
Professionalism and the Cycling Official

Inaugural USAC Officials Summit
March 12-13, 2011





Why Care about Professionalism

- Our sport and our riders deserve it
- Promotes mutual respect and builds confidence amongst Officials
- Enhances retention within the corps of officials
- Grievances against officials often focus on professionalism



When acting as an Official:

- How you dress is a reflection on USAC.
- How you interact with people in person, on the phone, and in writing is a reflection on USAC.
- Your attitude is a reflection on USAC.
- YOU are a not just a reflection of USAC –
YOU ARE THE PUBLIC FACE OF USAC.



Test on Professionalism

- There will be a test. The test is administered by riders, officials, parents, spectators, media, promoters, sponsors, and volunteers, each and every time you put on your uniform and assume the role of an Official.
- There is never a Final Exam. But each test counts toward the overall public perception of you as an official and of USAC; and toward your peers perception of your value as an official.



What is Professionalism?

A set of internalized character strengths and values directed toward high quality service including –

- Inner strength
- Respect for self and others
- Sound Judgment
- Know-how
- Mature Responsibility
- Problem Solving Perseverance
- Ingenuity
- Class



Why Professionalism

1. Professionalism demonstrates that the officials are working together and delivering results.
2. Professionalism increases the crew's synergy by reducing stress allowing more focus on assignments.
3. Professionalism is a primary component of leadership. We must lead by example.
4. If we are professional in our normal officiating routines, this will have major positive effects.
 - ✓ More satisfied customers
 - ✓ Better focused crew
 - ✓ Better morale within the corps of officials
 - ✓ Reduction in number of complaints about officials
 - ✓ Enhanced opportunity for personal advancement



Characteristics of a Professional

- Competent
- Committed
- Dependable
- Acts with Integrity
- Courteous
- Considerate
- Cooperative
- Trustworthy
- Empathetic
- Knowledgeable





Essential Elements

1. Strong work ethic
2. Respect for self and others
3. Keeps confidences
4. Positive attitude
5. Commitment to learning and growing
6. Acceptance of responsibility
7. Knows the language and culture of cycling.



Unprofessional Characteristics

(that create a negative impression)

1. Negative attitude.
2. Lack of appropriate hygiene
3. Dirty or unkempt appearance
4. Inappropriate attire
5. Unprofessional body language
6. Excessive fragrance
7. Chew and spit, chewing gum, smoking
8. Failure to take responsibility and/or corrective action, even when it isn't your fault.





How Professionalism is Judged

1. We are judged on our Projected Image
2. We are judged on our Communications
3. We are judged on our Competence
4. We are judged on our Demeanor
5. We are judged on our Impartiality

-- and these factors are reflected in the evaluation of officials





Projecting a Professional Image

- Thorough and timely completion of tasks.
- Communication and technology skills.
- Basic competence.
- Positive Attitude.
- Mature Behavior.
- Basic Courtesy and Etiquette.



Projecting a Professional Image

- Verbal and non-verbal communication in “sync.”
- Acceptance of Responsibility.
- Light, natural use of makeup; light use of fragrances.
- Proper uniform; appropriate for the event, the weather, and your body type.
- Good Grooming – Hair; Nails; Hygiene.
- Subtle use of jewelry.



Appearance Really Does Matter

- Appropriate Uniform
- Neat and Clean
- Clothing appropriate to body type
- Well-groomed



Attitude Matters Too

(and shows just as much as appearance)

- Maintain a positive attitude about officiating, your crew, and the riders.
- Be polite. Don't miss an opportunity to say "thank you" "please" or "excuse me."
- A little humility helps.

(Being an official does not make you either correct by divine ordination or the smartest person at the race.)





Work Ethic

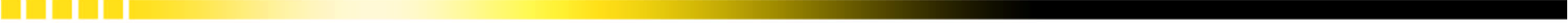
- Being Present in mind and attitude
- Standing by your work
- Not taking shortcuts
- Being Honest
- Respecting Authority



Personal Responsibility

- Respect others rights
- Know your limits/boundaries
- Don't meddle in affairs of others
- No Gossip
- Don't handle personal interests at race site, including personal calls or texting
- Watch your language
- No Sexual Harassment





“If you argue and rankle and contradict, you may achieve a victory sometimes; but it will be an empty victory because you will never get your opponent’s good will.”

- Ben Franklin



Rational Detachment

- Rational detachment is the ability to stay in control of one's own behavior and not take acting-out or situational anger personally.
 - Do Not Overreact. This is our responsibility – not that of the rider.
 - We can't control the rider's baggage, but we can control how we react.



Handling Conflict

Listen !

- Develop the habit of listening when a rider, coach, promoter, is upset.
- Simply listening when someone is upset, often diffuses their anger.
- Try to understand their issue – do not just prepare your rebuttal.
- Have the courage to initiate those tough conversations that you would rather avoid.
- Restate their concern or point of view



How do we Rationally Detach

- Know yourself.
 - What pushes your buttons? Don't let someone find out for you.
- Recognize your limits.
 - What is your tolerance level?
- Anticipate and have a plan.
 - Positive outlets and coping skills
- REMEMBER -- Your response will either escalate or de-escalate the situation.



Officials as a Team

- The USAC official almost always functions as a part of a team.
- Dysfunctional conflict destroys the team and precludes effective teamwork
- Use your talents, skills, and expertise to make the officiating crew look good.
- Understand your individual role on the team and play it to the best of your ability.



Officials as a Team

- Share your ideas, thoughts, and opinions honestly with consideration for others.
- Respect other team members.
- Avoid gossip and backbiting.
- Assist with collective decisions.
- Honor your commitments.
- Help others.



Accept Responsibility

- Develop the ability to accept responsibility (blame) and to share credit.
- Don't pass the buck.
- Share credit and your team-mates will appreciate it.



Respect for Self and Others

- Be Conscious that your work reflects your inner character; and strive for Excellence.
- Be customer experience oriented
- Our work speaks volumes about us to those we serve and are accountable to.
- Respect the officiating experience
 - Learn from it.
 - Improve yourself and your skills.
 - Seek out advice



Are You Acting Professional

- Ask yourself if you can answer "True" or an unequivocal "Yes" to these statements:

I officiate to my best ability.

I take pride in my officiating.

Participants are better off because of the way I officiate; I make a positive difference.

I start every event neat and clean.



Are You Acting Professional

- I report on time and stay until the event is concluded.
I treat riders, spectators, promoters, and other officials with respect and dignity.
I employ good manners in my interactions with others.
I keep my mind on the job at hand.
I respect my officiating skills and myself.



Are You Acting Professional

- Add these statements if you work as a CR or CJ:

I set an example of proper performance for my crew.

I regularly acknowledge and reward excellence among my crew.

I give meaningful feedback when I see a problem developing.

I enforce guidelines evenly across my crew.

I provide a "measuring stick" of what I expect from my crew.

Answer "no" to a question, and you've spotted a potential problem in your behavior that may impact the culture of officiating in your area.



Professionalism Pitfalls

- Over self-disclosure – discussing personal problems
- Super-Official – officious official
- Special treatment to a few or rule-bending for the favored
- Selective communication
- “Us” against the riders talk or actions
- Saying things that indicate you don’t like or respect riders. “Well, what do you expect, they’re just bike riders...”





Professionalism Pitfalls

- Threatening conduct
- Moralizing
- Ordering
- Psychological diagnosis of others
- Gossip
- Flirtations
- Inappropriate Dress
- Gifts



Am I being professional?

Ask yourself these questions:

- Would this conduct/activity be allowed in another sport or in my work environment?
- How does this conduct/activity assist in assuring a fair race with accurate results?
- Could this conduct/activity be recorded by an observer without expectation of raised eyebrows?



Am I being professional?

Ask yourself these questions:

- Would I do this for any other similarly situated person?
- How would I react if I were on the receiving end of this conduct/activity ?
- Is my proposed conduct/activity/decision consistent with USAC policy and/or standard rule interpretations?



Take-Home Rule 1

Don't ever do or say anything which if done by a rider or coach would result in your penalizing them.



Take-Home Rule 2

If you try to be aware of the other persons perspective – not that you have to agree but simply understand their point of view – responding with acknowledgment of that perspective will help you project a professional image of the sport and the USAC corps of Officials



Take Home Rule 3

Dressing or behaving badly – and thinking no one will notice – is a sure sign that people will notice – and think badly of you, USAC officials, and the sport. Your attitude colors everything you do. Pay attention to how you dress, and how you treat other people. It does make a difference.





Take Home Rule 4

If you follow the NASO Guidelines for Sports Officials you will be acting professionally and this will reflect well upon you as an individual Official, upon USAC, and on the sport of bicycle racing.





Random Thoughts

- Take your ego out of the game!
- It is not your race, your turf, your rules, etc.
- A rider or manager who breaks a rule is not launching a personal attack against you.
- You have a job to do. The riders and managers have a job to do.
- Sometimes these jobs conflict. It is just that simple.

