



GROUP RIDE ETIQUETTE AND PACELINE BASICS

Primary Objectives: BE SAFE!! BE SMOOTH!!

Always stay cool, calm and relaxed. Be predictable. Pedal Smooth. Ride in a straight line. The benefit of a paceline is to allow faster speeds and at the same time allows riders to rest while drafting in the slip stream of others.

Safety:

- **Obey the rules of the road!** Adhere to all traffic laws.
- Ride no more than two (2) abreast. Single paceline in traffic.
- Stay as far to the right hand side of the road as safely possible. **DO NOT** ride along the center line of the road!!
- Stay completely out of the road when stopped or waiting.
- **DO NOT** ride in aero bars while in a group or paceline. **IT IS NOT SAFE FOR YOU, IT IS NOT SAFE FOR OTHERS!!**

Communicate:

- Use hand signals to indicate turns (left and right), stopping and slowing.
- Use verbal warnings. This includes warnings for turns, stopping and slowing.
“Car Up” – To warn of approaching vehicles.
“Car Back” or “Coming Around” – To warn of passing vehicles.
“On your left” - When overtaking an unsuspecting cyclists.
- Point out and announce hazards in the road. This includes holes, bumps, road kill, gravel, sand, pedestrians, cars, etc. Anything disruptive to a cyclists.

Group Ride Basics:

- **Paceline** - a string of riders who alternate turns riding at the front, pulling then resting by sitting in, **drafting** in the slip stream of the other riders.
- **Drafting** – riding a slipstream, or pocket of moving air, created by the rider in front. This enables the second rider to maintain speed with less effort.
- **NO SUDDEN MOVEMENTS!!** Riders need to ride **straight, steadily, and smoothly**. Your riding affects all other riders in the group, so be **consistent, safe and predictable**. Always be aware of what is happening around you.
- If you brush shoulders, hands, or bars with another rider, **do not** panic. Stay relaxed and allow your upper body to absorb any bumps.

- If you have a mishap (flat tire, mechanical, etc) stay relaxed. **DO NOT** slam on the brakes. Slowly, smoothly and calmly slide out of the paceline. Once you are clear, then slowly decelerate before stopping off the side of the road. If you are at the back, calmly let others know you have had a mishap.
- **ALWAYS** be considerate to other cyclists and motorists!! Your actions reflect up the club, your sponsors and the cycling community as a whole!!
- **Do not** litter. Put any wrappers in your pockets until you get home.

Drafting:

- Ride a comfortable distance behind the wheel in front of you. Begin riding 2-3 feet away and work up to closer distances as you start to feel more comfortable. Practice helps!! Experienced riders will ride within inches of each others wheels.
- **Do not** fixate on the wheel in front of you. Look beyond the rider directly in front of you to see what is up the road. Be aware of what is in front of you!!
- **Do not** overlap wheels. If you touch wheels, the rider behind should smoothly and calmly slow down. The rider in front should maintain his line and pedaling.
- **DO NOT** slam on brakes!! If you roll up on the rider in front of you, easy pedal and smoothly ease to one side. Allow the wind to slow you down.
- Avoid gaps. If a gap does open, smoothly and slowly accelerate to close it. **DO NOT “Attack”** to close a gap. This creates more gaps with the riders behind you. If a rider opens a gap and cannot close it (he’s “cooked”) then smoothly and slowly accelerate around him to close the gap.
- **DO NOT** sling/rock your bike back when going from a sitting to a standing position (ex. on a hill). Many riders do not notice this, but when most riders quickly stand to accelerate, they throw their bike back possibly causing the rider behind them to react. When standing, put extra pressure on the pedals and stand up slowly. On the flip side, when approaching a hill, be aware of the rider in front of you and anticipate any slight loss of momentum from the rider in front of you.
- When riding downhill, do not slam on the brakes. Slowly and smoothly move to either side of the rider in front of you and allow the wind to help maintain your speed. Allow a little more room for reaction time due to the higher speeds.

Passing and Pulling:

- Generally, the lead rider will pull off to the left. There are some exceptions to this rule, but this is typically limited to experienced riders in echelons during windy conditions.
- **DO NOT** accelerate when taking the lead!! The lead rider should pull off to the side and smoothly decrease speed. The second rider should maintain the speed of the group. If the speed is to be increased, do so slowly and smoothly. Allow the rider to regroup at the back and benefit from the draft. Remember, he just did a pull and is probably a little tired. If you surge, the rider pulling off or even the group may take exception to the acceleration and do the same to you!!
- When pulling at the front, maintain the speed of the group. Do not stay on the front so long that you decrease the speed of the group. Keep the pace steady!!

- **DO NOT** over exert yourself at the front!! Stronger riders should pull longer, weaker riders should pull shorter. Do not be embarrassed to simply pull through immediately.
- **DO NOT** rush to the front and pour on the full power until you are exhausted or blow. Save enough energy to regroup with the end of the paceline and recover.
- When the lead rider pulls off, slowly move to the back of the group, but maintain some speed and do not stop pedaling. Stay close to the group as you drift back, this will help shield the other riders from the wind. When you are beside the last rider in the line, smoothly pick up your speed and move over behind his wheel. Careful not to slow down too much, otherwise you will have to accelerate hard to maintain contact with the group or miss the group all together.
- **DO NOT** ride to the front of the paceline and pull out in 2nd or 3rd position from the front opening gaps for the riders behind you. If you find yourself at the front, pull through and over once the front wheel of the rider who pulled off in front of you is past your rear wheel. This will not take anymore energy and prevents opening gaps for the riders behind you.
- When riding down hill, lead rider should **NEVER** stop pedaling.
- On a hill, maintain your effort, not the speed.
- If the group is traveling too fast, sit on the back. When the front rider pulls off and moves to the back of the group, move to the left so you are on his wheel and allow him to move in behind the rider in front of you. An advance verbal warning giving them plenty of time to react is helpful. Only do this at the back of the group, as riders behind you may want to pull through and the rider moving to the back probably wants as much rest as possible.
- **DO NOT** sit on the back the entire time only to “attack” or accelerate at the next big hill or win the sprint at the end of the ride. In other words, if you are not pulling through to do your share of the work, there probably should be a good reason (ie. You are in pain!) Other riders will remember this for a long time!!

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I cannot claim credit for this work, it is compiled from numerous other sources, all of whom are more deserving than me!!