

## CROSS TRIATHLON – CONSIDERATIONS IN COURSE BUILD OUTS

Factors to consider in planning/sanctioning an off-road triathlon:

- Many competitors may be novice mountain bikers; therefore, their bike handling skills may be limited. Hence, any off road course that Tri BC sanctions/insures must ensure maximum safety for all levels of athletes (i.e., course maps, mandatory pre-race meeting where explanation of course takes place, any more hazardous aspects of the course are marked on the actual trail (and on maps), etc.)
- An off-road course provides an alternative to on-road triathlons; it is not to be used as a challenging component for advanced mountain bike athletes.
- Respect for the environment is important: therefore, existing roads and trails must be used. There should be no damage to the natural environment as a result of a triathlon off-road event.

Trails open to bicycles must successfully pass a Triathlon BC official review for suitability. Criteria to be considered in this review are:

Course requirements:

- Roads (logging, gravel, dirt, etc.) are preferred
- Downhill sections must be moderate; there will be no drop-offs larger than 1 foot in height.
- Roads and double-track trails are preferred. Single-track trails are permitted but if technical in nature should be limited to a small portion of the race course.
- There will be no sharp corners or hazards at the bottom of downhill sections
- Gradual transitions are essential between changes in trail flow. Abrupt transitions are likely to produce skidding, braking bumps and may even force users off the trail.
- The trail must be well-maintained
- The course should use existing, public trails
- Clearly mark the course: temporarily block access to other trails/routes, station volunteers at intersections and flag the course route.
- Hazards/obstacles on the course are not permitted: no stunts, natural or man-made obstacles, holes or similar obstructions are allowed.
- All obstacles, hazards, etc. must be clearly marked both on the hazard itself, and on the course map.
- The course should be accurately measured with a Jones wheel.
- A course map must be given out to each competitor well in advance of the race
- Athletes must be encouraged to ride the course in advance
- Think about spectator movement around the course to prevent damage; post signs to direct spectators to other course sections via established paths.
- Leave the trails in better shape than they were in before the race. Document your restoration work with photos.
- Medical staff must have easy access to all parts of the course.

A Triathlon BC sanctioned mountain bike race must have an official in attendance, who has the option of cancelling/changing the race should it be deemed a safety issue. In the event of bad weather (e.g. rain which makes the course very slippery), the bike portion of the event may be cancelled, and the race will become an aquathlon (swim and run). Another option is to have an alternate course on paved roads. This is not a guarantee that the bike/event will not be cancelled for safety reasons, but it provides another option. If cancellation is the only option, refunds of race entry fees may not be possible, since most promotional costs are incurred before race day.

### **SAFETY MUST ALWAYS COME FIRST**

Note: information contained in the above document was taken in part from the Sierra Club Policy and Guidelines for Off-Road Use of Bicycles