July 2004 Revision

INTERNATIONAL UNICYCLE TRIALS RULES

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Changes in this July 2004 revision:

1. The method for awarding points to riders has been simplified.

There is no longer a requirement to assign difficulty ratings and point values to sections. Each section is worth a single point, and the rider who completes the most number of sections wins.

The reason for the change is that experience has shown that the order of finishers remains the same irrespective of the point values of sections, as long as riders have sufficient time to attempt all sections. In all cases the winning rider will ride the most number of sections, the second place rider the second greatest number, and so on. Since a well-designed competition should allow plenty of time for riders to attempt all obstacles, assigning difficulty ratings and point values is actually irrelevant for scoring purposes.

However, difficulty ratings should still be given for reference purposes when riders are choosing which sections they wish to attempt.

This change should make it much easier to run competitions, because properly assigning difficulty ratings and corresponding point values is time consuming and requires significant experience on the part of the organizer.

2. Section 14, Guidelines for Course Setters, has been expanded and revised

All changes to the text are in blue.

1. DEFINITION OF UNICYCLE TRIALS COMPETITIONS

The object of unicycle trials is to ride over obstacles. A Unicycle Trials competition takes place on a "course" containing 15-30 different obstacles called "sections". Each section is worth one point. Riders earn points by successfully riding ("cleaning") each section from start to finish. The objective is to earn as many points as possible by cleaning as many sections as possible. At the end of a specified time period, the rider with the highest overall number of points (who has cleaned the most number of sections) is the winner.

Unicycle trials more generally called "Freetrials" when done by either bikes or unicycles.

2. THE COURSE

The competition takes place within a specified time period (2+ hours depending on the number of obstacles), on a collection of 15- 30 independent, numbered sections of any length (typically 3 m to 20 m long). Sections may include narrow beams, steep climbs, hopping rocks etc.

The average difficulty level of sections will vary between competitions depending on the ability level of the riders participating. In all competitions, section difficulty should be evenly represented at all levels from the most beginner to the most expert riders. See Section 14 for more information on setting courses.

At each section are posted instructions that identify the section number, its difficulty level, and a description of the section. Section boundaries are defined by flagging tape and/or instructions that designate a start line, section boundaries, and a finish line.

3. SCORING POINTS

Riders may attempt any section they wish, in any order, and the objective is to score points by successfully riding ("cleaning") as many sections as possible within the specified time period. Cleaning a section is defined as follows:

- 1. Riding into a section. This is defined as the moment a rider's unicycle axle crosses over the start line.
- 2. Riding through the section without "dabbing". Dabbing is defined as follows:
 - a) Allowing any part of the rider's body to touch the ground or obstacle. If loose clothing brushes against the ground or obstacle but does not influence the rider's balance, then this is acceptable (does not constitute a dab). Also, it is acceptable for a rider's heel and/or toe to initially contact the ground when doing a pedal grab, as long as most of the riders foot is still on the pedal. However, after a rider is established in a pedal grab, weighting

the heel or toe on the ground constitutes a dab.

- b) Allowing any part of the unicycle except the tire, rim, spokes, crank arms, pedals, or bearing housing to touch the ground.
- c) Riding or hopping outside the boundaries of the defined section. The axle of the unicycle must be within the boundaries of the section at all times, even if the rider is in the air (e.g., a rider cannot hop over a section boundary that turns a corner, even if they land back inside the section).
- d) Breaking the flagging tape or other markers that are delineating a section boundary. Touching or stretching the tape does not constitute a dab, as long as the unicycle axle remains inside the section boundary.
- e) Riding a section in any way that is not consistent with the instructions outlined for that problem.
- 3. Exiting the section. A rider exits a section when their unicycle axle crosses over the finish line, or when it is within a defined finish area (such as a taped circle on top of a boulder). Note that there is no requirement to exit while in control the unicycle: if a rider falls across the finish line but manages to exit without dabbing, they have cleaned the section.

Riders may attempt any problem multiple times until they succeed or decide to abandon the section. However, it is not possible to earn additional points by cleaning a section more than once, and no points are awarded if the rider does not clean the entire section.

If there is a lineup for a section, the rider must go to the end of the line after each attempt. Near the end of the competition time period, priority must be given to riders attempting a section for the first time.

4. OBSERVERS

Observers are responsible for judging whether a rider has successfully cleaned a section. There are several possible ways for an Event Director to organize Observers at an event:

- a) One Observer can be assigned to judge at each obstacle. This is the best option but may not be possible if there are not enough Observers
- b) Each Observer can be assigned to judge several sections in the nearby vicinity. In this case, it is the responsibility of the rider to ensure that an Observer is watching when they attempt a section.
- c) Riders can be split into groups, and one Observer is assigned to each group. This Observer would then follow the group around as they go from section to section.
- d) At small events, there may not be a need for Observers. Riders waiting to attempt a section

may serve as Observers for the rider who is currently attempting the section. This is termed "self-judging", and it is up to the riders to ensure that scores are honestly recorded.

5. Keeping Score

5.1 Method 1

At small, self-judged events, a single table can be set up for the purpose of keeping track of all riders scores. Observers (usually 1 or 2) sit at the table and keep track of scores, using a spreadsheet with rider's names and section numbers as follows:

Participant	Section				
	1	2	3	4	Etc.
John Smith	\checkmark	\checkmark		\checkmark	
Etc.		\checkmark	\checkmark		

After cleaning a section, riders must return to the table and tell the observer which section they cleaned. The Observer records all cleans on a paper or computer spreadsheet. This method of score keeping makes maximum use of resources, but depends on honesty on the part of the riders and is not efficient if the sections are very spread out. It is not recommended for major competitions.

5.2 Method 2

Each rider is issued a scorecard (see example) at the beginning of the competition, and must give their card to an Observer prior to attempting a section. If the competition is self-judged, the rider attempting the section gives their card to the rider who is observing. If they clean the section, the observer indicates that they have completed the section by initialing the box corresponding to that section. At the end of the competition, riders hand in their cards to the Event Director or to a designated person for tallying of scores. Example scorecard:

Rider Name:	Category:	
Section Number	Difficulty	Completed?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

6. COMPETITION TIME DURATION

The minimum competition time duration is 2 hours. If there are more than 30 sections and there are a large number of competitors, 3 hours is recommended. The time duration should be sufficient to allow each rider time to attempt each obstacle multiple times, if necessary.

All riders must stop riding at the end of the time limit. If a rider is mid-way through an attempt when the time limit is reached, they are allowed to finish that attempt.

7. COMPETITION CATEGORIES

All riders attempt the same course; however, competitors are divided up into different categories for the purpose of awarding prizes. Rider categories should include beginner, sport and expert classes. For larger competitions, rider categories should conform to the relevant sections of the International Unicycle Federation (I.U.F.) competition rulebook.

8. PARTICIPATION BY THE COURSE SETTER

Due to the grassroots nature of many events, the course setter is allowed to compete. Although the course setter may initially be more familiar with course sections than the other riders, this should not result in an advantage because everyone is allowed multiple attempts to complete sections. However, if the course setter wishes to also compete, they must conform to Rider Responsibility No. 6, and refrain from riding on the course prior to the competition, including while they are designing and building the sections.

9. UNICYCLE DESIGN RESTRICTIONS

Any unicycle may be used as long as it meets the basic definition of a unicycle: that it has one wheel driven by crank arms directly attached to the axle. There is no restriction on changing unicycles during the competition.

10. SAFETY

All riders must wear helmets, shin and knee protection and gloves or wristguards. There shall be NO exceptions to this rule. Dangerous sections must not be constructed, and in particular, there should be no dangerous objects to land on if a rider falls off a high object. Artificial sections should be constructed so that they do not collapse or fall over under normal riding conditions. If an Observer or the Event Director feels that safety is compromised by a rider attempting an obstacle that is beyond his/her ability, they may prohibit the rider from attempting that obstacle.

11. RIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

The rider must know the rules.

The rider must gauge their time. No allowance will be made for riders who spend too much time at one obstacle and cannot complete the course before the end of the competition time period.

The rider is responsible for knowing where a section starts and ends, and which route he or she is supposed to take.

If two or more sections overlap, it is recommended that only one rider at a time attempt any of the overlapping sections. If two or more riders are on overlapping sections at one time, the rider who started first has the right-of-way.

The rider is responsible for his or her scorecard. If it becomes damaged, the rider can ask the Event Director for a new one. If it becomes lost, the rider will be issued a new card but their score will return to zero.

No rider may attempt any obstacle prior to the start of the competition. Ideally there should always be a separate practice area set up outside the competition area, for warming up prior to competing.

Intentional modification of a section by riders or spectators is prohibited. Note that kicking objects to test stability does not constitute intentional modification if an object moves. If a section is unintentionally modified or broken by a rider, they should inform the Event Director or

Course Setter who will return the obstacle to its original form if possible.

12. PROTESTS AND DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

A protest can be lodged by anyone against an Observer's ruling. Protests typically arise when a bystander (another rider, or a spectator) observes a rider make an infraction that is not recorded by the Observer, or when an Observer gives the wrong penalty. Protests must be lodged with the event director within fifteen minutes of the official results being posted. Protests must be in writing, and must note the rider, and section number and a description of the protest.

For small-scale events, the event director can act as the sole jury member. For larger events there should be at Jury consisting of at least three members, and they should be appointed in advance of the event. The Jury should be composed of the Event Director, the head Observer or Event Commissar if applicable, and a riders' representative. If there is no head Observer, the Event Director can appoint any person with experience in unicycle trials. Care should be taken to avoid conflict of interest and, in the event that a protest involves someone close to a Jury member, that person should be replaced for evaluation of the protest in question.

The jury will base its ruling on the input from the relevant parties, including the rider, the Observer, and the person who lodged the protest. In the evaluation of protests the benefit of the doubt must go to the Observer. The Jury is not obliged to overrule the Observer based on testimony from witnesses. Only if all parties present at the incident agree on the facts, and the Observer accepts that he or she made an error in assigning penalties, can an Observer's decision be overturned.

13. Tie breaking

Ties are allowed. However, the riders may choose to conduct a tiebreaker. Note that this should be a decision made by the riders that have tied, not the Event Director. If one of the tied riders wants to have a tiebreaker, then a tiebreaker must be held.

The method of tie-breaking can be chosen by the tied riders. Here are some suggested options:

- The tied-riders attempt to collect as many points as possible by cleaning as many sections as possible, *without dismounting between sections*. One rider rides at a time, and once a rider dabs, they must stop riding. The rider who scores the highest combined number of points is the winner.
- The tied riders pick sections to attempt, one at a time. If a rider dabs, they must stop riding. If all riders dab on the attempted section, they must pick another section. The winner is the rider who is left after all others have dabbed.

• If the event is small, grassroots and non-serious, riders may just play a game of rock-paperscissors or equivalent to solve a tie.

Final rankings are calculated after the tiebreaker has been conducted. For example, if two riders tied for 1st place, the rider who loses the tiebreaker will receive 2nd place, and the former 2nd place rider will be bumped to 3rd place, and the 3rd- place rider to 4th place, and so on.

14 GUIDELINES FOR COURSE SETTERS

14.1 Numbering and Describing Sections

Course setters should ensure that they have the following material for flagging and describing sections: flagging tape, duct tape, spraypaint, a staple gun, paper or cardboard, a felt marker, and large size Ziploc bags. Laminated cards with large letters A,B,C, etc. or 1,2,3 etc. are also very useful for labeling obstacles for description purposes.

Each section must be clearly numbered and designated with written instructions and/or flagging tape, and have clearly marked start and finish locations. Be especially careful to clearly define the finish so it is clear when a rider has cleaned a section.

Section instructions should include the section number and a description of the section. Assigning difficulty ratings to sections is not required. However, it is highly recommended that difficulty ratings be assigned to sections and listed on the rider scorecards, because it allows riders to quickly determine which obstacles they wish to attempt. Please see Section 15 for guidelines on assigning difficulty ratings.

Section instructions should include the following information:

- Section Number corresponding to the number on the rider's scorecard
- Start: Description of the start location
- Section: Description of the section and section boundaries
- Finish: Description of the finish location

Example Instructions:

Section 23. Difficulty: U3

Start: between the yellow tape, onto box #1

Section: Ride from Box #1, across Beam A, onto Box #2, then to Beam B.

Finish: Ride off the end of Beam B to the exit, staying between the 2 lines of flagging tape

To make it easier to describe sections, label major obstacles with numbers and/or letters. These should be clearly visible at a distance. Plastic laminated cards with letters or numbers are good because they can be re-used at other competitions. One good strategy is to label all boxes with numbers, and all beams with letters. This makes it much easier to include section descriptions such as "ride from beam A to box 6, without touching the ground."

Section instructions should not require or prohibit a rider from using certain techniques to complete a section. For example, the instructions must not prohibit a technique such as pedal grabs in order to increase the challenge.

14.2 Section Difficulty

The range in difficulty of sections should correspond to the range in ability levels of the participants. The easiest sections should be cleanable by all participants after one or two attempts, and the harder sections should require multiple attempts by the best riders.

It is highly recommended to include one or two sections that are so difficult that they may only be cleaned by one rider, or not at all. This will help prevent ties for first place, and may also help to increase the technical standards of the sport if a rider succeeds in doing something that has never been done before.

See Section 15 for guidelines on assigning difficulty ratings to sections.

14.3 Course planning: location and materials.

It is most important to make maximum use of available resources. Prior planning and proper site selection are essential. Expect to take at least one day to set a course for a major competition, plus time to assemble the raw building materials.

If possible, select a course location with an abundance of natural obstacles, or features that can be incorporated into human-constructed obstacles. It cannot be overstated that is much easier to make use of what is already there, rather than constructing new obstacles.

Sections may be set on natural features such as bedrock, boulders, logs, and hillslopes, and/or constructed from stacked pallets, railings, truck tires, junkyard cars, obstacles constructed from lumber, or any other material at hand. Often it is good to combine natural features with human-constructed obstacles.

It is highly recommended to also build a basic practice area to be set up outside of the competition area. This can consist of a small number of random obstacles, and is important for warmup and to reduce the temptation to ride on the course prior to the event.

Make sure that you have plenty of extra building material (tools, screws, and raw materials) on hand to repair sections damaged during the event.

14.4 Course Design

A photo inventory of previously constructed sections is located at <u>www.krisholm.com/sections</u>

Sections should differ substantially from each other and test a variety of unicycle trials techniques, such as hopping, rolling along narrow beams, and pedal grabs. Often, it is best to make a list of the different techniques in unicycle trials, and design sections that test each of them separately or in combination.

Course layout is controlled mainly by the available resources. If there are abundant natural obstacles, design sections around the most obvious natural features.

For either natural or artificial sections, a good way to maximize resources is to first construct several major structures that can be used as centerpieces, or hubs, and then design sections that center around these hubs. For example, a car, spool or large boulder could serve as a hub, surrounded by smaller structures that lead onto and over the hub in different ways.

Building centralized hubs rather than independent sections allows for high concentrations of sections on less building material. However, one disadvantage is that it may cause delays because only one rider at a time can ride on overlapping sections. Usually a combination of

hubs and independent sections is best.

It is extremely important to design sections that are durable enough that they do not break or change during the competition time period.

Overall, a course should not favor left or right handed riders, or riders with right- or left-footforward hopping stances. For example, the course setter should include sections requiring pedal grabs or hops to both the right and to the left.

It is a good idea to include a short distance of easy riding between the last obstacle and the actual finish location, to ensure that riders cannot fall off the last obstacle, through the finish, and still clean the section.

It is best to design sections that provide challenge without undue risk. Typically the bestdesigned sections include moves that test balance and precision, rather than moves that are difficult only because they are big. For example, rather than constructing a big, basic drop or gap between easy terrain, increase the difficulty of the takeoff or landing areas by making them smaller or off-angle.

There is no requirement that riders exit a section while in full control of their unicycle. Consequently, a well-designed section should force riders to be in control in order to finish- it should not be common for riders to fall across the finish line. The easiest way to do this is to include a section of easy ground between the last hard obstacle and the finish line.

14.5 Time and Space-Saving strategies

Normally, all riders of all categories are free to attempt any sections they wish, in the entire course. However, due to space or time constraints, the Event Director may clearly mark the easy sections (e.g. sections rated Green Circle, U0 or U1) and allow expert riders to skip these sections.

If there is very little space and/or building material, but adequate time, two different competitions can be held for Beginner/Intermediate and Expert class riders. This only works if sections can be constructed and dismantled very quickly. Normally, it is easiest to run the Beginner/Intermediate competition first.

A third option if building material is extremely limited and there are very few participants is to hold an elimination round instead of setting an entire course. A small number of sections is set (as little as 1 section at a time), and riders attempt all sections. Any rider who cannot clean an obstacle after multiple attempts is eliminated. Then a second set of section(s) is set, and the process repeated until only one rider can clean the section(s). This option works with minimal resources but should be regarded as a last resort.

15 Guidelines for Assigning Difficulty Ratings to Sections

Two methods for rating section difficulty are described below. The first method is simple and will suffice for most events. The second method (the U-system) is more detailed and is recommended for experienced course setters and all major events.

The most important responsibility when assigning difficulty ratings is to be consistent. For this reason it is best to assign difficulty ratings after all sections have been built. Course setters should also try not to let their own strengths and limitations at different techniques bias their judgment of score values. This is especially important for rating sections that have similar difficulty levels but which require different skills (e.g., hopping, riding narrow beams, pedal grabs, etc.)

Important note: These difficulty ratings do not rate the level of danger. For example, course setters should not give a balance line a difficult rating simply because it is high off the ground.

15.1 Simplified method to assign difficulty ratings

The following table is a closed rating system describing 4 difficulty levels from beginner to expert. It uses the same difficulty symbols as used at ski areas. A description of difficulty at each level is given, including its corresponding U-rating.

When rating sections, it is more important to consistently rate the *relative* levels of difficulty between sections, than to worry about accurately rating the absolute difficulty level.

Level	Difficulty	Description and reference to U-levels
Green Circle	Beginner	Beginner level (U0 – U1). Includes <15cm sidehops, <15cm drops, and <15cm wide balance lines
Blue Square	Intermediate	Intermediate level $(U2 - U3)$. From Green Circle difficulty up to moderately difficult obstacles requiring 30 cm hops, 1 metre drops, 4 cm wide level balance lines, wider balance lines that are bumpy or on inclines, and 1m gaps between easy landings.
Black Diamond	Expert	Advanced level (U4-U6). From Blue Square difficulty up to advanced obstacles requiring 75cm hops, 1m pedal grabs or smaller pedal grabs requiring accuracy, 1.5m gaps requiring some accuracy, or smaller gaps requiring high accuracy, obstacles with sequential hard moves in a row, riding along 8cm diameter round railings.
Double Black Diamond	Pro	Expert level (U7 & up). Everything harder than Black Diamond level, including 90 cm sidehops or rolling hops, pedal grabs requiring high precision, and riding straight balance lines narrower than tire width.

15.2 The U-system for rating the difficulty of trials obstacles and sections

This open-ended rating system describes the difficulty of riding trials obstacles, and is based on the difficulty rating systems used for rock climbing. It can be applied to unicycle trials competitions, recreational trials riding, or very short technical sections of trail when mountain unicycling.

The U-system is different than the "Artistic Skill Levels" defined for artistic unicycling (see the Artistic Skill levels at <u>www.unicycling.org</u>) because it does not consider riding techniques. Instead, it rates the difficulty of an obstacle itself, irrespective of the technique used to ride it.

U-levels are listed in the table below. It is an open-ended system that currently ranges from U0 to U8; more levels will be added at the top end as riding standards increase.

For each level, familiar obstacles and situations are listed as references so that users can get a

feeling for the difficulty level of each grade. With experience, a rider will get a "feeling" for the difficulty of other trials problems by comparing them to the difficulty of the reference problems. In this way, an unlimited number of problems can be graded for difficulty (assigned U-levels) without having to describe all conceivable problems (which would not be possible).

Different riders have different strengths and weaknesses for different types of problems and consequently may find some reference problems harder or easier within a given grade. For example, this is often the case with hopping versus riding narrow beams. However, an attempt has been made to include problems at each level that a "well-rounded" trials rider would find equally difficult.

U-Rating	Description of minimum difficulty*	Example obstacles for each difficulty rating.*
U0	 <15 cm sidehops <15 cm drops, >15cm wide balance lines 	• Moderately easy terrain encountered during cross-country mountain unicycling that is possible to ride purely by rolling.
U1	 15 cm sidehops, 30 cm drops, 10 cm wide, level, smooth balance lines 	 Hopping up or down a set of basic urban stairs Riding along the edge of concrete street curbs bordered by grass.
U2	 25 cm hops 40 cm drops 6 cm wide, level, smooth balance lines or wider balance lines on inclines 	 Dropping from a bench seat to flat ground, hopping through a rooty section of gentle trail, riding along flat-topped parking lot dividers Riding along a level 4x4 beam

U-System reference table

U3	 30 cm hops 1 metre drops 4 cm wide, level, smooth balance lines Wider balance lines that are bumpy or on inclines. 1 m gaps between easy landings 	 Hopping over a picnic table via the seats Hopping from the front hood of a junk car onto the roof Riding along the wide edge of a level 2m long 2x4 beam Riding along a railroad track
U4	 50 cm sidehops or smaller hops requiring moderate levels of accuracy on takeoffs or landings. Obstacles requiring pedal grabs at ≤75 cm height Drops requiring precise landings. 1.2m gaps between easy landings 	 Going directly to the top of a picnic table via a pedal grab. Riding along a level 2 m long 4 cm wide beam

U5	 50 cm hops or smaller hops requiring higher accuracy on takeoffs or landings. 2 m drops or smaller drops requiring moderate levels of accuracy on takeoffs or landings. 1.5 m gaps or smaller gaps requiring greater precision 90 cm pedal grabs or smaller pedal grabs requiring precision, such as onto off-camber or rounded obstacles <1 m gaps across to single round railings Riding 3cm wide wide square railing for >5 metres Moves involving sequential combinations of U4 level techniques. 	 Riding over a junk car, from the ground to the front hood, roof, back hood, and back to the ground. Pedal grab up the side of a 90 cm diameter round log.
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U6	 75 cm hops 1 m pedal grabs or smaller pedal grabs requiring accuracy 1.5 m gaps requiring some accuracy, or smaller gaps requiring high accuracy Obstacles with sequential U5 moves in a row Riding a 8cm diameter round railings 	 Pedal grabs up to a good square ledge part way up the side of a boulder, going to rubber, and then hopping directly to the top of the boulder. 60 cm sidehop to rubber on a 5 cm wide railing, then ride 5m Gapping horizontally across to a 5cm diameter round railing, then to a second one <1m away, and then to the ground. Pedal grabbing a 75cm high fence, and then over the fence to the ground on the other side. Doing a 180° turn on a railroad track.
U7	 90 cm sidehops or rolling hops 1 metre pedal grabs requiring some precision or smaller pedal grabs requiring high precision Multiple hard moves in a row Riding straight balance lines narrower than tire width. 	 Pedal grab, and then go to rubber and ride 5m on a 3cm wide square railing. Mount and then ride along a 3cm round horizontal railing for 5 metres 60 cm sidehop to rubber on a 3cm wide square railing, then ride 5m Multiple gaps perpendicular to 4 3cm wide railings spaced 1m apart. Riding along one 3cm round railing, then gapping to another that is less than 50cm away.

U8	 Same as U7 but bigger moves, longer combinations of moves, or moves requiring greater precision Difficult, awkward combinations of U7 moves 	 75cm hop to rubber, then ride 5m on a 3cm wide round railing Riding uphill or around curves on 3cm wide round railings Multiple hops across 3 or more round railings spaced 40" apart. 75 cm sidehops to rubber on round 2" railings, then riding 90 cm high pedal grab, then to rubber, on a 10 cm diameter vertical pole. Ride along a railroad track, gap to the other track, and keep riding
U9	• Same as U8 but bigger moves, longer combinations of moves, or moves requiring greater precision	

* Please note: All of the above-listed reference obstacles are subject to revision. For comments or suggestions about any of these examples, please contact Kris Holm at <u>danger_uni@yahoo.com</u>.