

Guidance Note - Measurement of Closed Road Events

This guidance note is intended to record methods of overcoming the difficulties presented in the measurement of courses for races run on closed roads. It lists different circumstances which may occur, outlines some basic strategies and gives a number of case studies as examples of solutions.

Locations and Problems

These may be categorised as:

- Urban** Dense traffic. One-way streets. Cycling prohibited.
- Suburban** High-speed roads (single & dual carriageway).
- Rural** High-speed or heavily trafficked B-roads, often with poor visibility. Meandering roads.
- Other** Motorways and other restricted roads.

These categories overlap and some problems apply to more than one category.

Basic Strategies (see Case Studies)

Measure in sections, some forward, some in reverse. (CS2, CS3)

Select day and time (including measuring at night). (CS1)

Use escorts – race director, highways or traffic management vehicle, police (rare). (CS1, CS2)

Measure offset line. (CS2, CS3)

Make use of other road closures. (CS3)

Case Studies

- CS1** Bristol Half Marathon, A4 Portway.
- CS2** Severn Bridge Half Marathon, M48, B4461, lanes.
- CS3** Severn Bridge 10k, M48.

Case Study 1 Bristol Half Marathon, A4 Portway. (Phil Holland)

A 4km length of the A4 along the River Avon was used as an out-and-back for a number of years. This is a 4-lane road, partly single carriageway, partly dual and carries heavy traffic to Avonmouth Docks and the M5. Most of the length has a 50mph limit. The Course used the left half of the road in each direction. On the first occasion, I measured the out-and-back as a first operation at 04:30 on a Sunday morning, with the race director following me with hazard lights on to give me protection from behind. On the second occasion, with later sunrise, I measured at 01:00 with a highways department vehicle behind with full amber beacons. Some of the HGVs still pushed fairly close to me.

Case Study 2 Severn Bridge Half Marathon, M48, B4295 & lanes. (Phil Holland)

The course starts on the closed M48 over the Severn Bridge, then B4295 for 2.7km, a loop of country lanes to rejoin the B4295 for a 3.6km return to the bridge, using the cycle track to the finish. The B4295 is a typical undulating, winding 2-lane country road with varying visibility and is closed for the race. Two short, narrow lengths of the lanes are also closed and the whole loop has poor visibility.

The bridge, comprising the Severn Bridge, Wye Bridge and two viaducts is 3km long and straight. The cycle track is parallel, only 3m offset, and so the M48 length was measured on the cycle track (I had to sneak 10m up the exit slip to measure the curve at the end). The B4295 was measured early on Sunday morning, with the race director providing 2 escort vehicles, one following close to protect me and one in front to warn and slow traffic (60mph is common, although speed limit is 40 or 50). The length was measured in 8 sections, 4 in each direction.

Measurement of the closed lanes was no more difficult than the rest of the loop. One escort vehicle, either behind or in front, was sufficient. I know these lanes well enough to anticipate potential hazards.

Case Study 3 Severn Bridge 10k, M48 (Phil Holland)

This was an interesting addition to the Half Marathon, starting on the west side of the bridge and continuing for 1km past the east end to turn point, back to the top of the exit slip and down to join the cycle track for the return to the finish. I had the measurement for the 3km over the bridge and the 5km on the cycle track to the finish, but the start length on the west and the Z for the turns on the east could only be measured on the M48 carriageway.

I used GoodRunGuide to get a close estimate of the turn length required and fixed a suitable reference for the first turn. The second turn would come at the start of the slip road where there was ample room to adjust its position by 50m. My intention was to measure on the morning of the race and fix turn 2. However, there was a maintenance closure a few months before and, unusually, permission was given for me to cycle on the carriageway. I was given 1 hour with an escort from the maintenance contractor, which served nicely.