

# BMX Freestyle Park Event Organisation

## Guidelines for National and Regional Events

### Introduction

This brief document provides useful advice to national federations about how to organise a successful BMX Freestyle Park event at the national or regional level.

These points are meant to provide guidance while maintaining some flexibility; the situation is different in each country. As such, the material contained within is more advice rather than a strict set of requirements.

Other important points of reference include:

- The UCI BMX Freestyle Regulations (available here: <http://www.uci.ch/inside-uci/rules-and-regulations/regulations/>)
- The laws of the country or region where the event will take place. This is particularly relevant with regard to medical / first aid arrangements and event insurance

In case you have questions, we invite you to contact the UCI:

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### Important Considerations for BMX Freestyle Park Events

- When can the event take place?
- Where can the event take place?
- Who is needed for the event to succeed?
- What are the important tasks, materials and considerations for the event to succeed?

### When can the event take place?

#### Time of Day

Events can be held at any time of day, though of course, night events will need adequate lighting. It is important that lighting is good enough so that there are no shadows within the park which could confuse riders. Likewise, avoiding low-light conditions towards dusk is important.

## **Weather**

BMX Freestyle Park can only take place when the surface of the park is dry. Events can take place either indoors or outdoors, so if the time of the year calls for rain, going indoors is a good idea if a suitable venue is available.

In case of an outdoor event, it is wise to have a supply of tarps to cover the ramps in case of a rain shower. Also, squeegees, brooms, and towels can be used to quickly dry up the ramps after the rain.

## **Event Dates**

At the early stages of integration, not all events might be on the national federation calendar. It is wise to check within the community to see what else is happening (if any) on the proposed dates for the event. Instead of doing two BMX Freestyle events at the same date, it's better to have them a few weeks apart for people to ride at both events. It helps the BMX community. Likewise, this will help to build a stronger link to the freestyle community, which results in a stronger calendar and more events.

## **Where can the event take place?**

### **Field of Play**

It is possible to use an existing action sports park (skatepark/bike park) depending on the size of it and the type of ramps present. The advantage of using an existing park is that you do not have to build up an entire park for the riders to ride.

It is best to engage with the local freestyle community to see if a particular park is suitable for an event. The type of activity which is already going on at the park will help with this. It may also be possible to enhance an existing park with a few temporary obstacles.

In general, most parks have some possibilities for competition, it is simply that some types of tricks or runs might not be possible depending upon the layout and type of obstacles available. The main impact of this is that the appeal of the event to certain types or styles of riders may be limited.

If a temporary park is going to be created for an event, location is important. Can people get to the venue by public transportation? Is there enough parking space? A market square attracts more people than an empty field 20 kilometres outside the city.

### **Security**

Most parks are designed with the security of the participants in mind, considering the type of activity which is expected to take place within the park. The key elements in managing risk to participants and the public in a BMX Freestyle Park event are:

- Fall protection such as railings at the top of high obstacles such as ledges along the outside edges of the park
- Ensuring that the park surface is in good condition (no holes, gaps between obstacles, smooth ramp surfaces that are secured and structurally sound, et cetera)
- Ensuring that there are no impalement hazards within or around the field of play

- A 'safety zone' at least 3m wide along the edges of the field of play where spectators are not allowed, in order to provide some separation between the field of play and the public in a case a rider or their bicycle are ejected from the field of play
- Ensuring that the area in and around the park is tidy and that any supporting equipment such as maintenance equipment is stowed in a safe place

The extent to which these measures are necessary depends upon the layout of the park.

## **Obstacles**

The number and size of the obstacles can vary. At minimum, a grassroots event could work with a box jump in the middle and two quarter-pipes on each end, whereas an elite event would need a variety of box jumps, quarter pies, spines, sub-rails, ledges, curved walls and bowled corners assembled together in a way that works to allow riders to do a variety of runs incorporating most of the obstacles.

It is easy to find examples of each of the above using google images (<http://images.google.com>). Simply search for the words 'BMX' combined with the name of the obstacle listed above (for example: BMX box jump). Contacting a skilled ramp building company is advised in case it is decided that ramps need to be built.

## **Venue**

It is important to remember that the area around the park is part of the event venue. Space will be needed for things such as registration, the judges area, and the riders area. Other elements such as sufficient toilets for both participants and spectators should not be forgotten.

For larger or more important events, additional facilities such as a media room may be needed.

## **Common BMX Freestyle Park Venue Elements**

### Judges Area

This is a fairly quiet sheltered area (usually a tent) where the judges panel watches the contest and deliberates over the scores given to each rider. At minimum, this should be in an area where they can see the entire park. Enough tables and chairs for all of the judges are needed as well as clipboards with paper and pens.

### Riders Area

This is the area where the riders entered in the contest wait before beginning the competition. It should be sheltered (usually at least 1 or 2 tents are needed) and located next to the park. It should also be separated from the public zone of the venue. Sometimes riders will also wait along the edges of the park so that they can watch what is happening; this is especially true of riders in the same heat as the rider presently doing a run.

## **Who is needed for the event to succeed?**

No event will succeed without the right people involved.

In order to make an event a success, the most important thing is to get people involved who have a passion for BMX Freestyle. Freestyle events are run for the Freestyle community – as such, they have a stake in ensuring that events are successful. Providing fun and well run events is the best way to build a relationship between the national federation and the BMX Freestyle community. Listen to them. Take their advice. Most importantly, keep an open mind – while some elements of BMX Freestyle events are similar to those for other cycling events, other aspects are not.

The key people needed to run an event are as follows.

### **Judges**

A panel of between 3 and 5 judges + head judge are needed. Generally speaking, each country where BMX Freestyle is practiced as a sport has experienced BMX riders who have judged BMX events before. It is important that the judges ride or have ridden and follow the sport in order to give the correct scores to the riders. As a suggestion, an injured Pro rider could be a good judge if he knows how to assign points. The passionate BMX people in your country will know who to contact for this job.

The UCI is working on training materials for BMX Freestyle Park judges. However, once this is available, our advice remains the same – find judges within the freestyle community and provide the training to them. Knowledge of and experience in the sport are key. We do not recommend recruiting commissaires active in other cycling disciplines in to BMX Freestyle as new judges, unless they already have a good back ground in BMX Freestyle.

### **The Announcer (or MC)**

The announcer has an important job leading the event from rider to rider. The person on the microphone can get the crowd behind the rider and inform the people about the tricks that the riders are doing. He can mention the time that is left for every rider in their run, mention the sponsors, etc.

### **The Commissaire**

For larger and more important events, a single Commissaire can be used to handle some of the tasks that have been traditionally done by the Announcer. These include managing the clock used to time the runs and supervising the practice to ensure that everybody has the same amount of time, et cetera.

### **Medical Staff**

A team of medics that is certified to provide first aid under the laws of the country where the event is held is needed. The same general standard as would be used for a BMX racing event in the country where the event is held is recommended.

### **Riders**

No riders, no show. The better the ramps, the better the circumstances, the better riders will enter the event. Depending on the reason for the event, a grass roots event will attract the local riders. An international Elite event will attract riders if there is a decent prize money purse.

## **Media**

Set some rules for any media who may attend. Where can they take pictures? Do they need to be on the field of play? Do they understand the risk? How important is their media outlet?

The bigger the event, the more applications you will receive. It is also important as an event organiser to do pre-event promotion. Local newspapers, local TV stations, and being present on all Social Media outlets are key in getting people to your event.

## **Other Volunteers**

Some other volunteers are usually needed to make an event successful. Examples of such volunteers include:

- Riders area support: Someone to supervise the riders area and control access
- Venue crew: People to keep the venue clean at all times, assist with registration, help with scoring sheets and results posting, and providing water for the riders
- Building / park crew: Depends on the type of park that is being used. In case temporary obstacles are being used, these are knowledgeable people who set up the ramps; during the event they also maintain them. Otherwise, these people assist with covering the ramps in case of rain, keeping the surface swept and clean, et cetera.

## **What are the important tasks, materials and considerations for the event to succeed?**

### **General Organisation of the Event**

#### **Registration**

For the moment, the UCI recognises categories at both the amateur and elite levels. At the elite level, the categories are:

- Men Elite aged 15 and over
- Women Elite aged 15 and over.

For the moment, there is no minimum qualification for a rider to decide to enter an elite category, as long as they are old enough to do so.

Generally there is no difference in the layout of the park between categories; the goal of setting categories in BMX Freestyle is to ensure that riders of roughly equal ability compete against each other.

At the amateur level, the UCI recommends two categories for each gender:

- An open amateur category
- A youth category for riders between ages 7 and 14

However, national federations are free to define the categories for national and regional events in the way that makes the most sense from the population of BMX Freestyle riders in their own country.

## **Identification of Riders**

During registration, riders receive a wristband showing that they've completed the registration process. Wristbands can vary by colour to denote that they have registered in a particular category. Unlike other cycling disciplines, number plates are not used. Riders are referred to by name.

## **Practice**

Generally speaking each group should have at least 1 hour of practice within the park before the qualification contest. The more practice the program allows, the better. In case large numbers of riders have signed up, it may be better to split each category into practice groups in order to allow the riders to make better use of their practice time.

The maximum number of riders practicing at the same time really depends upon the size and layout of the park. However, it should be set so that riders are able to practice doing complete runs without waiting too long. Normally this is in the range of 15 to 30 riders depending upon the size of the park.

## **Qualification**

If enough riders are present to have a qualification round, each rider does two runs of 1 minute each. Both runs count. The final score will decide if the rider makes it to the Semi-Final or Final (within the qualification round, riders are ranked in order from the highest amount of points to the lowest). Please refer to the UCI BMX Freestyle Regulations concerning the event format.

## **Semi-Final**

If enough riders are present to have a qualification round, each rider does two runs of 1 minute each. Both runs count. The final score will decide if the rider makes it to the Final (within the Semi-Final, riders are ranked in order from the highest amount of points to the lowest). Please refer to the UCI BMX Freestyle Regulations concerning the event format.

## **Final**

Each rider does two runs of one minute. Both runs count. A score between 0-100 points will be given by each judge. Within the Final, riders are ranked in order from the highest amount of points to the lowest.

## **Post Event**

### Prize Ceremony

As with most cycling disciplines, there is usually a prize ceremony after the contest is over. Be sure to provide enough space for the photographers in front of the podium.