

PACRAT Timing and Rules Discussion

There are typically many issues we have to deal with during PACRAT races. The most obvious to most of you are probably timing issues. All of the PACRAT board and all of the various resort staff are as frustrated or even more frustrated than you when we have a timing glitch. No one wants to be standing around in god knows what kind weather conditions any longer than they have to and we certainly would rather see happy racers than grumpy racers. The timing issues are caused by a variety of reasons:

- A wiring or transmitter/receiver issue (a short, a broken wire somewhere in the system, poor connections to equipment).
- A power issue (lack of power, power surges or power cables interfering with the equipment).
- Old equipment (not just a concern at Meadows but at Timberline and Ski Bowl as well).
- Malfunctioning equipment (start wands, finish eyes, the timer itself).
- Weather (heavy, wet snow can cause the photo electric eyes at the finish line to trip and or cause issues with electrical shorts, and bright sun can interfere with the photo electric eyes).

When everything works, it really makes things run smoothly. We started to see that last year now that we have our own timing system, and as we get more experience with the timing equipment we hope the days of hearing “bib number X, please take a rerun – we didn’t get a time” will be over or at least very limited.

One other thing on timing, **when you slip the course or are not racing, do not go through the finish line.** It happens virtually every race. Put yourselves in the boots of the racer whose time has just been messed up. They are not happy about having to do a rerun. So please make it a practice to ALWAYS ski around the finish line, even if we are not racing at the time. That way people who are new to the program see what is supposed to happen all the time. And tell all of your teammates and others of our PACRAT family who may not have the experience you have.

Most of the other issues have to do with PACRAT rules. While we have rules which govern most situations, the Board has full power to interpret and apply the rules in a fashion consistent with the general PACRAT philosophy of a fun recreational racing league. We try not to be draconian about it as that would detract from the fun aspects, but we do have to apply the rules if they are being abused. Therefore, we should all make every effort to abide by the rules. Here are the one’s that seem to pop-up more frequently than others:

Missing bib. It’s pretty obvious what this is. If you forget your bib, we can hand out a replacement bib for the day that you can wear inside out and just tell the starter your regular bib number when you race. Then bring your bib next time. If needed, we can let people race without a bib if they forget to ask for a replacement. But, if particular racers continually attempt to race without a bib we can DQ the racer for not following the rules. Why is it important to have your bib on? It helps us identify who the racer is, both for timing issues and other issues (like letting slippers know there is a racer in the course since they have a bib on). It’s also your

ticket into after race parties. We also have a bib sponsor who would be less inclined to support us if we didn't wear the bibs.

Shadowing the course and/or making two or more connected turns while slipping or previewing the course. This is where racers ski at speed beside or in the course in an attempt to get a feel for the terrain and or how the gates are set. These are DQable infractions. It's a pretty sad statement when one of our less experienced racers says they know it's an organization that is "loosely run", but they are frustrated to see experienced racers shadowing or taking multiple gates at speed. Please don't do this and stop others from doing it as well. You don't have to be "in your face" about it, just let people know it's against the rules and if they have an attitude about it, feel free to report them to a board member.

Missing a gate. We don't have gate keepers in PACRAT, so the hope is that this is a self-reporting event. If you know you miss a gate, please tell the timing shack or a board member. The run will be ruled a DQ and your other run will count as your fastest of two runs (assuming you complete it properly). Even if you miss a gate in both runs, please self report it. Also remember there are lots of people who might be slipping or making a coat run or previewing the course while the race is running. If more than one reliable source reports a missed gate, we will investigate and DQ the run if the report pans out. **SO PLEASE BE AWARE THAT YOU MAY NOT BE TOLD THAT YOU WERE DQ'd UNTIL LATER (PERHAPS EVEN AFTER THE ENTIRE RACE HAS FINISHED) SO ALWAYS TAKE YOUR SECOND RUN JUST IN CASE.** This is one of many reasons it is important to take your second run whenever possible so there is a second run to fall back on.

Ski Coming Off. If a ski comes off during a run prior to the last two gates it will count as a DNF or DQ (you can finish with one ski on if it's the last two gates). We frequently have people putting skis on in an attempt to finish a run. While it's a valiant attempt, the time won't count and ultimately it ends up causing delays with the race. So please let your teammates know that if a ski comes off during their run prior to the last two gates, to please gather themselves after taking stock of body parts and such and move a safe distance to the side of the course so the race can resume, unless an injury prevents you from doing so. And make sure to not continue in the course and through the finish line.

Interference. Interference can occur in a number of ways. Slippers or other course workers may not get out of the way in time when you are racing. Stray skiers or snowboarders may cut across the run. Someone may fall into your course. There may be loose equipment in your course. If you feel you are interfered with, stop your run and ski to the timing shack or find a board member and ask for a rerun. If you continue your run and cross the finish line we will not be able to give you a rerun as you will have an official time. Of course, for some racers this might be OK if the interference was minor or really didn't impact the run.

Not slipping or performing other course maintenance when asked to do so. Racers are expected to help with slipping or course maintenance when requested. The best way to do this is to come back to the start after your first run and ask if course maintenance is needed. It's best to do this as a team. If it's not needed, you are free to go until your next run. Then do the same

thing again after your second run. If you are asked and you refuse or it is determined particular teams never offer to help, it is a DQable infraction.

We need to endeavor to teach our less experienced slippers the proper way to slip. Unless there is new snow or the race line has holes and such, we should be slipping wide or to the outside of the line. Typically a berm or pile of snow naturally forms to the outside and down from the gate. This is the part that needs to be slipped or pushed away. Keep pushing it farther out and down without moving it into the race line. There are other methods and parts of the course that may need work, but let's have the experienced racers do that part and teach our less experienced racers how to work on the real problem area(s).

If you are slipping while the race is in progress it is your responsibility to be out of the course when racers come by. Always look up the course to check for the next racer and if you are in a blind spot, slip a few gates and move out of the way until the next racer comes by and then slip a few more gates and repeat. Error on the side of caution in this regard.

Thanks for being part of PACRAT.

Dale Parshall
PACRAT Results Director