

Biathlon Etiquette

Course and Racing

When on the course during a race, warming up or cooling down, always use courtesy and follow the rules of competition. When someone calls "track" or "on your left or right" move to the side and let them by. You are not required to get completely off the trail, just give them room to get by. In some areas it is not required that you yield track (the finish and the handover zone in a relay race), but if you are not moving quickly and/or not in competition with the person calling "track", it is appropriate to yield even in those areas that do not require it. If you do not audibly call "track", do not expect someone to move aside simply because you are behind them. It is your responsibility to know the course.

Make sure you get your questions answered at pre-race meetings. Know what laps you must or run and what order they are in. Do not ask course, penalty loop or range officials where you go next. It is not likely they will know what lap you're on or where you need to go. You must know this before you begin to race. If you go off course, you must ski/run back to where you went off course and continue. You cannot ask for, or receive, special dispensation for having run the wrong, or longer loops. Even though you might have run the correct distance, you cannot run the loops in the wrong order.

Do not discard items in the trail and do not ask the Course Officials to take or be responsible for any equipment you discard off the trail or loop. If you must discard something, try to do so as you enter the range near your pile of gear so you can find it later.

Range

The Chief of Range is in charge of safety and function. Their primary job is to observe and immediately correct any and all safety violations on the range. Some safety violations are grounds for disqualification. Under the rules and terms of insurance there isn't room for giving you a break. It is not appropriate to ask for one or to argue with the Chief of Range at any time. The Range falls in the official 'silent zone' (From 10 meters before the entry to 10 meters past the exit). During a race it is a rules violation for anyone to give you assistance or advice in that zone. Do not ask other racers, spectators or officials for information on your shooting, how you're doing, where you go next, etc.

It is your responsibility to select a lane with a target that has been reset and has its reset bar flag visible below the target. Only when you are held up by an official, or directed to a lane that is not ready for use, are you allowed a time credit. You must call "Alibi" to get a clock put on your delay.

It is your responsibility to note how many targets you have left standing as you leave the shooting point. As racers are coming into the range, targets must be reset quickly. Range officials cannot be asked or expected to wait to reset your target until after you've left the range area. There just isn't time with new racers coming in to shoot.

Penalty Loop

The penalty loop is a fairly condensed and narrow lane of travel. Before the race, make sure you are familiar with how to enter and exit the loop. The Controllers cannot tell you how many loops you owe and are preoccupied with keeping track of the movement of many other racers. Do not block the trail, yield when you hear someone call "track" or "on your left or right". Do not discard items in the penalty loop and do not ask the Controllers to take or be responsible for any equipment you discard off of the loop.

Pre Race Zero

Zero lanes will be assigned immediately prior to zero and posted on the bulletin boards near the range. Unless you are assigned an individual lane, assume that you are sharing a lane to zero with others. Get in, get your shots off and then get off the mat and let someone else use the lane. You can get some skiing/running in and come back when the other competitor gets their time in. Alternate. Be sure to confer with those zeroing on the same lane as to which paper targets each of you will use. Move through the range at zeroing just as you would during a race. One 5 shot magazine only, then get off the mat to make way for the next person. One way traffic only. Do not linger in the skiing/running lane; do not leave equipment in the way. Competitors will be coming in with elevated heart rates, ready to shoot. If you are on the mat, they cannot get their shots in while their heart rate is still up, giving them a less effective zero.

No zeroing scopes are allowed at the shooting point, on the mat or in the running lane. They are only allowed behind it. Coordinate with another racer to assist you at the scope, or simply go to the scope after firing your 5 rounds. (Note that it is ineffective to have someone "call" your shots...) that just makes you "shade" and will negatively impact your zero.) If using a club scope, understand that it is there to be shared.

Do not use or touch a privately owned scope without clear permission from the owner. This is common courtesy. ASK before using. Do not ask a range official to give you permission to use someone's personal scope, or any other personal equipment.

Equipment

This may be one of the most significant areas of etiquette. Do not touch, pick up, or use the personal equipment of another biathlete, especially a rifle. This can lead to a sharp rebuke, as many biathletes are very particular about their equipment, they have made a significant investment in it. Rifles in particular have many personalized adjustments that can be moved out of alignment. Unless it is marked as "club property" assume it is personal property. If you are using club equipment, obtain permission to use it and do not modify it in any way without permission of the Chief of Range or the Chief of Competition. This goes double if you are borrowing someone else's personal rifle. If you borrow equipment and make adjustments to it (only with permission) do your best to return it to the condition it was in when you got it. This is especially significant when it comes to stock length spacers, weights and magazines.

Set-Up and Break-Down

Biathlon Races are organized and staged by volunteers. You are not bound by any laws to help set up the range, course, firing line, rifle racks and all the other necessary items to have a race, or to stay after to help take it all down. But, if you don't, more work is put on others. You may not think others notice your failure to pitch in, but they do. Common courtesy dictates that all who participate in races should plan to arrive early enough to help with set-up, and arrange their schedules to make it possible to stick around at the end to help break-down. No one wants to set-up and break down for those who always have a "good excuse" and do not help. This behavior will cause the workhorse volunteers to get fed up and quit, and then no one will get to race. If an Olympic or World Cup Biathlete can take the time (and they do) for range set up and break down, so can you.