

Regional Competition Administrator Report

September 2023
Len Woffindin



2023 Summary

Circuit

Midweek circuit events have commenced at Litherland, Lancaster, Tameside, Carlisle and Pendle. As in previous years, these series generally manage themselves with local officials. Numbers of riders were reported as low.

The North West Youth League was a success, with lower numbers than 5 years ago, but still around 80 riders at each. Organisers have reported being very close to break even financially, some not quite made it. The organisers communicate regularly which helps.

The new event at Silloth town centre went well, a fully closed road event. Thanks to Fiona Graham for organising it and Peter Deary for taking the commissaire lead. It was well supported by BC staff, including myself, Rob and Olivia. The cobbles proved to be a good surface, it was a hot day. There were Go-Ride events on the grassed area.

Track

Hard Track

Regional track leagues ran as in previous years: Manchester Regional Track League (Tuesday and Friday) and the Monday Night Track League.

Grass Track

The only Grass track took place Ambleside sports in July. Fiona Graham has taken over from Bob Maclean with the organising of the grass track cycling.

Road Racing

10 regional road race events took place, some with multiple races on the day. The Proper Northern Road Race series of three events by Deb John included National B for men and women.

6 events were planned then cancelled for a number of reasons including low numbers of entries and financial issues.

Organisers have had confirmation of officials assigned to their events: commissaires, moto commissaires and contact details for NEG, ACMs and equipment availability.

Road Police Approvals

With the exception of Cheshire, requests to the police have had a positive and prompt reply. Cheshire are requesting an additional document, and don't reply either way to the request. In the Cheshire request I have stated we will assume the application is approved if we have no reply after 28 days, this hasn't been challenged.

Regional Equipment

Regional equipment is held in 3 locations, available for event organisers to borrow.

Finance Viability

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A common theme from organisers is the financial viability for hosting a road race. A significant variable appears to be Accredited Marshal costs: the number of ACMs required varies depending on the course used, and the distances travelled by ACMs varies considerably. The Regional Board has provided financial assistance to organisers who provide accounts demonstrating difficulties for their event. Removing ACM positions from Risk Assessments is not a safe solution, as confirmed by the Risk Assessment team, supporting my initial reply on this issue to organisers.

Lower numbers of entries to some events is not helping with financial viability.

National Road Events with Regional Support

Colne Grand Prix, National A circuit series event ran with a Regional support race for men and women, and a youth race. Lancaster Grand Prix ran purely as a National A road Race. Junior road events took place in the Region. All events had support and help from regional volunteers.

Risk assessments

A number of the road risk assessments were last updated some years ago. For Road courses, Police are asking for updates. Many risk assessments don't specify National B events, this has been flagged with the BC team. The statement about NEG is now included in all revised road risk assessments, this is a positive move on safety ground given how busy many of our roads are we use for road races.

Permits for Crits and Track

Olivia has confirmed that permits are not required to be issued for circuit and track events. Permits only apply to road events: open road and semi or fully closed roads. If organisers do want a permit, a permit application is required and a permit is issued. The Board has since requested permits are issued.

Road, Circuit and Track Officials

Early 2023, Olivia contacted all commissaires in the region to ascertain who is active and wishes to contribute. Although the numbers are reasonable, the availability has only just covered the events we have this year.

As with other regions, we do need to encourage younger people into the officials programme. This is ongoing with BC and Olivia.

Compared to other regions we do have a strong team of Moto-commissaires, this is positive and generally adds to safety and allows for better control of open road races.

NEG is co-ordinated by Dave Greatorex. The Accredited Marshals are co-ordinated by Clive Chadderton. Providing sufficient ACMs to meet the demands of a number of Risk Assessments is a challenge. Both the NEG and ACM training and qualification programs by British Cycling are limiting the number of new volunteers and hindering the retention of those qualified. British Cycling have confirmed that the ACM training and CPD programme is currently under review with the aim of reducing the ACM demand and keeping the ACM pool local to events where possible.

For next year when we should expect more events in the calendar, supporting these with commissaires, moto-commissaires, ACMs and NEG is going to be a challenge.

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The available track commissaires for the track leagues remains a challenge, with very light teams some weeks.

2024 Season

Work is ongoing to provide clearer advice for organisers in 2024, to help them plan and organise successful events to the standards expected by the Region.

The mix of road events for 2024 needs careful consideration to include provision for those who are beginning road racing and those in the lower categories, as well as the higher level events. Events for Masters and Women are to be encouraged, with co-ordination between regions where numbers are expected to be lower.

Youth participation at the midweek circuit series and leagues will be challenging, the lack of demand and support for youth races is a wider issue.

A number of our race circuits are underused, or in the case of Palatine and Preston Arena rarely used at all. Better use of these for those beginning road racing might help to progress riders to open road races.

Larger closed road circuits such as motor racing circuits, parks and other private venues are an alternative to open road race courses, this again might encourage more participants.

These suggestions will be put to organisers and local clubs for 2024, subject to Board approval.

Len Woffindin

Competition Administrator