

## **BMX – BICYCLE MOTOCROSS**

Welcome to the wonderful world of BMX racing! The manual you hold is designed to try to provide a comprehensive, yet simple guide to the various aspects of the sport.

In the early 1970's, a group of California kids were imitating their motorcycle motocross heroes on their 20-inch bicycles, and they built a homemade track to "race" their bicycles on. This new sport, created by kids, for kids, was happening throughout the nation.

In 1974, the National Bicycle League (NBL) was formed as the first sanctioning organization to turn the backyard racing into an exciting, competitive sport on a local, state, national and international level.

## **MANAGEMENT OF THE SPORT**

The highest-level officials in the sport are the National Commissioner and the National Board Committee. Under that umbrella the country is divided into regions; Pennsylvania falls under the Northeast Region. Each region has its own commissioner and board also. Under the Region, fall the various states. Each state has its own management system, consisting of a state commissioner and board. Lower down the ladder is each individual track, which is manned by a track director and the track board. At the end of this manual you will see the current personnel filling these various positions.

## **GETTING STARTED!**

### **EQUIPMENT:**

**Bicycle:** Any 20-inch bicycle can be used for competition. The handlebars must also have grips that are in good condition. If your bicycle has a kickstand, chain guard and reflectors or other gadgets, they must be removed for safety purposes on the track. Remember however, if you decide to ride your bike on the street, you will need to add all of your safety equipment back!

One point to remember: Getting started with the right bike and BMX equipment is extremely important to a successful season. Thanks to South Park Cycles, South Park BMX does have loaner bikes available for you to try.

### **Gear:**

**Helmet:** A helmet is **the** most important part of your equipment! If you do not have a helmet to use, ask one of the track officials. South Park BMX has some helmets available for you to borrow. For racing purposes, you must have either a full-face helmet or a helmet with a mouth guard attached.

**Clothing:** You must wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. It is advised that if your pants are baggy and could possibly become entangled in the bike chain, you use some tape to fit the leg tight around your ankle. You will not be permitted to roll your pant leg up – all skin must be covered.

**Optional:** You may see many riders wearing gloves, chest protectors, extra padding, etc. These items are optional, however can be very helpful, especially to a new rider. Please ask any track official if you have questions about what is necessary or acceptable.

## **MEMBERSHIP:**

The track at South Park is open to the general public during park hours. Anyone can ride the track during those times. However to participate in any racing events or practices, you must become a member of the NBL. You may join the NBL with a 30-day trial membership to see if you enjoy racing. If you decide that you like it and want to continue, you can then extend your membership for the year and will receive a membership card with your NBL number. The last 3 digits of that NBL number will be the number you will place on the front of your bike

See “fees” section for details on different levels of membership racing.

## **RACING**

**LEVELS:** There are three skill levels in BMX: Rookie (beginner), Novice and Expert. The brand new rider will start as a rookie and will race other rookies the same, or close to the same age.

Age classes in BMX are one year apart, beginning with the 5 year old and under class and continuing up to the 17 and older classes.

The classes for girls are slightly different – they can run either as a “girl” or run in the boy classes.

See “Move Up” section for details on how rider moves through the different proficiencies.

**REGISTRATION:** The first thing to do is check the local schedule to see what time registration begins. You will need to register prior to each race to be included. Simply go to the registration area and present your NBL membership card or register online until 3pm on race day at [www.spbm.net](http://www.spbm.net).

**BIKE INSPECTION:** The next stop you will need to make is at the “Bike Inspection Area”. If you are not sure where that is, ask any track official. The inspector will check your bike to see that all fittings are tight, that there are grips and ends on the handlebars, and that your chain is fitting appropriately. He will also check that you have the appropriate clothing and helmet on. Once approved, he will place a sticker on your number plate. You will not be allowed to sit on the gate without an approval sticker.

**PRACTICE:** Before the race begins there will be a practice gate session. This is an open session and is not divided into classes or age groups (at the local level). One of the track officials is called the “Gate Starter”. He/she is in charge of the gate area. During practice times, he will encourage riders to fill in all 8 gate spots.

### **DESIGN OF A RACE:**

#### **Officials:**

You will notice many volunteers helping out during the races. Please realize that these folks are volunteers and do not get paid for the work that they do. Their only payment is for you to have a safe and fun race. Following is a list of the various positions of the officials:

- Track Director – functions as the chief referee for the day – final say in all decisions.
- Clerk of Course – in charge of the registration process
- Official for the Starting Hill – assuring that all riders are in the correct moto and the correct gate.
- Gate Starter – in charge of all gate activity
- Bike Inspector
- Announcer
- Corner Marshals – oversee each area of the track to record and observe racing. These are the folks who provide info to the referee in the event of a protest.
- Scorers (3) at the finish line.
- Paramedic

Your track also has 1 rider representatives available. It is their responsibility to be your voice to the South Park BMX board. Please learn who your rider rep is and feel free to ask him/her questions and express your opinions on issues related to the racing program.

#### **Motos**

A typical race consists of 3 separate races around the track (not at the same time). You will race once, and then you will have a break, then race again, take a break for a total of 3 races. These races are called motos. Once the official clerk has divided all racers into their class and age groups, they will post the moto sheets. These sheets will tell you what number moto you are in, what gates you will have for your motos. After completing

your three races there will be a main event. If there are 8 or less riders in your class all riders will be in the main, if there are more than 8 riders the top 8 from the motos will advance to the main. ***It is your responsibility to check the moto sheets, to know the number of your moto and what gate you have for each race.***

### **Racing**

You will begin the race by sitting on the gate with the rest of your group. The Gate Starter will watch to make sure everyone is ready. He will then make a short announcement and push the button to begin the gate sequence. If the Gate Starter is beginning before you feel you are ready, you need to speak loudly saying, “hold the gate” and raise your hand. The Gate Starter will wait until you are ready. If you do not let the starter know you are not ready, he cannot be held responsible for beginning without you.

During the race there are officials posted at various points around the track to observe the racers and watch for offenses. If you feel that someone has purposely done something wrong to you during the race, you need to raise your hand in protest ***immediately*** after crossing the finish line. One of the officials will hear your complaint and judge the action. No protests will be honored later or will be accepted if voiced by anyone other than you the rider. A parent may not protest for a child – the child himself must raise the protest.

### **What happens if I am the only one in my class who shows up to race?**

If there are not enough riders to make a class, the rider will be combined with another group. For instance, if you are the only 10-year old rookie who shows up, you may be combined with the 11- year old rookie class just for the purposes of running the moto. This prevents you from having to travel the track by yourself.

When this race is finished, there will be 2 first place trophies awarded. No matter how you finish, you will receive a first, because you are truly the only rider in your class. There will also be a first place 11-year old rider.

At the end of your racing for the day, you may go to the registration area to pick up your trophy. You will need to tell the trophy staff your name and what moto number you were in. Please realize that the trophy staff is working as fast as they possibly can – be patient!

The points that you add up all year, decide what track plate you can ride for the following year. For example, you may come out with the most points of everyone in your class based on your performance. You will be given a #“1” plate to wear on your bike at the local track for the following year.

That is how local BMX racing works! Let’s move on and look at other levels you can participate in.

### **PENNSYLVANIA STATE SERIES**

There are 6 tracks that are part of the PA series:

Johnstown BMX, PA

South Park BMX/Pittsburgh, PA

Westmoreland BMX/Apollo, PA

Drake Well BMX/Titusville, PA

Southtown’s BMX/Hamburg, NY

Charlie’s BMX/Jamestown, NY

The state series consists of 10 qualifying races and one state championship. A qualifier is a weekend race held at each track. Saturday counts as one qualifier, Sunday counts as another. Each track in the state hosts either a qualifier or the championship each year.

Any registered rider may participate in the state series. To participate in the championship you must have complete a minimum of 6 qualifiers (3 weekends). It does not matter what place you take in the qualifiers, you can still compete in the championship. Points accumulate with each of the qualifiers and do count towards the championship, however only the top 6 races are counted.

The State Championship rotates to a different track each year. Based on the number of points you enter the championship with and the place you take in the championship race itself, you will be awarded a state place for the year. For example, you may earn the #1 10-year-old Rookie plate for the year in the state. You will be awarded a trophy and a number plate with “1”. There will also be a small letter after the number telling the class

you are in (rookie, novice, etc). Your plate will say “1” r. You can then wear that plate on your bike for the next racing year at all state and local races, until another #1 is awarded.

The State Series is a great way to improve your racing skills. You will be racing against the best kids in the state and that can only help you get better. Plus it is a lot of fun!

### **NORTHEAST REGIONAL SERIES**

The Regional Series is run very similar to the state series, except it involves the entire Northeast region. There is a difference however, in the points system. In the regional series, all points accumulated in any race, at any track (local, state, regional, etc) count towards the championship. Once again, the total of your accumulated points, along with how you finish in the championship, decide the plate you will wear for the year. The plate can be used at any local, state, or regional race. Regional number plates will be recognizable because the number will have the first initial of your last name after it. For example if you take the number 2 spot in the region and your last name is Smith, your plate will say “2” S. For more details on the points and qualifications for the Regional Championship and for the Regional Race schedule, please visit [www.nbl.org](http://www.nbl.org).

### **NATIONAL SERIES**

The highest level you can race at is the National Series. You must complete 6 national races to compete in the National Championship. If you win a National #1 plate you can wear that plate at any race for the following year. Full race schedule and qualification details can be found on the NBL website also.

### **THE WORLDS**

Certain national riders may qualify to go to the World Championship. This race rotates to a different country each year.

The different levels of racing can be very confusing at first. Please feel free to contact any of your track officials and they can point you towards helpful information about the various series.

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Well that is BMX racing in a nutshell! I hope it sounds exciting. South Park BMX will work very hard to make your season successful.

It takes many people to keep South Park BMX going. The track itself and all areas

inside of the fence are maintained by the organization – not by the Allegheny County Parks Department. For this reason, volunteers are always welcome. Whether you would like to become an official and work the race itself, volunteer to help in the concession stand, or simply cut some grass every now and then, we accept all help graciously.

Financially the organization is self-supporting also. We do not keep money collected for registration – your yearly fees are given to the NBL and your weekly fees get divided up between trophy costs and fees to the NBL for insurance. Therefore the only money we get to keep is that which is donated for sponsorship, advertising and what we bring in from the concession stand. Monies that we do make are used for track upkeep and maintenance.

The parks department is good to our organization – without them we would not have a track at all! Please be courteous and respectful to the park staff and police. Also please respect the park itself by not littering and by cleaning up your area after you are done.

## **2011 Board of Directors**

*Track Director George Brain*  
*Asst. Track Director Jim Walbert*  
*Asst. Track Director Chris Bryan*  
*Clerk of Course Dee Brain*  
*Asst. Clerk of Course Nikki Calvert*  
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*Member at Large Larry Hill*  
*Member at Large Michelle Bell*  
*Member at Large Steve Calvert*  
*Rider Rep Paul Schmac*

*Concessions Michele Gentile*

Track Website: [www.spbmx.net](http://www.spbmx.net)  
Track Phone Number: 412-831-3620