

UCA Suggested Social Media Schedule for Race Directors

The purpose of this guide is to suggest some “best practices” for using social media to promote your race. We’re not trying to add to your workload – this guide is a response to requests some of you made in the past. It’s a starting point and set of suggestions. You might have found in the past that other methods or schedules worked better for your races.

The guide tries to capture the fact that different types of people sign up for races at different times for different reasons, and that social media platforms (FaceBook and Instagram in particular) have recently changed in ways that make it harder for any given post to reach the bulk of people who follow your account.

To deal with this change in social media platforms, it’s important to post more frequently. This doesn’t mean repeating the same post over and over. The best method is to create posts that highlight different aspects of your race and of participants’ experiences.

Types of posts

The purpose and content of your posts change as the race gets nearer, generally moving from creating awareness for the race well in advance of race day, to sparking interest and reminding people of the race as race day approaches. Almost all of these posts can be created and scheduled months in advance.

From BikeReg listing to 6 weeks before

First, starting from the time your race registration opens on BikeReg (or equivalent) up to about 6 weeks from the race, posts should try to **create awareness**. The purpose of such posts is to make people aware that the race exists and to “plant the seed” in people’s minds about participating. These posts try to get people to imagine going to the event and start making tentative plans.

Examples of posts to create awareness:

- “Save the Date” posts,
- announcements that registration is open,
- links to registration and race flyer,
- GPX file of the race course (which should also be linked on the race flyer),
- calls to volunteer on race day,
- and highlights of what’s near the race venue (so that racers can plan the whole race day and possibly include family members).

6 weeks – days before

Then, from about 6 weeks up to right before the race, transition to posts that **generate interest** in the race and function as **reminders**. These posts are beneficial because of how different people sign up for races at different times: a few people sign up immediately when the race appears on BikeReg, but most people need repeated reminders and prompting before signing up – they will need to see many posts with different reasons to register.

Example posts to generate interest and remind:

- continue with the post types listed above, and add:
- pictures from past years' races,
- scenic pictures from the race course,
- a preview of an important part of the race course such as a technical descent, the final corner before a sprint finish, or a feed zone,
- suggestions for tire choice given the terrain,
- a Strava segment from the race course & K/QOM challenge,
- thanks to race sponsors,
- a picture of medals or prizes,
- reminders about when prices are about to increase,
- food to be served at the venue for racers/volunteers,
- and "behind the scenes" photos of course setup or riders training for the race.
- Posts should be heavily visual; even better than pictures and graphics are videos such as GoPro footage of the course or course fly-overs from Relive or Strava.

Final week

In the final week, consider adding "countdown" visuals to posts, post about the last chance to preregister, and post any updates about the race course or schedule. If relevant, post about the weather forecast. The night before, post a reminder with parking info.

Race day

Race day posts are difficult to post without help, but they are some of the most viewed and shared content from UCA socials. They enhance the overall experience for racers and help create great memories of your race. Depending on race location, they may also prompt day-of registration from fence sitters.

Examples of race day posts:

- an early morning scene of race setup (e.g., finish line setup),
- a shot of race officials and/or volunteers meeting before the first race,
- a picture of racers registering or warming up,
- race pictures or video of racers at the start line, in a breakaway, etc.,
- and podium celebrations and race results.

Afterward

Finally, after race day, posts should wrap up the race experience and lay the groundwork for your next race.

Examples of day-after posts:

- pictures/galleries of the race,
- thank-yous to athletes, volunteers, and sponsors,
- and recognition for racers or race fields who achieved some challenge, such as Strava K/QOMs on the race course.

Overview of Posting Schedule

<i>Timing of post</i>	<i>Example content</i>
When your race appears on BikeReg (or equivalent)	“Save the Date” style post – announce that registration is open, where possible link to registration and race flyer.
6-7 weeks before event	A second Save the Date post
6 weeks – 10 days before	Start 2x/week Interest and Reminder posts
10 – 1 day before	Add a countdown to posts, make logistical reminders or updates
Day of event	Race setup, race action, podiums
After event	Race pictures, thank-yous

General advice to increase reach

Facebook and Instagram mechanics

- FB and Instagram seem to favor posts with good graphics and minimal text (details can go in captions).
- Make sure graphics are the right size to avoid automatic cropping by FB and Instagram when posting and sharing. Stories and Feeds may require different size graphics. The graphic sizes and aspect ratios can change, so it’s best to double-check via a web search every few months.

Types of content

- Fun vs sales: A general social media rule is to make most posts fun (e.g., focusing on the challenges of the course, the inspirational setting, the fun of competing) vs. sales pressure (e.g., register right now). There’s a place for registration pressure, but most posts should avoid having it front and center.
- Community feeling in pictures: Podium pictures are great shots to post, but many racers aren’t there to contest the win. All racers will appreciate images of sharing the experience of suffering up a climb or sharing stories after the race, etc.
- Think about creating a unique hashtag for your race(s), to aggregate content about your event from all sources. Encourage users to use the hashtag when, for example, training for the race.
- Hashtag or not, ask users to share your posts – race sponsors, athletes, clubs and teams, volunteers, bike shops nearest to the race venue, etc.