



Road B Module 1

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Road B Modules are designed so that officials can take the initiative to learn more about the various tasks involved in working a bicycle race to work toward advancement to a level B official. This is an important designation as level B officials are qualified to be the Chief Referee of any local race. Each module contains a pre-test and the answer key as well as reading lists. Use these tools to test your knowledge and to learn more about best practices that are recognized nation-wide.

As a part of this process, contact a member of the National Technical Commission (NTC) in your area to be set up with an RB Module Google spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is where you will have mentors rate your progress on the skills associated with each module, with the opportunity to leave feedback in the notes section that can be very specific to you, and with the goal of helping you assess your strengths as an official and have a clear idea of what you still need to work on as you are working races. Below are the steps of that process for this module.

1. Take the pre-test included in this document and grade yourself with the answer key.
2. Complete the required reading listed below, making note of components that were included in the pre-test and anything else that resonates with you.
3. While working races as an official, review the list of skills related to customer service and actively work on those skills as the opportunity arises.
4. Invite a mentor who has observed you using these skills at races to edit your **RB Module Progress GoogleDoc**. Your mentor can then rate you on the Customer Service tab and make comments about your progress as applicable. You may invite multiple mentors to rate you - you are not limited to one. Your goal for this module is, with practice, to be at "Developing skill" or above for at least 70% of the Customer Service skills.
5. Retest yourself if it would be helpful for you.

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GOALS

The purpose of this module is to provide a better understanding of customer service as it relates to the cycling official. The module serves as part of the training necessary for Level C Road Officials interested in advancing to a Level B Road Official.

After successful completion of this module, the Level C Road Official will be able to:

1. Understand the different roles of officials.
2. Understand who our customers are.
3. Understand the principles of providing customer service within the boundaries of our regulations.
4. Understand the need for a tactful approach with customers.
5. Understand the difference between sympathy and empathy, and how these relate to officiating.
6. Be self-aware of one's demeanor and presence as an official.
7. Understand the bigger picture of customer service.
8. Become a more successful communicator.

REQUIRED READING

[USA Cycling Rulebook](#)

- General Regulations | 1G. Officials

From the same page above on the website,

[ADDITIONAL RULES, POLICIES & REGULATIONS](#)

- Policy IVa. Nepotism
- Policy V. Officials Code of Ethics
- USA Cycling Whistleblower Policy
- USA Cycling Code of Conduct
- USA Cycling Officials Social Media Guidelines

[SCHEDULE OF FEES](#)

- 8. Official's Fees

READING INCLUDED IN THIS MODULE

- Characteristics of Good Cycling Officials

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SKILLS FOR THIS MODULE

In step 4. of the process of completing your modules, your mentor will provide a ranking and feedback on the following skills in your **RB Module Progress GoogleDoc**. If you do not have a GoogleDoc set up for you yet, contact your local member(s) of the National Technical Commission. That list can be found at the bottom of the [official's upgrade page](#) at USA Cycling.

Ranking for the Customer Service skills runs from “No experience” to “Some exposure” to “Developing skill” to “Fulfilling local needs with support” to “Fulfilling local needs independently”.

Direct riders/spectators to registration/medical/portalets, etc.
Direct concerns not related to results to the Chief Referee
Direct questions about results to the Chief Judge
Identify as an official: clean, neat and appropriate
Demonstrate poise and proper control
Demonstrate effective teamwork with partners
Demonstrate proper emphasis on calls and signals
Display and execute superior verbal communication skills
Display and execute superior non-verbal skills
Handle challenges appropriately
Communicate effectively with riders
Communicate effectively with spectators/coaches
Communicate effectively with Race Director's team
Show a positive attitude

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PRE-TEST

1. All officials shall endeavor to uphold and enforce the regulations of USA Cycling and shall do so:
 - a. Wearing club/team clothing.
 - b. Giving preference to a rider that is always in the top placings.
 - c. Understanding that some riders are habitually “bad” and this should be taken into account when making decisions.
 - d. In an impartial manner.
 - e. In accordance with the promoter’s wishes.
2. The official’s skill set should include:
 - a. Communication, Confidence, Motivation, Concentration, Tact.
 - b. Communication, Arrogance, Focus, Temper.
 - c. Confidence, Manipulation, Concentration, Comedy.
 - d. Flexibility, Adaptation, Self-Importance, Emotional Instability.
3. Your customers at a bike race include:
 - a. Spectators.
 - b. The race organizer and staff.
 - c. The racers.
 - d. The media.
 - e. All of the above.
4. If a rider wishes to protest the result of a single day criterium on the grounds that another rider did not hold a straight line in the final sprint, the protest must be lodged:
 - a. In writing, to the Chief Referee.
 - b. Within 15 minutes of the protesting rider’s finish.
 - c. With a protest fee as specified in the Schedule of Fees.
 - d. With the Chief Judge within 15 minutes of the rider’s finish.
 - e. (a), (b), and (c)
5. Which of the following penalties may NOT be imposed by a Chief Referee?
 - a. Warning
 - b. Fine
 - c. Relegation
 - d. Disqualification
 - e. Suspension
 - f. 72-hour suspension effective immediately

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6. Which of the following is NOT a power of a Chief Referee?
 - a. To interpret and enforce the rules of USA Cycling.
 - b. To make rulings on any point not specifically covered by the rules.
 - c. To recommend a rider for suspension when serious infractions of USA Cycling rules are witnessed.
 - d. To overrule the Chief Judge when they have clearly made an error in determining the order of finish.
 - e. To supervise the general conduct of a race.
7. When may a rider benefit from their own misconduct?
 - a. Never.
 - b. Never, except when the rider was fouled during the final sprint.
 - c. Never, except during the final kilometer of a stage race finish.
 - d. Never, except during National Racing Calendar (NRC) events.
 - e. When he's participating in a Category E race.
8. If a rider appears to present a danger to the other competitors, at what point may that rider be disqualified, if at all?
 - a. Before the race begins.
 - b. During the race.
 - c. Before, during or after the race.
 - d. Only when another rider or manager complains.
 - e. Before or during the race.
9. True or False:
 - a. ___ Listening is the first key to successful communication.
 - b. ___ Shouting back at an irate rider is the best way to get my point across to them.
 - c. ___ My tone of voice can convey a different message than what I intend.
 - d. ___ A written protest allows the rider or coach to think through the problem carefully, present it with the rule they feel is applicable, and helps them to look at the problem more rationally and with less emotion.
 - e. ___ Re-stating the problem presented in my own words is a waste of time.
 - f. ___ A decision that affects one rider may have an effect on several or more of the riders in the race.
 - g. ___ It's important to identify the source of the problem and assign blame in order to provide good customer service.
 - h. ___ Other officials at the event may have records, information, or insight to resolving a problem.
 - i. ___ Giving a realistic estimate of the time needed to resolve an issue is part of providing customer service.
 - j. ___ The rider (customer) is always right.
 - k. ___ Stick to the regulations and you'll always make the right decisions.
 - l. ___ Maintaining a safe, fair race for all riders and remaining consistent generally leads to good customer service.

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10. In the examples below, either statement gets the point across. Which of the statements in each of the pairs demonstrates the best approach to providing customer service?

a)

1. "Your number can't be read easily when it's that small. Please unfold it before the start of your race. We want to make sure we place you correctly!"
2. "Unfold your number or you'll be fined \$20."

b)

1. "Helmets are required while you're on the bike. It's a safety and liability issue."
2. "Put your helmet on!"

c)

1. "The Chief Judge handles results protests."
2. "Protests on order of finish need to be lodged with the Chief Judge at the Finish Line. They are really busy right now, but will be available as soon as the race finishes. If you like, you can put your protest in a note, including your category, bib number, and where you think you placed, it will serve as a reminder, and the Chief Judge can get started working on it before you come back."

d)

1. "The promoter doesn't need to give you a refund!"
2. "The organizer has met their obligations in providing you a safe, fair race. I understand that you're not happy because you missed a turn on the course, but according to our rules, the responsibility of knowing the course ultimately lies with the rider. You are not entitled to a refund."

e)

1. "You can't sign someone's waiver for them. They have to sign it themselves."
2. "I'm sorry, but your teammate will have to personally sign the waiver. It's a legal document."

f)

1. "While this may seem like an order of finish question, you actually placed fourth in the sprint, and the Chief Referee has relegated you to the back of the bunch you were sprinting with. If you want to discuss it further, you'll need to speak with the Chief Referee, who is over there with the white hat."
2. "You were relegated for your bad riding behavior. Go home."

g)

1. "Only a coach or the rider can file a protest. I won't listen to anyone else."
2. "Our rules say only the rider or coach can file a protest. It's part of what sportsmanship is all about. Tell them I'll listen! It's part of my duty to the participants!"

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PRE-TEST, Answer Key

1. All officials shall endeavor to uphold and enforce the regulations of USA Cycling and shall do so:
d. In an impartial manner.
2. The official's skill set should include
a. Communication, Confidence, Motivation, Concentration, Tact.
3. Your customers at a bike race include:
e. All of the above.
4. If a rider wishes to protest the result of a single day criterium on the grounds that another rider did not hold a straight line in the final sprint, the protest must be lodged:
 - a. In writing, to the Chief Referee.
 - b. Within 15 minutes of the protesting rider's finish.
 - c. With a protest fee as specified in the Schedule of Fees.
 - ~~d. With the Chief Judge within 15 minutes of the rider's finish.~~
 - e. (a), (b), and (c)**
5. Which of the following penalties may NOT be imposed by a Chief Referee?
e. Suspension
6. Which of the following is NOT a power of a Chief Referee?
d. To overrule the Chief Judge when they have clearly made an error in determining the order of finish.
7. When may a rider benefit from their own misconduct?
a. Never
8. If a rider appears to present a danger to the other competitors, at what point may that rider be disqualified, if at all?
c. Before, during or after the race.

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9. True or False:

- a. **TRUE**_ Listening is the first key to successful communication.
- b. **FALSE** Shouting back at an irate rider is the best way to get my point across to them.
- c. **TRUE**_ My tone of voice can convey a different message than what I intend.
- d. **TRUE**_ A written protest allows the rider or coach to think through the problem carefully, present it with the rule they feel is applicable, and helps them to look at the problem more rationally and with less emotion.
- e. **FALSE** Re-stating the problem in my own words is a waste of time.
- f. **TRUE**_ A decision that affects one rider may have an effect on several or more of the riders in the race.
- g. **FALSE** It's important to identify the source of the problem and assign blame in order to provide good customer service.
- h. **TRUE**_ Other officials at the event may have records, information, or insight to resolving a problem.
- i. **TRUE**_ Giving a realistic estimate of the time needed to resolve an issue is part of providing customer service.
- j. **FALSE** The rider (customer) is always right.
- k. **TRUE**_ Stick to the regulations and you'll make the right decisions.
- l. **TRUE**_ Maintaining a safe, fair race for all riders and remaining consistent generally leads to good customer service.

11. In the examples below, either statement gets the point across. Which of the statements in each of the pairs demonstrates the best approach to providing customer service?

- a) 1. "Your number can't be read easily when it's that small. Please unfold it before the start of your race. We want to make sure we place you correctly!"
- b) 1. "Helmets are required while you're on the bike. It's a safety and liability issue."
- c) 2. "Protests on order of finish need to be lodged with the Chief Judge at the Finish Line. They are really busy right now, but will be available as soon as the race finishes. If you like, you can put your protest in a note, including your category, bib number, and where you think you placed, it will serve as a reminder, and the Chief Judge can get started working on it before you come back."
- d) 2. "The organizer has met their obligations in providing you a safe, fair race. I understand that you're not happy because you missed a turn on the course, but according to our rules, the responsibility of knowing the course ultimately lies with the rider. You are not entitled to a refund."
- e) 2. "I'm sorry, but your teammate will have to personally sign the waiver. It's a legal document."
- f) 1. "While this may seem like an order of finish question, you actually placed fourth in the sprint, and the Chief Referee has relegated you to the back of the bunch you were sprinting with. If you want to discuss it further, you'll need to speak with the Chief Referee, who is over there with the white hat."
- g) 2. "Our rules say only the rider or coach can file a protest. It's part of what sportsmanship is all about. Tell them I'll listen! It's part of my duty to the participants!"

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Characteristics of Good Cycling Officials

(ADAPTED FROM THE 2006 OFFICIALS MANUAL, PART 1)

It seems safe to assume that you are reading this because you want to become a good official or to become a better official. Just as athletes are constantly striving to better their performances, so must we. Rules change, better techniques are developed, technology improves and we must keep up.

Let's consider a few basic principles of sports officiating.

Why do we have officials at sporting events? We've all played games with our friends, family and schoolmates without officials. It works, provided everyone is honest, trusts everyone else, everyone is paying attention to the whole game and the stakes aren't high enough to erode the moral foundation of the game. When this is not the case, officials are assigned to reinforce good sportsmanship. We strive to provide objective observations from the best vantage point to determine placings and proper conduct. We allow the competitors to focus their attention on their own performances, safe in the knowledge someone is "watching the other guy." Our goal is always to watch for safety, fairness, and the accuracy of the results.

Why are you an official? Perhaps you love the sport, saw this as a way to maintain involvement after your competitive career ended, or saw a need for good officials and wanted to help. Maybe you have a flair for organization, are a good manager and enjoy being involved with a growing sport. No matter your entry point, we hope that you care about fairness, an important quality in an official.

If the goal is a safe, fair race with accurate results, how can you best accomplish that? Know the rules. Know all of the rules. Know what all of the rules mean. That is, know the Technical Commission's interpretation of each rule. It is not fair to the riders to insist your interpretation is better than the Technical Commission's. Riders travel and race under many different officials in the course of a year. Simple justice demands they find the same rules each time and that our interpretations of the rules are consistent with one another. In addition to watching the new rules webinar each year, or reviewing new regulations and changes, maintaining a continuous dialogue with other officials, both in your local area and beyond, will help us all be as consistent as possible in the application of the rules.

Once you know the rules, you should feel confident that you will make good decisions. When riders, coaches, organizers and even other officials have questions, you will be able to answer and explain them correctly because you know the rules and – perhaps more importantly – why the rule exists and how it should be applied. This enhances your poise and allows you to remain calm at all times, another very important quality. Where the rules do not specifically address the point, you will use good judgment to make reasonable, common sense decisions. Also, once you have made such a decision you will not be easily swayed from it. It will become obvious that you know what you mean and mean what you say. This will earn you the respect of the competitors, even when they don't agree with you. Additionally, you will remain open to the possibility of better methods and better strategies. You will develop good rapport with riders, coaches, managers, organizers and other officials because you understand what needs to be done and you share a common goal: a safe, fair,

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professional looking bicycle race that is won by the most capable competitor that day. An official must earn the respect and confidence of the competitors in order to be truly effective. While those riders who have been exposed to only good officials are predisposed to trust others, those who have not been so fortunate will be inclined to distrust you. Riders who do not know you may try to test you to see if you are competent. So long as you maintain the goal of a safe, fair race and remain consistent you should have minimal problems after the first or second meeting with them.

An official must be above suspicion. Fairness and integrity must be our bywords. We must not only be fair, but we also must give the appearance of fairness. While it is possible to make fair judgments while wearing a hat or warm-up jacket of the Acme Bike Shop team, but if you then disqualify the rider who placed ahead of a Team Acme rider, who will believe you are truly objective? This is an example that illustrates why, as officials, our clothing does not include any sponsorship other than the badge that denotes us as a USA Cycling official. It is also why, if you are not an official at a race or are at a race that is not sanctioned by USA Cycling, you should not wear any pieces of the USA Cycling uniform.

An official must always support the decisions of the Chief Referee or the decisions of any Protest or Appeals Jury on which they might sit. Any doubts you have will be cleared up in private so when you meet the public, a decision is unanimous. An official who violates this trust will soon find himself excluded from any further discussions, and a valuable learning tool will be lost if this occurs. This also includes comments on social media that relate to decisions made by officials. We should not comment on or discuss our opinion of a call made at a race, whether we were there or not. Remember that professionalism and integrity are essential components of the good official. Strive to improve your skills and to help other officials to improve theirs. Compliment other officials on their work and always do your best so you don't let them down. Good officials compliment and complement each other's abilities.

When a rider is frustrated or upset about a situation, it is our job to listen closely and work to understanding the rider's point of view. This will help you calm situations that inevitably arise. You won't be unconsciously antagonizing them, or cause the escalation of a discussion to an argument simply because a rider feels you don't hear the problem. Courtesy is key here. When a competitor wants to discuss something with you, give them your attention, or arrange for a time when you are available so that you can give them your attention. Then, when you have made your decision, there is a world of difference between saying, "You are disqualified and that's all there is to it", and saying, "You have my decision, thank you." If you should be guilty of some rudeness, apologize. Recognizing your human frailty and atoning for it will enhance your stature more than issuing edicts.

Part of understanding the riders is working to understand what motivates a particular rider. Physical exercise, validation of self, perhaps friends or family are watching, or they may be trying to earn the respect of other riders. Competitors have a lot of ego and a lot of adrenaline flowing, both during the competition and for a time afterward. Both traits will cause tunnel vision and a loss of logical thought. Sometimes a conversation is better in 10 minutes that right in the heat of the moment. Remember, most athletes are inherently honest.

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A rider who suffers a mishap may believe they deserve a special break to make up for it, or sometimes may not have a clear understanding of the rules regulating mishaps. It will help if you remember life is not always fair, and neither is bicycle racing. There are glass shards, potholes, dogs, cars, and wrong turns all lurking in wait for a luckless victim. Sometimes there is nothing you can do to make it better for an unfortunate competitor.

Empathy comes naturally to a good official. “I can understand how upsetting it is to have come all this way and not be able to race because you don’t have your helmet with you. I’m sorry the rules leave me no options, unless you are able to find a helmet that can be loaned to you.” Seek to make the rider your ally. Instead of saying, “Unfold your number because I said so.” you might be better to say, “You have to unfold your number. It is too hard for the Judges to read and we want to be sure to place you properly.” Most riders will understand the logic in that!

In local events, many riders are new to the sport and learning about the sport and the rules while they race. Most riders don’t have the rulebook cued up to read or reread each year. This means that educating the riders is part of our responsibility as an official, and preferable to “teaching them a lesson they’ll never forget”. Most of the competitors in our sport are woefully misinformed about the rules under which they race. This is especially true in the case of uniform and equipment standards. Try to be diplomatic. Ask the rider if they understand what they did wrong. Riders have inquiring minds too. You can refer a rider to the USAC website, www.usacycling.org to get the rule book.

Enforce all the rules every time. The Category 5 rider who is allowed, without comment, to wear a World Championship jersey in three or four races, will of course be belligerent when someone finally tells the rider that they can’t. Support your fellow officials. Don’t leave it for them to re-educate riders you ignored. No official likes to hear, “But last week the Chief Referee let me do it.”

Reflecting is a technique that can be most useful with agitated riders. It consists of saying back, in your own words, what you believe you heard the rider say. It reassures the rider that you are listening, it helps you get the true picture of the rider’s problem, and it helps the rider clarify in their own mind what they want from you.

Role playing is helpful in learning non-inflammatory responses. For example, a rider runs up to you screaming, “Did you see what that rider did?” Some possible responses are:

“Yeah, so what?” “Of course I saw it.”

“What did you do to deserve it?”

“If I didn’t see it, it didn’t happen.”

“If you want to protest, you need to follow the directions in the rule book. You’d better hurry you only have 15 minutes.”

“Tell me exactly what’s wrong.”

“I’d like talk about it, can you explain the situation to me calmly?”

As you can see, some of these replies will agitate the rider further, while others will calm the situation.

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Characteristics that all top officials have in common:

Consistency

- What riders may perceive as “inconsistent” officiating may be due to the varying experience levels of officials. It may also occur due to a slightly differing situation that is perceived by the rider(s) as being the same.

Rapport

- Good officials can anticipate how a race will develop, and can anticipate situations before they develop. Be a student of the sport, and your ability to “read” a race and understand what the riders are facing will grow immeasurably.
- Other officials on the crew are a part of your team. Work together and use the resources available to you.
- Develop good communication skills with all constituents: race director, racers, fans, officials, volunteers, etc.
- Be approachable.

Decisiveness

- Do NOT wait for the rider(s) to complain about an incident that you witnessed.
- Avoid controversy by making quick, decisive calls. Be firm but fair.

Poise

- Remember, no matter how good you are, some of the people will be unhappy at the end of the day; you can’t please everyone. But you can be calm and considerate with everyone.
- Responding calmly under pressure demonstrates good poise.

Integrity & Good Judgment

- Use a sound knowledge of the rules as the basis for decisions.
- Be honest with yourself and others about yourself and your decisions.
- Stay focused on the race so you have the most possible information for your decisions.
- Use the information and expertise available from your official’s team.

Confidence

- Believe in your abilities and own up to mistakes when you make them.
- Cultivate a positive attitude.
- Use a growth mindset so that you can learn and improve as an official at every race.

Enjoyment & Motivation

- Enjoy the challenge that comes with working as an official.
- Consider what resonates with you the most while working as an official and how that is good for bike racing. Cultivate that while working on areas that are more challenging for you.

For more in-depth information, try reading *Psychology of Officiating* by Robert S. Weinberg and Peggy A. Richardson.