

Statement on the subject of BIKETRIAL (BIU) & the sport of cycling trials in Germany (BDR)

Written in June 2022 by Jonas Friedrich, Founder and Head Coach of the JOFR Academy & Trial Officer at the Badischer Radsportverband.

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1. My personal request

First of all: I do not want to accuse or condemn any persons & I will not mention any names in this letter in order to protect certain persons. The issue of biketrial in Germany was raised years ago by my father with the BDR/Trial Commission Germany. They tried to find a solution to promote trial sport in Germany.

In 2018, I rode with other German riders at international biketrial events out of interest and protest. My experience was very positive and I could see the difference between Biketrial and UCI Trials.

Now that I am going to organise the Biketrial European Championship with the JOFR Academy, I am receiving statements and questions from many sides. In order to clarify this (hopefully once and for all), I am writing this letter.

For me personally, it is about promoting trial sport in Germany, especially in the south, to the maximum. This includes the coaching, workshops, camps and events of the JOFR Academy. The JOFR Academy has been in existence since 2018. The primary goal of the Academy is to offer children, young people and also "pro riders" the opportunity to develop individually and to the maximum.

I am not interested in reinventing the sport of trial riding, creating a "new association" and attracting people to my side. I am interested in the sport and the passion that unites us all.

Now everyone can make up their own mind about the whole thing. Enjoy reading, thinking and (possibly) rethinking.

This letter may and should be published and distributed!

2. Difference between Biketrial Union and Bicycle Trials in the BDR/UCI

What is the difference between these sports? Aren't both trials? Yes and no.

The tools/our sports equipment are the same. The idea of riding a bike over obstacles is the same. The athletes are even (usually) the same. So-called sections are ridden in both sports. There are judges, section arrows and section ribbons in both sports.

What is the difference?

The regulations of Trial (BDR & UCI) as we know them are briefly explained:

You collect points for each section on your account. Whoever has the most points at the end wins. You are only allowed to touch the ground with the tyres. All other touches are counted as mistakes. When the section time of 2 minutes expires, the points earned up to that point belong to the gymnast. The "plus points" are counted. The sections tend towards "Urban Sports". This means that the interest is more in attracting the sport to the cities to reach spectators and the media (positive example: the finals of the German Championships in Berlin).

The sections have been artificially constructed for the most part. There are usually 5-6 sections and 2-3 laps to ride. There are usually the following classes: U9, U11, U13, U15, U17, U19, Elite and Hobby classes.

Regulations Biketrial (BIU): Here, the great interest is to draw the sport exclusively into nature. The family togetherness, the sport and the passion for the common hobby are in the first place. It is clearly defined that a Biketrial event must be held under "natural conditions". In other words: 80% of the event sections should be natural sections with natural obstacles. 20% may be artificial obstacles, such as tractor tyres or concrete parts.

In the Biketrial you have 2 minutes per section. You are allowed to touch obstacles with the pedal and the underbody. They are seen as aids and are actively used by the athletes. You start the section with "0 feet". A maximum of 4 feet is allowed, the section must be left with the 5th foot. If the time is 2 minutes and the section has not been completed, 5 penalty points will be awarded.

In other words, penalty points are scored and not plus points as in the UCI. In addition, for example, a supervisor may be present in the section at all times to give tips and advice. In UCI trials this counts as "outside help" and is penalised. In bike trials, a section order is usually specified and must be adhered to. At the UCI there is always a free choice of section. At a BIU event, for example, a bike may be outside the section bands as long as it is in the air. This is to give the possibility to use more free space in narrow passages. This saves unnecessary discussions with referees and judges. This would be unthinkable in the UCI. The rules are very strict on this issue (overshooting, out of section, etc.).

The sections at BIU are largely made up of and shaped by nature. Usually there are 10-20 sections and 2-3 laps to do. Physically rather comparable to a half marathon. The individual sections are sometimes several hundred to one kilometre apart. At a UCI event there are strict guidelines for the area & section size. At the BIU there are the following classes: U10, U12, U14, U16, Class F, Class 3, Class 2, Class 1 and Hobby 1,2 and 3. There is also an e-bike class.

In the end, it can be said that these are two different sports with different section and competition methods. The interest, why a Biketrial and why a UCI event is raced, is different.

Short change of sport. Motocross & Enduro. The tool is the same, the machine. Nevertheless, a different methodology is practised in both sports. According to sources, there are over 10 motocross associations in Germany! From the German Amateur Motocross, DMJV and the Motor Sport Ring and many more. Each association differs from the others in its regulations. In boxing there are currently 4 world federations. Some athletes participate in several federations. Anthony Joshua is world champion with the WBO, IBF and WBA. Three federations with 3 different regulations. Only the tool, in this case boxing itself, is the same.

3. "Problem" between BDR and Biketrial Union

Many years ago there was apparently the problem that both federations had a high rush of participants. This meant that fair prize money was paid and sponsors were interested in participating in such events. So some athletes thought about which federation they would rather compete in: Where do I get more money and where do I get more recognition? Many athletes decided to do both. (Primarily athletes from other countries like Germany).

The now selectable offer ultimately divided the clientele. Today, it is quite clear in the worldwide trials scene that the UCI is definitely the more professional federation in trials sport. More money and more media presence. Exactly what is interesting for sponsors and

financiers. The Biketrial Federation is more of an amateur sport. The regulations are the same as they were 25 years ago. They don't move with the times, but remain true to their origins. At the UCI, I personally witnessed 3 changes in the regulations and classification system from 2006 to 2022, which again shows that the two regulations are not identical.

But now the question: Is there still a problem between these federations today? I don't know. Personally, I only see that there are two sports. In Germany, but also worldwide. Both sports pursue their individual goals. Both sports have the origin of trial - to ride over obstacles with a bicycle. Both events have not been in each other's way for years. Strict care is taken to ensure that there is no overlapping of dates for important international events. This means that there is no pressure on the athletes to choose one or the other. In all countries, the athletes (and this is the most important thing) see a profit in participating in both types of trials. Some see it as training for an important event. Others see it as an important building block in their sporting career. Especially countries like Spain and France, which are pioneers in Trial sport worldwide, practice their events with both federations. There, everyone can choose what he or she likes better. There is no competition between the federations. There are no negative effects of having two federations.

So what is the problem here in Germany? The question is, from which side does the problem come?

Since there is the threat of a ban after participation in a Biketrial event, would it be possible that no German athletes would participate in SDMs, NDMs, ODMs, regional as well as international competitions such as UCI World Cups, World Youth Games or the World Championships? This idea would be absurd. Why should trial sport split? Doesn't anyone see a chance to promote trial sport in Germany and the promotion of young talent in general?

4. BDR regulations - points and statements to be questioned in the sporting regulations & trial info.

Was the BRV Cup at the beginning of the year at the JOFR Academy and all previous JOFR Cups illegal? Will all athletes now be banned?

All the events I have held so far have taken place without the cooperation of the BDR or any association that cooperates with the BDR. The Academy has merely taken over the regulations and organised competitions in order to have fun riding trials.

From an insurance point of view, all events were covered by the Academy's company insurance. Nevertheless, according to the following written statements, the events were not eligible.

[2021 UCI Ethics-en.pdf](#)

General Sporting Regulations from the UCI - no point which makes a statement that participation in other federations, in other sports or events which cooperate without UCI are forbidden and illegal.

[regulations trial uci.pdf](#)

Regulations Trial UCI: There is no point here that describes or indicates that athletes are prohibited from participating in events organised by other federations.

https://static.rad-net.de/html/verwaltung/reglements/spo_2022.pdf

Sport regulations of the BDR (german federation)

Point 4.4 1

"1) For all disciplines supervised and regulated by the UCI, the following applies: An athlete licensed through the BDR may only participate in cycling events that have been approved and properly advertised by the BDR, an LV or a federation affiliated to the UCI."

Okay, so does the point above apply that my events were not permitted?

Or, since I am a trials referee in the BRV (Badischer Radsportverband), am I allowed to approve my event or a BIU event? Unfortunately, there is no clearly defined answer to this.

4.4.5

"(1) The regional federations have the right to ban all other competitions in the same discipline from starting at their championships. Athletes who are scheduled for supra-regional competitions and who have been requested by the BDR from the responsible regional association are exempt from the ban.

So can riders who only compete in regional championships receive a ban, but top riders cannot?

Appendix Penalty Catalogue (page 42) which states:

"A penalty shall be imposed if the Athlete competes in a cycling event that is not promoted by a UCI-affiliated Federation". (see SpO 4.4.1 (1)) Minimum penalty 2 weeks suspension plus max. fine 100 €".

I can only repeat my statements above.

[trial_info2022_ger.pdf](#)

Point 6 b:

"Bike Trial events / Bike Trial licences".

Participation with Bike Trial Germany- EBU- or IBU-Licence in German Championships, supra-regional and regional Trial competitions, which are approved by the BDR or approved and organised by federations affiliated to the BDR, is not possible (see Sporting Regulations 5.1). Athletes with a BDR licence are not allowed to compete in EBU and IBU events as this is a competing federation."

Since when this point has been in the Trial Info, nobody knows and nobody of the BDR Trial Commission could tell me. Here again there is talk of a competing federation, which (as already mentioned above) is incomprehensible to me and many others.

... see Sporting Regulations 5.1 it says. "(7) An athlete may hold only one licence at any one time for the cycling discipline he is involved in. This licence must be presented to the authorised persons on request as proof of eligibility to participate in competitions. The requirement to produce it applies to all those involved in an event as an active competitor or official."

Let's define the word "competition". My definition is as follows:

For me personally, competition is a positive aspect. Competition leads to people or groups striving to become better and more successful. For example, here in trial sport. Germany-wide, Dominik Oswald is one of my biggest competitors. This is good because Dominik makes me better and at the same time Dominik improves. We both profit from this in a positive sense, because we both become better and more successful.

An example of competition with a negative impact: Let's assume that Nina Reichenbach, trainer and employee of the JOFR Academy, founds a trial school 10 km away. She orientates herself to my training times. She recruits the same target group, tries to convince customers by all means that her school is better and talks negatively about the JOFR Academy. Coincidentally, Nina holds the same event as me on the same weekend, in the same year and at the same time. Nina copies my concept & forcefully convinces the whole community to participate in her event. This would have the effect of splitting trialsport, creating two or more groups and competitive behaviour. Instead of cooperation, tolerance and acceptance, Nina tries to pull everyone towards herself. I now have no choice but to react in exactly the same way.

What am I trying to say. There are 1000 examples and definitions of competition. But where you have to be clear is at what point does competition actually exist, and if it does, you should ask yourself whether it has a positive or negative impact.

On the subject of Biketrial and Trial: the model of Spain, France, England, Italy, Czech Republic, Japan, China, ... clearly shows that the competition described by the BDR has positive effects on the sport! But is there really competition? An even better question: does it really have to be? Unfortunately, I have to repeat myself again: the same tools, different regulations, different history and different methodology in events and in the practice of the sport itself.

5. Similar situation with skating

I have received an interesting article on this from my lawyer. I have listed important points and text phases here:

<https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/eislaufunion-muss-regeln-zur-wettbewerbsteilnahme-aendern-15331530.html>

Point 1: Line 17, third paragraph in the text. Just swap ISU with UCI and IOC with BDR now.

"Since the ISU is the only governing body for speed skating and figure skating recognised by the IOC, the Commission classifies its conduct as an abuse of its dominant position. This is prohibited under EU competition law."

The above situation can unfortunately be directly related to us. Here, too, athletes:inside are afraid of being banned. The mere fact that I, too, was at a loss and contacted my lawyer is significant enough. It doesn't have to be like that! We are so few athletes and people who are connected through trial sport. We don't need to be divided by this. Our sport should not be practised with fear, but with fun and a lot of passion!

6. Similar situation with wrestling

Again, a similar situation in another sport.

<https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/Y-300-Z-GRURRS-B-2021-N-34724?hl=true>

Right at the beginning of the text: "1. A sports association that excludes individual athletes (here: wrestlers) from further competitions and namely from their participation in international championships because of their participation in an alternative league operation can be held liable for injunctive relief due to the abuse of a dominant position, unless it can be established that its conduct is legitimised by sports policy reasons, suitable and proportionate. The blanket assertion that the national sports promotion system could collapse and that there could be a lack of young athletes in one's own association in the future cannot be accepted as justification."

Please try to transfer this situation...

7. Trial & Biketrial in other countries (Spain, France, England, ...)

As mentioned above several times, participation in Biketrial and UCI events is tolerated worldwide. There is no country that has published a written statement that participation or holding a licence from BIU is illegal. Each country sees the benefits of both federations. Every country benefits positively from both federations. Athletes benefit through a wider range of events.

The UCI Trial Commission does not welcome participation in BIU events. But it is not forbidden either.

8. Why do I organise a Biketrial event in Germany?

Unfortunately, an event organised by the "main European association", the UEC, would have been too expensive for me. Only the organisation of a European Trial Championship through the UEC would have cost a 5-digit amount as the organiser's fee alone. This price does not include the costs for insurance, staff, terrain rental, catering, advertising and all the important organisational points. In addition, there are strict requirements for hosting a European Trials Championship, such as specifications for section construction, etc. The JOFR Academy, stand construction company, can do this. As of today, the JOFR Academy cannot meet these requirements.

The European Biketrial Championship via the EBC (European Biketrial Union) costs the JOFR Academy only a fraction of the above-mentioned sum (plus prize money, insurance costs, terrain rental, personnel costs, etc.).

For the Academy and me personally, this is a very fair price. Few conditions and a lot of leeway in the implementation of the event. As the organiser, I have a lot of freedom in implementing the European Championships. I was allowed to help decide whether a final would be held, which age groups there would be, how many sections and laps would be

ridden and how the sections would be built. The condition was, however, to include the classic Biketrial method (long sections, 80% natural sections, etc.). This is one of the reasons why the event in Ölbronn will be held in a motorbike trial area with natural sections. For the JOFR Academy, an international event under these conditions is a welcome opportunity to gain experience in the event sector. The BDR knows that I am very interested in BDR, UEC and UCI events. Here I am in contact with all related persons. They know that I am in favour of a Biketrial event from a financial and organisational point of view.

9. Proposed solution & personal request to the trial sports community

When my father was still alive, we asked every year why it was forbidden to participate in a BIU event as a person living in Germany with a valid BDR licence.

It was always argued that the Biketrial Association was competing. We were not given any further arguments. Unfortunately, we never took the desired step of dealing with the issue anew and rethinking old familiar patterns.

This brings to mind a saying that I like to say: You have to move with the times, otherwise you move with the times.

What I mean by that is. What was 20 or 30 years ago is the past. Today the world looks different. Drivers:inside and nations want to live in freedom and give responsibility to their own actions. And above all, we all want one thing: TO TRIAL!

Especially in trial sport. Such a small family sport. No matter if it is Biketrial or Trial. None of the sportsmen:inside and none of the federations have the intention to act in a negative way, so that the sport and the youngsters suffer. At least that is my personal experience in trials since 2006! What we want is to ride trials. To have fun, to compete with each other. Does it really have a negative effect if an association, with obviously different regulations and historically different motivation, organises competitions and events on deliberately different weekends? I have been asking myself that for over 15 years. Unfortunately, as of today, there is no UEC Trial European Championship for 2022. What a pity! But there is a Biketrial European Championship on a free weekend. The EBC in Ölbronn gives the 5 best athletes of all age groups (from U10 to the senior classes) the opportunity to develop personally and to spread the sport. Especially for the younger athletes it is the perfect training for the upcoming World Youth Games (UCI) in Poland, which will take place one week after the EBC. It has to be said that other European nations will also take this opportunity to prepare for further competitions.

Trial sport in Germany should grow and offer our young talents the opportunity to develop. In the end, everyone may and should decide whether and which competitions they ride.

As long as I don't see any division in trial sport, that two parties form, incite each other and try to pull athletes to their side, I don't see any reason to say: Here are two different sports facing each other, competing and contributing to the negative development in the sport through their actions.

I ask those responsible at the BDR to refrain from making verbal statements that scare athletes (threatening bans and fines)! Instead, I ask them to see the opportunity for the athletes. The chance for further development, fun and enjoyment of our sport.

What I do in trial sport, I do for the sport. But I would also like statements like "We accept participation in BIU events" from the BDR Trial Commission to be true. I know everyone does their best and everyone does what they can. Everyone wants to do their job in such a way that it is good.

I am happy to have a personal discussion on this topic with anyone who would like to have a constructive exchange with me. Please feel free to contact me!

Jonas Friedrich

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