

Columbia Observed Trials Association

2016 Official Rules

Table of Contents

- 1.0 The COTA Organization page 2**
- 2.0 Membership Dues page 2**
- 3.0 Rider Classification page 3**
- 4.0 Competition Classes page 4**
- 5.0 Equipment page 4**
- 6.0 Event Sanctions page 5**
- 7.0 Course and Sections page 5**
- 8.0 Scoring page 6**
- 9.0 Entry Fee page 8**
- 10.0 Starting Time and Time Limits page 8**
- 11.0 Safety and Protest Committees page 8**
- 12.0 COTA Championship page 8**
- 13.0 Awards/Trophies page 9**

2010 Official Rules

1.0 The COTA Organization

1. The association shall be a non-profit organization and shall be known as the Columbia Observed Trials Association (COTA). The COTA is in existence to provide a yearly championship in Oregon and Southwest Washington for trials riders who enjoy competing for the fun of it and to promote the family oriented sport of observed trials.
2. Elected officers shall be at a **minimum** President, Secretary and Treasurer. These officers make up the **Executive Committee**. They shall be elected at an annual meeting to be held at the end of the COTA competition year, and shall take office **January 1st of the following year**. **The COTA Bylaws have additional information.**
3. The Secretary shall be in charge of keeping records on championship points each rider receives from sanctioned events.
4. State representatives shall be chosen to be the local contact for trials information.
5. A Sporting Steward may be selected by the Executive Committee to review the sections prior to each competition for difficulty and safety if it is requested by the course marshal or recommended to the Executive Committee. The Sporting Steward's objective is to improve the quality and safety of COTA trials by maintaining high standards and consistency in setting the appropriate level of difficulty and properly marking sections for each class. The goal is that competitors can reliably expect all COTA events will be challenging, fun, safe, and consistently marked.
6. The Sporting Steward will inspect the sections, if possible, a day in advance of the competition. The Steward is not **to** make the sections more difficult, he only is to ease-up sections when necessary.
7. Inadequate sections must be corrected per the Steward's request. The Sporting Steward has the authority to delay the start of the trial until any required changes are made. **In the event the Sporting Steward is not available, two (2) members of the Board of Directors may fill this role at an event. Their joint decision will serve as if the Sporting Steward was making a section correction request.**
8. The Secretary shall revise the rulebook to reflect changes voted on at an **Executive Committee or board of directors** meeting within one month after the meeting. The revised rulebook will be submitted to the **Executive Committee** for review and approval. Once approved, the rulebook will become official.

2.0 Membership Dues

1. Membership dues shall be on a **per event basis** and shall be of an amount as approved **by the Board of Directors**.
2. Dues are payable at the **day of each event**. Payment of dues on the day of a COTA trial shall entitle the member to receive any championship points earned at the trial.
3. **There are no longer ANNUAL DUES. We are operating on a per event basis moving forward. These dues of 5.00 per event are included in the event registration.**

3.0 Rider Classification

- 1. General** - There shall be seven rider classifications based on ability level and they shall be named YOUTH, NOVICE, INTERMEDIATE, ADVANCED, **SENIOR ADVANCED**, EXPERT, **CHAMP**, VINTAGE A, VINTAGE B, (youth and vintage will only be run at selected events). The actual competitive classes in a trial may at times differ in name from the rider classification.
2. Riders may reclassify themselves whenever they feel the need due to change in ability, injury, age, or equipment.
3. An interview with the promoter or a member of the Executive Board shall help a rider determine which class to ride if unsure.
4. A Rider wanting to compete in a class other than their normal class may do so by indicating to the event organizer that they are riding for "Exhibition only". This allows the rider to test their performance in another class. An exhibition rider will not be eligible for series points but may be eligible for the awards of the day.
5. Rider classifications will be established for each rider who competed the previous year by the COTA Executive Board using the following ability level guidelines:

1. YOUTH - **Any rider 14 and under** who is not ready to ride the novice line. If there is any question concerning rider eligibility, the Sporting Steward(s) will make the determination. Note: any youth rider who cannot competently handle their motorcycle shall be accompanied by an adult. Youth events will only be held at events where the trials marshal has made separate sections for the youth class.

2. NOVICE - The novice classification is for the beginning trials rider. These are riders that understand the sport and are developing basic trials skills. Section challenges should allow for generous approach and recovery space. First time competitors should feel comfortable attempting all sections.

3. INTERMEDIATE - The Intermediate classification is for the experienced trials rider who has shown ability *well above* the Novice level, but is not yet ready to handle extreme terrain challenges such as those typically seen in the support class at the North American Trials Council (NATC) national championship events.

4a. ADVANCED - The Advanced classification is for riders who know and can use advanced riding techniques. Advanced riders should be able to handle competition and challenges approaching that typically seen in the support class at the NATC national championships.

4b. SR ADVANCED - The SR Advanced classification is for riders who know and can use advanced riding techniques. This class is established for highly skilled riders that are trials veterans and may have ridden expert or champ classes in the past. It is not based on riders age. SR advanced typically rides the same sections as the advanced class, though the Trials marshal may allow them to ride up to 3 or 4 of the easier Expert lines.

5. EXPERT - The Expert classification is for those riders who desire to compete in more technically challenging sections while minimizing exposure to unnecessary risk. **Challenges should not require spotters to make competitors feel comfortable attempting any section.** Expert riders should be able to handle competition and challenges approaching that typically seen in the Expert Sportsman class at the NATC national championships.

6. CHAMP- These sections will be the most difficult and technical. The challenges will be similar to what would be seen in the Expert class or above at the NATC national championships. Spotters may be required on occasion (Minders are allowed at no additional entry fee).

7. VINTAGE A - Will include Intermediate level riders on pre-1980 bikes.

8. VINTAGE B - Will include Novice level riders on pre-1980 bikes.

Vintage classifications are suggestions based on motorcycle vulnerability and rider ability.

4.0 Competition Classes

1. COTA championship events (points awarding) shall normally consist of the eight classes described in section 3.
2. Non-championship COTA trials shall have sections with difficulty levels suitable for all classes. In special cases the event organizer may combine classes or use classes that differ from standard classes if the sections are suitable for both classes.
3. Competition classes that will have year-end rankings and awards will be determined at the year-end meeting.
4. A minimum of two entries shall be required to constitute a competition class [for the championship series](#).
5. All riders become COTA members when they enter an event and are eligible for championship points and year-end awards. However to receive year end awards riders must ride at least 50% of the trials for the year.

5.0 Equipment

1. All motorcycles must be effectively muffled so that the noise level is not irritating to the other riders, workers, or spectators.
2. The intermediate, advanced, expert, [and Champ](#) classes may only use tires that are of a trial tread pattern that meet International Motorcycle Federation specifications and which are available to the general public.
3. A rider may start and finish on different bikes.
4. Vintage Technical Specs
NOTE: Without machine limits, modifications may cause the difficulty level of the sections to increase beyond “fun” for many riders as well as greatly increasing the cost of competing.
 - a). Tires and Wheels: Trials tires are required in all classes. Any pre ‘80 wheels and hubs from the proper era are acceptable.
 - b). Suspension: No single-shock bikes may compete (except Vincent).
 - c). Rear dampers may be replaced with gas filled units. Rear wheel travel (not shock travel) is limited to four inches. Front wheel travel is limited to seven inches.
 - d). Silencers are required. No machine may compete with an open exhaust system.
 - e). Major components may not be later than 1980. Specifically: engine, frame, gearbox, and forks.
 - f). All modifications must be consistent with the spirit of the class. Period modifications only.
5. IMPORTANT! Anyone operating a motorcycle at any COTA event is required to wear a DOT or

Snell 85 or later, or any FIM approved helmet or they may be removed from the property. It is the sole responsibility of the rider to select a helmet and apparel, which will provide appropriate protection. The rider must rely upon his own judgment in the selection of any helmet and apparel for durability and safety.

6. A number plate is [encouraged](#) stating class and name.

6.0 Event Sanctions

1. The COTA Executive Board shall have responsibility for awarding COTA sanctions to those individuals or clubs requesting to put on a COTA trial. Receiving a sanction presents an organizer with the responsibility of providing a trial that is laid out and operated in a professional manner and in accordance with COTA rules.

2. [The trials marshal/organizer will work with the Executive Committee or their designee to ensure the event is covered by insurance, has restroom facilities, and proper permits/permission as required by the land holder. Additionally, that a liability waiver is signed by participants and fees collected and turned over to a member of the Executive Committee or their designee within 7 days.](#)

3. Any required event sanction fees or other special event fees will be of a type and quantity determined at the annual meeting.

4. [The trial organizer \(promoter\) is responsible for supplying a suitable event flyer to the Webmaster and for ensuring that any mailed flyers are provided and mailed in a timely manner.](#)

5. The trial organizer shall provide the Secretary with a complete list of the results of each trial showing the finishing position of each rider and their final score. The scores shall be complete in every class with all ties broken and any discrepancies settled. The list shall include the trials-master and all section observers and event workers. There may be a maximum of two trials-masters for each event.

6. In the event of a need to cancel or reschedule a trial, the trial organizer must notify the COTA president as soon as possible so the appropriate action can be taken.

7. The COTA Executive Committee may disqualify any trial not run in general accordance with these rules.

8. Results shall be official 15 minutes following the trophy presentation and any corrections during that time are allowed by the trials-master or protest committee.

7.0 Course and Sections

1. The course shall consist of sections in numerical order laid out on a loop. Turns must be marked with arrows. Caution or danger spots on the course must be adequately marked.

2. The design and layout of the sections shall be such that they do not present unrealistic or overly hazardous conditions to riders in the respective class. Trails connecting the sections must not present challenges above the skill level of the lowest class riders.

3. Section design for “flowing” no-stop sections is strongly encouraged. Challenges requiring “stop & hop” techniques should be avoided if possible.

4. ***All sections should be ridden several times*** by the organizer or his representative (non-rider in trial) to ensure their suitability for use. Event organizers should pay special attention to the effects of changing weather on each section and plan for possible route changes. The Sporting Steward serves the

Executive Committee as the COTA representative who may judge the suitability of the sections and has the authority to delay the start of the trial until any required changes are made.

5. Each section shall be adequately marked throughout to show the required path and boundaries for each class. The sections shall progress through gates of one meter minimum width marked with red on right and blue on left. Riders are limited only by the splits and gates that pertain to their class. All other ground within the section is “free territory”.

6. Once the event has begun, the sections must be ridden as is and as they develop, changes to sections cannot be made after having been ridden by a single competitor.

7. Each section shall be numbered and have clearly marked start gates and end gates one meter minimum width.

8. Each section shall be ridden in numerical order. No section shall be ridden twice in a row.

9. Each trial shall consist of a minimum of 24 attempts, maximum of 36. Exceptions to this shall only be granted by the Executive Committee and the trials marshal.

10. Group check system shall have groups consisting of riders from the same competition class unless done so or approved by the course marshal. No rider may punch his own card- punching your own card will result a 10 point penalty for first offense and disqualification for second offense. Supplementary rules may be in effect at group check trials, the course marshal shall communicate these rules at the riders meeting prior to the trial.

8.0 Scoring

1. THE OBSERVER IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY IN EACH SECTION. Observers are expected to be attentive, familiar with the rules, and consistent in scoring.

2. Penalties given in the section shall not be cumulative except for the first three dabs.

Riders are only permitted to walk the section prior to the trial. No practicing in a section allowed.

While walking the section a rider may not alter the section. A rider officially enters the section to be scored when the front axle of their bike passes an imaginary line between the “Start” markers. A rider is out of the section when the front axle of their bike passes an imaginary line between the “End” markers.

3. PENALTY POINTS are as follows:

1. **Clean** - Successful completion of the section without a failure or Dab. No points.

2. **Dab-**

a) Any intentional contact between the rider’s body and a supporting surface or object that is being used to maintain balance is one point.

b). Intentional use of any part of the motorcycle other than the rubber of the tires or the skidpan or foot pegs to maintain balance is also a Dab.

c). Both feet on the ground at the same time counts as two points.

d). Foot rotation is one point.

e). Sliding a foot is three points.

3. Failure - five points

a). Riding out of bounds. If a boundary tape is on the ground, a rider is not considered out of bounds until there is ground visible between the tire and the tape.

b). Breaking a ribbon or knocking down or breaking a marker. Touching boundaries or markers is permitted.

c). The rider does not have both hands on the handlebar when footing while stationary.

d). The rider fails to pass through all the gates for their class.

e). Moving backwards, with or without footing (Incidental backing, while hopping the motorcycle

sideways does not constitute a failure-in this case, the backing must be intentional to be a 5).

- f). Dismounting - both feet on the same side of or behind the rear of the motorcycle.
- g). Passing through the entrance or exit gates with the front axle more than once in each section.
- h). Riders may not cross their own tracks with both wheels (i.e. riding in a circle) except where specifically permitted by the trials-master.
- i). Failure to ride a section. The rider must have the scorecard marked for sections not ridden.
- j). The rider or minder changes the condition of a section or the rider receives outside assistance.
- k). The engine stops while footing or while any other part of the machine, except for the tires, is used for support, without forward motion (If the motorcycle is moving forward while footing with a dead engine, it is NOT a Failure).
- l). The handlebar is used for support and the motorcycle is beyond 45 degrees from vertical.

4. MISSING A SECTION - ten points. If a rider fails to have a score marked for a section, ten points are awarded. (Note: If a rider has missed more than 10% of the sections in an event, (i.e.-failed to have more than 90% of the sections punched for the day) that rider will be considered a 'DNF' for that day.)

5. SCORING UPDATES- 8.0 Scoring, subsection 3 Penalty Points will follow NATC guidelines as determined annually at the year end NATC Meeting (www.natctrials.org) for what constitutes a "clean, dab or failure." A vote by the Executive Board can override the annual adoption of NATC scoring guidelines.

6. SCORING NOTES

1. A bike with a dead engine that coasts out of the section, without dismounting, or is restarted while balanced without dabbing is permitted.
2. A rider may balance, without dabbing on the skidpan, foot pegs, or tires for as long as necessary provided the event is not delayed.
3. A rider may move his bike in any direction in the section except backward. If the rider dabs during this movement, one point is given for each dab up to three.
4. A rider may stop while footing and the penalty will be the number of dabs, up to three. The stop may not be long enough to "delay the trial" and the duration is at the discretion of the observer. If the observer decides that the trial is being delayed, the rider is to be advised as such. If the rider does not then begin movement, a failure may be awarded.
5. Any protesting of scores that cannot be mutually agreed upon by observer and rider must be taken up with the trials-master only. If there is a dispute over the score or line, the rider shall receive the greatest of the disputed score until such dispute is settled by the trials-master. No rider may protest another rider's score.
6. A rider may choose not to ride a section and receive a five but must have their scorecard marked.
7. Failure to have a section marked on a scorecard will result in a penalty of 10 points for that section.
8. Other course specific rules are given at the riders meeting.
9. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. Any abusive language or conduct directed toward an observer, spectator or course marshal could result in a 25 to 100 point penalty or disqualification. The 25 point penalty can be assessed by the observer, however if the observer feels the 100 point or disqualification penalty is necessary it must be in writing and submitted to the course marshal.
10. Vintage scoring is the same as above.
11. A rider's final score for an event shall be the sum total of all the individual scores incurred from all sections.
12. Tie scores shall be broken using the following steps one at a time:
 - a). Step 1 - Most cleans wins
 - b). Step 2 - Most (1) scores wins

- c). Step 3 - Most (2) scores wins
- d). Step 4 - Most (3) scores wins
- e). Step 5 - Best score in a section wins, starting with the first ride through section one.
- f). Or as mutually agreed to by the involved competitors/trials marshal after step 2, i.e. a ride off.

9.0 Entry Fee

- 1. The entry fee requirements for a COTA sanctioned trial shall be as approved at the annual meeting.
- 2. The entry fee is at the option of the promoter - it is typically \$25 - up to a maximum of \$35 – NOTE: (see #3 - landowner or land use fees may be additional depending on site requirements.) A family member living in the same household at the age of 18 and under will pay \$15.
- 3. A gate fee may be charged by the promoter if noted in the event flyer/announcement.
- 4. A current AMA membership card must be presented at sign up. (Only if an AMA sanctioned event)

10.0 Starting Time and Time Limits

- 1. For club championship events a starting time no later than 10:30 am (on Sunday) is recommended.
- 2. All championship events shall have a time limit for completion. The promoter shall determine the time limit and announce it at the riders meeting. The announced time limit shall not be changed during the trial. The time limit shall not be a tool for disqualifying participants, but rather for making the event run on a timely basis.
- 3. Only paid competitors are allowed in the sections during an event.

11.0 Safety and Protest Committees

- 1. The requirements for safety inspection shall be determined at the annual meeting or at any time during the year by the Executive Committee. Sporting Stewards shall be appointed by the executive committee as required. Sporting stewards are charged with inspecting the sections, preferably one day before the event. Stewards have absolute power over the sections, course, and time limit. If the decisions of the steward are not followed the stewards are empowered to delay the start of the event until a resolution is made.
- 2. A protest committee shall consist of the event trials-master plus any members of the executive board who are present at the event.
- 3. Equipment protests are as outlined in the AMA rules. Specifically, a protest must be accompanied by \$25.00. The Trials-master and any other officers present will decide the results of the protest. If found in favor of the protesting party, the money will be refunded and the penalties to the offender determined. If the protest is overruled the COTA receives the money.

12.0 COTA Championship

1. The championship shall be on a yearly basis. The total number of COTA trials to be held shall be determined by the Executive Board within the limits of no less than 7 and no more than 12 trials. Two (2) different riders in a class, with a minimum of five (5) combined entries through the series, constitute a Championship class.
2. At each COTA championship trial, championship points shall be awarded to each COTA member rider relative only to other COTA member riders. Non-member riders are disregarded.

3. Points are awarded as follows:

Position- Points	
1 st - 30	11 th - 10
2 nd - 25	12 th - 9
3 rd - 21	13 th - 8
4 th - 18	14 th - 7
5 th - 16	15 th - 6
6 th - 15	16 th - 5
7 th - 14	17 th - 4
8 th - 13	18 th - 3
9 th - 12	19 th - 2
10 th -11	20 th - 1

4. And so on if needed.
5. Each rider's championship score for the year shall be based on the points earned in all events, less one. Each rider's best scores in this number of events shall be used in computing the total championship score for the year.
6. Tie scores for championship placing shall be broken using the following steps one at a time:
 - a). Step 1 - Greatest number of total wins will win.
 - b). Step 2 - Championship points earned in events where the riders competed against each other will be added and the largest number will win.
 - c). Step 3 - Total score on observation at those events where the riders competed against each other will be compared with the lowest total being the winner.
 - d). Step 4 - If still tied, the total number of cleans, ones, twos, etc. from events where riders competed against each other will win.
 - e). Step 5 - If the tied riders never competed against each other, the rider who lost the least number of points for the year gets the better position in the overall standings.

13.0 Awards/Trophies

1. Trophies or awards may or may not be given at events. However, it is encouraged that awards be made available to the youth and lower classes at a minimum. The size, quality, and quantity of the awards will be determined by the Executive Committee or their designee.
2. Trophies or awards will be given at the end of the year. These awards will be chosen by the Executive Committee or their designee. As with individual events, the awards may not be given to all classes and only to select finishing positions as determined by the Executive Committee or their designee. In general, the more competitors in a class, the more awards will be given out. Also, in smaller classes, awards will be prioritized to those competitors that entered more events.

3. In the event that prizes are given, winners will be responsible for any applicable taxes. No substitute prizes will be given.
4. If a trials marshal/organizer gives out cash awards, it will only be to Champ/Pro level riders. Entrants in this category of competition need to have a prior history of successfully competing at this level. All cash awards will be the responsibility of the winner to report to the IRS or similar tax/government authority. The trials marshal will be responsible for developing the cash award/placing breakdown.
5. To qualify for END OF YEAR AWARDS riders must ride at least 5 events of the total for the year.