

Handicapping, a Dark Art?

There are a number of ways to set handicaps in time trials, but they are all based on the same principle, that is to figure out what time a rider is currently capable of and give that rider a time allowance, which in theory would give them a fair chance of being level with the fastest rider.

To try and explain this I will use an example from the results of the 7 league on the 4th August 2022.

Name	Time	Hand time
Dominic	16:30	16:30
Nigel	18:55	16:37
Evgeniya	19:32	16:14
Dave	19:52	16:04

To calculate each rider's time, I took the best time I could find for each rider from this season's league results. Dominic's best time was 21:16 for a 10 on 28th July 2022. As this was for a 10, I had to convert it to a 7 by dividing by 10 then multiplying by 7.8 (the full length of the 7). This gave him an expected time of 16:36. As Dominic was expected to be the fastest rider, he was given no allowance and his time of 16:36 became the "scratch time." Dominic finished 6 secs faster than expected.

Nigel had a best time of 24:14 set on the 7th July 2022, again for a 10. This worked out to give him an expected time of 18:54. Taking away the scratch time of 16:36 gave him an allowance of 2:18. This allowance was then taken away from 18:55 his "actual time" on the night, leaving him a handicap time of 16:37. (He finished 1 second slower than expected).

Evgeniya had a best time of 25:31 set on the 28th July, also for a 10. This worked out to give her an expected time of 19:54. Taking away the scratch time gave her an allowance of 3:18. Taking this allowance from her actual time on the night (19:32) gives her a handicap time 16:14. (She finished 22 seconds faster than expected).

Dave was trickier as having not ridden the leagues during much of the season his best time of 20:19 came from the 7 on the 21st April giving an allowance of 3:43 and therefore a handicap time of 16:04 on the night. (He finished 37 seconds faster than expected).

Clearly the more data available the more accurate the handicapping!

All riders are then ranked and awarded points in the league.

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