



CHAPTER 14 – COURSE CERTIFICATION

14.1 – DEFINITION OF A CERTIFIED COURSE

What are USATF-Certified Courses?

A USATF-certified course is a road race course whose distance has been certified for accuracy. Courses must be certified and sanctioned (see Chapter 12) for any road running performance to be accepted as a record or to be nationally ranked. Furthermore, running a race on a certified course allows you to accurately compare your time to performances run on other certified courses because you can be sure the distances were the same.

How to Get Your Course Certified

The easiest way to have your course certified is to hire someone who is already skilled at measuring courses for USATF certification.

You can search our database of known course measurers on our website at

<http://www.usatf.org/events/courses/certification/>.

Alternatively, you can measure it yourself. In either case, you may need to contact the USATF Road Course Certifier for your state. This person can refer you to qualified measurers that you might hire. Or, if you choose to measure the course yourself, the Certifier can provide guidance to help you through the process, and when you are finished, you will need to send paperwork to your state Certifier.

USATF Road Course Certifiers

The USATF Road Course Certifier for your state can refer you to experienced measurers in your area that you may hire to get your course certified, or can provide guidance if you choose to measure a course yourself.

For anyone who wishes to measure road courses for certification, our complete Course Measurement Manual is provided online at www.usatf.org/events/courses/certification/manual. After measuring according to the procedures in this manual, the measurer must submit complete data and application forms and a detailed map of the course to the Certifier in the state where the course is located (most certifiers charge a fee for reviewing the application, up to a maximum of \$30). The certifier will either approve the course or, if the measurer made a mistake, notify the measurer and explain how to fix it. Once a course is approved, the certifier will assign it a course ID number, and prepare a certificate which is combined with the course map to become the official documentation for this certified course.

14.2 – COURSE MEASURING VERSUS COURSE CERTIFICATION

Just like measuring a track must be done using accurate surveying techniques accepted by planners, engineers, and the rule makers of the sport, a road course must be measured using a

specific technique to guarantee accuracy. This involves riding a calibrated bicycle along the shortest possible route of the course, and calculating the distance traveled. This constitutes the actual measurement of the course.

However, this does not constitute certification. A surprising number of errors in calculations are made, and some parameters must be provided concerning complicated courses and the route followed. Therefore, the measurer must prepare a document showing the course details, including an overall course map and smaller inset maps showing particularly technical locations on the course and how they were measured. On the numbers side, show all of your calculations, including how and where you calibrated the bicycle counter, the statistics of your ride(s) over the course, and your re-calibration of the bicycle counter after each measurement. This is then submitted to the certifier for your state, who may not reside in your state, but is an accepted expert of the RRTC. Once that individual accepts your paperwork, your course is certified.

14.3 – WHO CAN MEASURE A COURSE

Anyone can measure a course. They must have the proper equipment, which includes a bicycle which will accommodate a counter, the counter itself – a Jones Counter specifically designed to fit on the hub of your front tire wheel (go to <http://www.jonescounter.com/> for information) – and a course relatively free of traffic. NOTE: a GPS counter – while of significant value in helping determine your route and backing up (in your own mind) your calculations – is not a valid measurement tool for road course certification. It is a valid way for you to locate marks later, provided you have an instrument of sufficient computing power. Basic automobile GPS devices do not have such capabilities.

14.4 – HOW TO MEASURE A COURSE

Visit the online manual for course measurement and certification procedures at: <http://www.usatf.org/Products-/-Services/Course-Certifications/USATF-Certified-Courses/Procedures-Manual.aspx>.

14.5 – DATABASE OF CERTIFIED COURSES

Maps of all certified courses are available online. Measurers should be aware that their maps will be posted on the Internet. Runners who are thinking of running a race may view its map at this site. And race directors who are thinking of hiring a particular measurer may view maps that the measurer has produced.

Duration of certification

Because courses often degrade over time, all course certifications expire automatically 10-years after the year of issue.

14.6 – COURSE CERTIFIERS

The USATF Road Course Certifier for your state can refer you to experienced measurers in your area or provide guidance if you choose to measure a course yourself. The list is at <http://www.usatf.org/Products-/-Services/Course-Certifications/USATF-Certified-Courses/Course-Certifiers.aspx> and has clickable names to direct e-mail addresses.