



# Road B Module 3

## ASSISTANT REFEREE | CRITERIUM

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 a criterium referee 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 Referee 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 all the Referee skills.
5. Retest yourself if it would be helpful for you.

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## GOALS

The purpose of this module is to provide the Assistant Referee for road events with the necessary information and experience needed for refereeing at a criterium. The module serves as part of the training necessary for Level C officials to advance to a Level B official.

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

1. Understand the concepts and terminology for working the wheel pit during criteriums.
2. Score riders/groups in a criterium as a referee (chief ref/pit official).
3. Apply the Free Lap Rule:
  - a. Determine recognized/not recognized mishaps
  - b. Insert riders back in to the race
  - c. Communicate with the judges regarding riders in the pit and free lap decisions
  - d. Keep accurate records of riders, mishaps and free lap decisions
4. Set up junior roll out and correctly roll out junior racers.
5. Referee sprints.
6. Start races.

## REQUIRED READING

### [USA Cycling Rulebook](#)

- Road Racing | 3D. Criterium
- General Regulations | 114. Junior Gears

### READING INCLUDED IN THIS MODULE

- Criteriums

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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 Criterium skills runs from “No experience” to “Some exposure” to “Developing skill” to “Fulfilling local needs with support” to “Fulfilling local needs independently”.

ASSISTANT REFEREE: CRITERIUM SKILLS
Track riders off the front
Identify the field and its approximate size
Track riders off the back
Know the time split for leaders
Determine Recognized / unrecognized mishaps
Reinsert riders per the Free Lap rule
Communicate riders in pit to Judges
Accurate records of riders in the pit, free laps awarded/denied, DNFs
Set up Junior Roll Out
Roll out junior riders
Referee final sprint
Start races

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## PRE-TEST

1. Which of the following is NOT a “recognized mishap”?
  - a. Being delayed by a crash by the group ahead
  - b. A crash
  - c. A failure of an essential component of the bicycle.
  - d. A flat tire
2. All riders must race the final \_\_\_\_\_ km of a criterium
  - a. 30
  - b. 8
  - c. 6
  - d. 5
  - e. 4
3. On a course of less than \_\_\_\_\_ km, two laps may be allowed for any mishap.
  - a. 2.5
  - b. 2
  - c. 1.2
  - d. 1
  - e. 0.8
4. During a criterium, a rider passes the pit and then has a flat tire. In order to return to the pit quickly to change wheels, the rider makes a “U-turn” in the middle of the road, nearly hitting a group of riders and causing them to brake violently. What action should the Referee in the pit take?
  - a. Warn the rider that they may not ride backward on the course.
  - b. Disallow the rider’s free lap
  - c. Disqualify the rider.
  - d. Allow the rider’s free lap but report the incident to the Chief Referee.
  - e. Either (a) (b) or (d), to be decided per the judgment of the Pit Referee.
5. During a criterium, a rider enters the pit with a wheel that has pulled over because the quick release was not tight enough. What action should the Referee in the pit take?
  - a. Disallow the rider’s free lap and tell the rider that they must chase.
  - b. Allow the rider’s free lap and ensure the rider is reinserted at the back of the group in which they were riding.
  - c. Advise the Chief Referee and the Scorer that the free lap was disallowed, but do not advise the rider.
  - d. Disqualify the rider for attempted fraud.
  - e. None, as the rider has violated no racing regulations.

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6. Bicycles for mass start road races must be equipped with:
  - a. A freewheel and exactly one working brake.
  - b. A quick release.
  - c. A freewheel a working brake on each wheel.
  - d. A fixed cog with a brake on the front wheel.
  - e. A properly glued tubular tire.
7. The Junior gear restriction of 7.93 meters does NOT apply to a junior rider in which of the following?
  - a. Junior National Road Championships.
  - b. A local criterium for juniors of any category.
  - c. Junior National Time Trial Championships.
  - d. A junior cyclocross event.
  - e. When the rider is riding an elite race.

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## PRE-TEST, Answer Key

1. Which of the following is NOT a “recognized mishap”?  
**a. Being delayed by a crash by the group ahead**
2. All riders must race the final \_\_\_\_\_ km of a criterium  
**a. 8**
3. On a course of less than \_\_\_\_\_ km, two laps may be allowed for any mishap.  
**d. 1**
4. During a criterium, a rider passes the pit and then has a flat tire. In order to return to the pit quickly to change wheels, the rider makes a “U-turn” in the middle of the road, nearly hitting a group of riders and causing them to brake violently. What action should the Referee in the pit take?  
**e. Either (a) (b) or (d), depending on circumstances like level of the riders racing and how the incident affected the race.**
5. During a criterium, a rider enters the pit with a wheel that has pulled over because the quick release was not tight enough. What action should the Referee in the pit take?  
**a. Disallow the rider’s free lap and tell the rider that they must chase.**
6. Bicycles for mass start road races must be equipped with:  
**b. A freewheel a working brake on each wheel.**
7. The Junior gear restriction of 7.93 meters does NOT apply to a junior rider in which of the following?  
**d. A junior cyclocross event. (It always applies in a criterium.)**

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## Criteriaums

(ADAPTED FROM THE 2005 OFFICIALS MANUAL, PART 2)

### COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

A criterium is a race on a closed circuit with a distance of 800 meters to 5 km (1/2 to 3 miles) per lap. The minimum width of the course should be 7 meters (21-22 feet). It is the most popular road race in the United States due to accessibility for spectators and the relative ease of obtaining a course. The distance of the circuit and whether or not the course is entirely closed to traffic are important in defining whether you really have a criterium.

### LAPPED RIDERS

For local races, lapped riders are generally left in the field to race. When that is the case, they...

- Are not eligible for primes
- May be pulled if out of contention
- If allowed to finish, finish on the same lap as the leader(s)
- May work with other riders, but may not drop back to assist a rider gaining a lap

Many things must be taken into consideration before pulling lapped riders. Some fields are small and thus leaving lapped riders in the race generally causes no problems for riders, both on lap and those being lapped. With beginner fields and lower categories, leaving riders in the race allows all riders to practice. If riders are always pulled, they get no racing experience and become discouraged, often leaving the sport. At the same time, too many lapped riders on a small circuit can make judging unusually difficult and the places may be awarded to the wrong riders, or the configuration of the course may make it less safe to allow lapped riders to remain.

If it is a Pro/Cat 1/2 race, it is generally expected that riders who are out of contention will be pulled. Both pulled riders and lapped rider should be placed in the results.

### PRIMES

Primes are intermediate sprints within the race, a “race within a race” for a separate prize than the overall finish of the race. Some notes about primes:

- Lapped riders are not eligible
- May be awarded to the race leader or the leader of any group
- Only riders in the group (or behind it!) at the beginning of the prime lap are eligible
- Are awarded even if a rider withdraws from the race
- Are determined by the Race Organizer’s staff but recorded by the officials
- The timing of primes is under the control of the Chief Judge.

### FREE LAPS – WORKING AS A PIT REFEREE

A rider may be awarded a Free Lap in any of these circumstances:

1. Crash
2. Puncture (aka Flat)
3. Breakage or failure of an essential component

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*How do you determine if a free lap should be awarded?*

Crash: Typically, it's fairly obvious when a rider has been involved in a crash – they may have road rash, or their bike may have obvious damage. If there is a motoref working the event, they may radio the numbers of the riders involved in the crash. Some riders who were merely delayed by the crash will report to the pit in the hopes of being awarded a free lap. If in doubt, award the lap and err on the side of the rider. If they have misrepresented what happened, there is plenty of time to figure that out and make a decision about correcting things in the results (loss of lap). The intent of the rule is to compensate for bad luck, so don't worry too much about being overly lenient. Leniency early in the race and a stricter adherence to the rules late in the race is a good practice.

Puncture: As with a crash, this is usually easy to verify – the tire will be flat! In the case of a slow leak, allow the lap and instruct the mechanic to re-inflate the tire to racing pressure, note the time, and check the pressure later. If it hasn't lost air, tell the CJ and the CHIEF REFEREE that the lap is denied. You might also consider keeping the offending wheel away from prying eyes and fingers.

Breakage of Essential Component: What are the “essential components”?

The frame, derailleurs, derailleur cables, seat posts/saddles, cranks/pedals, handlebars/stem, chain, spokes, etc. *Accessories such as water bottle cages, computers, etc., are not essential components.*

Breakage/Failure of an essential component is not the same as a failure to properly tighten or maintain those components. A broken seat tube is a breakage and thus a recognized mishap.

A seat tube that has slipped because the clamp wasn't properly tightened a failure to tighten/maintain and is not a recognized mishap. A broken chain is a recognized mishap. A dropped chain is not a recognized mishap. In the case of a mishap that is not recognized, the rider must be sent on their way as soon as the repair has been made.

Communicate with the riders: If a rider asks you, “Do I get a free lap?” what do you say?

- Unless you know that it's obviously a valid mishap you need to be cautious.
- You might say, “What seems to be the problem?” or “I haven't determined that you have a valid mishap yet.”
- If this is a Category 5 rider, they very likely don't know what constitutes a valid mishap.
- However, if this rider is a PRO/1/2 rider, consider close examination of the equipment.
- Ideally, the decision made in the pit should stand. Sometimes this isn't possible, and it may result in a rider being down a lap in the results after thinking they wouldn't be.

How do you reinsert at rider?

Stand in front of the rider being held, watch the field approach, and communicate calmly with the rider as to when you are going to release them. When it's time to release, step aside and wave them on. It is often helpful to give them a countdown (time trial style). This lets both the rider and the mechanic better know what's happening, as they are looking forward, not back at the approaching field.



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## When do you reinsert a rider?

**Recognized mishap:** The rider(s) will be reinserted into the group they were in at the time of the mishap. If it was a large group, the riders will be reinserted so they will join the back third of the field. In order to do this, you need to send the rider out before that last third reaches the pit as the rider will need time to get up to speed. You don't want to wait so long that the rider has to sprint to catch on to their group. This is not an easy task and takes practice to master. Every field races at a different speed, so you have to consider your timing with each field on course – that is when you start a Cat 5 to rejoin the Cat 5 field will be very different than when you start a Cat 2 rejoining the 1/2/3 field.

*What if the rider was in the break?* You put the rider back in with the break.

*What if the rider was solo off the front?* This is the trickiest one. How much time do they have? How do you give the rider that gap again? Seek assistance. The judges should know what the gap was. The judges and the motoref (if there is one) can also help you figure out where the field is relative to the pit. It's a good idea to start figuring out how you might handle this once a solo break starts to happen. You don't want to change the outcome of the race by giving the rider more of a gap than they had, nor by taking away a significant part of their advantage.

**At one lap down:** Occasionally, a rider will be reinserted as if they were awarded a lap, but scored at one lap down. This usually follows a denial of a free lap or an extended (botched?) repair. There is nothing wrong with re-entering a rider at one lap down, so long as the chief referee and chief judge are aware of what you are doing. If in doubt, get approval from the chief referee.

**Unrecognized mishap/denied free lap:** A free lap may be denied because of an unrecognized mishap. When that is the case, the rider can be reinserted one lap down after notifying the judges, or the rider can be sent back "to chase" as soon as the mechanical issue is resolved.

## Keep Notes

When riders come in for free laps, do your best to keep notes. This can provide important information about who is on lap rather than down a lap should the judges miss noting a rider receiving a free lap.

## Score the Race

Pit officials should make every effort to score the race if possible (sometimes the bib numbers are on the riders' other side). While it is not expected that you will have a complete score sheet, you should have a working knowledge of the composition of breakaways, location of the field, and numbers of riders off the back. Why do you need to do this? So you know where to reinsert riders after mishaps. When you need to attend to a rider in the pit, you will have to stop scoring. This is expected. If the race picture changes during that time, the judges can assist you with sorting out the changes.

## Managing the Pit

**Work cooperatively with the mechanics:** Introduce yourself to the mechanics and respect the work they do, and they'll give you the respect you need to do your job. Don't let the mechanic make rulings on legitimacy of mishaps – ask for information if you need it (they might see a broken hub cone, for

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example, that you didn't catch), but you make the calls. You are expected, however, to control how and when the rider returns to the race. Good mechanics know the rules, and professional ones have had officials training too.

**Be decisive!** Whatever decision you make, make it quickly. This gives the mechanic time to do their thing, or at the very least gives a rider with a denied lap an opportunity to chase – they probably won't get back in the field, but a quick return might save them a heavy pro-rated time penalty in a stage race.

**Observe how riders approach the pit:** Remember, riders can't ride backward on the course to reach the pit. A rider doing that – or making a U-turn on the course to come back – has earned at least a denial of the free lap, or removal from the race if their actions endangered others. If you can help them correct the situation instead of a penalty, make every effort to do so.

**Don't penalize the rider for a mechanic's mistake:** Occasionally, a mechanic screws up – we're all humans. Don't deny a second free lap for something out of the rider's direct control, even if the replacement bike had, say, a loose quick release.

## JUNIOR ROLL-OUT

**Set-up Junior Roll-Out:** Ideally find a location that has a straight edge or line to help guide you when rolling out bicycles. Another option is to tape down the tape measure to provide that line to guide the roll out. 26' is one full revolution of the crank. If you set up 13' it is a half revolution of the crank.

**Roll-Out Junior Riders:** In preparation for roll-out, ask all riders to put their bikes in the biggest gear and line-up with the bikes facing backwards. This means the chain is around the biggest chainring on the front and around the smallest cog on the rear wheel. Begin with the crank arms perpendicular to the ground and line them up with the first marker. Make sure the tires are inflated and that the gears are set correctly. Since juniors may have blocked a cog or two, try to put the bike in those gears. Roll the bike backwards until the crank arms have completed one full revolution. Have the rider walk the distance with you. If the revolution is short or right on the second mark then the bike has passed. Mark the rider's number, write it down in your notes, and/or check them off the start list. However, if the revolution is long then re-roll the bike. You should inform the rider that they have failed roll out, and let the chief referee know as they may want to re-roll the bike or check the measurements.

**When to roll out juniors:** Pre-race is a courtesy. Post-race is a requirement. Why? A junior could go and change equipment between a pre-race roll out and the start of a race. Immediately after the race ensures that the gears being checked are those used during the race.

## REFEREE A SPRINT

Someone should be positioned about 200 meters before the finish to watch for foul riding. The official should be visible to the riders and have a clear line of vision. Most of the interesting things that happen in a sprint finish do NOT happen in the finishing straight. This is important because judges should not be trying to watch the sprint for infractions. If they do, they will fail in their judging duties. To warrant a penalty, it is best if the infraction should be observed by an official so it's important to position people to watch the sprint! If no official saw the alleged incident, you must obtain a great deal of evidence and

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take great care with the decision. You may also be asked to referee the riders in the final corner. In any instance, when refereeing a sprint watch for:

1. Riders changing their line during the sprint – did the change of line impede other riders, by changing their line or their pace?
2. Contact between riders – during a final sprint contact should not happen.
3. Lead out riders – watch when and how they pull off the front of the train – did they impede other riders engaged in the sprint?

## STARTING A RACE

### Before you blow the whistle

1. Know what field you are starting and that those who are there are the right racers.
2. Check the field. Look at bib numbers – are they the correct sequence for the field and reasonable placement? Check for plugged bar ends. Is clothing and/or bicycle correct (no sleeveless jerseys, no fixed gear bike, etc.)? The Chief Referee may arrange to have an assistant judge or referee help with this.
3. Verify with rest of the officiating crew, and the pace vehicle if you have one, that everyone is ready for the race to start. If you have a motoref, you can have them take a lap to verify course readiness while you are checking bibs and bikes.
4. Give instructions, these typically include:
  - a. Laps or duration (minutes) of the race
  - b. Lap cards and how they will be used
  - c. Location of the Pit
  - d. When (laps to go) Free Laps end
  - e. Where results will be posted
  - f. Location of medical / roll-out

### Actual start of the race

1. Verify that all riders have a foot down
2. Announce “Riders Ready”
3. Blow the whistle (or fire the starter’s pistol as the case may be)
  - a. Be sure to be off the course and out of the way of the start.

## RADIO COMMUNICATION

Communications should be concise. Do your best to speak clearly and calmly. Keep in mind that radio frequencies aren’t private and your communications may be heard by anyone. Most communication at a criterium is between the judges, the motorefs, and the pits. One of the most important things for criteriums is to recognize the timing of your communications. The judges need to know who is in the pit and/or returning from the pit, but the moment they are judging a prime sprint is not the best time to try to contact them. As with any radio communication, be aware of what is happening in the race, and who else may be trying to transmit before you push the button to talk.

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## Tips for using the radio

- Use titles, not names. For example, say "Pit to Judges", not "Dave to Joe."
- Keep the radio out of the wind.
- Listen.
- Anticipate responses to other conversations. For example, the Chief Referee asks a motorcycle referee for an update on a crash, but the moto has not called back yet. Do not start a radio transmission at this time that steps on the transmission of the motorcycle referee.
- Know the titles of everyone you will be calling.
- Examples of typical radio calls:
  - After denying a free lap for a rider:
    - Pit to judges
    - Go for judges
    - Rider 132 (called as one thirty-two, one-three-two) has been reinserted one lap down
    - Judges confirm one thirty-two is a lap down
  - After a rider calls it quits (unfixable bike, etc.):
    - Pit to judges
    - Go for judges
    - Rider 4 (called as four, the number four) has abandoned
    - Judges confirm rider four as DNF

## CHIEF REFEREE

As the Chief Referee, you may position yourself near the start/finish, or at/near the pit (this depends in part on whether or not you are going to pull riders), but you should be prepared to move about the course as needed to assist with problem solving as needed once the race is underway. The other officials are tied to their positions so, if there are problems, they cannot come find you. Therefore, you should check with them frequently to make sure everything is okay. You are responsible for the general conduct of the entire race.

You will be assigning the officials' duties for the crew. Make sure they feel comfortable with the tasks assigned to them. Define your expectations and answer any questions that may arise. Your major concern should be to oversee the event. For example, one of the hardest decisions is when should you stop or neutralize a race. Some notes on neutralizing a race:

- Stop the race if there is a serious obstruction on the race course. An example would be a crash involving a serious injury where the ambulance and medical staff would need the whole road; a fire truck coming onto the course; or some sort of natural disaster.
- Stopping or neutralizing a race should be the last resort, but there are times when it must be done. Use common sense. Make sure the riders understand what is expected of them so you do not create an additional problem by stopping the race. Use a motorcycle official, if you have one, or the pace car, to notify the riders whether they will be expected to stop or roll around slowly. If possible, allow the riders to roll around without changing their positions.
- Do NOT change the lap cards until racing resumes. Make sure the course is clear, give the riders

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a final warm-up lap and then restart the race. Remember that a serious accident is psychologically upsetting to the riders, so make sure they are settled back in and ready to start.

- In some cases, you may add some laps back to the race. An example would be if you had to stop the race with two laps to go on a short course. If the field were altogether, it would be dangerous to restart with two to go. It might be better to restart with four or five laps. Consider the amount of time left in the day for racing— you may want to confer with the race director.

How will you manage lapped riders?

- If you have announced that riders will be pulled at your discretion, then you can pull riders early or leave riders in as appropriate. If a single rider goes off the back early in the race when there is a big field of riders and loses a lap (in the first third of the race), then you might leave that rider in because their presence is not causing any problems. On the other hand, if the same rider continues to lose lap after lap, you may decide to pull the rider for their own safety, as it is dangerous mixing riders of widely differing abilities on a short circuit.
- A rider who loses a lap in the last one third of the race may be left in. If it appears being lapped will compromise the final laps of the race, you may pull that rider. It will depend on the number of riders and the circumstances of each race. There is no single right answer.
- Be sure to communicate clearly with the judges when riders are being pulled and when riders are being allowed to lose a lap in the race.
- If a field is small, leave the riders in if possible. In general, we always want to let riders finish when we can.

Other responsibilities include:

- Take all reports from your officials and assess the appropriate penalties, if needed.
- Fill out your reports, collect officials' fees from the organizer and distribute them to the crew.
- Make a point of conducting a debrief meeting after the race with the officials and separately with the race director. Thank everyone!