

BMX Freestyle Park

Judging Method

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Introduction

BMX Freestyle is a sport in which the outcome of competition is decided entirely by a panel of judges, who evaluate, compare and then rank the performances of all riders.

BMX Freestyle judges have a background in the sport of BMX Freestyle, specifically in the competition specialties for which they are a judge. This experience is an essential element in the ability to accurately assess the performances of riders. Judges are trained to apply the judging method outlined in the UCI BMX Freestyle Regulations.

It shall be assumed by all concerned that judges' panels diligently and honestly evaluate the performance of each rider to the best of their ability in accordance with this code of practice and the UCI Regulations. The UCI may audit the work of judges' panels from time-to-time to ensure that this is the case.

What is a Freestyle BMX Judge?

A BMX Freestyle judge is more than just an experienced and passionate rider.

While knowledge of BMX is critical for a judge to have, other skills are also important - they need to be able to assess the performance of many riders quickly, calmly and accurately.

In doing their work, judges have the reputation and credibility of the whole sport in their hands – so being able to judge other riders' performance in a fair and unbiased way is essential.

Key Principles Governing the Work of Judges

1. The nature of BMX Freestyle as a sport is that the outcome of competitions depends on the opinion of the judges' panel concerning each rider's performance when compared with that of other riders. Given this, differences of opinion between riders and the judges' panel are inevitable and do not, in themselves, give rise to concern over the integrity of the competition. On balance, the collective opinion of a panel of judges shall serve to rectify inconsistencies, meaning that the opinion of the judges' panel shall always prevail.
2. The performance of each rider is impartially judged during its execution and only on its merits and deficiencies without consideration of perceived ability, reputation, nor past performances (even in earlier phases of the same competition).
3. Continuous professional development is a valued and important activity in maintaining competence and achieving consistent judging.

Standards of Practice for Judges Panels

1. Judges must be licensed by their national federation in each year that they intend to be active as a judge. As with riders, this obliges judges to follow the UCI regulations and code of ethics.
2. The head judge serves as the coordinator and representative of the judges' panel towards third persons. Members of the judges' panel should refer queries to the head judge, who shall coordinate discussions with the panel.
3. The head judge will be present at the rider's meeting or team managers' meeting to answer questions about the judging method, if asked.
4. The judges' panel will examine the field of play prior to beginning their work to better understand the conditions facing the riders during their performances. Likewise, they may decide to watch some or all of the practice to gain a sense of the possibilities and difficulties presented by the field of play.
5. The judges' panel shall deliver its scores as a unit, submitted through the head judge. No judge shall disclose or discuss, at any time, the scores or their grounds outside of the panel's deliberations.
6. Following an event, the head judge will provide a report to the UCI or their national federation (in case of a national event).
7. Riders, coaches, team managers or any other staff representing those riders are entitled to have the UCI judging method explained to them in a general sense and judges shall ensure that such information is made available to other stakeholders, either proactively or upon request. The stakeholders are, however, not entitled to receive specific information concerning how their performance was judged, or advice about how they should prepare for future competitions from individual judges or the judge' panel.

Providing such information and advice is the responsibility of the rider's coach and not that of judges.

8. The role of a judge is not compatible with any role within a national team, with the role of a coach, or in general within the context of training or preparing BMX freestyle riders for competition. In any year that a judge is licensed, he or she shall not also serve in any such function. In this respect, the judge shall disclose any involvement related to cycling (whether related to athlete support or not) to the UCI and the national federation.
9. Judges may only give judge training courses with the knowledge and permission of the UCI or their national federation in case of a training course in their own country. Any official curriculum for such training courses must be followed.

Duties of Participants in BMX Freestyle

As a condition of participation, all riders and team staff understand and accept the nature of BMX Freestyle as a judged sport. Unless there is proof to the contrary, they also accept that by default each judges panel will honestly and diligently judge the performance of each rider, and that the opinion of a panel of judges is always more credible and unbiased than the point of view of any individual or team.

As the quality of the judges' work depends on being able to focus on the contest in question, participants accept that they must not approach or disturb the judges when they are doing their work.

While individual judges or any judges' panel may explain this document to them, participants accept that judges will not discuss the specifics of the results of any contest. Once announced by the judges' panel, the results of each contest are considered final.

Keeping in mind the above, in case any administrative errors in how the results are reported are discovered, such errors will be corrected.

In case of any concern regarding the work of the judges at an event, participants may contact the UCI office or the UCI Technical Delegate at the event, if one is present.

The Judging Method

Contest Formats

UCI Events – National Championships, Class 1, Continental Championships

Two methods are possible:

Method 1

- All competition phases: Two runs, both count (the average of the score from both runs decides each rider's final score for that phase)

Or

Method 2

- Qualification phase: Two runs, both count (the average of the score from both runs decides each rider's final score for that phase)
- Semi-final and Final phases: Two runs, score of the best run counts

During UCI BMX Freestyle Park World Cup Events & UCI Urban Cycling World Championships, method 2 is used.

Regardless of the competition format, all runs are 60 seconds long.

The contest format will always be announced in the competition guide for the contest.

Overall Impression and Scoring

The key of the judging method is that of 'Overall Impression'. This means that on balance, the ranking within each phase of a contest is established based upon the judges' impression of the overall quality of each rider's runs in consideration of certain criteria.

Within each phase of a competition, after watching a run, each judge decides the quality of the run as compared to the quality of the runs done by all of the riders up until that point. While each judge forms his own opinion, judges may opening discuss the run with each other to ensure that the quality of each run is accessed correctly.

The score assigned by each judge reflects the overall impression of the quality of the run relative to those already done by the other riders. This score is a place-holder which establishes the ranking of that rider within the phase. As already mentioned above, the score reported is the average of the scores decided by each judge.

It is important to understand that scores are not absolute. BMX Freestyle is judged using an 'anchor and compare' basis. That is, the score is a tool which helps the judges establish the ranking for each phase of the contest.

The same run in a different phase of the same competition will only ever get the same score if the order in which the riders ride is the same and the other same riders do exactly the same runs with exactly the same quality.

For example:

- Scores are set between 0 and 99.99
- After the first rider's run in each phase of competition, a score is given based on their performance. This score is then used as a benchmark (an 'anchor' point) to compare against the performances of the next riders coming up. For example:
 - Rider one gets a score of 75
 - Rider two has a better run, so they should get a higher score than 75
 - Rider three has a worse run than rider one, they get a score lower than 75

As such, the score given to the first rider in any phase of a competition sets the basis upon which the performances of all other riders yet to come in the contest are compared.

Criteria

When considering overall impression of the quality of a run, the judges consider the following criteria.

- Difficulty of tricks
- Progression
- Amplitude
- Flow
- Use of course
- Risk factor
- Variety of tricks
- Style
- Execution
- Originality
- Landings

No particular criterion is more important than any other; they all contribute to overall impression.

Difficulty of Tricks

Difficulty of tricks refers to not only how hard the trick is, but also the placement of trick on the park or within the run. For example this could be a backflip triple bar spin on the jump box or a big tailwhip transfer over a gap.

In general, a Freestyle BMX Park contest run with a lot of difficult tricks has a high overall impression.

Progression

Progression is a big part of BMX Freestyle. It helps keep the sport exciting and shows how far we can push the level of riding.

It is good for the overall impression of a run if a rider can pull out a never been done trick in a contest.

Amplitude

Amplitude refers to the height the rider goes in the run.

A lot of riders can do tricks on many parts of the course but if the rider can do a trick higher than the other riders this will help to improve the overall impression of their run.

Use of Course

Course use is a very important criteria as there are many choices of lines and ramps on most BMX freestyle courses.

Judges can sometimes watch around 200 runs on the same course and many riders have similar lines. If the rider can find some unique lines that involve nearly every ramp on the course this will help improve overall impression.

Risk Factor

Risk factor refers to the level of danger inherent in the tricks performed. In BMX Freestyle doing something risky/dangerous can really help overall impression. For example, this can an individual trick, transfer or doing something at height.

Variety of Tricks

The run should have a mix of all types of tricks. This shows us that a rider has a large skill set and has taken the time to learn and perform a range of tricks.

These can include not only spins, flips, barspins, tailwhips, but also technical tricks and taking hands and feet off the bicycle (supermans, no handers etc.)

Style

Style is what a rider does to a trick or sequence of tricks to make it their own; they put their own touch on tricks so they look unique.

Execution

This can be one of the most important on the list. If a rider has poor execution the overall impression of their run will not be as good as other riders doing the same trick but performed correctly.

For example, doing 360 bar spin to no hander but not getting full extension with your arms.

Sometimes less is more if executed correctly. Three poor tricks do not make a good trick.

Originality

Part of BMX freestyle's beginnings are thinking outside the box. So if a rider can be creative on the course while doing something unique this will help improve overall impression.

When there are such large fields of riders it helps to find something different to what other riders are doing.

Landings

Landings are examined closely. Many riders can learn a trick but not all of them can land a trick. If you land a trick well you can keep your speed and move onto the next feature fluidly and smoothly.

Hanging up and putting feet down are errors that will affect the overall impression of a rider's run.

Impact of Errors on Overall Impression

The impact of a crash or other error on the overall impression of a run depends on the overall quality of the run, how big the mistake was, and what the rider does afterwards – continue and really go for it, or give up or just waste time. A little slip off the pedal is less of a mistake as a tumble off the bike where a rider needs 10 seconds to get back on.

While fewer mistakes normally means a better overall impression, this still depends of what is shown during the run. Just pedalling around the course without mistakes doing no tricks is not going to beat a great run with loads of unique tricks with style at height where one pedal slip happens.

The judging panel is responsible for making those judgements. Their decisions concerning errors is final.

The Bottom Line

What Constitutes a Great BMX Freestyle Park Run?

Given the above, what constitutes a great BMX Freestyle Park run?

A great BMX Freestyle Park run with a very high overall impression should consist of a unique line around the course using all of the 60 seconds, have a variety of difficult, progressive tricks, performed at height, and with good execution and clean landings.

However, as always, the overall ranking of such a run in each phase of a BMX Freestyle Park contest depends on what every other rider in that phase does.

Practical Advice

During Each Run

- When a rider is prompted to start they have sixty seconds to start their run
- The clock starts when a rider begins moving from their starting position. The rider can choose where to start
- In case of a crash or bike failure the clock keeps going
- The rider needs to get another bike or fix their bike and carry on the run
- The judges stop assessing a run at the point in time when the clock reaches zero
- Any part of a run taking place outside of the boundaries of the park is not considered (safety railings at edges are considered part of the park boundaries)
- In case a rider does not start a run (DNS), they will receive a score of 0

Impact of a DNS

In the qualification phase where both runs are counted, suppose a rider completes the first run with a score of 50. His bicycle breaks or he is injured and he decides to not start his second run. In this case, he will receive a score of 0 for his second run. As such, his score for the qualification phase will be 25 (the average of 50 points and 0 points).

If the same situation happened in a Semi-final or Final where the best run counts, then the rider's score for that phase would be 50 (50 points is better than 0 points).