

Clerks of Course Guidelines for Section Setting



All competitors, expert to novice alike, want a good day's sport that is challenging but safe and rewarding. The Clerk of the Course's difficult job is to deliver that for all levels of ability. These Guidelines, which Clerks are expected to follow, have been prepared to help achieve that, with safety being paramount for all participants at all times. Practical advice will be provided where Clerks are having difficulty successfully interpreting these guidelines.

1. Overall

1. Hill starts should be on flat ground and wide enough to allow a choice of starting positions.
2. Hills should get **progressively** more difficult.
3. The aim should be to challenge drivers with grip and gradient **not** tightness of poles. Tight sections can sometimes change rapidly with the passage of trials cars making for an unfair competition, wide sections, allowing a choice of route, will reduce this.
4. Avoid a potentially difficult early section followed by an easy section. In other words where if you get past the 9 you are guaranteed a 3.
5. Use of diagonal approaches (rather than straight up the slope) towards potential stopping points, reduces the advantage of more powerful cars. However, avoid adverse cambers on steep slopes which can be dangerous. This is where the cars have to move sideways across a steep slope. If this is necessary try to route the section with the passengers on the upside (most cars are right hand drive).
6. Try to anticipate how the hill will wear especially at the bottom of the hill. Will it become rutted, too wet or too slippery? If it may become too slippery make sure the section is wide enough to allow a choice of route.
7. Do not waste numbered poles on downhill sections unless there is skill in missing them. No more than a maximum of 2 per hill. Intermediate poles should be used if it is necessary to mark a downhill section.
8. To avoid 4 wheels out difficulties and ensure you guide cars the correct way, consider placing poles at 45 degrees to the hill rather in line or across the hill. (See also note on four wheels out.)
9. Try to ensure that numbers 3-1 are the most difficult of the hill but there is no point in putting them in impossible positions or where the hill is too steep.
10. Make sure that there is a safe exit from the hill, especially for cars which reach the top. Sometimes cars can also get stuck at the bottom of the hill, so make sure there is a safe way out there also. An obvious point but sometimes forgotten.

2. Poles 12 to 8

1. Start with wide gates especially where the course may become more difficult with use.
2. Early in a section, novice drivers should be able to proceed without too much difficulty. Numbered poles on any downhill sections to be kept to a minimum.

3. Poles 7 to 5

1. Try to avoid downhill sections after the 7, or at least keep them short and don't use numbered poles to mark the way.
2. Where there is a sharp uphill turn following a flat or down hill section try to make this wide with options for the drivers.
3. Again, poles should be fairly wide apart.

4. Poles 4 to 1

1. Try to ensure this is the most difficult part of the hill.
2. Poles can be more tightly positioned.
3. It is quite acceptable for this section to be very difficult (but not dangerous) early in the trial and the passage of cars to slowly break down the surface.

5. Amending a course during the trial

1. When changing a hill, bear in mind that drivers move on and try to prevent the same drivers being faced with changes on successive rounds if only some sections are being changed.
2. After the first round, hills are normally only changed where:
 - a) the hill is too easy;
 - b) most or all drivers are getting stuck in the same place;
 - c) there are ruts;
 - d) the hill has or could become dangerous.
3. Avoid changing the bottom end of the hill, especially if this could lead to problems for a few early drivers before the course becomes established.
4. Most hills should be changed or "tweaked" at lunch. The objective is to give drivers a new challenge for the afternoon session without having to reset the hills completely. Ask a marshal who is an experienced driver if he would like to change his own hill but you need to check it to ensure it meets your interpretation of what a good hill is.

6. Spare hill

1. If possible, it is always advisable to have a spare hill set out. This enables a quick change if you experience problems with a particular hill which can't be remedied by a change of poles. It also makes amending hills at lunch time a bit easier.
2. Remember if you change a hill you need to be sure the new hill is numbered in correct sequence and that the marshals and drivers are aware of the change.

7. Four wheels out

1. The Club follows a strict interpretation of the 'Blue Book' with regard to four wheels out which is defined as "all four wheels positioned outside the boundary of the course at the same time." The boundary is represented by a straight line drawn from course marker to course marker along the direction of the course (T6.4.2).
2. Accordingly, **drivers must assume that four wheels out rule always applies unless they are advised to the contrary by the section marshal.** If drivers are unsure whether the line they intend to take is acceptable, they should consult the marshal before attempting the section.
3. However, the 'Blue Book' stipulates that "markers should be placed to avoid the likelihood of competitors putting four wheels out between markers" (T1.3.15) The following guidance should in achieving this:
 - in setting out hills, the clerk of the course should always attempt to avoid the need for applying four wheels out by placing the poles in such a way as to give drivers acceptable width to negotiate the hill.
 - this can be done by putting poles at forty-five degrees to the slope rather than in a vertical line with the hill or straight across the hill. Where this is not sufficient, intermediate poles can be used.

8. Event Check List for Clerks of the Course

1. A separate event checklist is available for clerks on the Club's website under the Membership and Documentation tab. It provides a useful list of the clerk's practical duties and an aide memoire for pre-event planning, setting-out and on-the-day activities.

Rev: 12/2017