

Rules for the Flèches-USA

Revised September 2015

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. (A team's route may start in another region.) 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 and the same route, 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. Each tandem or other multiple-rider vehicle counts 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 hours of darkness or other low-light conditions, all riders must wear a reflective vest or some other device that clearly places significant reflective material on the front and back of the rider. During these times all riders will also wear a reflective ankle band around each ankle. (Due to their unusual seating position, recumbent riders may modify their reflective torso devices to show better from front and rear.) Other reflective devices on clothing, shoes, helmets, and machines are encouraged for increased safety - but they are extra and may not take the place of the minimum items listed above. Riders must review the [RUSA Reflectivity guide](#) and are strongly encouraged to meet the recommended minimum standards for torso reflectivity described in that document.

Regardless of whether or not an RBA or ride organizer conducts a gear/equipment inspection at the start of a ride, failure to have and display appropriate reflective gear and required lighting may result in an immediate disqualification.

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.

The shortest legal and safe distance between successive checkpoints is credited, not the actual route taken. 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 least 25 km must have been ridden within the last two hours of the event. At the end of the 22nd hour of the ride, the exact time, elapsed distance and the location of the team must be noted on each route card. The location shall be verified by the signature and/or stamp of a local merchant, official, etc. A business receipt imprinted with the time, date and location will also be accepted. This could be an automated receipt such as from an ATM machine, so long as time, date, and location are shown. A verification by postcard is acceptable, but only when no local businesses are open. (In the case of a postcard verification, all members of the team (or those still riding together) must sign the postcard.) Failure to follow this requirement will result in disqualification.

In the event that the 22 hour point is reached where no verification is available, the time, distance, and location of the team shall be noted by the team members on their route card and verification must be obtained at the next available location along the route.

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 will also be accepted. This could be an automated receipt such as from an ATM machine, so long as time, date, and location are shown. The exact time and location must be noted on the route cards, as well as the mileage completed. A lost route card or postcards (unless duly mailed) used for verification which have missing signatures will result in the automatic disqualification of the team member(s).

In the event that the 24 hour point is reached where no verification is available, the time, distance, and location of the team shall be noted by the team members on their route card and verification must be obtained at the nearest available location.

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 3 team members must legally complete the team's course and arrive at the finish together. (Reminder: tandems and other multi-rider vehicles count as one member.)
- All riders arriving with this group who have legally completed the course receive credit. Riders arriving before or after will not, even if they've legally completed their team's course.

Article 13

Any fraud, cheating, or deliberate violation of these rules will result in the exclusion of the rider from all RUSA-sanctioned events (including those sanctioned by the ACP and RM) 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 hours 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.

These rules are available for download and distribution.

Approved by the Randonneurs USA Board of Directors on February 17, 2004, revised 4/2011, 4/2015, 9/2015