

# Cyclocross – A Spectators Guide

In terms of spectator friendly cycling events, Cyclocross (CX) races are high on the scale of popularity.

If you are attending a CX race for the first time, here are some tips to help you prepare!

**Cow bells:** Cow bells are the noise maker of choice at these events. Ringing a cow bell as a racer passes by is a way to encourage competitors, since the course is often a challenging mix of mud, sand, tight corners, and obstacles. When using cow bells or anything else for ringing, we recommend moving away from the start/finish area so the riders do not confuse the sound with the official bell for the last lap.

**Terrain Variety:** Most CX events are held in the fall and in parks. There will be a mixture of grass, dirt trails, mud, and even sand. There will be a mix of slow speed sections with turns and obstacles, with a few longer length sections designed for speed and passing.

**Walk the course:** Cyclo-cross courses are meant to be explored by the spectators, but avoid crossing the course. There can be fast riders that appear quickly. A rider going 25mph is moving 50 feet per second; this is not a lot of time to react and get out of the way, so avoid crossing the course for safety.

**Dogs on leashes:** While CX courses are outdoors and would seem like a nice place for a furry friend, this can be hazardous and stressful for both dogs and competitors. All dogs must be on a leash at all times. Loose dogs or long leashes can easily end up tangling with a rider which is disastrous for all.

**Kids on bikes:** Cyclocross is a great sport for children since there is no risk of car traffic, and the grass ensures a soft landing for any falls. Even children on push-bikes can participate. Kid's courses are a shorter distance than the adult course and they will get a chance to experience a mass start. The only requirement for kids racing is an approved cycling helmet; no special clothing or other protection is necessary.

**Terrain Variety:** Most CX events are held in the fall and in parks. There will be a mixture of grass, dirt trails, mud, and even sand. Obstacles may be present and tight turns and longer length sections are standard.

**Hand-ups:** These are an expression describing handing food or money to racers during the race. For sanctioned events, hand-ups may be limited to a designated area such as a feed zone.

Hand-ups can be done in the form of food or dollar bills. The goal is for the racer to maintain speed while grabbing the hand-up. This makes for exciting interaction between the racer and spectator.