



Team time trials

A time trial is a controlled race simulation at practice that allows student-athletes to undergo the mileage and terrain of a NICA race course.

What is the purpose of a time trial?

- Prepares the student-athlete for a timed race experience
- Introduction to simulated environment, while learning how to manage anxiety
- Allows returning riders to build stamina and learn from time trial experience
- Helps student-athletes with their goal-setting for the season
- Aids the creation of ride groups for practice

Simple Time Trial - low in technicality and low in management

- Location: fire road, wide gravel path
- Marshalls - course marshalls need to have specific spots along the route that are staggered equally so that eyes are on student-athletes for the majority of the route.
- Routes - Select a route that is less than a NICA course loop. The terrain should be easy, beginner-friendly and not too technical.

Complex Course - increased technicality or length will need increased management

- Location: Single-track loop (ideal length - less than one lap of NICA race course)
- Marshals/Roving Marshals- course marshals need to have specific spots along the route. Roving marshals need to be on bikes staggered throughout the loop while surveying riders.
- Sweeper - A sweeper needs to follow behind the last rider and give the all clear when everyone has completed the course.
- Level 2 and Level 3 coaches are the only ones allowed to be Roving Marshals and Sweepers.
- Routes - Select a route that is less than a NICA course loop. The terrain should be similar to what a student-athlete will experience at their first NICA race.

Equipment Needed

- Directional Signs - Kids will be on course alone at times and this helps them feel safe.
- Timers - you can use actual timers or there are many different phone apps to help time
- Sign-making materials (for parents/guardians if they want to cheer on the team)
- Walkie talkies - communication between volunteers, coaches, etc.
- Water Cooler - hydration station for after the race, also for your volunteers
- Snacks - make sure to check in with your team's allergies
- First Aid Supplies - all marshals need to have a first aid kit!

Other Roles

- Starters - The starters will start the student-athlete and make sure the time intervals in between starts are accurate.
- Timers - Ideally there is more than one timer. This allows for accuracy (timers can fact check each other) and will help if your team is large and it is hard to keep track of everyone coming through.
- Parent Volunteers

Risk Factors - Planning Ahead

- Road - You should not do a time trial on any busy road. If you are planning on using a fire road for your time trial, make sure it has low traffic, look into it being closed off, and have volunteers helping control the flow of traffic. Make sure student-athletes know to look out for cars as they ride if using a fire road.
- Trail - Communicate with student-athletes ahead of time about proper trail etiquette. All other users always have the right away and bikers **MUST** yield to them. We want to make sure we are being respectful to other trail-users.
- Trail Connectors - Making sure your marshals are stationed at trail intersections. While coaches might have set up directional signs ahead of time, we want to make sure a student-athlete does not go down a trail that is off course. Marshals can help guide them and keep them on the race course.

How to Use Results

- Student-Athlete Goal Setting - “This time trial is for you!” Communicating this to the student-athletes will allow them to understand that they are competing against themselves. Building respect into team culture will be critical. Teammates will learn how to focus on their individual goals instead of comparing and contrasting their results.
- Ride Groups - Time trials are especially helpful when creating ride groups. Having their times recorded gives your head coach data to work with when placing student-athletes in ride groups.

Coaching Tips to Create Supportive Culture

1. Pacing - Take time to talk to the student-athletes about monitoring their breathing and pace as they ride. Your younger/beginner student-athletes are used to riding with a coach as a ride leader and need to practice pacing on their own.
2. Passing with Kindness and Respect - Before the time trial is a wonderful time to remind kids to pass with kindness and respect. Remind them of passing language and reflect on passing at the end of the time trial. Did people feel respected when being passed? Was it properly communicated? Did the person passing shout encouragement to the passed rider?
3. Supporting teammates when finished - The time trial event should be fun and a milestone event for your team. Encourage your teammates to cheer on their fellow teammates. Just stepping up to the start line takes bravery and courage; we want our student-athletes to support one another.