

Instructions for Marshalls and Drivers



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Instructions for Marshals and Drivers During Cycle Races.



Every effort should be, and is, made to make each cycle race as safe as possible for the riders and other road users. An essential part of this is the corner marshals and drivers. They make sure other road users know about the race and keep all the riders on the race circuit.

Instructions for Corner Marshals During a Road Race.

During a cycle race every point on the course where the riders turn from one road onto another should be marshalled by at least one corner marshal. Usually two are assigned to each corner and sometimes more if the race organisers feel the corner requires it.

The job of a corner marshal is twofold:

- to alert other road users to the fact that there is a cycle race in progress which allows them to proceed with appropriate caution; and,
- to inform the riders of the turn.

By law marshals cannot stop a motorist to allow a bunch to negotiate a corner or other hazard. However, this can be the safest solution and so marshals may, at their discretion, encourage a motorist to stop, and the vast majority kindly do.

Remember that, when you are marshalling, you are a representative of your club and sport so always be courteous to other road users, even if they take exception or are abusive to you. Most drivers are courteous in return.

Marshalling may require you to stand out in adverse weather conditions so remember to bring appropriate clothing and (on much fewer occasions) sun block.

If you have volunteered to marshal a corner then you should:

1. Turn up to the start/finish area (or sign-on area in the case of an open race) with reasonable time to allow you to gather your equipment and get to your corner before the race starts. Usually 30 minutes before the race starts is plenty of time.
2. Sign the marshals sign-on sheet, required by Cycling Ireland for insurance purposes.
3. Enquire as to which corner you will be marshalling and who will be there with you.
4. Liaise with your marshalling partner(s) for the event and collect enough bibs and flags for one each, at least one radio, enough 'Caution Cycle Race' signs and string to tie the signs onto something or weights to ensure they don't blow over in the wind.
5. Finally enquire about the number of bunches in the race, the time gaps between each at the start and the number of laps in the race. This will help you predict when the bunches will arrive at your corner.
6. Make your way to your corner with all your equipment.
7. Once at your corner inspect it for loose gravel or objects on the road which may be a hazard to the riders and do your best to remove them.
8. Put out signs as appropriate (see the diagrams below and if you are unsure, as ever, just ask). Place each around 50 meters (50 yards) from the corner so that it can be

easily seen by approaching traffic without causing an obstruction. Take into consideration the speed of approaching traffic (if it will be moving faster place the signs further away from the corner), curves in the road and particularly the brow of a hill which may obstruct the view of approaching traffic. Place a weight on standing signs to ensure they don't blow over or securely tie the sign to something strong.

9. Decide between you who will stand where (see diagrams below), put on your bib, grab your flag, tune in your radio (station 1 unless told otherwise) and get ready.
10. As the first bunch approaches your corner the driver of the lead car should radio you to tell you that the race is approaching. Sometimes radio reception is poor so also keep an eye out for the flashing orange light of the lead car. There should always be a car at the front of the race but other bunches may have a motorbike in front of them and the motorbike riders may not have radios so always look out for them too.
11. When the bunch approaches in good time marshal A (see diagrams below) should
 - a. let the other marshals know the bunch is coming,
 - b. indicate with their flag the direction the bunch should take,
 - c. check for other road users approaching the junction and encourage them to stop.
 - d. check for other road users who have not stopped for marshals B or C and may cause a danger to the riders.

When marshals B and C get the signal from marshal A they should warn, and possibly suggest stopping, to any approaching traffic. If a motorist is kind enough to stop use your flag to ensure any other motorists behind them are aware of you as they may try to overtake the stopped vehicle, this is particularly important if the first vehicle is a van, lorry or 4x4 etc.

It is very important that marshals do not put themselves in danger in order to stop oncoming traffic.

As the riders make their last approach to the corner shout a warning if there are any hazards at the corner that couldn't be removed (eg. potholes) or if there is any traffic which may cause a hazard. Keep your shouts short, clear and loud and repeat them as the bunch passes so all the riders hear the warning not just the front few. An appropriate shout could be 'Car, keep tight!'.

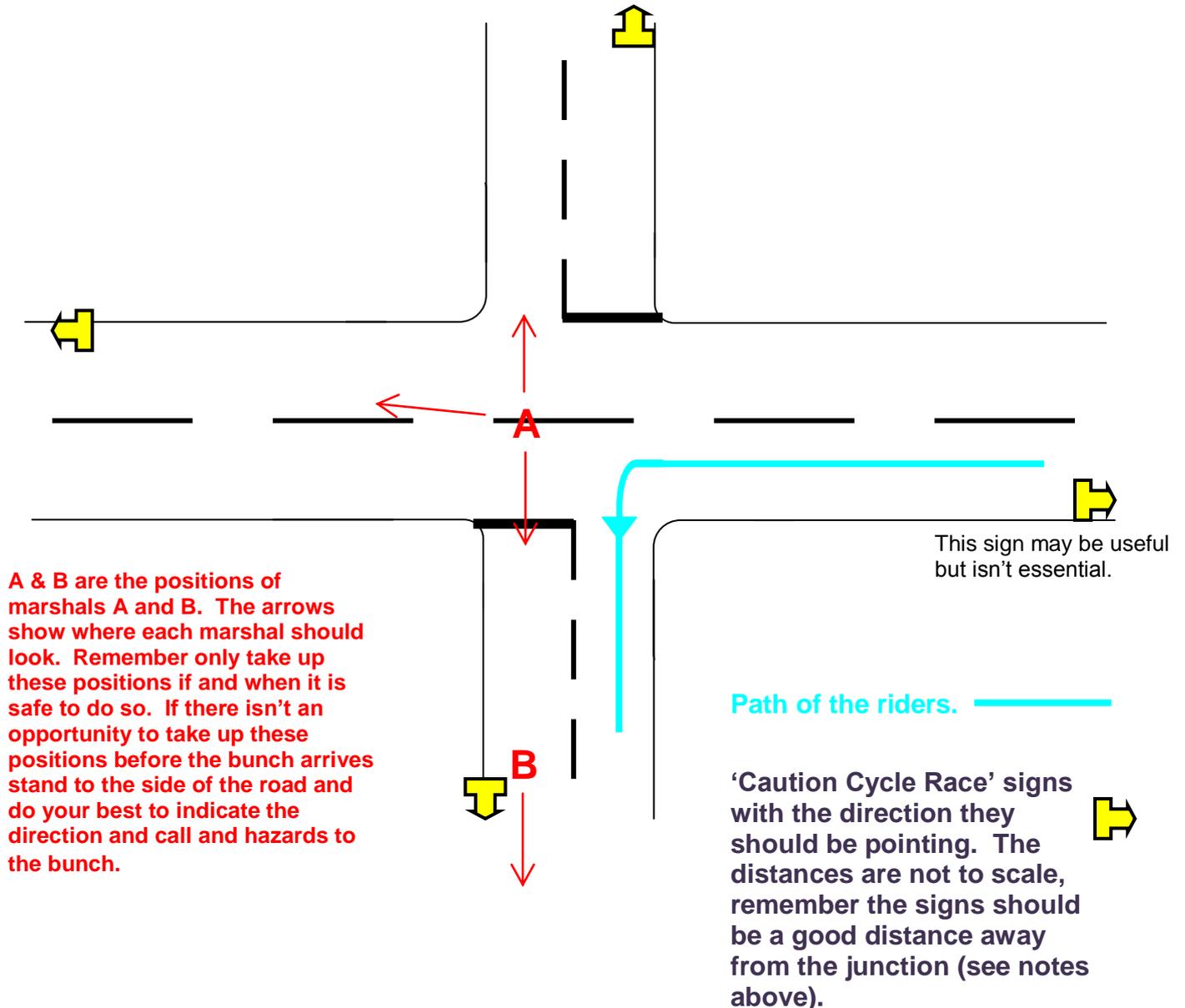
Before releasing stopped vehicles take care to ensure that there is not a split in the bunch meaning another group of riders are entering the corner.

12. As you release any stopped vehicles remember to give them a wave and thank them for their co-operation.
13. Repeat this process for each bunch on each lap.
14. Once the last riders have passed you on the last lap collect the signs and return them and the other equipment.

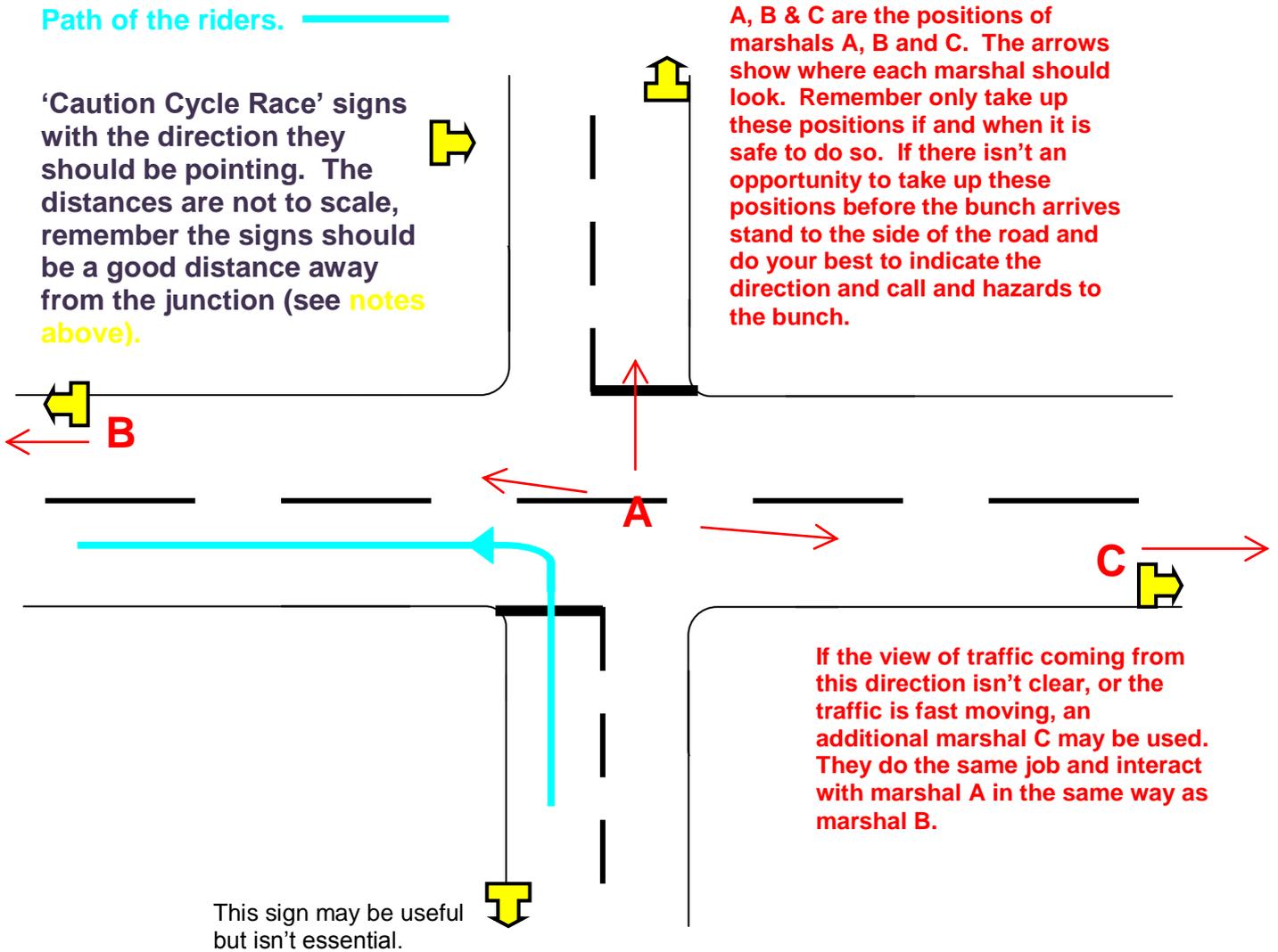
It is essential that all riders, and marshals, understand that marshals cannot stop every vehicle and the onus is always on the riders to stay on their own side of the road. Marshals will never be held responsible if a rider breaks the rules of the road, even if the marshal mistakenly indicates that the road is clear of hazards.

Where to Stand and Place Signs.

Going From A Major Road Onto A Minor Road.



Going From A Minor Road Onto A Major Road.



If the junction is a T junction, rather than a crossroads as in the diagrams, simply ignore the extra road in the diagrams.

Roundabouts are less easily generalised. An experienced rider will usually be among those marshalling a roundabout and can assess and advise those who are less experienced, but the same general principles should be adopted.

Instructions For Corner Marshals During a Time Trial.

When marshalling during a time trial approach it in the same way as marshalling at a road race. Arrive on time, collect your equipment, check your corner for hazards etc. There are however two significant differences between marshalling time trails and road races which change how you interact with the traffic.

Firstly you will probably be marshalling at a potentially busy roundabout, possibly on your own, and secondly there will a lone rider arriving at the roundabout roughly every minute.

These two factors together can make stopping traffic potentially dangerous, quite difficult and can cause tailbacks if you stop traffic for each rider which could then cause problems in five or ten minutes time. It can also be annoying for the other road users using the roundabout.

Therefore your approach to marshalling a time trial is to ensure the other road users are aware of the event by using signs etc. in a similar way to marshalling a road race. During the event aim to alert the traffic when a rider is approaching the roundabout by using your flag and to direct the rider to the correct exit, a shout of 'second exit' for example may be useful.

It is therefore the rider's responsibility to ensure they enter and exit the roundabouts in a time trial in a safe way. Marshals may encourage traffic to stop to allow a rider to enter the roundabout unimpeded if they feel that it is safe and manageable to do so, however, this will probably be the exception rather than the rule.

Instructions for Lead Car Drivers and Motorcycle Marshals.

Each significant bunch in a race should have a lead car or motorcycle travelling ahead of it where possible. The aim of this is to warn other road users and corner marshals of the approaching bunch.

Each lead car should have a flashing/circulating orange light on it's roof and should make use of their hazard warning lights. Motorcyclists should use their hazard warning lights and should wear brightly coloured or reflective clothing (a marshalling vest would suffice). Magnetic 'Caution Cycle Race' stickers may also be attached to cars or motorcycles to further warn other road users. All of these can be collected from the start/finish area (or sign-on area in the case of an open race) before the race.

If you have volunteered to drive or motorbike marshal at a race you should:

1. Ensure you turn up in good time to allow you to prepare your vehicle.
2. Sign the marshals sign-on sheet, required by Cycling Ireland for insurance purposes.
3. Collect an orange light, if driving a car, magnetic signs (if any are available) and a radio. Obviously it is difficult for a motorbike marshal to use a radio while wearing a helmet, but some motorbike riders have kits that allow them to use the radios by use of a microphone and earpiece.
4. Ensure you know the course, a map is usually available to look at. Confirm the number of laps for the race.
5. Find out which bunch you will be driving in front of, then prepare for the off.
6. Once the race has started aim to drive so the bunch comes into clear view of oncoming motorists just as they pass you. Oncoming motorists will slow on seeing you, if you drive further ahead of the bunch than this they will think 'What was that all about?' and accelerate again only to meet the bunch a few seconds later. If you drive closer to the bunch you may not give the oncoming motorist much time to react before meeting the bunch.

This is a difficult skill and will require you to keep one eye on your mirrors and one eye on the road ahead. It can be increasingly difficult to keep your concentration in longer races but be aware of attacks or other unusual accelerations from the bunch behind. It may also be appropriate to drive further ahead of a faster moving bunch, on a descent for example, or allow the bunch to close up slightly when moving more slowly, perhaps on a hill.

7. As you approach a corner move slightly further ahead of the bunch and use your radio to alert the corner marshals.
8. During the race bunches will catch each other and perhaps only one or two lead vehicles may be needed. In this case the other lead vehicles should continue in front of or behind the race and be prepared to move ahead of a sizable bunch of riders who don't have a lead vehicle in front of them for quite a distance. This usually occurs if a breakaway forms or if riders get dropped from the main bunch. The different drivers should communicate by radio to organise this as they see fit. It is usual to not put a vehicle between two bunches until there is at least a 30 second gap between them to prevent any possible drafting of that vehicle. It is also important to ensure that the main lead vehicle of the race, that is the vehicle immediately in front of the lead bunch, is a car rather than a motorbike as it is more visible and will definitely have radio communications with each corner and the start/finish area.

Instructions For Driving a Commissaire.

A commissaire is cycling's version of a referee. They are not used in club races but are present at each open race. They are driven behind the riders to allow them to observe what is happening in the race and to ensure everyone is obeying the rules. They can be seen standing out of the sunroof of the cars following riders in races like the Tour de France.

They require someone to drive them to allow them to fully concentrate on observing the race. This job is usually assigned to an experienced rider as the comm (for short) will want to follow closely behind bunches or move between bunches. Experienced riders usually know best how to do this without endangering the riders as they are used to racing bunches and know what dangers to look for.

Apart from that the job is quite easy, simply follow the comm's instructions. He or she will tell you exactly where they want to be and you just have to get them there.

Guidelines for the Use of Club Radios During Races.

The club radios allow those who are organising, driving in or marshalling a race to keep in touch with each other to make the race as safe as possible. In order to use them most effectively there are some basic guidelines to follow:

- Tune the radio to station 1 (unless instructed otherwise).
- Keep the volume slightly below maximum as the radios tend to distort at maximum volume.
- Only use the radios when necessary as too many messages can clog up the signal.
- Make sure the airways are clear before passing on a message. To transmit hold in the side button and speak into the front of the radio. Keep your mouth about 5cm (2 inches) from the front of the radio to avoid distortion. Try to turn your back to the wind to avoid wind noise if possible (but don't do this if it means you won't be able to spot any dangers

you are looking out for). Always end your message with the word 'over'. Remember to release the side button when you have finished speaking.

Sending a message.

- Before you transmit a radio message be clear in your head about what you want to say and try to make the message as concise as possible.
- Identify yourself and if possible ask for the person you want to speak to by name eg. 'This is Colin at the first corner, come in Eamon, over.' If not then identify them by their role eg. 'This is Brendan in the lead car, come in marshals at the first corner, over'.
- Wait for a reply before you pass on your message. If you don't get a reply within about 10 seconds try again.
- When you get a reply pass on your message then wait for a further reply to confirm the person has received it. Be prepared to repeat the message or answer questions about it if the signal wasn't clear.

Receiving a message

- If someone calls you on the radio identify yourself and give them the go ahead to send their message, eg 'This is Dermot, go ahead Billy, over.'
- Listen carefully to the message, if you have missed part or all of the message either ask the sender to repeat all or part of the message or ask questions to make sure you have understood the message fully.
- When you have received the message end the conversation with 'understood, over'. This allows others, who may have messages to transmit, to know you are finished and they can begin to transmit their message.

Relaying a message.

Generally the signal from the radios doesn't reach from one end of a race circuit to the other. If a message needs to be sent over a distance it may be relayed from one corner to the next and so on until it reaches the person it is intended for. These relays are rarely needed and generally the use of a mobile phone is a better option in this situation if it is possible to use one.

Conclusion

Marshalling may not be the most glamorous job in the world but it is essential. If nobody marshalled there simply wouldn't be any racing. There is a lot of information above but once you have done it once or twice you will find that it's pretty straightforward. An inexperienced marshal will always be put with someone who is experienced and can show them what to do. So wrap up warm and enjoy the craic with your marshalling partners as it makes the time go in more quickly.