

Rules for the Flèches-USA

Article 1

The Flèches-USA are 24-hour randonnées held in various regions of the United States during the spring. The traditional event date is Easter weekend, but it may be held from one week before Easter until seven weeks after. The Flèches-USA are administered by Randonneurs USA (RUSA) and its Regional Brevet Administrators (RBA). These rides are patterned after the **Flèche Vélocio** held by the Audax Club Parisien (ACP) in France, and count toward the ACP's Randonneur-5000 award.

Article 2

The Flèches-USA are regional events whereby teams of cyclists all head to a common destination from various starting points. The RBA in each region establishes the finishing destination each year. Each RBA will conduct the event and process the results in his or her own region only. There can be other similar team randonnées anytime during the year, such as the RUSA Arrow or Dart rides, but an RBA can hold only one Flèches-USA ride per year.

Article 3

The Flèches-USA are team events; no individual entries are allowed. Each team may start its ride between noon Thursday and 10:00 AM on Saturday. The minimum distance required for the 24-hour period is 360 KM. No rest stop may exceed two hours in any one location.

If several teams use the same starting point, then starting times for individual teams shall be spaced at least one hour apart. Choice of routes and starting times is customarily assigned according to the order of receipt of registrations, but the RBA has discretion to do otherwise if need be.

Article 4

The Flèches-USA are randonnées, not races. Riders must be civil at all times, they must abide by all applicable traffic laws, and they must follow the directions of all law enforcement personnel. Riders are expected to observe local customs of decorum at all times.

During the event, each rider is considered to be on a personal ride. RUSA, the ACP, and other organizers cannot and do not accept responsibility for any accidents that may occur during the course of the event.

(In the event that the team's progress or route is materially affected by the instructions of law enforcement personnel, the team shall endeavor to adjust their ride to match as closely as possible the timing and distance of their original route. Event officials may make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the situation.)

Article 5

Each team is limited to a maximum of five members and a minimum of three members. Tandems or other multi-rider vehicles count as a single member. Members of the same team may assist one another. However, teams are expressly

forbidden to aid each other, even teams from the same club. The one exception to this is in the event of a medical emergency. During the event, riders may not draft anyone except their flèche teammates.

Article 6

No following cars are allowed under any circumstances. Teams using a support car can receive support from their car **only at the control points listed on their route cards**. Assistance from other motorized non-participants is also not permitted, except in the case of a medical emergency. There may be secret and roving checkpoints.

Article 7

Only human-powered vehicles are allowed. All vehicles must be equipped with functional front and rear lights, per standard randonneuring regulations. Front and rear lights must be firmly affixed to the vehicle and be of sufficient brightness to satisfy the applicable State Highway Code(s). They must be mounted on the vehicle during the entire 24-hour period. Support cars may not carry the riders' lights during daytime hours. Riding in a group does not change the lighting requirement; all riders must use their lights. Roving event officials can and will confiscate the route card of any rider riding without lights.

During the hours of darkness or other low-light conditions, reflective ankle bands and a reflective vest/sash/Sam Browne belt are required to be worn by each participant, per normal RUSA brevet regulations. Reflective arm bands and white jerseys and jackets are recommended for riding at night, as is placing additional reflective tape upon the vehicles. Fenders are also recommended in order to help the team in case of inclement weather.

An approved helmet must be worn at all times while cycling during the event.

Article 8

Each team is to design its own route that is at least 360 KM in length. The traditional format for a flèche is point-to-point, like an archer's arrow (*flèche* in French) flying toward its target. Though not a classic flèche route, a large circuit or loop may also be used, such as to make a scenic tour of a region. However, an out-and-back route is not consistent with the traditions of the flèche. Out-and-back route segments are permitted, such as to obtain food and supplies in remote regions, but no control may be used more than once and no road segment may be used more than once in the same direction. If an out-and-back route segment is utilized in the overall route design, a control point must be located at its turnaround.

Distance traveled is calculated on the basis of the shortest route between checkpoints that can be legally traveled by bicycle. Maps or mapping software with accurate mileages will be used to determine distances. In the case of forced detours due to road construction, accidents, etc., only the additional mileage verified by a postcard checkpoint or verification by a stamp from a merchant, post office, or police station at the far point of the detour will be counted. A business receipt that

is imprinted with date, time and location would also be accepted. Further, such mileage will be counted only if shown on maps or mapping software. No matter the circumstances of any particular detour, a minimum of 360 KM must be ridden in the 24-hour period.

A successful Flèches-USA team ride counts as 360 KM in ACP and RUSA Distance Awards, even if a longer distance was covered in the 24 hours.

Article 9

The start time and starting place approved with the team's registration **must** be used. Event officials or RUSA officers may be on hand to officially supervise the start. All team members must have their route cards in their possession at all times during the ride and must present their route cards to all officials making such a demand.

Article 10

At the end of the 22nd hour of the ride, the exact time and the location of the team must be noted on each route card and verified by the signature and/or stamp of a local merchant, official, etc. A business receipt imprinted with the time, date and location would also be accepted. Lack of the 22nd hour checkpoint verification will result in disqualification. A verification by postcard is acceptable, but only for times between 10:00 PM and 8:00 AM. In the case of a postcard verification, all members of the team (or those still riding together) must sign the postcard. All team members' route cards (or those still riding together) must indicate the time and location of this verification. Failure to follow this requirement will result in disqualification.

Article 11

Teams must have their location and time verified at the event destination point, or nearest town or village at the end of their 24 hours. Verification must be via a stamp and/or a signature obtained at a place of business, a police station, or at a train/bus station. A business receipt imprinted with the date, time and location would also be accepted. The exact time and location must be noted on the route cards, as well as, the mileage completed. A lost route card or postcards used for verification which have missing signatures will result in the automatic disqualification of the team member(s).

Article 12

For a Flèches-USA team ride to be certified by RUSA and the ACP, and any regional team awards to be earned:

- At least three team members must have ridden the same distance and arrive at the finish together.
- At least 25 KM must have been ridden between the end of the 22nd hour and the end of the 24th hour of the ride. Under no circumstances may these two checkpoints be the same place, even if the planned distance has already been completed.

Team members not arriving with the team but who have met the 360 KM requirement, as well as the 25 KM requirement between the end of the 22nd and 24th hour, will be certified as individuals. Their result will not figure in the attribution of regional team awards, nor will it count as the Flèches-USA event for the ACP Randonneur 5000 award. It will, however, count toward 360 KM in individual RUSA distance awards.

Article 13

Any fraud, cheating, or deliberate violation of these rules will result in the exclusion of the rider from all *RUSA*, *RM*, and *ACP* sponsored events for a period of time to be determined by the RUSA Board of Directors.

Article 14

Any rider who registers and starts a Flèches-USA agrees by these actions the following: Any complaint or questions about a flèche or its organization must be submitted to the RBA in writing, within 48 from the finish of the event. The RBA will review the complaint and forward it, with a recommendation, to RUSA for a final decision.

Article 15

Randonneurs USA will be the final arbiter of any questions that arise which may not be covered explicitly in these rules.

Approved by the Randonneurs USA Board of Directors on February 17, 2004.