

## **B - Guide for setting a mountain bike hash**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this guideline is to try to help the hare to set rides to a certain M2BH standard.

### **Want to be a Hare?**

Before you opt to be a Hare you should be either an experienced Hash runner and hare, have done a couple of Mountainbike Hashes and have read and understand the guideline for ***cycling at a mountain bike hash***. You should know well the expectations of the Bashers.

As a first time hare seek the help of an experienced co-hare.

### **Principals of a Bike Hash**

In general avoid busy and paved roads. At least 95% of the route must be rideable on the bike as opposed to pushing or carrying the bike.

Plan the track in such a way to slow down the fast riders and give opportunities for the slower ones to catch up with the pack.

### **The Two Rides**

Due to different levels of capabilities, preferences and expectations of hashers, two rides are normally set.

The ***Long/Rambo Ride*** covers approximately 25-30 km, in varied terrain with interesting river or swamp crossings, steep hills, scaring down hills, difficult single track, and speed section.

Ride time should be 2 to 4 hrs. depend on terrain and Hash setting.

The ***Short/Scenic Ride***, covers approximately 15-20 km, ride time should be 1-2 hrs. The terrain should be as above but less arduous. Avoid excessive hill climbs, dangerous descents or carrying of bike. Beginners and new comers normally join this ride, so don't scare them away.

The track is either on a different circuit or largely the same as the long one with short cuts for the Short/Scenic Ride. Mark the branch off with signboards or use paper of differing shape or colour for each ride.

### **Reconnoitre (Recce)**

First select if possible a virgin area that has not been used yet by the Mountain Bike Hash. Also the location should be chosen in a radius up to 50 km from Malacca. Since we are Mountain Biker the terrain should be hilly.

Find one to three co-hares preferably familiar with the area you wish to lay the ride. It is not advisable to do it alone. To set a good ride you will need to reconnoitre the area thoroughly, starting with the main tracks before exploring the less or unused tracks. Anything from three to five sessions until you are very familiar with the whole area.

Plan the ride to cover a wide area within the distance limits. If it's too tight especially at checks, there is a possibility that bashers hit the in-trail again and confusion will reign. Worst if they hit the back-trail at the first checks, the entire Bash is screwed up. Remember that despite logic, bashers will overrun the end of "falsies" by up to 50 meters or more in the desperate hope paper will magically re-appear. Also, when bashers fan out from a check they can cover an area up to half a kilometre in diameter!

Don't worry about taking riders off the main tracks to struggle up contours, wading through a river, but don't overdo it and although remember the "ridable" ethic. For obvious reasons avoid crossing standing or stagnant water, rubbish tips and planter's gardens.

Make sure there is a reasonable parking area where roads/tracks will not be blocked by basher's parked cars. A shady area is preferable.

Send your ride site directions to the Secretary/Trailmaster two weeks before the ride. Remember that simple instructions with trip-meter mileage work best. A direction map included would be most helpful.

### **The Perfect Bash Trail**

Plan the final track in such a way to slow down the fast riders and give opportunities for the slower ones to catch up with the pack. This can be achieved by:

***Overshooting***. The paper track suddenly turns away from the straight trail, which let the front riders overshoot. It takes time until they have noticed that they run off paper and have to return to the last paper seen.

***Short cutting***. At an overshoot or by zigzagging the trail, there should be a possibility for followers to short cut easily towards the new direction.

***Looping***. A loop should come back close to the in-trail so that followers can see the front riders and there must be an easy connecting path or better open terrain to short cut to the on trail.

**Paper.** Use the paper sparsely. A long visible trail of paper will not slow down the FROP's. Place the paper spots every 10 to 30m only (depend on visibility and speed). Hide the paper a little bit. This will drastically reduce the speed of the front riders. But if you want to make sure that the Bashers follow a certain track or at long grass and dense jungle you will need to lay more paper.

**Long rides.** Avoid very long rides on straight estate roads or single tracks. This will only stretch the pack without opportunity for the slower ones to catch up.

### **Checks**

Checks are the most powerful tool to bring front and end at the ride together again.

Plan five to six difficult checks on the long run with change of direction, back checks, false trails and a loop check. For the Scenic ride set two to three easy checks.

A check must have at least 3 to 5 opportunities for checking a new trail. If you also consider rubber or palm oil lines or contours it can take some time to break the check.

As compared to running the new paper trail should only start in a distance of 100 to 300m. Consider that a biker can cover a distance of 100m in a few seconds! But do not make it too difficult otherwise the Bashers will get fed up and if everybody has arrived already it is wasting of time.

Lay one or eventually two **False-Trails** with paper starting about 100m from the check thus the checkers will topple over it first. A false trail should last not more than 100m of false paper. If practical mark the end of the "falsie" with a paper cross, crossed branches, leaves etc. Chalk can be used on tarmac surfaces. The true route should then start approximately 200 to 300m from the check.

Use **Back-Checks** where bashers will have to go back on their in-route to find the real trail. Alternatively lay it up a dead end where they know they will have to back track.

**Circular-Checks** lead them round in a wide circle (up to 500m in length) preferable a hill or other obstacles. Then they'll meet themselves coming round. This can be an effective check to gather a large pack at mid to three-quarter way of the whole ride.

Remember not to lay checks or "falsies" too close to where bashers may find another part of the ride and end up going the wrong direction or shortcut the course.

Meander the general direction of the in trail so that is not possible to guess where the true track goes and where the back trail is.

Do not indicate at the starting point the return trail otherwise the last checks are overcome quickly. If the home trail is along the road leading to the parking side lay the paper only after the pack has left.

### **General Hints**

After difficult passages or checks give longer stretches of easy terrain to recover and enjoy cycling.

Plan checks and difficult passages for the first three quarter of the ride. The last quarter should be an easy to follow estate (main) road without checks. This enables the fast riders to race and for the slower once to come back comfortable and safely.

To work out such a Mountain Bike Hash ride, is a taxing task:

***"To lay one single track on which the faster ones cycle more km, the slower ones cycle less km and all are back at the same time!"***

### **Bash Trail Paper**

Use shredded paper or sliced up squares / triangles / strips and different colours if you feel inclined. It is biodegradable but only after some time. If your run is in a popular hashing area make sure your paper is different from all the other stuff on the ground.

### **Laying the Trail**

To be safe, plan to lay the paper on the Saturday before the run. There is a danger that it may get washed away by overnight rain but it's a lot quicker to freshen up a trail on the Sunday morning than to lay it from scratch (unless you start at 5:00am with a torch).

Do not under estimate the time required of laying the paper. To lay paper for a 30-km and a separate 20-km ride can take up to 8 hrs. Consider that on rough surface or at up and down hills you need both hands on your handle bar. So you have to stop every time to place the paper. The rest is one arm riding all the way, which is very tiring. To shorten the laying time, arrange that your co-hares lay the paper at certain stretches.

Be also aware that may be other Hash Chapters have used the area just a few days ago and your nicely plant checks or trail are Chris crossed with fresh paper. In this case you have to pick up the "old" paper or worst, have to search for a new trail and checks.

Get to the site early on the Sunday of the Bash, allow yourself enough time to whiz round most of the run and make sure the trail is intact.

### **Pre-Bash Briefing**

Once the gathered masses have arrived you will need to give them a briefing or at least tell them what kind of paper to follow, point out any dangers etc. Let them know your hand phone no.

### **On the Bash**

Make sure everyone goes off in the right direction. Decide which one of your co-hares goes as tail sweeper on the long and short trail. If you come to a check and the check has not been broken for a while, give a clue, but resist all threats. Make sure that checks are closed (lay paper to join the route) once they have been broken, slow riders coming up behind will have a hard time finding the trail if not at all. If a basher is struggling, give him / her a shortcut if you can.

You are responsible to organise a search for missing persons who have not signed out after the ride.

On-On!