

Bicycle Rodeo Manual

Guidance for Communities Hosting Rodeo Events



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What is the Palmetto Cycling Coalition?



A non-profit organization that formed in 1992, the Palmetto Cycling Coalition (PCC) is South Carolina's only statewide bicycle advocacy organization. The mission of the PCC is to make South Carolina more bicycle friendly for all bicyclists—mountain bikers, road bikers, children, teenagers, racers, commuters, and more. We advocate to provide access for bicyclists on South Carolina's roads and trails, we work to improve safety for all South Carolina bicyclists, and we educate all South Carolinians on the value and importance of bicycling for healthy lifestyles and communities.

What is a Bike Rodeo?

Bicycle rodeos are a fun way to introduce and educate children to bicycle safety skills. Bike rodeos teach children the importance of seeing, being seen, and remaining in control of the bike at all times. This is accomplished through bicycle handling drills and activities, which are described in further detail beginning on page 2 of this manual.

Why this Manual?

There are so many resources available through various organizations and clubs on how to host bicycle rodeos. This manual is a way to synthesize all of these materials, and provide it to the community that the Palmetto Cycling Coalition serves. A big thanks to Marin County Safe Routes to Schools and The Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundation for reference purposes.

What Do You Need to Make a Rodeo Happen?

- ✓ Section of a parking lot, playground or paved space to run the rodeo
- ✓ Waiver—it is a good idea to have each child and parent sign a waiver form to release you and your group from liability in case of injury
- ✓ Children! The ideal age group is 5-12 year-old. The children must bring a bike and helmet
- ✓ Consider providing snacks, water, and sunscreen
- ✓ *PCC Bike Rodeo Kit*, which includes: 20 orange cones, 10 road signs, sidewalk chalk, and foam identification dots



- ✓ If you are planning a bicycle maintenance check, be sure to bring tools and pumps
- ✓ Several volunteers at each station (10-12 total). Volunteers can be used to pick up cones that are knocked over, and help students navigate through courses
- ✓ If you are planning a helmet giveaway or are distributing other safety items, you will need to provide instructional materials to go along with these items

A Word about Children at Rodeo events!

Bike Rodeos are an exciting event for both children and adults. The students arrive eager to participate, but are easily distracted by other events. Unless you cater to a specific age group, it is a challenge to interact with a group of children of different ages. For an effective event, remember these key communication tips:

1. Require respect while maintaining a friendly disposition
2. It's all about safety, safety, safety!
3. Provide positive and encouraging feedback
4. Model on your bike what you are asking them to do
5. Rather than telling the children what to do all of the time, prompt them to provide answers on how and why we do certain things

Sample Stations for Bicycle Rodeos

The following contains details about sample stations that you can set up at your bike rodeo event. These stations address specific skills and challenges, and when organized together, create a comprehensive learning environment for bicycle safety skills.

STATION ONE: Figure 8

Objectives of this station are to make the children comfortable with bike handling; work on smooth stopping; encouraging comfort while using their peripheral vision; and yielding to cross traffic.

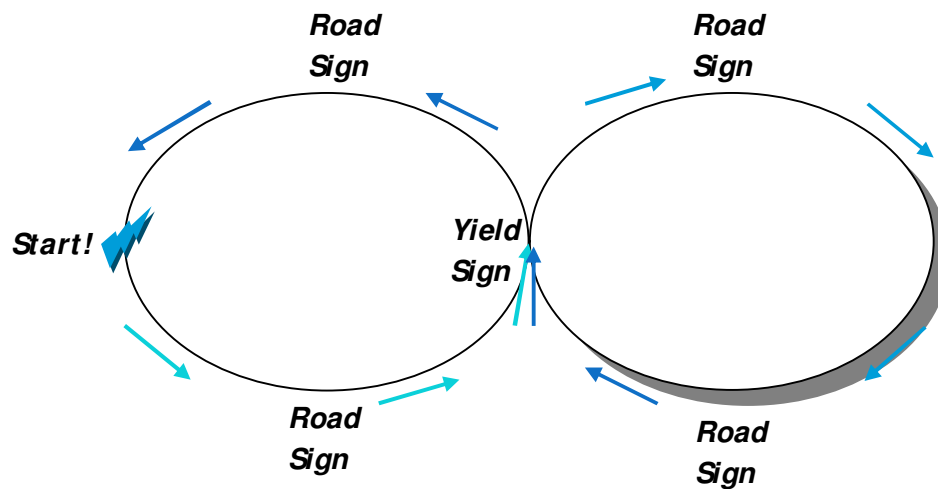


Set Up

Draw this course, with chalk, in the shape of a figure 8: it winds and turns tightly, and then opens up for straight riding conditions. The line crosses itself creating an intersection. You want to ensure that you indicate the direction for riders to follow with chalk and road signs. You will also need to place the yield sign at the intersection of the paths, indicating one direction to yield to the other. See diagram on page three for illustration.

Instructions

Ride the course one time and demonstrate. You want to follow the chalk line with your front wheel as best as possible. As riders practice the course, challenge them to gradually ride faster while maintaining a safe speed. Do not allow passing.



Teaching Points

The first teaching point is one of **peripheral vision**. Explain that peripheral vision allows you to see out of the corners of your eyes—without looking directly at an object. This vision allows us to focus on where we are going, while paying attention to street signs and other road users. Other teaching points include crossing at **intersections** and **yielding**. Students need to slow down where the paths cross. Explain that when you see the yield sign, you yield to others who were there first.

STATION TWO: Turtle Race

Objectives of this course are to maintain balance and control when riding slowly, to improve quick stopping skills, and a bonus for older students, to check over their shoulder while riding.

Set Up

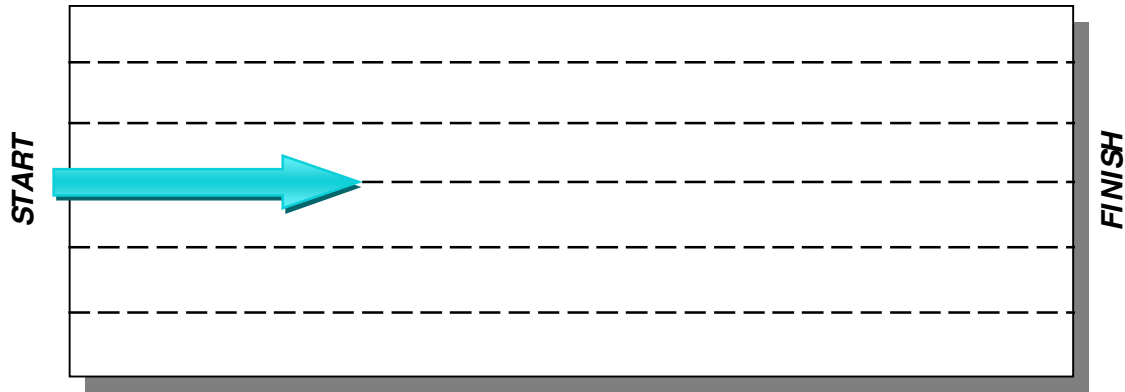
This course consists of six or more lanes, which are about 3 feet wide and 75 feet in length. Mark the start and finish with cones or the foam dots. See diagram on page four for illustration.

Instructions

Ask the students if they find it harder to control their bikes at slower or faster speeds. They will most likely agree that it is more difficult at slower speeds. Explain to them that this is a

balance exercise, and that they will be practicing riding at slow speeds. The last person across the finish line is the 'winner.' Encourage them to try not to put down their foot and to stay in their lane. Provide positive feedback to the children, and cheer them on.

After they appear to have mastered this, tell the students to return to the start line and that this time, they can ride at a normal pace. A volunteer will be standing at the end of the lanes and will hold up a stop sign when they want the students to stop at a point on the course. This exercise will help them refine their braking skills.



Teaching Points

Explain to them that by starting with the pedal in a 2 o'clock position allows for a stronger beginning. Also make sure that they realize how important staying in the lane is, because on the real roadway.

When they are braking, ensure that they are doing so evenly, without going over the bars. Demonstrate that they need to shift their weight back, over the rear wheel to keep control.

* Bonus! *

This additional challenge is better served for older children. Explain that now they have mastered riding in a straight line, you are going to increase the challenge by having them look over their shoulder. Model this by riding up the lane and scanning to the rear without swerving. Explain to them that a natural tendency is to swerve in the direction we are looking when we check over our shoulder.

As riders proceed down the lane, a volunteer stands behind them and randomly calls out either 'check right' or 'check left'. Continue this exercise until they appear comfortable and in control, and provide them with positive feedback as this IS a difficult skill to master.

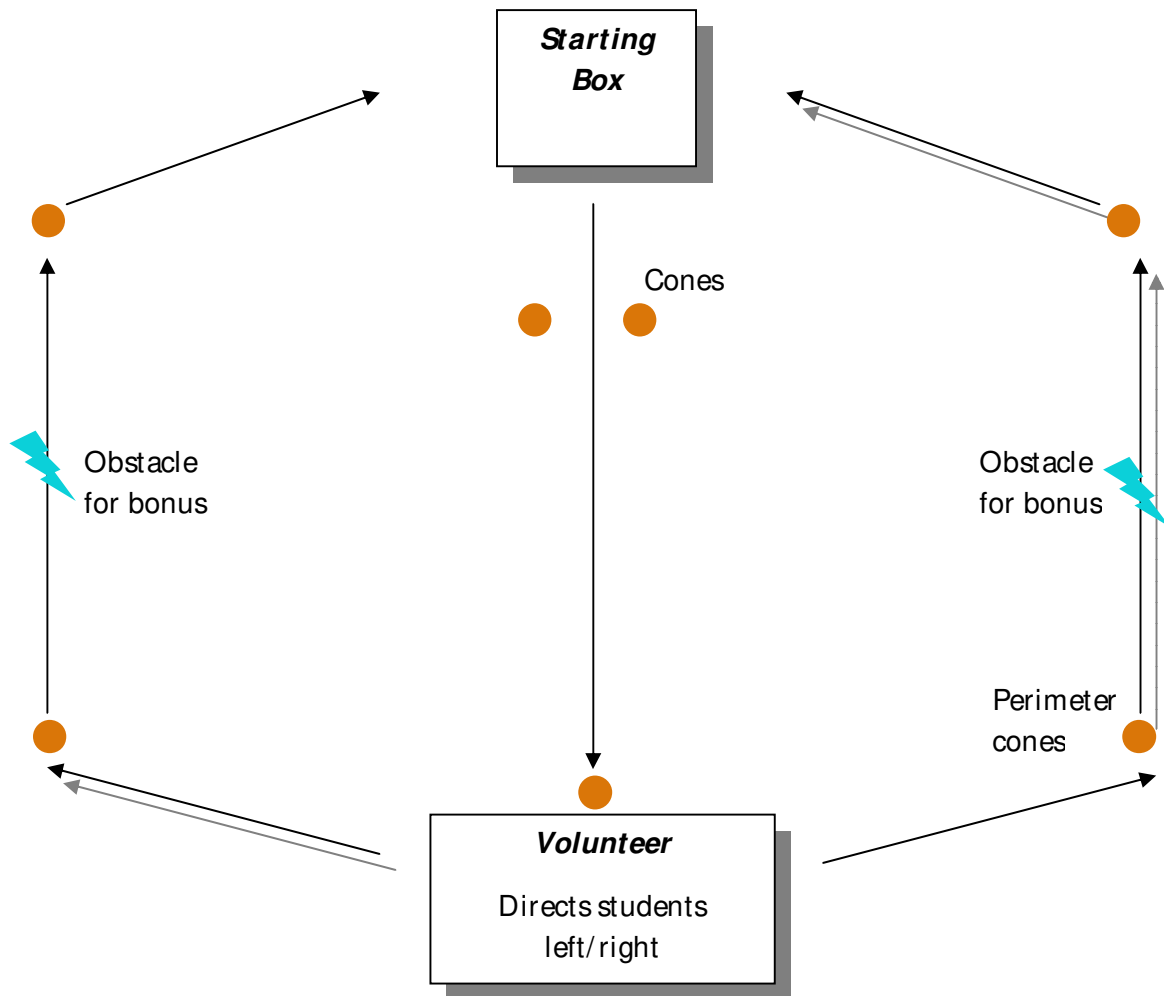


STATION THREE: Quick Turn/ Rock Dodge

The primary objectives of this course are to maintain balance and control when dodging an obstacle. Students will refine their quick decision making skills, as well as fast turning abilities.

Set Up

This course begins with a starting box and is marked with chalk and cones. One at a time, students ride towards a volunteer who will direct them to turn either left or right. After turning, students will then ride around a perimeter cone, and will return to the starting box. Mark the pavement with chalk and indicate direction with arrows and cones. A large area is recommended for this station. See illustration below.



Instructions

Instruct the riders to line up at the starting box. They will ride through the two beginning cones towards the volunteer, who will direct the rider to turn left or right. They will then ride

out around the perimeter cones, and circle back to the top of the starting box and begin again. Demonstrate this, and encourage them to build up speed as they become comfortable.

Teaching Points

Explain to the students how important it is to maintain a close eye on changes in the roadway at all times, as it allows you to be able to react sooner. Being able to react quickly includes turning appropriately, without losing control and crashing.

* Bonus! *

Place an obstacle along the pathway that returns to the starting box (see illustration for details). A good obstacle to use is the colored foam dots provided in the PCC bicycle rodeo kits. Instruct the students to continue to stay in a straight course, but to quickly flick their wheel around the obstacle. Be sure to demonstrate this.

Bicycle Rodeo Resources

There is a wealth of information available for communities interested in hosting bicycle rodeos. A few of these resources used in the creation of this manual include:

[An Organizer's Guide to Bicycle Rodeos](http://www.bike.cornell.edu/pdfs/Bike_Rodeo_404.2.pdf). Cornell University.
http://www.bike.cornell.edu/pdfs/Bike_Rodeo_404.2.pdf

[Organizing a Bicycle Skills Rodeo](http://www.cbcef.org/pdf/bike_rodeo06.pdf). Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundation.
http://www.cbcef.org/pdf/bike_rodeo06.pdf

[Safe Routes to Schools Rodeo Manual](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/pdfs/lessonplans/RodeoManualJune2006.pdf). Safe Routes to Schools Marin County.
<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/pdfs/lessonplans/RodeoManualJune2006.pdf>

These include resources such as sample waiver forms and kits for contacting the press about your event. Be sure to contact the Palmetto Cycling Coalition with details about your event and for extra tips—we'll be sure to promote it within our membership.

Be safe and have fun!

Prepared by the Palmetto Cycling Coalition

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