

DON'T  
THUMP  
your  
melon

WEAR  
A  
HELMET

# A Bicycle Safety Rodeo Kit For Communities

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Department of Public Safety  
Office of Highway Safety/Accident Records



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# Introduction

## **“Don’t Thump Your Melon”**

Hold on, you are about to become one of the “Melonheads.” That’s a good thing.

The materials in this kit are designed to provide you with tools to instruct and encourage bicycle helmet usage and safe cycling. While it is recognized that similar materials are already available from other sources, this kit is presented in a South Dakota specific context. Sections of the “Don’t Thump Your Melon” Rodeo Kit were reproduced with the permission of the Minnesota Community Bicycle Safety Project a program of: 4-H Youth Development, Minnesota Extension Service, and University of Minnesota.

Included in this curriculum guide is a survey to be conducted during the rodeo event. As an overall program evaluation tool, the survey is very important. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. For further information or order more materials, please visit our website at [www.sdemsc.org/DTYM](http://www.sdemsc.org/DTYM) or call South Dakota EMS for Children at 605-328-6668.

Thank you for taking the time and interest to use these materials in your community. It has been a pleasure developing and providing them to you.

### **What is the Problem?**

Children represent the segment of the population most likely to be involved in a bicycle crash. On the average in South Dakota, the number of crashes involving cars and bicycles is 150 annually. The percentage of those crashes involving 6-13 years old is 60 percent, averaging nearly 100 reports. Three-fourths of all bicycling related deaths are result of head injuries. Eighty five percent of all head injuries are preventable when the cyclists wear a helmet. We can save lives, not to mention hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical costs and untold suffering for parents and family. Other popular sports also take their toll in head injuries and will increase in proportion to their rise in popularity. Skateboarding, snow boarding, rock climbing and horseback riding head injuries could all be reduced through helmet use.

Reasons for low bicycle helmet use have been identified. Lack of understanding of head injury by parents, by children and the public in general is a primary reason. This is accompanied by a lack of awareness and understanding of helmets and their effectiveness. Many people have never thought of wearing a helmet or never thought it was really necessary. Parents report a helmet is unnecessary because they or their children don’t ride in traffic, don’t ride very far or ride very often.

Children report they don’t wear a helmet because their friends don’t think it’s cool, they don’t own one, or because their helmet is uncomfortable/too hot.

# The Solution

“Don’t Thump Your Melon”. A South Dakota Department of Public Safety and SD EMS for Children program, is designed to promote bicycle safety and encourage the use of helmets for children. It is designed to graphically demonstrate to parents and children the dangers of not wearing a helmet. With your help it will become a vital part of each child’s education.

Bike rodeo events are often the main part of a community bicycle safety program. Today’s rodeo consists of driving course designed to simulate actual road situations commonly encountered by bicyclists. It is an effective way to involve parents, teachers and civic and community groups in helping young bicycle riders learn how to ride safely. It is also a fun way for bicyclists of all ages to remain aware of the importance of safe bicycling skills in their communities.

## Skills to Be Taught

A bike rodeo skills course should provide a fun and safe environment for bicyclists to learn various skills and practice them until they can drive with confidence and experience. Skills which should be stressed:

- Signaling
- Scanning for traffic without weaving
- Turning
- Maneuvering
- Balance
- Braking
- Helmet safety
- Rules of the Road (i.e. Hand Signals)

The activities described and supported in this curriculum can be used as stand alone projects or integrated with other disciplines. The material here can be used in conjunction with other programs either existing or planned in your community. PTA’s, local law enforcement, Safety Program Officers, EMT’s, and private individuals may be planning bike safety events in your community. Don’t be afraid to ask who else is involved in your community programs. At the most basic level, all the materials needed for a successful community bike rodeo are provided in this kit, with the exception of two. You and the children. Thanks for your help!

# Getting Started

- **Form a Planning Committee.** To coordinate a rodeo, it is best to form a committee to help with various tasks and to be volunteers at the event. The committee should also gather after the rodeo to evaluate the program (what went well, what should be done differently for future rodeos), and to write thank you cards to the people who donated time and materials.
- **Choose a Suitable Location.** You might use a convenient playground, parking lot, or gymnasium for your rodeo site. Once you have selected an appropriate location, check whether you need permission to use the space.
- **Choose a Date and Time.** Setup for the rodeo takes about an hour, if the volunteers set up and take down their own area. Allow approximately an hour-and-a-half for every 50 children in attendance.
- **Solicit sponsors.** Ask business people and civic groups in your community to be sponsors for your event. Depending on their resources and ability, they can be asked to help with:
  - Cost of promotional materials and supplies
  - Prizes, ribbons or certificates
  - Publicity
  - Refreshments
  - Volunteers
  - Bike Shop to provide bike inspections
  - Local Law enforcement to assist with bike registrations.
  - Photographer
- **Recruit volunteers.** You will need the help of volunteers throughout the planning process to help with fundraising, purchasing supplies and materials, and developing the course. You will need volunteers on the day of the event to help set up the course, volunteer at each of the skill stations, and volunteers to assist refreshment and registrations.
- **Assemble materials.** Make copies of materials for each participant and any materials needed for the volunteers.
- **Decide what awards or recognition you will distribute.** You may decide to give participant a certificate or prize for completing the course. Small prizes such as water bottles, reflectors and coupons to local restaurants make great prizes. All participants should be acknowledged for their efforts.
- **Assign a bookkeeper.** Someone needs to keep track of the number of participants expected, costs incurred and donation of time and materials.

# Bike Rodeo Materials

Suggested items for a Bike Rodeo

- 18 small orange cones
- Bike helmets – participants must wear an approved bicycle helmet during their participation in the bike rodeo. If child does not have one or theirs does not fit – need to have some available to give away.
- Bike Rodeo Station Signs
- Sidewalk chalk
- 2 tape measures – 50 feet minimum
- String
- Stopwatch or sports watch with timing capability
- Tables
- Chairs
- 10 – 12 pens
- Clipboard for each station
- Paper Clips, scissors
- Extension cords
- First Aid kit
- 10 small sandbags
- TV and VCR
- Prizes, ribbons or certificates
- Bags for prizes and participant materials

# Bike Rodeo Stations

## **Station 1 - Registration/Welcome**

The participants will assemble here, with their bicycles and helmets, to receive overall course instruction. Basic traffic will be reviewed and course layout will be explained.

## **Station 2 - Bike Helmet Fitting**

This station will ensure that each participant has a bike helmet and that it fits properly. The volunteer at this station needs to be proficient at the requirements for a properly fitting bike helmet.

## **Station 3 - Bicycle Registration**

This station will be set up to register the participant's bicycles with the local law enforcement.

## **Station 4 - Bicycle Inspection**

A quick and efficient inspection procedure begins with several people making their initial inspection with the participants and their bicycles. See copy of bike inspection checklist at the back of this curriculum.

Each bike is quickly checked over, with major repairs or problems left to more experienced mechanics. A 'repair station' may be set up to deal with these problems and can be staffed by a local bike shop who can supply mechanics and tools needed. The most important this to keep in mind is that the inspection process should be a learning opportunity for the participants. Include the student in the inspection and if repairs are needed, explain what is being done and why. Use the checklist included in this manual and have each participant complete the inspection on their bike. This checklist can be sent home to parents with recommendations for needed repairs or safety equipment.

## **Station 5 – Skill Stations 1 – 8**

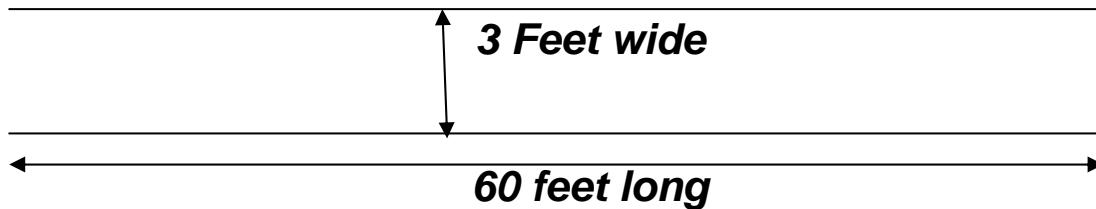
It is recommended for each skill station that you have two volunteers. The first volunteer will explain to the child the purpose of the station as well as how to proceed. The second volunteer will check off the skill on the checklist.

Each skill station will need:

1. Clipboard
2. Pens
3. Test site signs
4. Give aways if available

Each individual skill station may have additional needs. The last station should send children back to the registration table to pick up their completion certificates and/or other giveaways.

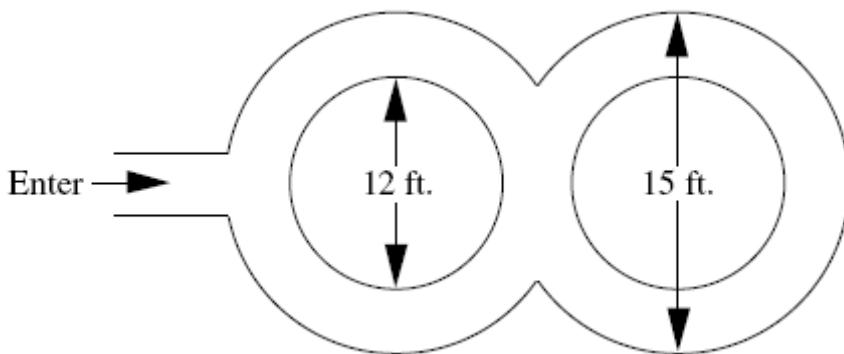
## **Skill Station 1 – Mounting and Dismounting**



The lane is 60 feet long and three feet wide. If space is limited, reduce to 40 feet.

**Purpose:** *To test starting and stopping while maintaining control.  
Rider must mount, steer bike without losing balance or swerving out of the lines, and then dismount.*

## **Skill Station 2 – Circling and Changing Direction**



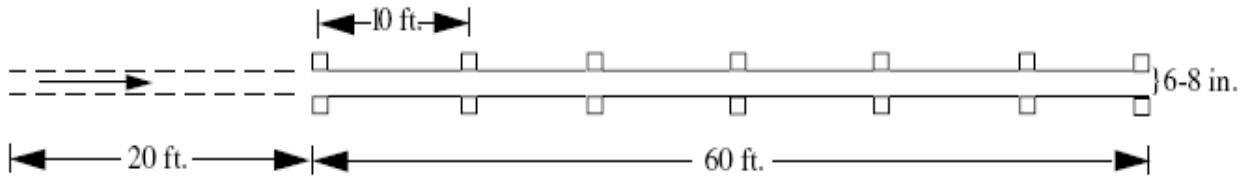
Inner circle is 12 feet in diameter; outer circle is 15 feet in diameter, providing for a 1.5 foot lane.

To draw the circles, a person holds a six-foot length of string in one spot, and the other drawer pivots around the center point with the chalk until a complete circle is made. Using the same center point, us a 7 ½ foot string, except do not complete the circle (see illustration).

To draw the other half of the course, hold the 7 ½ -foot string on the outer edge of the inner circle. After extending it completely, mark an "X" at the end of the string. This is the center point for the second set of circles. Repeat instructions for the first set.

**Purpose:** *To test balance and steering control while changing directions.  
Rider should start to the right and maneuver through the circles in a figure eight.*

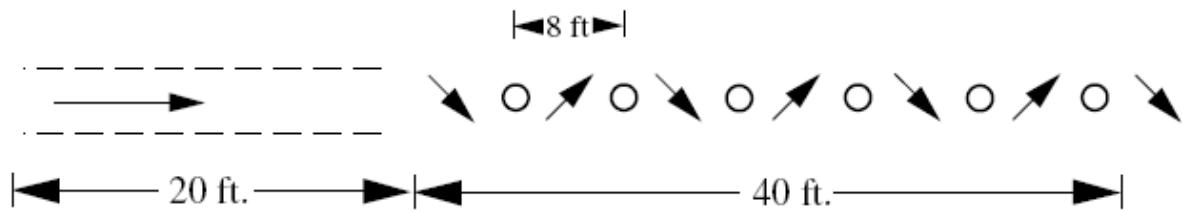
## **Skill Station 3 – Straight Line Control**



The lane is 60 feet long and six to eight inches wide. There should be 20 feet available in front of the start of the lane for the rider to balance, but it doesn't need to be marked. Reduce the length if space is limited. Place the small cones on the outside of the lane at 10-foot intervals.

**Purpose:** *To test balance and steering coordination. The rider should be able to ride in a straight line, without veering over the lines or putting a foot down to balance.*

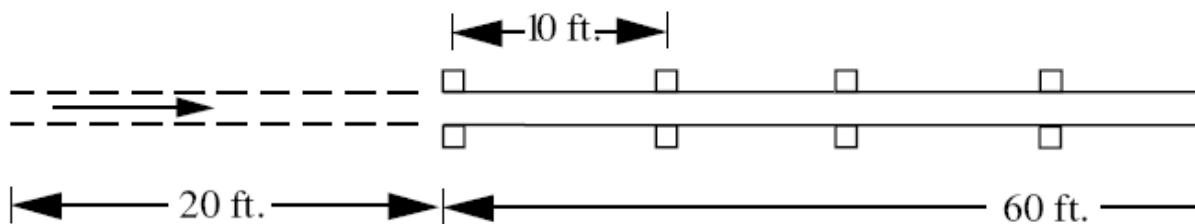
## **Skill Station 4 – Weaving and Maneuvering**



There is no marked lane for this test, but you may want to mark the cone placement in case they are moved. Cones should be placed eight apart. Riders should have 20 feet of starting room before the first cone.

**Purpose:** *To test balance, steering control, and the rider's ability to judge distance. The rider shouldn't hit any obstacles and should weave alternately to the right and left.*

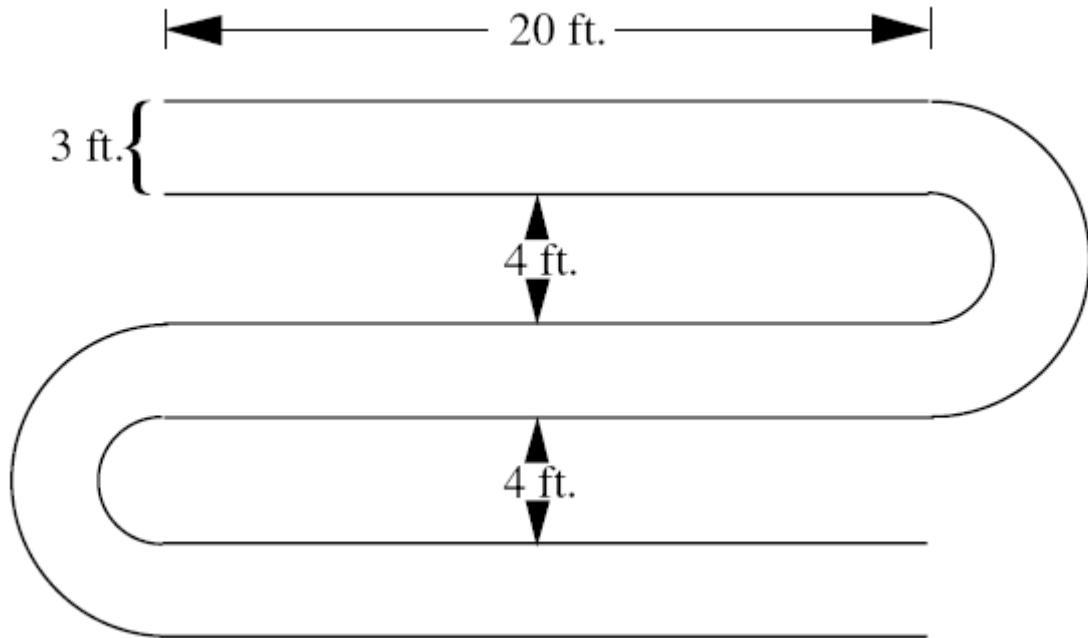
## **Skill Station 5 – Stopping Ability**



The lane should be 60 feet long and three feet wide. A cross mark should be at 50 feet. If space is limited, this test can be on the same lane as skill station 3.

**Purpose:** *To test judgment and braking control. Rider should ride through the first 50 feet and be able to bring the bike to a complete stop before touching either foot to the ground within the last 10 feet.*

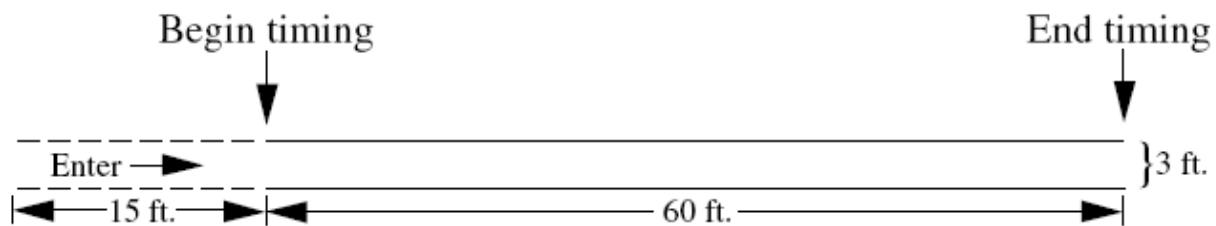
## **Skill Station 6 – Short Radius Turning**



The lane is three feet wide with each straight section 20 feet long. Draw all straight sections first and then connect them with an arc. Each lane is separated by four feet.

**Purpose:** *To test balance, speed control, and steering coordination. Rider should maneuver through the course without veering over the lines or putting a foot down to balance.*

## **Skill Station 7 – Slow Speed Control**



The lane is 60 feet long and three feet wide. A 15-foot running lane should be provided but does not need to be marked. If space is limited, the course can be done on the course for skill station 1.

**Purpose:** *To test speed control and balance. The rider should maneuver the bike at a slow speed, requiring at least 30 seconds from start to finish. Write the time on the checklist.*

## **Skill Station 8 – Hand Signals**

Each participant should know the rules of the road and how to signal that they need to make movement such as stopping, left or right hand turn.

You can use the following script for this station:

"Never change direction or change lanes without first looking behind you and using the correct hand signals. That way everyone knows where you're going. Use your **left** arm for all hand signals. To indicate you're making a **left turn**, hold your arm straight out to the left; to indicate a **right turn**, bend your elbow, holding your arm up in an "L" shape; and **before you stop**, bend your elbow, pointing your arm downward in an upside down "L" shape. "



**LEFT TURN**



**STOP**



**RIGHT TURN**

# **Survey Instructions - Bicycle Survey**

South Dakota EMS for Children and the South Dakota Department of Public Safety believe that increasing bicycle helmet usage among children will reduce incidents of head and brain injury. As a result, the "Don't Thump Your Melon" Program has been prepared for use in communities statewide. The regular collection of data relative to helmet usage from children will prove an essential tool in evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Your assistance in collecting data is crucial. Please take a minute to review these simple instructions and complete the survey at your community bike rodeo.

Facilitator records the number of male and female children present at the bike rodeo and reads each question aloud asking children to raise their hands if the answer is "yes". Facilitator or volunteer then counts and records the number of males and females who raise their hands to each question. The entire questionnaire takes less than five minutes to complete. Please return the survey form to: Don't Thump Your Melon, SD EMS for Children, 1400 West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105-1570.

NOTES: Discussion among children about helmet usage before they have responded will contaminate the results and should be avoided. Surveys are NOT to be distributed to children. Questions must be asked by the facilitator. No individual child can be identified with any answer. The facilitator simply counts the number of males and females who raise their hands indicating a "yes" response to each question.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

# **Bicycle Survey**

Thank you for taking the time to assist us with collecting valuable data enabling us to better evaluate the success of our bicycle safety program statewide. When completed please return this form to or Email form to [amy.marsh@usd.edu](mailto:amy.marsh@usd.edu):

Don't Thump Your Melon  
South Dakota EMS for Children  
1400 West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105-1570

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Your Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

How many children participated in the bike rodeo today? \_\_\_\_\_

Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

For each question record the number of females and males who raise their hands to answer yes.

<b>Questions</b>	<b># Female</b>	<b># Male</b>
1. Do you use the proper hand signals when turning to communicate to drivers?		
2. Do you ride in single file with traffic, not against it?		
3. Do you own a bicycle or do you have access to one you can ride from time to time?		
4. Did you ride a bicycle any time in the past month?		
5. When you rode a bicycle during the last month did you wear a helmet:  Every Time? Sometimes? Never?		
6. Do you own a bike helmet?		
7. If not, is there a helmet you can use?		
8. Did you ride a bike to school today?		
9. If yes, did you wear a helmet?		
10. If you do NOT own a helmet now, and you were given one, would you wear it?		
<b>Organizer</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
11. Was the Bicycle Rodeo Kit easy to use?		
12. Did the Bicycle Rodeo Kit help children to understand the importance of bicycle and helmet safety?		

Comments and/or suggestions (please use the back for additional comments)

# Bicycle Rodeo Station's Checklist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please follow the numbered signs to complete all of the stations. Please give the volunteer your checklist as you arrive at each station.

<b>Station</b>	<b>Volunteer Initial</b>
Station 1 – Registration/Welcome	
Station 2 – Bike Helmet Fitting	<input type="checkbox"/> Received new helmet <input type="checkbox"/> Fit current helmet
Station 3 – Bicycle Registration	
Station 4 – Bicycle Inspection (see Bicycle Inspection Checklist)	
Skill Station 1 – Mounting and Dismounting	
Skill Station 2 – Circling and Changing Direction	
Skill Station 3 – Straight Line Control	
Skill Station 4 – Weaving and Maneuvering	
Skill Station 5 – Stopping Ability	
Skill Station 6 - Short Radius Turning	
Skill Station 7 – Slow Speed Control	
Skill Station 8 – Hand Signals	

Please make any comment/suggestions on the back.

# Bicycle Inspection Check List

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Item Inspected	SAFE	UNSAFE	Item Inspected	SAFE	UNSAFE
<b>Handle Bars</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rear Wheel</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In line with wheel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Runs true and round	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tightly fitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spokes condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grips tight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inflated properly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tubing ends covered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tread condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Wheel center in fork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Brakes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Seat</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaster brake stops quickly and evenly within a 20-degree back pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proper height	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hand brakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cable condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stops quickly/evenly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Pad condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Crank Assembly</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lights and Reflectors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chain tension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ample reflectors on back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chain condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working light on front	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sprocket teeth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Pedal tread	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Pedal tight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Chain guard present	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Chain guard tight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Frame</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Straight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Cracks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>Front Wheel</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Runs true and round	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Spokes condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Inflated properly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Tread condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Wheel center in fork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Remarks:

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**4-H Youth Development  
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