

Having kids who love biking is the first step to what can be a lifetime of fun and fitness. Organizing a bike rodeo for scout groups, school clubs, etc., is one way to do just that. Below are different events and activities you can use to get the fun started. Each of these can be a particular station that each kid must complete in order to successfully "pass" the bike rodeo and be eligible for any prizes that you might choose to offer.

In general, each station is worth ten points, and points are awarded or deducted for the performance of each. Keep track of each kid's score and tally them at the end if you wish to award prizes to the top performers. Note that most of these events can be scaled up or down to fit the space you have available.

1. Safety Check

Check that each kid's bike is road-worthy by inspecting tires, brakes, handlebars, and chain. This is also a good time to make sure that the kids bikes fit them properly.

2. Helmet Inspection

Each kid's helmet should fit snugly, and come mid-way down the forehead. Check to be sure that the chin strap is tight enough and that it fastens properly, and that there are no cracks in the inner shell or outer helmet.

3. Zig-Zag Course

Create a course using chalk, tape or paint to create a zig-zag path between 30 and 50 feet long with four or five 90-degree turns along the way. The edges should be about three feet apart. Deduct 1 point each time a kid's wheel touches a side.

4. Slow Race

Lay out a course that is either a long straight line or a loop that brings riders back to the start. Two riders at a time should compete, pairing kids of same age and riding ability. The object of this event is to be last, i.e., ride slowest.

- Ten points are awarded for the "winner" (slowest rider) with a deduction of one point for each time a foot touches the ground. Give the second place person six points, with the same one-point deduction for each time he or she touches the ground.
- This develops balance and bike handling ability

5. Figure Eight

Almost 20 percent of children are overweight, a threefold increase from the 1970's. Poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle are just behind smoking as the leading cause of deaths per year in the United States, and the number of deaths related to poor diet and physical inactivity is increasing.



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6. Stop on a Dime

Create a single straight line, about twenty-five feet long. One end is the start, the other end is the finish line, which you should mark clearly with a bold line, along with additional shorter markings every four inches a total of two feet in front of and behind it.

Have the kids begin at the start line, and ride toward the finish, aiming to stop pedaling and apply their brakes so that their front wheel ends up squarely on the main finish line.

Deduct one point for each four-inch marking that the rider stops in front of or behind the target finish line.

7. Long Roll

Find a spot that is either flat or goes slightly uphill. Create a start line and a mid-line about 25 feet past that.

- Direct your kids to start pedaling at the first line and pedal like mad until they reach the next point, where they must begin coasting. The object of this event is to roll as far as they can, scoring more points the farther they go before touching the ground.
- Give each kid a minimum of five points, and then add an additional point for each distance mark they hit beyond a certain point. You will probably need to have kids do a couple of test runs to get a sense of how far your kids can roll before you draw your lines showing scoring for distance achieved.

8. Spiral

Draw a two-foot wide path that goes in a spiral around a large (five-foot diameter) circle. Have each kid ride the spiral from outside in as slow or fast as they want. Deduct 1 point each time a kid's wheel touches a side.

9. Paper Boy

This is a fun event that allows kids to play at being a newspaper delivery boy. You should include it if at all possible in your bike rodeo as it is always a real hit.

- For this you'll need is five to ten targets (clothes baskets, large tubs, trash cans, etc.) and an equal number of rolled newspapers, plus a bag that can be slung over a shoulder to hold the papers.
- Lay the targets out one after another in a course, and have the kids ride the "route" trying to throw a newspaper from the bike in each target. You can award points based on successful deliveries, i.e., putting the newspaper on target. Naturally, you should feel free to modify the rules, awarding more points for difficult targets, etc., whatever you need to do to make it fit your particular situation.

10. Balance Beam

Draw one main line about 30 to 50 feet long, with two smaller lines approximately three inches on either side of it. This will give you a path six inches wide that your riders should follow.

Have each kid ride the course, following the center line from one end to the other as slow or fast as they want. Deduct 1 point each time a kid's wheel touches a side.

The key to this is to be flexible, knowing that every one of these events can be modified to fit your setting and the age and ability of your kids. Regardless of how you finally end up structuring it, you can be sure that your kids will have a great time and learn about bike riding, honing their abilities in the process.

