

Policy IVa: Nepotism

Nepotism: favoritism (as in appointment to a job) based on kinship or close personal relationship

POLICY

USA Cycling Officials who are involved in assigning officials to cycling events shall refrain from making promises, whether explicit or implied, regarding the assignment or reassignment of officials to an event, except as allowed by the relevant Assigning Authority (a USA Cycling Local Association, a Regional Technical Commission, or the National Technical Commission, as appropriate).

The direct assignment of members of one's own family (persons with close kinships or personal ties) shall be avoided to the extent practical. If more than one member of a single family is assigned to an event, an Assigning Authority shall make the assignment. Assigning Authorities shall be composed of more than one member, the majority of which shall not be members of the assignee's family, if the possibility of nepotism exists. Assignments shall be made in a fashion that is free of family influence, both in substance and in appearance.

Nepotism among cycling officials, whether between direct relatives of families or close personal relationships should be avoided. Nepotism in officiating assignments, whether necessary or overt, consistently discourages the recruitment, development and advancement of officials. It is especially impactful if the frequency of assignments, opportunities for significant experience, or upper level events are assigned between two or more members of the same family. An officiating team composed of family members can at times create a significant breach of officiating ethics.

It is not uncommon for officials to be from the same family. Often an officiating career is something that a family member has started while the other raced. At some point, both people may continue as officials and this is never discouraged. However, just as we expect complete neutrality of a cycling referee whose family member is racing, the same neutrality is expected in the assignment and advancement of officials. Officials are taught that even wearing team clothing or advertising compromises their neutrality. If family members are in a position of authority, especially in assignments or oversight of officiating assignments, nepotism or the appearance of nepotism, should be understood as creating the potential of compromised impartiality and authority.

Without a question, there are times that assignment of family members may be practical, efficient, and the only solution to a possible shortage of referees in an area. There are regions of the country where these may be the only cycling referees willing to work an event. In such a case, nepotism isn't going to be an issue, at least

until another referee is available and willing to work. Even in regions with more officials, there may be practical and overriding reasons for family members to be assigned to work the same event. One person may judge, one person might work as a motor referee and another one might act as the chief referee. As practical as those assignments might seem based on experience, skill or local availability, there is certainly the reasonable possibility that questions of nepotism can be raised.

However, if one of those family members is in charge of the assignment process, it now moves beyond just the question of nepotism to the clear appearance of nepotism regardless of intent. Any ability or opportunity of a person in charge of, or influence in the process of, assigning a member of one's family to an event must be open to scrutiny. Officials involved in the assignment process should avoid these conflicts by seeking a higher authority to oversee the assignment process to avoid this perception. Assignment of multiple members of a family by an outside Assigning Authority, are situations where an independent evaluation of the assignments can be made without creating a nepotistic situation.

Officials who wish to remain in a role of assigning officials should take due care to create the openness, transparency and discipline of equitably distributing assignments to alleviate nepotism concerns. When in doubt, the assigner may need to remove themselves from the selection of officials for an event that multiple family members are likely to be utilized. Look to the next higher Assigning Authority to assist in such a process. The clearest sign of neutrality and avoidance of nepotism is to simply make the decision to not assign members of one's family or never work events where one's family members have been assigned. Due caution must also be taken to equitably distribute the senior positions, opportunities for advancement, or positions on the crew that receive the higher pay rates among all qualified officials.