



The objective of the **Bicycle Safety Rodeo** is to teach children the importance of seeing, being seen, and remaining in control, at all times when riding a bike. This is achieved through a series of bike handling drills and the simulation of traffic situations. The Safe Routes Instructor begins each rodeo with an explanation of what we expect students to demonstrate:

- Children will demonstrate the procedure (stop, look left, then right, then left) before entering the street from a driveway or proceeding through an intersection.
- Children will demonstrate the ability to maintain good balance and control of their bikes.
- Children will demonstrate an awareness of what is going on around them.

Nine different stations give students the opportunity to practice a variety of specific bike handling skills and procedures for operating a bike safely and legally on the street.

The factors to consider when planning a rodeo are:

- how much space you have
- how long do you have with the kids
- how many cones/markers do you have
- how many course marshals are available to assist.

Either the number of children will drive these needs or these resources will determine the number of children you can work with.

Each course should take about ten minutes to complete, when working with groups of about ten children. The whole group instruction at the beginning of the rodeo will require a minimum of ten minutes. According to this schedule we can work with groups of about 90 children, completing the entire rodeo in 100 minutes.

We always begin with a **Helmet Fit**, **Bike Fit** and **ABC Quick Check** (bike safety check over). The emphasis on wearing a well-fitted helmet and having the right size bike in good working order can not be overemphasized. Children are not allowed to wear baseball caps under their helmets (the knob on the top of a cap will cause serious injury if impact occurs).

This is done as a whole group activity before we enter the stations. The Safe Routes Instructor will conduct helmet fit, bike fit and ABC quick check with the whole group; all Course Marshals will assist children in adjusting their helmets and identifying any unsafe cycles.

The Safe Routes Instructor will first instruct the group to check their helmet fit, it must be snug and level; you should have room for no more than two fingers between the straps and your chin. All Course Marshals will adjust helmets. If a bike is not working properly the child must see a Course Marshall qualified to assist with adjustments. If a bike is unsafe for a child to ride help the child find a “Bike Buddy” who will share their bike.

The Safe Routes Instructor will have all students stand over their bikes and explain that they must be able to stand over the top tube with both feet on the ground, the Safe Routes Instructor models this with a bike.

The Safe Routes Instructor will explain to the group that this next procedure must be followed every time we ride; it’s as easy to remember as your ABC’s and it’s that quick too. The Safe Routes Instructor models this with a bike while describing:

A is for air, check tire pressure.

B is for brakes, check your brakes.

C is for cranks, chain and cassette. Make sure the cranks are not loose, the pedals are attached tightly to the cranks, and the chain is on a ring up front and the cassette in the back.

Quick is for the quick releases on the wheels and the seat, make sure they are tight.

Check, is for a slow, smooth start to make sure you are shifting properly. (instruct them to do this when they start their first station)

Children who wish to participate and have helmets but not bikes should “buddy” with a friend who is their size and take turns with the bike. No child will be forced to participate. In most instances children are not allowed to share helmets due to the risk of lice, if you anticipate the need to share helmets obtain painters caps or plastic hair nets in advance. Baseball caps are unsuitable (the knob on the top of a cap will cause serious injury if impact occurs).

The way we accommodate children who do not wish to participate is by having them partner with a rider for the bike and helmet fit and ABC Quick check, we then have them go with a teacher to watch a bicycle safety video. The remainder of the period they will be sent to do an alternative PE activity or allowed to watch the rodeo. Another opportunity for them to participate is by having them help the Safetyville “human stop sign” course marshals.

Safety Course Instructions For Course Marshals

Introduction:

As a Course Marshal you are the authority, and must keep the peace at a Safetyville Rodeo. To guarantee a successful experience for everyone, be a tough Marshall.

This means demanding two things, the first is **respect**, for you as an instructor and for one another as students. Do not tolerate or ignore disrespectful behavior. Use the specific language “I expect you to respect me/one another”. Do not hesitate to reprimand a student who is creating a distraction, don’t allow disruptive kids to ruin it for everybody (particularly you). Participating in the rodeo is a privilege and riding on your own is an important responsibility.

In order for the kids to really learn from these exercises you must also be tough on the students when it comes to their **performance**. The second demand is that they really demonstrate the principles we are teaching. Spend time with each group explaining what is expected at your station and the importance of the principal being practiced. You must coach them into

making an obvious effort. The challenge for you as a Marshall is to maintain exacting standards without ever being negative.

Many children genuinely lack confidence and this can be a valuable confidence building experience; many kids have an attitude and think these exercises are too easy. If you explain the stations correctly and provide them with **feedback** that challenges their ability they will find these exercises difficult. If they are working hard they won't get bored and they will be easier to manage.

Make sure you are providing lots of encouragement; be enthusiastic. Kids are very susceptible to your **enthusiasm**; use this as a tool to engage them.

Finally, as important as it is to be firm you must be friendly; **smile**. Especially when total chaos breaks out; smile and the kids will be none the wiser that you just lost control of the whole situation.

The Stations

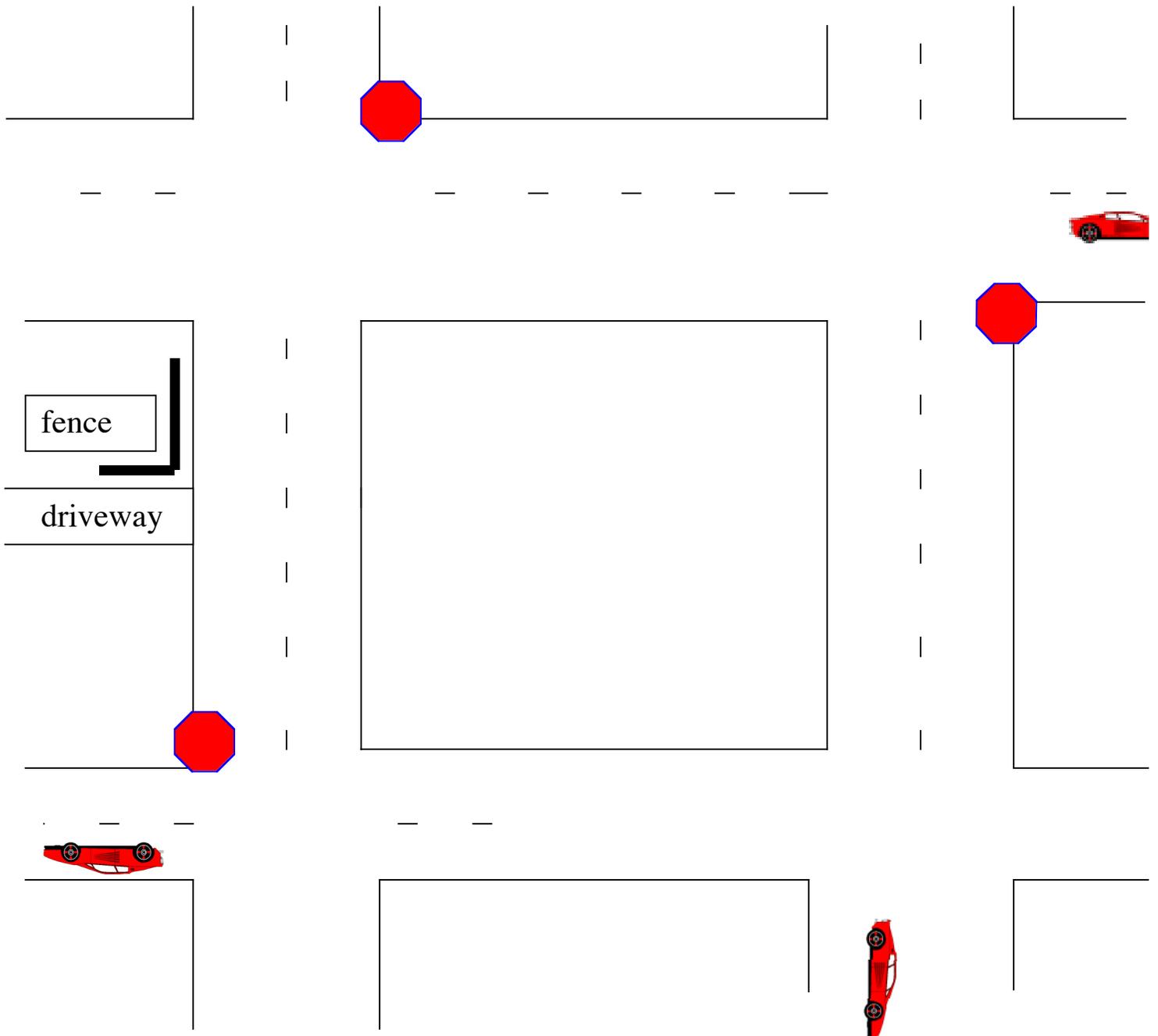
In the **Safetyville Traffic Course** we simulate simple street riding situations, with an emphasis on:

- stopping before entering or crossing a roadway or intersection
- looking left, then right, then left again before entering or crossing a roadway or intersection
- the danger of pulling out from behind an obstacle
- riding on the right hand side of the road
- obeying stop sign.
- stopping and starting smoothly

This station is taught by the Safe Routes Instructor who gives explicit instruction in the proper procedure for pulling out of a blocked driveway: stopping at the edge, looking left, then right, left again, then only if it is clear, pulling out into the street. Students move on to negotiate four intersections; repeating the full procedure at each intersection.

The role of Safetyville Course Marshals (possibly played by children who are not participating in the rodeo) is to act as human stop signs at each intersection. They check for compliance with the proper procedure of stop, look left, right, left and proceed only if it's clear. Human stop signs should model the procedure when necessary.

Prop cars, motorcycles, pedestrians and other bikes (played by additional Course Marshals) can move around the course, requiring that children make real decisions about how to react and proceed safely. All Marshals should talk to the riders as they come through their intersection, offering positive and encouraging feedback.

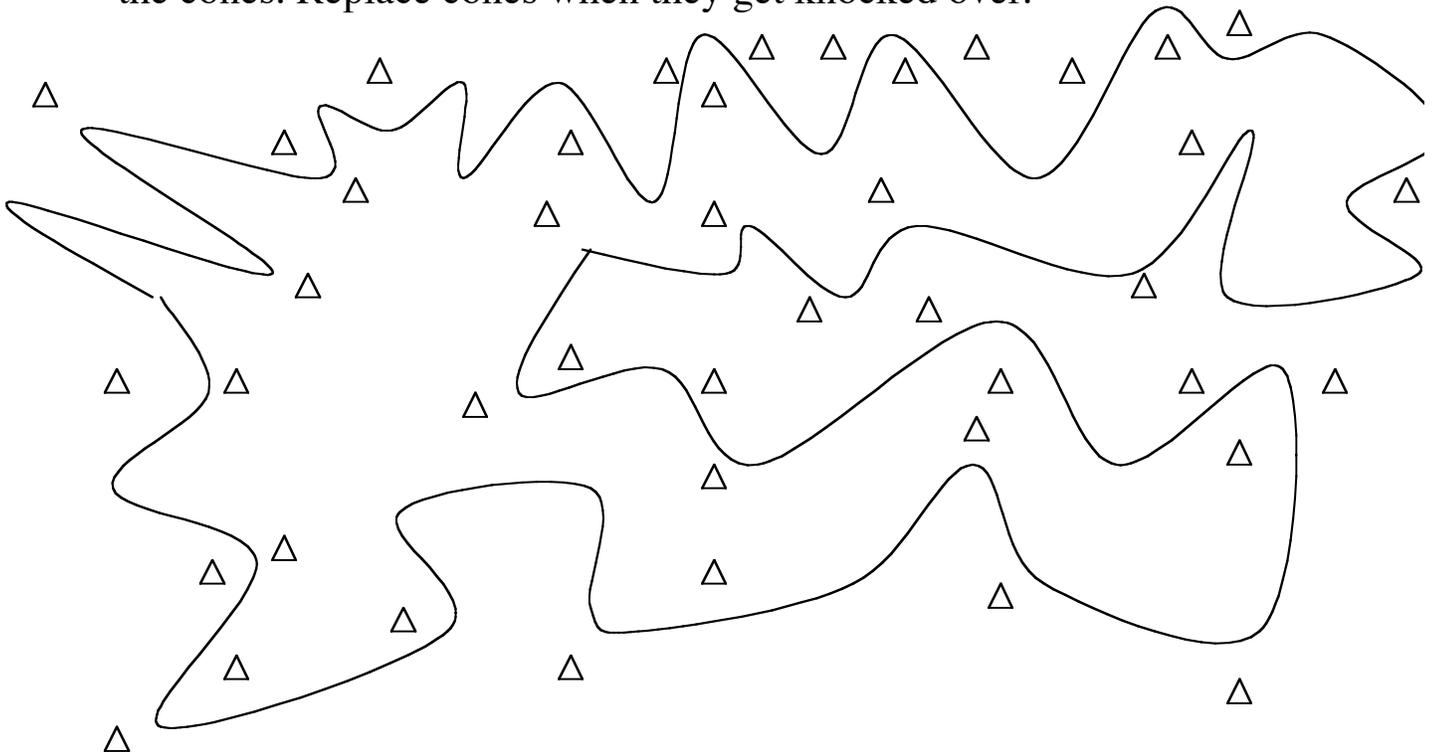


The **Slalom Course** is an exercise in bike handling, designed to challenge all ability levels while ensuring success for every rider.

The Course consists of a circuitous chalk line, which winds and turns tightly; outlined by traffic cones. The traffic cones are placed far enough apart that any child should be able to navigate the course while remaining between the cones.

Instruct the riders that the object is to follow the chalk line drawn on the blacktop with their front wheel. Explain that the cones are set up to mark the course and that they must stay within the cones. Explain that keeping their tire right on the line will be very difficult (impossible actually) to do, but everybody should be able to stay within the cones.

The course Marshall will monitor the distance between riders and check their speed. Talk to the riders, offering positive and encouraging feedback but holding riders to the goals of following the line and avoiding the cones. Replace cones when they get knocked over.



The **Turtle Race** is an exercise in balance and control. The Course Marshal enforces the theme of this activity, which is: don't be the hare be the turtle.

The course consists of lanes about 2 feet wide, the number of lanes you will want to have is determined by the size of the groups you will be working with and should be as long as possible, at least 75 feet.

Ask the riders if they find it harder to control their bikes at slower speed. They will most likely agree. Explain that this is a balance exercise; the last person across the finish line is the winner, you can not put your foot down and you must stay within your lane. Explain that we want them to practice controlling their bikes at slow speeds, which is achieved through good balance. Talk to the riders, offering positive and encouraging feedback and coaching them to stay in their lanes. Cheer the riders enthusiastically.

The **Rock Dodge** Course Marshal will explain that we want the riders to demonstrate the technique of flicking the front wheel to avoid a sudden obstacle, without swerving wildly.

The course is laid out in a rotational pattern, a large space allows for more rock obstacles, the diagram shows a more compact oval with two rock obstacles. The markers (sponges work well or the PE department may have poly-spots) are arranged around the course so that they create narrow chutes. Instruct the students to warm up by riding the course and keeping both wheels inside of the markers when they come to the chutes. Once students have done this several times place the "rock" sponge in the center of each chute.

Instruct them that this simulates a situation we often encounter; a sudden obstacle in your path, when you have to stay within a narrow area. Instruct them to steer away from the rock at the last moment, which will cause you to lean in the opposite direction. Counter this by over-steering the other way.

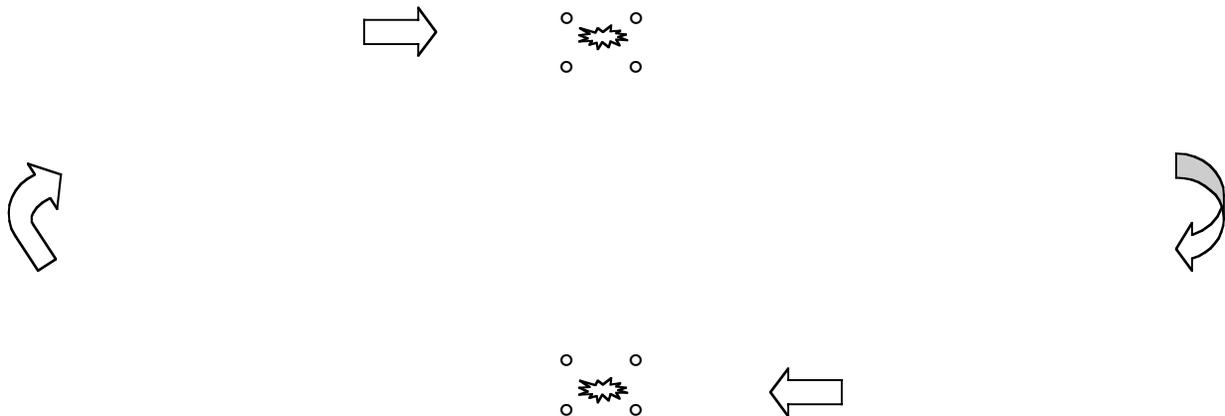
The Marshal will model this for the riders. The Marshall should move around the course, offering feedback and encouragement. The Marshal will

need to replace the “rock” sponges and chute markers as they will get knocked around.

This explanation of the rock Dodge is excerpted from the League of American Bicyclists Road One Instructors Manual and used with their permission:

To execute a rock dodge, keep riding straight until you are very close to the rock. Just before the rock, turn the handlebars suddenly without leaning so the front wheel goes around the rock. For example, if you steer to the right of the rock you will automatically start to lean left. However, you will catch yourself as soon as your wheels have passed the rock by steering more to the left than is natural. Your wheel snakes around the rock, but your body and handlebars have barely moved. The entire action happens in a split second.

This technique will feel unnatural at first and will take practice before you can do it smoothly. Once you master the Rock Dodge, practice it regularly. While out riding, dodge rocks that you would otherwise be able to avoid. For an emergency maneuver to work in an emergency, it has to come naturally.

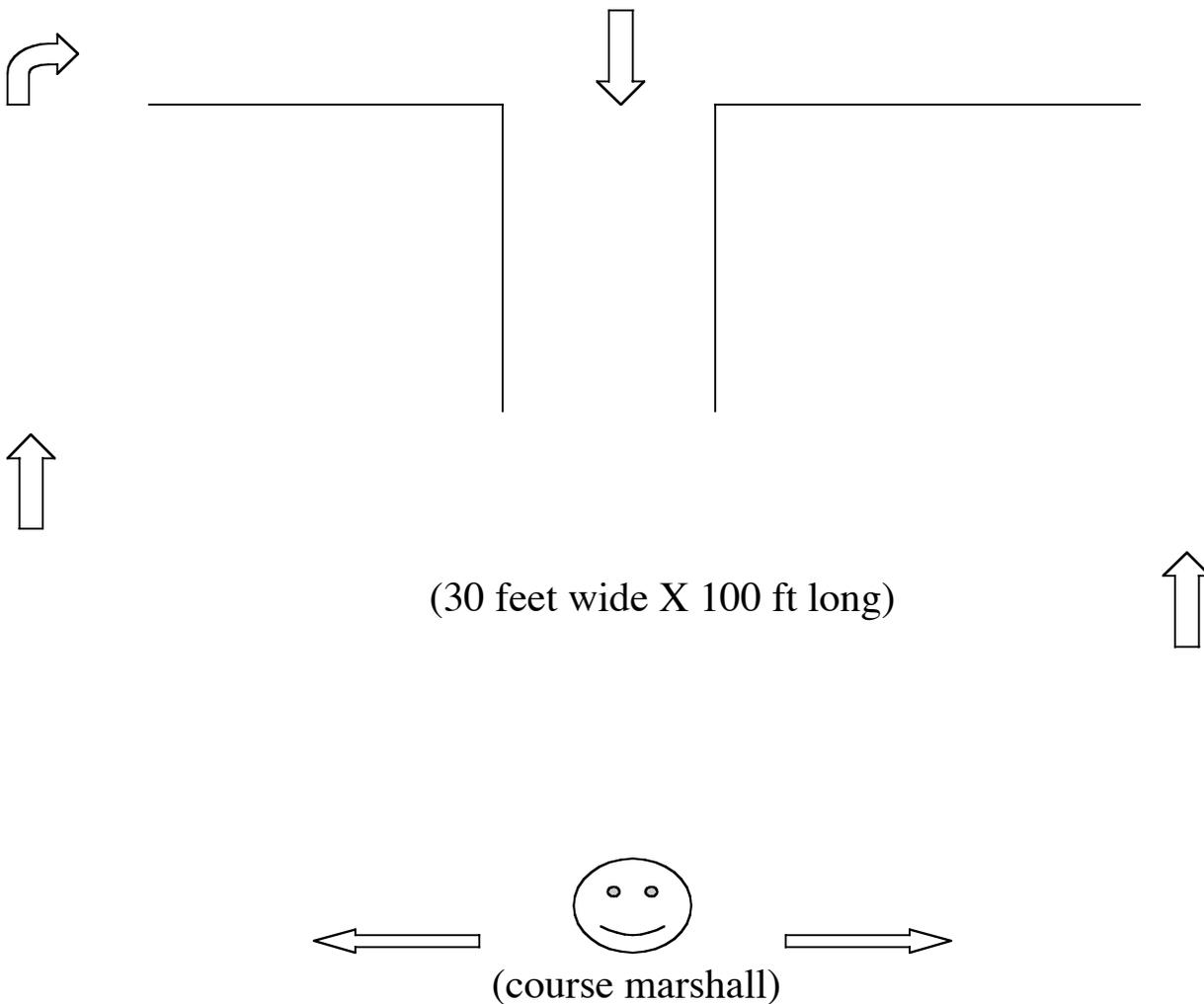


The **Quick Turn** Marshal conducts the exercise which practices making a quick decision to execute a sharp turn. An area of at least 100 feet

by 30 feet is suggested, it works best when riders have the opportunity to build up speed.

The course consists of a chute marked with chalk and/or cones and perimeter marking cones and chalk arrows which direct the riders back to the top of the chute.

The Marshall shall instruct the riders to line up and ride through the marked chute toward them, just as the rider reaches you, direct the rider to turn right or left. Instruct them to then ride out to the marker cone and circle back to the top of the chute and wait in line to repeat the drill. Encourage them to build up speed as they become comfortable with the activity.



The **Chaos Corner (AKA Cops Corner)** Course Marshal supervises the station which demonstrates the need for traffic rules, signals and signage. This is an outstanding course for a law enforcement officer to supervise. Kids love the opportunity to talk with an officer and it is beneficial for young people to have positive interactions with the police.

An area will be designated by four tall safety cones, arranged in a square. The riders must remain within this space. The size of the area will be determined by the size of the group, a good ratio is approximately 5 square feet per student. The object is to make the space difficult to navigate without running in to one another.

The Marshal will allow riders to enter one at a time, the object being to ride chaotically within the confined area without touching another rider. If the Marshal sees riders making contact they must be “sited”.

Intentional collisions will result in the offending riders being removed for the duration of the station. The riders involved in accidental collisions should have their licenses temporarily revoked and their insurance rates increased.

Stop the traffic after a few minutes and ask the riders what rules would make the course less chaotic. Try their ideas. At the end of the course, ask the riders if the new rules helped.

An excerpt from The Guide to Bicycle Rodeos by John Williams and Dan Burden, explains why this course is important:

One surprising thing that we’ve learned from the accident studies is this: while the kids involved in car/bike crashes were most often at fault, they generally knew the traffic law they violated.

They violated them anyway because of competing needs (“Got to get home or Mom will be mad”) or faulty expectations (“No one ever comes down that street...why stop at the stop sign”).

For this reason, expecting kids to obey traffic rules simply because we tell them to is unrealistic. The old rote learning programs that give

“dos and don’ts” will not do the trick. The kids need to see first hand why rules help people get where they are going.

The Quick Stop teaches the ability to respond quickly; braking suddenly and maintaining control while stopping fast. The Marshal will demonstrate applying the brakes evenly and shifting your weight (butt) back while braking. Explain that this will make stopping quickly easier and safer because putting equal pressure on the front and rear brakes and putting weight on the rear wheel keeps you from going over the front of the bike and makes it stop faster.

This exercise can be set up in a big (at least 100 feet long by 15 feet wide) oval or as a straight line exercise. Set up 2 rows of cones along the long sides of the oval or in a long straight line. You will need enough cones to space them at intervals that challenge kids to “slalom” through them (about 4 feet apart).

Each rider should circle around the outside of the cones once so they feel comfortable about where to go.

On their second turn the Marshal randomly blows a whistle, signaling the rider to stop immediately. The object is to stop fast by braking evenly and shifting their weight back. Encourage the riders to build up speed, continue to randomly blow the whistle several more times as the rider proceeds around.

If time allows have the students perform the exercise while slaloming through the cones. This allows them to practice the principals of the quick stop while changing direction.

If there is room to do this as an oval you can have several riders do this at once.

use this information to explain why this work.

This excerpt from the League of American Bicyclists Road One Instructors Manual, used here with their permission, explains the goal of this station in detail:

There is an art to stopping a bicycle in an emergency. Doing it incorrectly could cause you to: 1) hit the object you are trying to avoid; 2) somersault over the handlebars; or 3) lose control of the bike as the rear wheel skids out from under you. If you are like many people, you instinctively grab both brakes in an emergency and apply them equally until the bike begins to skid. You have no control over a locked wheel and a wheel that is skidding offers you virtually no stopping power.

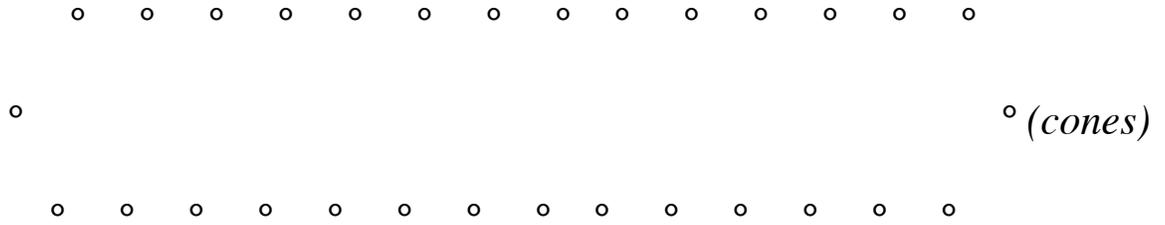
When you apply either the front or the rear brake, the bicycle begins to slow down and your weight transfers forwards. The more weight on the wheel, the more effective the braking and the less tendency to skid.

If you apply the rear brake hard, your weight is shifted to the front wheel, decreasing weight on the rear wheel. Since the rear wheel is supporting less weight, it will skid as you brake, decreasing the effectiveness of the brake.

Applying the front brake also shifts weight to the front wheel. In this case however, the weight transfer increases the effectiveness of the brake and the tendency of the front wheel to skid is greatly reduced. The danger is that if the front brake is applied too hard the rear wheel will lift off the road and the rider may be pitched over the handlebars.

The implications for effective braking are as follows:

- *Braking with the rear brake alone will avoid pitch-over, but it is not very effective.*
- *In theory, the fastest stop can be made with the front brake, but only a slight error will pitch you over.*
- *The best system for a fast, safe stop is to use both brakes, which produces the optimum deceleration. If the rear wheel starts to skid, this indicates that you are un-weighting the rear wheel too much. Therefore when the rear wheel skids, ease up slightly on the front brake.*
- *When braking hard, slide your body back on the saddle as far as possible. You can transfer even more weight to the rear wheel by moving your butt straight back.*



The Crazy Eight course practices bike handling while challenging riders to employ their peripheral vision to help them make decisions. This course also practices traffic courtesy. The layout consists of two or more conjoined circles drawn on the pavement and outlined with small safety cones.

Begin by asking if they know what we mean by “peripheral vision”. Explain that is what we see out of the corners of our eyes; we can see things without looking directly at them. A child’s field of vision is not fully developed so they must be taught to take advantage of everything they can see.

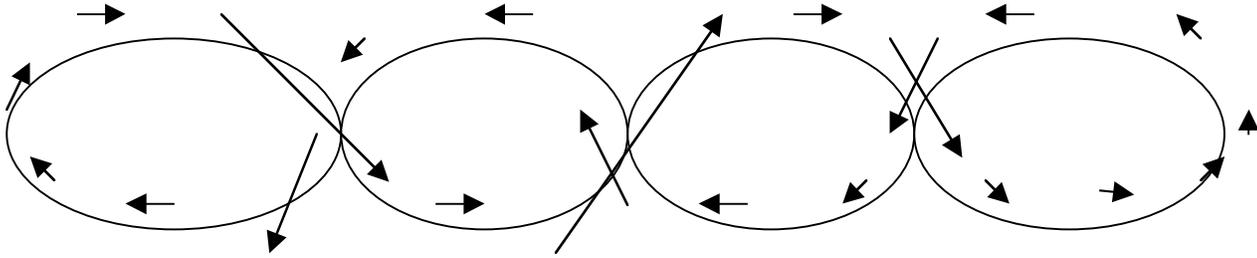
We always want to focus on where we are going, so instruct them to follow the chalk line but also to be aware of the other riders without looking directly at them. The marshal will monitor speed and distance between riders.

They must avoid collisions at each intersection and avoid running into the rider ahead of them.

The Marshal will allow each child to ride the course as a warm up. The Marshal will then feed the riders onto the course one at a time, until as many students as possible are on the course at once.

The first time a rider slows down or stops in order to prevent a collision commend the student on their good judgement. Ask the entire group to stop and point out what just happened. Explain that slowing or

stopping to let someone else go ahead is the best way to stay safe and the kind, courteous thing to do. Explain that is what “sharing the road” is all about.



The **Shoulder Check** practices the maneuver of looking over your shoulder while riding in a straight line. The set up consists of a lane marked with cones, at least 100 feet long, approximately 2-3 feet apart.

Riders proceed down the lane one at a time, the Marshal stands behind the rider and randomly calls out either “check right” or “check left” and holds up a big red card or a big white card. The rider must look over their shoulder to the right or the left and call out the color of the card.

Explain that the challenge is to stay in the lane because the natural tendency when we look back is to swerve in the direction we are trying to see. When riding on the street this can put you in the path of traffic.