

Race Day Notes for Chequamegon Rookies

While many experienced racers and riders show up on the Chequamegon start lines, there are quite a few who fall into the race day rookie category. In fact, for some, the Chequamegon point to point events may be their very first mountain bike event. For those race rookies, here are a few broad target first time tips to consider.

Prepare your muscles, machine and mind- To get the most of your Chequamegon experience it's a good idea to have some long miles in the saddle before race day. Build your endurance and bicycle handling skills with frequent training rides before the event. You'll have more fun if you are physically prepared for the race distance.

Come to the race with your bicycle in good mechanical condition. Either visit your local bike shop to have them give your bike a check up or do it yourself.

Finally, don't get caught up in pre-race hype and first time anxiety. You are here to have fun. Relax; enjoy the day, the terrain, and the ride with those around you.

What to wear to the party- Plan your pre, during and post race apparel based on the day's fickle forecast. Layering thin apparel with a wicking base layer is always a good idea. Be sure to drop off your post race clothing needs at the start line using the clothing drop bag you will be given at bib pick up. Your bag with fresh clothes will be waiting for you at the finish line.

Everybody looks good at the starting line To new comers the bicycle "tricknology" can be overwhelming. When heading to the start line, don't be intimidated by expensive bikes, flashy apparel or big bold biker tattoos. If you are riding a rigid bike with a kickstand in your tennis shoes you have as much of a chance of having a great time and finishing strong as those decked out with the latest garb on the lightest bike. Well in many cases that is.

The point is; ride YOUR race, not someone else's. You are competing against your own physical and mental abilities. Go out easy; find your proper place in the peloton and save something for a strong finish. Have confidence in your abilities and don't worry about anyone else's. There is great satisfaction in riding by someone pushing a \$3500 fully suspended carbon fiber bike on the last hill before the finish line.

Murphy's Law rules at Chequamegon Mountain bike events are not finely scripted occasions. Anything can and will happen during the course of an off road event. Be prepared to deal with mechanical situations that may surprise you during your ride. Having the tools and know how to fix a flat tire or broken chain can mean the difference between finishing the ride and looking for a lift to the finish line.

Drink, drink, drink No, not like in your college days, but be sure to adequately hydrate before, during and after the event. Fluid replacement is essential as well as replacement of electrolytes lost through perspiration. Invest in a good hydration pack like a Camelbak to carry your fluids with you. The event provides water and Clif Shot Electrolyte at the aid stations along the racecourses. Don't make the mistake of missing an aid station. If you wait to drink until you are thirsty you have waited too long. .

What's for lunch?? You'll need fuel to keep your physical fires burning. A good sports nutrition boost like Clif Bars or the Clif Shot gel products provide a good source of easy to digest and quick to burn carbohydrates. Like your hydration, don't wait until you are hungry or hypoglycemic to eat something. Bonking from a lack of quick energy is not something you want to experience your first time out, or any time for that matter.

Yee Ha factor- Off road riding has quite a bit of the "Yee Ha Factor" attached to it. Let's face it this is a fun, exciting adventure. Word of caution though, ride in control at all time. Of special note are the fast paced, crowded mass starts of the Saturday events. Like the running of the bulls, the roll outs are filled with excitement, speed and risky maneuvers. "Yee Ha" can change to "Yikes!!!" in a heart beat. Relax, ride in control, talk to those around you. Get through the roll out and ride within your ability. There is plenty of time to move up or settle into your own pace.

You talking to me??? These are big events, with many people in close proximity to each other along the trail. Communication among racers is the key to a safe race. Call out your intentions when changing speed, altering directions, or coming upon hazards to warn those in your riding area. Be sociable by passing along words of encouragement to those around you.

I'm finally done, now what? Customer service is the name of the Chequamegon game when you hit the Telemark Resort finish line. Finish line food stop, clothing drop bags, bike wash, bike corral storage, hot water showers and a free bus ride back to your car await you. In addition under the Big Top Chequamegon tent and in the expo area you'll find the Telemark Resort food and beverage service, event souvenir sales and sponsor expo booths. Kick back, relax, and enjoy the end of your journey with the thousands of others who shared your Chequamegon experience.

A little help from our friends Rack up some good karma points by taking the time to thank some of the hundreds of volunteers. Tirelessly they put in countless long hours to help stage the event. In addition, unless you are seriously competing for prizes or a personal best, don't hesitate to stop to help someone in need along the trail. They may return the favor to you sometime when you could use a hand.

Enjoy the Fun Factor Remember this is not just a race, it's a really great time. Have some fun during your event weekend. The CAMBA Tour, Pasta Feast, sponsor expos, Sunday Funday events, CAMBA single track trails are all ways to enhance your Chequamegon experience.

Give Back to the Sport you enjoy While at the event, be sure to stop by the off road bicycle advocacy booths in the event expo. There you can learn how you can give support to the sport you enjoy. Local and regional bicycle trail organizations like CAMBA and WORBA as well as the National Mountain Bike Patrol members will be on hand to answer your questions. Your financial support and sweat equity will aid in keeping trails open for you to enjoy.