

EM1240 course notes

(9/28/09)

Draft 10 is the current cuesheet

Course Marking

Several volunteers have been marking parts of the course -- the course is marked with a white "EM" and directional arrow. Much of the course is marked, but you should certainly not rely upon this. The cue sheet is your bible to the course and the one and only true path. If there is a conflict among the cue sheet, GPS and course marking, you should rely upon the cue sheet. If there are any cue sheet issues discovered after the start, we will try to get updated info to you at the controles. Alternatively, the course will be marked with "EM cue sheet change" on the road, if possible. The current marking status as of 9/28:

<u>Miles</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
1-128	COMPLETE (except 5 turns at mile 1 and the turn onto Rt 97) Mary Crawley
128-207	COMPLETE - Tom Rosenbauer
208-263	Rt 11 / Rt 17 (no marking)
208-344	COMPLETE - Bill Fischer
345-418	COMPLETE - John Fessenden
419-475	3 MORE MILES - Eric Keller
475-517	COMPLETE - Eric Keller
517-601	NEARLY COMPLETE - John Fuco
601-670	COMPLETE - Paul Scarce
670-691	COMPLETE - Paul Scarce
691-716	COMPLETE - Andrew Mead
716-766	COMPLETE - Andrew Mead
767-775	TBD Andrew Mead

Scouting Notes

There is a road closed sign just after mile 92, in the Delaware Water Gap Recreation Area. The park service has advised that although the road is closed to cars, it is passable by cyclists. The park service has specifically requested that you ride single file through the park area.

Please note that the course marking at mile 156 was changed to reflect the recent course change with draft 8 of the cue sheet. The previous route turned left at mile 156 while the new route goes straight here. While the arrows have been changed from left to straight to reflect the route change, the remaining arrows associated with the old route further down the road near the bridge construction are still there... If you somehow get off-course by following the old draft 7 route, you would see these markings and mistakenly think you were on course.

Maile Neel reports: "...Binghamton is awful to come through at night. LOTS of drunk students, including one hanging out the window of a car as they drove by. The justice was a bit further down the road - they were pulled over by 4 cop cars for drunk driving. Also, the road surface is GONE. The asphalt has been removed from the bridge cue to the cross road named Florence (~ 10 blocks). The pavement is grooved and there are lots of manhole covers and such that stick up 2-4 inches. It was challenging..." With luck, that road construction will be a fresh ribbon of blacktop when you come through during the event. And riders stopping at Hallstead and leaving at the recommended departure time will most likely avoid the party-goers.

Maile Neel reports: "mile 387 - by the time we went through Waterville the store was not open. Although we had eaten and filled all bottles in Canton, we needed to fill bottles and get a cup of coffee in Waterville. The Waterville Tavern was the only thing open. They quit serving food at 9 but they

gave us (literally) coffee and water. After initially eying us and or lycra/wool outfits strangely they were VERY nice. We told them riders would be coming through next week and they were eager to help out if they could. Nothing needs to go on the cue sheet but it would be good for riders to know that hanging out in this biker bar for a cup of coffee prior to the big climb would be an option that they might otherwise not feel comfortable with. Also, it was very warm (unlike all the air conditioned minimarts) and was a nice short revitalizing break on this long stretch.

Mile 428: There is a bridge that is under construction but it is passable.

Please note the comments about the Sheetz controle #12 in Mt Union -- the checkout clerk will NOT be signing cards, so just get a receipt there. There is another Sheetz controle in New Holland and the clerks have signed cards in the past. However, if you have any problems getting your card signed here (or at any of the other controles) a store receipt will suffice.

In case of emergency

I certainly hope everyone has a safe ride. But should you become injured, or arrive just after an accident resulting in an injured person (rider, motorist, or passer-by):

- Call 911 for an ambulance, describing where you are and the condition of the injured person(s)
- Contact me or one of the volunteers listed on the cue sheet
- Be sure to carry identification along with your emergency contact information in case you are knocked unconscious
- Get the contact information for anyone involved

A few words about the challenge before you

Over the years, many riders who come out for my Eastern PA series tell me that my events are some of the toughest they've ever ridden. And frankly, I estimate that EM1240 is quite a bit harder than any of those events. While some of the +1000' climbs shown on the course profile will be challenging, the real difficulty is with "all the stuff in between". Emily O'Brien, who completed the 2008 edition of the PA1000, sums it up pretty well: "...The difficulty with these Pennsylvania climbs isn't that they continue for 20 miles; nothing on those roads stays the same for 20 mi. The grades are never constant, and there's usually a lot of up and down before you start going up for good. When you start really going up, it often gets extremely steep. But while they aren't that long, they are relentless, and the space in between big climbs is filled with little rollers, some of which are quite steep little kickers in their own right..."

Course Overview

The EM1240k is similar to the C1200's (Cascade) planned overnight controles and uniform pacing for the controle timing. The EM1240k is also like the LC1200 (Last Chance) with minimal support provided on course. The EM1240 traverses the same east coast mountains as the S1200 (Shenandoah), so it shares much of the same challenging terrain with many steep climbs. As many who have ridden the PA1000k will attest to, northeastern Pennsylvania offers many spectacular vistas along some quiet back roads that are ideal for cycling. However, every course ultimately is a series of compromises that tries to work in as many great destinations as possible while minimizing the connecting roads that may be less than ideal. Consideration has been given to the time of day you'll be riding and the terrain you'll see then -- every effort has been made to minimize hazards such as twisty descents in the dark and main roads during rush hour. But in some cases, you will need to take a little extra care for some hazards you may encounter. Several of these are called out on the cue sheet and discussed below in the route details.

While resting at the planned overnight controles is highly recommended, and the course has been designed with this mind, some of you may be riding through and perhaps going for a personal best time

or RAAM qualifier. The drop bags and volunteers are scheduled to be at the overnight controles as follows:

- Hallstead: Wed, 6PM
- Lamar: Thu, 3PM
- Pine Grove: Fri, 11AM

This will accommodate a pace of 15 MPH on the first day, and a 12 MPH pace on the remaining days. Based on the timing of elite riders who have ridden previous editions of the PA1000k, this timing should accommodate the fastest riders. However, if you are on pace to arrive before the scheduled drop bag time, we will do our best to accommodate you.

Detailed Route Notes

Day 1

One of the biggest hazards you encounter just might be another cyclist -- please be careful when riding in a pace line - especially with riders you are not familiar with. You should avoid forming large groups of riders and riding side by side. With the large field of riders, the riders will be sent off in two groups of ~30 riders at the start. You will be placed in a group based on your 600k finish time -- those with a faster time will be in group A and will depart first. The remaining riders (group B) will depart ~10 minutes later. Any riders placed in group A may opt to instead join group B, if they want to start with a particular riding partner.

The start is on a major highway. Although you will be leaving at a very early hour and there will be minimal traffic, the cue sheet has you taking a jug-handle type turn so you can safely cross this highway at a traffic light intersection, instead of making a tricky left turn on a major highway with fast traffic approaching from behind.

Rt 378 (mile 8.6) is a major highway, but should have minimal traffic in the early morning hours.

Since the field of riders will be closely packed together on the first day, the first controle stop (#2 Danielsville) will be staffed, along with some of the other controle stops on day 1 -- the consideration here was to efficiently get you through the controles on the first day without overwhelming a store/restaurant with a crush of riders all at once. With the spread between the first and last rider increasing as the event progresses, the controles will be unstaffed. These unstaffed controles will generally be at a store/restaurant -- you should plan to restock your supplies there, get your brevet card signed by the checkout clerk, and initial the sign-in sheet at the check-out counter. Please include your time on the sign-in sheet, so we can track your progress.

Be sure you leave controle #2 with plenty of food and water -- you're headed into a beautiful area but one with limited services and a major climb up Fox Gap awaits you. Controle #2 will be stocked with water and some food bars -- if you need anything more than that, there are several mini-marts on course before controle #2.

At mile 71.8, there is a special instruction that has you crossing a pedestrian bridge. Those not familiar with the area, may easily miss this, since the bridge is not directly connected to the road. I've added a "spotting cue" that has you looking for the (Citgo) mini-mart near the bridge.

Controle #3 (Blairstown) will be staffed, but only to sign your card -- you can buy food and beverages on your own at the Gourmet Gallery there -- great sandwiches and pastry! If the store is busy, there are other places nearby in Blairstown to resupply.

After Blairstown, you have a major climb up Millbrook Rd. At the top around mile 88.8, please be very careful on the descent ... it is very long and steep, and you can easily reach speeds of over 50 MPH - but this is not advisable. Just after this descent, you'll have another climb followed by another very steep

descent near mile 92.0 -- this descent must be taken very slowly, since there are several very big holes and ruts in the road that you must navigate around.

As noted on the cue sheet, there are limited services after the Blairstown controle (#3). If you need supplies, the Layton General store at mile 103.7 would be a great stop to make -- it's very quaint, has great food, and is a favorite controle stop on my regular brevet series.

At mile 168.7, you start the climb up Salem Mountain which many riders on the PA1000k consider one of the toughest on course -- those of you who brought along some low gears, will be glad they did so. Unfortunately, the descent will not pay back for the effort, since it is very steep and will need to be taken slowly as you enter the Carbondale city limits.

At Controle #5 in Carbondale you may encounter a volunteer who will be in the area sweeping the course to the sleep stop ahead. Many of you will probably be riding in the dark after this controle. At mile 183.2, there are a series of descents that are not too long but some of them are steep and twisty, which will require extra caution in the dark.

Controle #6 (Hallstead) is the first sleep stop. As with all the sleep stops, the general procedure is to go to the volunteer room to collect your drop bag and get your room key -- the volunteer room number will be posted at the front desk. Food will be provided by volunteers, either in the volunteer room or in a dining area. When you are ready to depart, return your bag to the volunteer room (along with your key) and be sure to sign-out with the volunteers (so we know you are back on course). Some breakfast items (bagels, juice, etc.) will be available. There are several stores and restaurants near the hotel, if you need to resupply. The faster riders will probably get in around 7PM, with most of the riders arriving between 10 and midnight. Although the first sleep stop may seem a bit early in the ride, all the climbing and challenging terrain will make it seem much longer, and you will be ready for a good rest. The uniform pacing for the controle open/close timing allows you to take a longer rest here. I recommend a departure time between 3 and 5 AM.

Riding through any of the sleep controles is not advisable. But if your plans involve riding through, please let me know ahead of time, before the event starts, to discuss your options. I've already spoken to one rider who wants to ride further before stopping for his first extended rest. Some other options for an alternate sleep stop further on the course include: Binghamton (~mile 230), Owego (~mile 244), and Sayre (~mile 264).

Day 2

Day 2 starts off with much gentler terrain along the NY southern tier ... on the PA1000k, riders welcome this ~60 mile stretch as a reprieve from all the climbing on day 1. You should be able to bank some time on this stretch, or catch up if you get a late start. The first controle stop on day 2 is Sayre (#7). Please note that this is an untimed post-office controle -- you will be given a stamped postcard to mail back to me. You mark your brevet card with "PC", along with the time of passage -- but please note that this controle is untimed. An "on pace" time will be listed on the brevet card, but it is not checked. There will be many opportunities to get food on your own both before and after Sayre, with many good options in Towanda, the biggest town on day 2. As noted on the cue sheet, you should resupply before you leave Towanda, as you head into another limited services area.

Up to Towanda, the course has generally followed the recent PA1000k route. The EM1240k heads further south into an area that is truly remote, near World's End State Park. On the way, you should fully resupply at Dushore (controle #8) -- an unstaffed 24-hr mini mart. The climbing starts in earnest after you make the turn onto Rt 154 at mile 322, as you head towards Shunk. The road trends up, but there will be many false summits and short, steep and twisty descents before reaching the true summit near the junction of Rt 4006 at mile 336. Please take seriously the noted cautions on the cue sheet ... this is probably the longest and steepest descent on the entire route, which will need extra care. Be mindful of

your rim temperatures, and modulate your braking to avoid a blowout which will most certainly ruin your day. Don't go any faster than your guardian angel can keep up with -- there are some technical curves that will also ruin your day, if you over shoot them.

Controle #9 in Canton, is shortly after the big descent on Rt 154. Again, you need to fully resupply before heading into a limited services area. Those familiar with the PA1000k, will know that although the course profile is not very impressive, the 14 miles shortly after Canton is one of the more challenging parts of the course -- there are a countless string of steep rollers, that are as hard, if not harder than any of the big climbs.

A respite from the rollers finally comes when you reach Liberty around mile 360 -- ahead, is a nice stretch along Blockhouse Rd that trends generally downward, as you near Little Pine Creek State Park. You should plan to stop for food and resupply somewhere in the Little Pine Creek area -- which by the way, has some of the nicest scenery on course. There are several options listed on the cue sheet between miles 375 and 387. PA1000k riders have enjoyed stopping at the "snow cone" restaurant (near mile 386) and the general store in Waterville (mile 387), as well as going a bit further and stopping at the restaurant at mile 394.

The last major climb on day 2 is out of Waterville. At the top of this climb, there will be a series of rollers before you start a big descent into Lockhaven. As noted on the cue sheet, there is a caution on this descent to watch out for hair-pin turns.

The faster riders will probably be reaching the over night controle in Lamar (#9) around 7PM with most getting in between 10PM and midnight. There are a variety of stores and restaurants nearby, for resupplying.

Day 3

I recommend a departure time from Lamar between 4 and 6:30 AM (the controle closes around 7:30AM). If you are on course much before then, you will find it very difficult to resupply before reaching Mt Union, controle #12, which is 92 miles away -- most of the stores and restaurants listed on the cue sheet will not be open in the wee hours of the morning. There is however, a 24-hr mini-mart off course at mile 473.9, located about half way on this long segment.

If you leave Lamar before midnight, please note that there is some technical terrain starting at mile 502 that you will probably encounter in the dark. As noted on the cue sheet, there is a very steep and twisty descent that needs to be taken with extra caution.

Riders leaving Lamar at the recommended departure time should plan to stop at the mini-mart in Pine Grove Mills (mile 477.9) in order to resupply before heading into the limited services area noted on the cue sheet.

Be sure to top off your supplies before leaving Mt Union (a Sheetz 24-hr mini-mart) -- there's only one store (off course near Lewistown mile 546) until you get near Mifflintown, which is over 40 miles away.

After the Mifflintown controle (#13) (another 24-hr mini-mart), you'll be meandering along a nice quiet ridge that goes parallel to Rt 35 (which is the main road in the valley to your right). Rt 35 will be carrying a lot of fast traffic, while the roads you are on should have very little. The route eventually crosses Rt 35 about 24 miles into this leg, and there will be a nice drive-in restaurant there for food. That's pretty much all there is on-course until the controle stop in Selinsgrove ... however, while riding along the ridge, you are never very far from Rt 35. There are a couple of small towns that Rt 35 passes through, and you should be able to find some services off course.

The Selinsgrove controle (#14) is at a 24-hr Denny's, located in a shopping mall. You'll be riding along a

very short stretch (about 0.2 miles) of Rt 11 which is a major highway, but with a good enough shoulder. You'll then be turning into the mall parking lot in order to get into the Denny's parking lot. When you leave, you'll actually be on a small access road that is part of the mall parking lot. The cue sheet will direct you towards the mall exit near the Weis Market, where you will be back upon the road you were just on, before the Denny's control. However instead of turning right on Rt 11, like you did to get to Denny's, you will now be crossing Rt 11 at a traffic light.

At mile 604.0, there are a series of special instructions that direct you to the pedestrian walk that gets you across the Susquehanna River bridge -- the roadway across the bridge is not suitable for cycling. Please note the directive to walk your bike on the pedestrian walk and the warning about the signs and lights that protrude into the pedestrian walk. When you turn on Rt 147 at the end of the bridge, be sure you're headed down stream, south, with the river on your right -- the next cue is over 13 miles away, and you certainly don't want to find out then, that you went the wrong way!

The course to the sleep control in Pine Grove (#15) has been routed along main roads, in order to minimize navigation and avoid some technical descents in the dark. Most riders will be coming through in the early evening, if they are following the recommended departure times at the sleep stops, so the traffic should be easing up as they ride into the night. The riders who opt to leave the sleep controls earlier, will have the disadvantage of seeing more traffic on this leg during the afternoon and evening rush hour.

As is the case with the other two sleep stops, the Pine Grove sleep control offers many nearby services and options for food. Most riders will probably be arriving around midnight. Faster riders who arrive before 3PM will have access to their drop bag, but a hotel room may not be available that early.

Day 4

With less than 200k to go from the Pine Grove over night to the finish, many of you may opt to ride through and not rest very long. However, if you leave around daybreak, I think the navigation will be a bit easier for you as you work your way through the back roads of the Pennsylvania Dutch area.

Finish

At the finish, there will be 2 volunteer rooms available for taking a shower and resting. If you are planning to stay overnight on Saturday, you should book a room yourself (using the group rate). The post ride brunch will be at the hotel on Sunday morning, 6AM-10AM.

Have a **safe** ride.

Regards,

-Tom Rosenbauer
Eastern PA RBA