



City of Brisbane

50 Park Place

Brisbane, CA 94055

Attn: Michael Barnes – Mayor

Re: Cyclocross Bicycle Races

Dear Mayor Barnes,

Thanks for your interest in our Night time Cyclocross event held in November at Sierra Point. This is the 3rd time we have gained permission from land owners to use Sierra Point for this type of race and it was a remarkable success. We had nearly 500 competitors enjoying ideal conditions and hope to return for another night event in 2009.

We held 5 events on the Peninsula and in San Francisco this season and hope to expand next year to 6 cyclocross races. I've provided a short description of the type of event and common course conditions that make an effective race and think the new Baylands project would be an ideal location, sharing the space with Mountain Bike enthusiasts and other recreational cyclists. In fact, should the City provide paved perimeter roads for maintenance, they could be used by road cyclists for both recreation and occasional racing events. Baylands could certainly become a "Mecca" for cyclists of all varieties.

I've included various photos from some of our events demonstrating the uniqueness of Cyclocross as a sport – artificial obstacles to force riders to dismount and carry their bikes and natural obstacles to do the same thing. In terms of space requirements – we held our Sierra Point event strictly within the bounds of the empty lot just west of the Marina parking lots and created a course length of somewhere around 2,300 yards.

Sincerely,


Tom Simpson

Pilarcitos Cyclesports

Cyclo-cross is a form of bicycle racing. Races take place typically in the autumn and winter (the international or "World Cup" season is September-January), and consists of many laps of a short (2.5–3.5 km or 1.5–2 mile) course featuring pavement, wooded trails, grass, steep hills and obstacles requiring the rider to quickly dismount, carry the bike whilst navigating the obstruction and remount in one motion. Races for senior categories are generally between 30 minutes and an hour long, with the distance varying depending on the ground conditions.

Cyclo-cross has some obvious parallels with cross-country cycling and criterium racing. Many of the best cyclo-cross riders cross train in other cycling disciplines. However, cyclo-cross has reached a size and popularity that racers are specialists and many never race anything but cyclo-cross races. Cyclo-cross bicycles are similar to racing bicycles: lightweight, with drop handlebars. However, they also share characteristics with mountain bicycles in that they utilize knobby tread tires for traction, and cantilever style brakes for clearance needed due to muddy conditions. They have to be lightweight because competitors need to carry their bicycle to overcome barriers or slopes too steep to climb in the saddle. The sight of competitors struggling up a muddy slope with bicycles on their shoulders is the classic image of the sport, although unridable sections are generally a very small fraction of the race distance.

Compared with other forms of cycle racing, tactics are fairly straightforward, and the emphasis is on the rider's aerobic endurance and bike-handling skills. Drafting, where cyclists form a line with the lead cyclist pedaling harder while reducing the wind resistance for other riders, is of much less importance than in road racing where average speeds are much higher than in cyclo-cross.

A cyclo-cross rider is allowed to change bicycles and receive mechanical assistance during a race. While the rider is on the course gumming up one bicycle with mud, his or her pit crew can work quickly to clean, repair and oil the spares. Having a mechanic in the "pits" is more common for professional cyclo-cross racers. The average cyclo-cross racer might have a family member or friend holding their spare bike.

Races almost universally consist of many laps over a short course, ending when a time limit is reached rather than after a specific number of laps or certain distance; the canonical length for senior events is one hour. Generally each lap is around 2.5-3.5 km and is 90% rideable. Races run under UCI rules must have courses that are always at least 3 m wide to encourage passing at any opportunity, however sections of singletrack are common for small races in the USA and Great Britain. A variety of terrain is typical, ranging from roads to paths with short steep climbs, off camber sections, lots of corners and, a defining feature, sections where the rider may need, or would be best advised to dismount and run whilst carrying the bike. Course conditions include asphalt, hardpack dirt, grass, mud and sand. In comparison to cross-country mountain bike events, terrain is smoother. Less emphasis is put on negotiating rough or even rocky ground with more stress on increased speed and negotiating different types of technical challenges.

Each section of the course typically lasts no longer than a handful of seconds. For example long climbs are avoided in favour of short, sharp inclines. Sections are generally linked together, or long straights broken up, with tight corners. This not only allows a standard length course to fit in a relatively small area, but also forces competitors to constantly change speed and effort. Accelerating out of corners, then having to decelerate for the next before accelerating again is a common theme.

Obstacles that force a rider to dismount and run with their bike include banks too steep to ride up, steps, sand pits and plank barriers. Besides the start/finish area, these obstacles may be placed anywhere on the course that the race director desires. The regulation height for a barrier is 40 cm although this is treated as a maximum at smaller events. Plank barriers seem to be more common in the US than in Europe and UCI regulations only permit one section of them on the course.