

## Trials Course Layout

Typically an Observed Trials course contains a loop of sections to be ridden two to four times within a reasonable time limit, with penalty points if the time limit is not met. The loop is considered part of the course and in some cases can be as challenging as the sections. The only difference being that the riders are not scored on the loop trail, only timed. When marking the loop trail keep in mind that while many riders may be very familiar with the area and know where to go, there may be riders that have never been there before who will need a well marked loop trail to follow. If separate loops are used for morning and afternoon classes they should be clearly marked to avoid confusion, or laid out so that there is no overlapping, or intersecting, trail between them (preferred). Remember that due to bad weather or low rider turnout a group check may be desirable, so all riders may be on the course at the same time. If the loops are separated this is not a problem but overlapping loop trails can become congested and confusing, even dangerous.

Sections should be arranged, or orchestrated, to allow riders to flow smoothly around the loop and in and out of the sections. The most difficult sections should be the middle sections of the loop (for example section #s 4, 5 and 6, in a ten section loop) with the easier sections leading up to them and tapering off from them. The hardest section(s) in a loop for a given class should approximate the difficulty level of the next class up the ladder. Many times the terrain will dictate compromises in this formula, so it is a goal rather than a standard.

Particularly in the lower classes, the sections should be as educational and confidence building as possible.

Section boundaries should be natural boundaries wherever possible. The perfect section would need only start and end gates marked, with the intended line defined by trees, rocks, rivers or other natural boundaries. This is, of course, rarely possible, so ribbon must be used. The boundary ribbon should be placed so that it is difficult for an in bounds motorcycle to displace it (for example ribbon should be run on the outside of a tree where a bike that hits the in bounds side of the tree cannot displace it). If boundary ribbon must be placed where a bike can contact the ribbon it should be placed securely on the ground, not elevated.

Sections should always be designed so that they can be easily observed and scored, preferably by a single observer/scorer, and designed so that the observer/scorer will be located near the end gate of the section so that riders can quickly present themselves to the observer to have their card punched, then move away to allow the next rider through. There should always be adequate staging space before the start gate of a section so that riders can comfortably and efficiently line up and enter the section, as well as room to clear the end gate of the section and have cards punched, get a drink, catch their breath etc. The observer must be able to call riders into the section. It's best if the rider and observer can make eye contact.

Sections should be as varied as possible. Try to include both up and down hills, steps and drops, on and off camber turns, logs and rocks, wet and dry terrain, etc.

INTA rules require a minimum of 24 sections for an Observed Trial. Hopefully course builders will strive for more than the minimum acceptable number of sections and try to put on the best event possible. Keep in mind that occasionally a section must be discarded for various reasons. If there are only the minimum number of sections and one is discarded then the entire event may be disqualified from the season scoring and points.

Trials marshals have the ability to modify and/or improvise on many of these standards. There is nothing wrong with being creative, use your imagination. We ride Trials for fun and the marshal should have as much fun laying out and marshaling a Trial as the riders have riding it. Experiment if you like, just remember the rules and always keep safety in mind.

Don't hesitate to ask other club members or officers for help or advice. It's much more effective to ask individuals personally for help via phone or e-mail, than to rely on volunteers coming forward, or even scheduled workdays.

Have fun and take pride in your work.

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