

## MTBA Skills Coach Pre-course Reading

## Part 1

### Skill Development and Analysis

Things to remember when working on skills development activities with all riders, regardless of developmental level.

- Break skills down into sizeable chunks
- Demonstrate and allow practise time
- Allow for skill progression
- Link activities and sessions
- Keep sessions fun and varied.

#### The Skills Analysis Process

Teaching the ideal proficiency of a skill is based on:

1. Identifying the ideal proficiency of a skill and using teaching/coaching points to explain to the rider how to perform the skill.
2. Observing the rider's proficiency of the skill. Have the rider perform the skill and observe them. It is important that you can clearly see their performance of the skill. If necessary you might have the rider perform the skill several times and observe them from different angles each time.
3. Analysing the rider's proficiency of the skill. Compare the rider's performance of the skill against your mental picture of the ideal performance of the skill. How did it compare? Was it the same as the ideal performance of the skill? Was it less than the ideal performance? If it was not the ideal performance of the skill, what needs to change (what does the rider need to do?) in order to improve their performance? Consider the teaching points you need to highlight in order to help the rider improve their performance of the skill.
4. Providing feedback to the rider about their proficiency. Having analysed the rider's performance of the skill, the next step is to provide the rider with some feedback about their performance – identify what they did well and what they need to improve.
5. Using teaching or coaching points from the ideal proficiency of the skill to correct the rider's proficiency. These may vary from rider to rider depending on which aspects of the skill the rider has performed correctly or incorrectly.
6. Providing feedback to the rider again.

This process is repeated until the skill is mastered.

#### Examples of Teaching Points

##### Mounting the bike:

- Straddle the bike.
- Place both hands on the handlebars covering the brakes.
- Place the right foot on the pedal in the "2 o'clock" position – this is often referred to as the "power position".
- Check that it is safe to set off.
- Push forward and down on the right foot to make the bike glide forward.
- Maintain an upright head position through the push off.
- Lift bottom onto the saddle and place the left foot on the pedal.

## MTBA Skills Coach Pre-course Reading

## Part 1

### Dismounting:

- Decide upon the best place to stop.
- Apply brakes evenly to reduce speed to bring the bike to a stop.
- Make sure the right pedal is in the 6 o'clock position
- Slide forward off the saddle.
- As the bike comes to a complete stop, lift left foot off the pedal and place it on the ground slightly to towards the front wheel.

### Example: Identifying ideal vs. rider proficiency

	Skill:	Riding in a straight line
	Ideal proficiency	Possible deficiencies in rider's proficiency
<b>Body position</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep weight distributed evenly</li> <li>• Looking towards the horizon</li> <li>• Keep arms strong but relaxed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weight too far forward</li> <li>• Looking at the front wheel</li> <li>• Arms too loose, gripping handlebars too tightly</li> </ul>
<b>Pedaling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium, consistent cadence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low, inconsistent cadence</li> <li>• Speed too slow</li> </ul>
<b>Gearing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium gear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gear too easy leading to instability</li> </ul>
<b>Braking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No braking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Braking when deviating from line in an attempt to correct</li> </ul>
<b>Line of travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As straight line as possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wandering from side to side</li> </ul>

Coaches should remember that different riders will learn new skills at different rates. This is influenced by a number of factors:

- Sports or other activities taken part in by the individual prior to the introduction to cycling may involve some skills which transfer positively to cycling.
- Skill abilities are determined by both genetic and experience factors.
- Fatigue will affect the ability to learn and practise skills properly.
- The appropriateness of their equipment and clothing and their bike set up will affect riders' ability to learn new skills.
- Their preferred learning style.
- Their perception of their ability will impact on their confidence and therefore their ability to learn new skills.

## MTBA Skills Coach Pre-course Reading

## Part 1

In order to maximise learning, it is important to ensure that participants are using equipment and clothing that meets their needs. Determine their learning preferences/style, any specific needs and their perceived ability so that you can tailor your approach to meet their needs.

### Tips for providing feedback

- Ask participants how they thought they went and what they should do to improve.
- Encourage openness.
- Praise good work.
- Make feedback timely, i.e. as soon as possible after the performance you're referring to.
- State your feedback in a manner that conveys respect and support.
- Keep comments impersonal and task-related.
- Make it specific – tell them why it was good.
- Ensure comments are clear and understood.
- Support negative feedback with data.
- Link negative feedback to actions for improvement.

### Demonstrations

When using demonstrations in the delivery of skills training, the following are important:

- The demonstration should be appropriate to the skill level and development of the cyclists. Simple to complex
- Demonstration should be of the correct skill. Emphasis should be on 'what to do' rather than 'what not to do'.
- At some stage they should be at actual speed.
- Break the skill down into important parts where necessary; however the total skill demonstration should always follow so as to give the full picture
- Undertake as many demonstrations as necessary from a number of angles and perspectives. Follow with practise and evaluation.
- Give two or three key teaching points with a demonstration and then have the athlete/s practise before progressing.
- Knowledge of the prior experience of the athlete is important to know what type of demonstration to use.
- Use experienced athletes with good skills to demonstrate the skills.

### Considerations for best uptake of instruction

Consider the following points when having athletes practise a new skill.

- The athlete should be in a fresh state to obtain full benefit from skill practise.
- Skill practise needs to be progressive in difficulty.
- Practise needs to be individualised for athletes at different levels.
- Provide feedback to the athletes which is specific, immediate and positive.
- Provide an environment where the skill can be practised without disruption or distraction.