



## READING A CUE SHEET (And some comments on GPS devices)

We live in an electronic age, and many riders now have dedicated GPS computers on their bicycles. Some riders have apps such as *ridewithgps* on their cell phones.

GPS does not substitute for a cue sheet! Even the most sophisticated GPS units may:

- Run out of battery
- Fail to pick up satellites
- Be unable to load the ride file
- Become confused when a route travels the same road more than once
- Become confused if you have to detour for any reason.
- Decide to take you on the “most direct” route
- Try to take you back to where you got off the route even if you are well past that point without trying to reroute you.
- Suffer from “operator error”

Therefore, in addition to understanding how to use your GPS, you must also know how to read a cue sheet.

There is no standard format for a cue sheet; there are many variations of the order of columns. However, every cue sheet will suggest a logical way it should be read. It should provide the distance to the next turn or instruction, either to the left of the instruction, or to the right of the instruction, in which case it indicates the distance to travel before the instruction on the next line). It should also provide a turn abbreviation or acronym, and the total mileage at the point of the instruction.

Turn	Total Miles	Street	For
L	0.0	Park Drive East	2.0
S	2.0	AC Powell Blvd [ <i>exit park</i> ]	1.3

Cue sheets use a common set of acronyms (with some variations; you will readily discern their meanings by looking at the roads for which they are providing instructions).

- R, L = Right Turn, Left Turn
- BR, BL = Bear Right, Bear Left (i.e., turn is at a fork or at less than 90-degree angle)
- SI R, SI L = Slight Right, Slight Left (i.e., turn is at a fork or at less than 90-degree angle)
- SR, SL, ShR, ShL = Sharp Right, Sharp Left (i.e., turn is at a greater than 90-degree angle)



- QR, QL = Quick Turn Right, Quick Turn Left (i.e., the turn will be less than 1/10th of a mile away)
- 1stR (2ndR, etc.), 1stL (2ndL, etc.) = Turn at the first (second, etc.) Right or Left
- R@T, L@T = Right at T-Intersection, Left at T-Intersection
- S = Straight
- X = Cross (a particular street, railroad tracks, bridge, etc.)
- TRO = To Remain On (usually appears in the "Street" column)

You should expect BTCNJ club rider leaders to provide you with a cue sheet or provide a link to a [ridewithgps](#) file on the ride listing, from which you may download and print a cue sheet as well as download the file to your GPS device. If the rider leader does not do this, he or she is obligated to not "drop" any rider. Get in the habit of looking over the cue sheet before the ride starts. Ask the rider leader if you have any questions about instructions on the cue sheet.

The best place for a cue sheet, particularly if you only have a bicycle computer, is attached to an inexpensive clip mounted on the handlebar. Reaching for the cue sheet is to be avoided. If you don't have a GPS unit or a phone app, you should have a handlebar-mounted bicycle computer that will tell you the distance you have traveled.

### **Comments on GPS devices**

If you are using a dedicated GPS unit or cellphone app, take the time to learn its functions and features. If you are using a cell phone app, make sure you have a sturdy bicycle mount for your specific phone. It won't do you much good in your pocket, and it's dangerous to ride with it your hand.

These units are designed to give you auditory signals while riding. Never glance down at your GPS unit or cell phone app unless you are stopped or are sure the road in front of you is free of hazards, distractions and traffic (including other riders).

Note: Dedicated GPS units are designed to operate for many hours. Cell phone GPS apps, however, will use up the battery fast, particularly if the screen is lit. You might carry an external battery for longer bike rides.

Some GPS units have maps. If you have a cell phone, you will have a mapping app (like Google Maps). This can show you where you are relative to the roads on the cue sheet.