



Leading a Team at a Road World Championships **Wayne Pomario**

Working as a Commissaire at a World Championship is a great honour and privilege, and it carries many unique responsibilities. It is a high profile, high visibility event, which has consequences beyond the end of the race for the riders, and nations. It can be career defining, or ending. And as a Commissaire at the event, you have an influence on the outcome. Of course, your desire, and hope, is that your influence will be a positive one that ensures the sport is reflected in the best light, and the athletes experience a competition that is fair.

I was appointed as President of the Commissaires Panel for the 2015 Road World Championships recently held in Richmond, USA. From a race perspective, the World Championships is really just another bike race. And it does not matter what the race is, all bike races deserve the same level of respect from Commissaires. But of course, it is not “just another bike race”. Being the World Championships you have the best in the World, and you are under the eyes of many millions of people who will be constantly analysing and commenting on your work. There is no hiding from any mistakes.

My preparation for the event started about 9 months prior to the start of the races. The first task was to get the names of all the other UCI Commissaires assigned by the UCI so I could start to think of roles. Then it was checking the event website to see what I could immediately learn, and what needed to be clarified with the organisation. It is a little bit like applying for a job. Doing your homework gets you more respect from the organisation.

At about 8 months from the event I contacted the organiser. The primary purpose of this contact was to introduce myself and offer any possible assistance, and to identify who all the other Commissaires would be, and what the schedule for events was. It was at this time that I also started to discuss the course, and movement of resources around the course, as well as getting any questions I had based on my review of the website answered.

A large amount of the initial preparation work is setting up a schedule for the Commissaires that will allow you to cover all the activities that are taking place. In total I had, working with me an additional 6 Commissaires assigned by the UCI and a further 10 assigned by USAC. Now 17 Commissaires may sound like a lot, but again, keep in mind the level of the event. And also keep in mind that we are not just working on the actual races themselves. There are the different road events and race categories, and each of these have a license control, number allocation, number distribution, and technical meeting, in addition to the race itself. All these controls need a number of resources. In terms of the race, we have a Finish Judge, an Assistant Judge, Lap counter, 5 Commissaires in cars or on motorbikes, Commissaires in the pits, Commissaires doing bike control (both before and after every race), Commissaires monitoring protocol as well as the rider call ups. So planning the movement of people to all these activities requires a lot of work and continuous adjustment, especially when changes happen at the event itself. This is why it is so important to be as prepared as possible in advance, so when something unpredictable happens, as it will, it does not create a waterfall of additional problems.

Key to any successful event is the ability of the Commissaires to work together as a team, and as the President, it is my responsibility to ensure that this happens. This means ensuring everyone is able to

properly perform their function, and is trusted to do it. Keeping open lines of communication between and with the team is critical.

When it comes to the race itself, it is just a race, and it is managed as we would any race. We did have some advantages, as well as challenges. A huge advantage was being able to place a Commissaire in the TV Production truck to watch the images from the different cameras. This was especially useful in the time trial events. The great news is that there was no need to have to use the TV footage to make any decisions.

One of the biggest challenges for the Commissaires is managing the Pits. It is an area that is incredibly dangerous, and can have a major influence on the race, and you have to go through them every lap. We could have used every Commissaire we had, and still not been able to completely control the behaviour there. And we only had two in each pit zone. For the Commissaires working there, this was an experience that they will never forget.

So returning to the first paragraph, did we achieve our role of ensuring that the sport be reflected in the best light, and that the competition be fair? Well, that is for others to judge, but I believe the reception of the crowning all the World Champions in Richmond provided a general answer. The sport won, and as a team, I believe we Commissaires were successful.