! - Two minutes!" and get folks assembled. Finally, yell "Rider's meeting!", and get down to it.

Ask if anyone isn't a club member, or hasn't signed the release form. Explain the course, including the start and finish areas. Describe (and show) the markers you've used on the course, and explain any particular hazards. Resist the temptation to be super detailed - racers won't remember such stuff. A course map might be a handy thing to have on hand. Ask if there are any questions, then announce that the race will start in five minutes or one minute, or whatever is appropriate.

Tell your racers that when riding on or crossing roads, they have to observe all rules of the road, which includes stopping at stop signs, yielding where appropriate, and so on. Alaska statutes require that while on a public road, cyclists ride as far to the right as safely possible, and ride no more than two abreast. The biggie? The only time that a cyclist can cross the yellow line is when crossing the road.



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In a mass start, your timing person gives a countdown: "One minute! Thirty seconds! 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, GO!" and starts the timer. Everyone takes off, and the timing person(s) proceed to the finish area and wait, having some idea of when to expect the first racers.

If you are doing a time trial, see the sheet on Time Trials.

When racers start coming in, your timing crew needs to record the racers finish time on the race results sheet next to the rider's name and/or number. This can be tricky when many racers are coming in, so the easiest thing to do is record the finish order (either names or bib numbers) and punch the "lap" button on the timer whenever someone comes in. You can then correlate the order to the stored times, when you have a moment.

When the race is done, recheck and collate the results. Then, with great aplomb, announce the results to the racers staggering around the refreshment area. Award prizes however you see fit, being sure to treat your volunteers to good booty!



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Time Trials:

A time trial is a race (road race, typically) wherein racers are pitted against the clock in a staggered start (instead of a mass start.) Drafting is not allowed.

Instead of a mass start, racers are started individually at regular intervals apart (one minute interval makes for easiest math). Racers are "seeded", in approximate order of speed, with slowest riders going first, and fastest riders going last. This gives everyone someone to chase for at least part of the race, and means that everyone will be finishing fairly close together.

Start: Announce the starting order, and get riders lined up. The timing person starts the timer, and announces that the first racer goes out in one minute. A grip volunteer holds the racer's bike upright, and lets go when the timing person counts down to zero: "5, 4, 3, 2, 1 GO!" The timing person announces the next few riders names or number, the next racer pulls up to the start line, and the process is repeated until all racers have gone out.

Finish: The timing person will stand at the finish cone or finish line, and press "lap" on the timer, recording time that the racer goes by. FCC owns a timer with a printer that helps out in this process. Another volunteer records the bib numbers. Because racers are finishing close together, it is best to have two or three people at the finish area to help identify racers. When you have a breather, put the times next to each corresponding bib number.

Subtract the start delay time from the finishing time for each rider, and this is the elapsed time. It's best to ask for a sanity check on the math. Collate the results and announce!



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Create press release: (day of event)

This is a quick little step that makes a lot of difference. People like to see their name in print, and it also helps boost awareness of our club. Write up a creative summary of the race, including a colorful description of the course, throw in a few quotes from racers, and mention the top finishers and their times. Include any interesting stories from the race ("Elderly statesman racer Doug Burnside crashed when a brake cable stopped his front wheel. Undaunted, he rode his bike to the finish line in 2:06:14, despite breaking his neck in the crash.")

Include a complete list of racers and their times, broken down by whatever categories you want to use. View some examples in the race results section of the FCC website: www.fairbankscycleclub.org, or in the race results forum: www.fairbankscycleclub.org/Forum .

Post the race results in the FCC Race Results Forum (along with some photos.) You can also submit your press release to sports@newsminer.com, with your text in the body of the message. A PDF of the race results would probably be acceptable. If you have some race photos send those along.

Take down the course: (day of event, if possible)

We want the course markers back. Try not to excessively mangle the pin flags, or damage the arrows and other course markers. The pin flags can be straightened out, so please do this before returning them. When collecting the course markers, look for race litter and pick it up. Leave nothing but tracks so that we are welcome back next time.

Return everything: (as soon as you can)

Easy. Just give everything back to the club officer that you got everything from. We reuse a lot of stuff, including this document.

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Hopefully you find that you enjoy putting on events, and will want to do more of it!