



Cheltenham & County Cycling Club

Cycling : Come and Try It!

TIME TRIALLING



FOR BEGINNERS



Time trialling is often the first and easiest way into racing bikes on the road in the UK. It has a long and often obscure history, which means that some of the rules and regulations it's held under often seem impenetrable and frustrating for novices. As a section of cycling sport it does not market itself well, so if you're new to it, please persevere-it'll be worth it in the long run!

Benefits of time trialling include a big improvement in your fitness, an introduction to competition for less confident riders, and a way to measure your absolute ability against both other riders and yourself. As they say, it's the "race of truth", with nowhere to hide!

Can anyone time trial?

Almost, as long as you're a club member and over 12 years old. You need to be a member of a cycling club because of event insurance, except for the occasional 'Come And Try It' events.

Do I need a special bike?

No, basically, if it's a conventional bike, road/mountain/bmx/trike or Raleigh shopper, you can ride it.

Do I need a helmet?

Technically, no you don't. However, for your own safety, our cycling club and the Road Time Trials Council strongly advise you to wear a hard-shell helmet in all events of this nature.



Do I need to enter club events in advance?

No, just turn up with your entry fee (50p if you're a member of CCCC or £1 for other cycling club) pin on your number, and ride. (The only exception being the interclub event with Evesham-see the racing secretary)

What about Open events?

Ah, more tricky here. See the Club's racing secretary. Or an experienced club rider, just to make sure you know the secret Masonic signs to enable you to enter. It's not difficult, it's just somewhat obscure, that's all!!

What sort of time should I be aiming for?

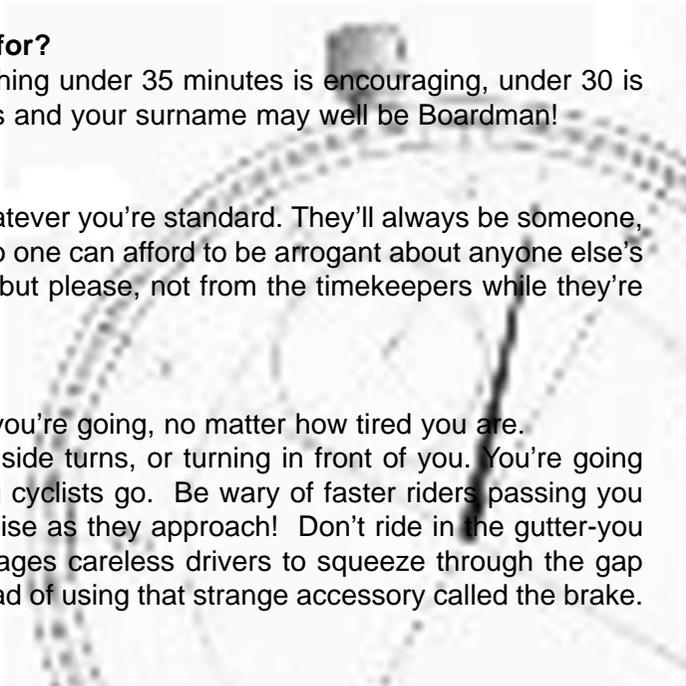
As a beginner, for a 10 mile event, anything under 35 minutes is encouraging, under 30 is excellent. By the way, under 20 minutes and your surname may well be Boardman!

Will I make a fool of myself?

No. "Testing" is physically very hard, whatever you're standard. They'll always be someone, somewhere who is faster than you, so no one can afford to be arrogant about anyone else's ability. Ask for advice from other riders, but please, not from the timekeepers while they're doing their job!

What should I be careful of?

Keep your head up and watch where you're going, no matter how tired you are. Watch especially for cars pulling out of side turns, or turning in front of you. You're going much faster than they're used to seeing cyclists go. Be wary of faster riders passing you without warning-they don't make any noise as they approach! Don't ride in the gutter-you may hit the kerb and fall, and it encourages careless drivers to squeeze through the gap between you and oncoming traffic, instead of using that strange accessory called the brake.





TIME TRIALLING FOR BEGINNERS

more detailed guidance issued by the Road Time Trials Council, the national governing body for this sport.

Over the years the Regulations governing time trials have grown and become more complicated. This makes it difficult for the newcomer to the sport to find the important things they need to know about time trialling before riding in a race. These notes contain the main features from the Regulations relating to racing and competitor's behaviour but in no way do they detract from or alter those regulations.

1. Minimum Age

The minimum age for competitors is 12 years. This is in the interest of safety as most time trials are conducted on open public highways and it is not practicable to try and supervise all minors throughout the event. It is therefore essential that young competitors know the Highway Code and are competent to ride on the roads alone.

2. Time Trial Races

The minimum distance for a time trial is generally 10 miles but shorter races are permitted in certain circumstances (10, 25, 50 and 100 miles) or fixed time (12 and 24 hours). Riders start at one minute intervals, or sometimes more, and cover the course as fast as they are able alone and without taking pace from other competitors or vehicles.

When a competitor gets caught by another one the Regulations require the overtaken rider to fall back to a distance behind the other one where he/she is getting no shelter or help from the faster rider. At least 50 yards/metres is required.



3. Safety

When time trial courses are designed safety is a major consideration. However, ultimately it is the competitor's conduct which determines how safe a course is. The races are held on open roads and competitors must obey the law of the land relating to road travel before, during and after a race. Competitors must be responsible for their own safety and also avoid creating situations which are unsafe for other road users.

There are a number of points which will help the beginner, and others to enjoy safer racing :-

(i) A cyclist is less likely to be seen than a car or lorry by drivers of vehicles. You need to remember this when approaching any road junction. To improve visibility from the rear (as well as identifying the rider) all riders are required to wear a bright fluorescent number on their rear. This needs to be positioned on the rider's shorts from the waistband downwards, or as near to that position as possible since an overhanging jersey would cover it in that position. The number should not be positioned high on the back like a runner's numbers are.

(ii) U-turns in the road are another hazard as drivers of vehicles are not normally expecting another road user to make this manoeuvre. It is RTTC national policy to eliminate U-turns from courses and to reduce their use where they cannot be avoided. They are also a hazardous manoeuvre both before the race whilst riders are warming up or circling in the road prior to starting and after the race when riders return to the result board or to their cars.

(iii) Head down riding is another major hazard as the rider will not see an obstacle on the road. Even on a Clearway cars may stop at the side of the road due to breakdown or to consult a map or for some other reason and it is no good saying "The car should not have been there". The answer to that is "You should have seen it". This type of accident is one of the types covered by the Regulation about Dangerous Riding and if the rider is found to have contravened this regulation then a suspension from competition for six months of the racing season is normal.

(iv) Any road junction or roundabout can constitute a hazard in a race.

Competitors are travelling much faster than motorists are used to seeing cyclists moving and may make an error of judgement. Be ready for it. Slip roads joining and leaving dual carriageways and other major roads are places where care is particularly necessary due to the long distance where a cyclist can be between two lanes of merging traffic or vehicles leaving the main carriageway at high speed.

4. Accidents.

If you have an accident during a race, no matter how minor it may seem, you are required to report it to the Event Secretary as soon as possible.

5. The Bicycle.

There are some restrictions regarding the equipment which you can ride in a time trial. Your brake levers must be positioned so that you can get to them quickly in the event of an emergency from your normal riding positions. Clamp-on Triathlon bars, and equivalents, may be used. A solid disc wheel may be used at the rear of your bike but must not be fitted as the front wheel. Spoked and composite spoked (tri-spoked) wheels may be used in the front and rear wheel positions. Under no circumstances may streamlining devices be used i.e. wheel covers etc.

6. Clothing and Advertising.

Clothing for time trials is generally a short sleeved racing vest and cycle racing shorts which cover the upper part of the thigh to just above the knee. Nowadays this is often a one-piece skinsuit. The wearing of a crash helmet is recommended. The subject of carrying advertising on race clothing in time trials is complicated. Basically, if you are a member of a sponsored club (or a professional) you may carry your sponsor's name(s) on your race clothing. Other than that nobody may carry advertising on their race clothing in a time trial (except in club events) except where the manufacturer puts his name on one of the products which he makes. Thus cycling shoes with the name of the manufacturer e.g. Sidi, Look, etc. may be worn but a racing vest or hat with the name of somebody who did not make it e.g. Raleigh, Campagnolo, your local cycle dealer etc, may not be worn unless they happen to sponsor your club.

7. Entering Races

If you are entering a race the closing date by which the organiser must receive your entry is usually just under two weeks before the race. It is advisable to send your entry just a little bit earlier than this to allow for delays in the post. Entry must be on an official RTTC Entry Form (there are three types - one for solo time trials, one for team time trials and one for hill climbs). Unless otherwise specified the fastest entrants at the distance being entered will be accepted - only times done during the past three seasons qualify. If you are under 18 years of age your parents must sign the Parental Consent Form. Entry to Club events is different, usually being "entry on the line" on the day of the event. You will be required to sign a Club Entry Form and if under 18 must show the organiser a Parental Consent Form.

Whatever type of time trial you are entering you must be a member of a club which is affiliated to the RTTC. Being a British Cycling Federation or Cyclist's Touring Club member does not generally qualify you to ride time trials unless your BCF Division or CTC District Association is affiliated to the RTTC.

Once your entry has been accepted for a time trial you will receive a start sheet a few days before the event giving details of the course, prizes and your starting time. After the race you will receive a result sheet showing where you finished in the event and confirming your official time.

Courses and Watches.

Courses are measured to a high degree of accuracy using special equipment and methods. Whilst marshals are appointed to assist riders to get round the course, it is your responsibility to make sure you know the route to follow in the race. The watches which timekeepers use must also meet high standards of accuracy, have certain features which generally prevent wrist watches (even digital ones) from being used and be certified by an approved watch tester. The timekeepers word regarding your time is final, but if you have a query leave this until the event is over when the timekeeper will be able to check your time for you.

What do you do next?

Just pick up a copy of the Monthly or Quarterly publications of the Cheltenham & County Cycling Club: the "Road mag" or the "Reflector". In there will be details of our local events and people to contact for further information. Alternatively, surf the internet to our official website at www.cc-cc.co.uk

The Road Time Trials Council publish an annual handbook which details "open" events around the country. This can be obtained by contacting that organisation's Secretary, Philip Heaton, who's address is
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