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## Pack Riding

### GENERAL RIDING RULES

- Normally ride 2 abreast, shoulder to shoulder. Sometimes for safety or when passing, ride single file.
- Ride two abreast maximum, No passing around the outside of the pack!
- Do not half-wheel the rider in front: do not overlapping your front wheel with their rear wheel.
- Keep your front wheel in line with the rider beside you.
- Maintain a close but comfortable distance from the rider beside you (each rider's comfort zone will be different)
- Although the pack needs to be tight, keep a distance that is comfortable for you from the rider directly in front of you generally about 500mm from the wheel in front. (each rider's comfort zone will be different).
- Keep a constant watch to maintain spacing - increase the distance when going downhill and in adverse weather conditions
- If you bump into the rider alongside or touch a wheel in front DO NOT PANIC! Gently recover. If you are bumped, support the bumper to become stable if you are able. In many situations where riders touch there is no problem unless they panic and hit the brakes or other sudden manoeuvre.
- Apply brakes only gently and call out "slowing" when you do so. Avoid hard braking which can cause accidents for those behind in the pack
- Pull out into the wind rather than braking if possible
- Ride smoothly avoiding hard accelerations and braking, be aware and conscious of those behind, next to you and in front
- Lead riders need to keep pedalling to pull the pack along - especially no free-wheeling downhill unless the hill is steep. The only exception is when you are easing up for people to rejoin the group, at which point it is helpful to actually "sit-up" to show you are deliberately slowing.

### DOWN HILLS

- Lead riders should pedal hard down hills to keep the pack moving and to avoid the need for anyone in the pack to use their brakes.
- Remember that the riders in the pack will quickly gain speed downhill as they have the benefit being out of the wind.

### **UPHILLS**

- Change gears before you get to the foot of the hill. Get out of the big ring - this avoids sticking chains, missed changes under power which can lead to erratic riding
- Allow for "Kick back" on the rider in front up hills when they get out of the saddle, Most riders surge back when they rise out of the saddle
- When riding out of the saddle, keep a smooth action in a straight line. Do not weave. If you cannot maintain this then change down to an easier gear and climb seated. It is dangerous for the following riders to have the rider in front struggling and weaving across the road.
- On moderate hills attempt to ride as a pack with the lead riders maintaining a speed to allow the whole pack to ride up the hill together.

### **Rules for Pack Riding**

- When riding over hills as a pack, the lead riders should slow over the crest to allow the others to catch up
- On big or steep climbs where the pack becomes strung out, lead riders should stop at the top of big hills for the pack to regroup

### **SINGLE OR DOUBLE FILE?**

- Generally it is safest to ride double file - the pack is more compact, more visible and less vulnerable to cars & trucks
- Single filing only for as long as is strictly necessary to keep the pack distance compact. If the pack is too strung out it encourages drivers to cut-in to the middle as the overtaking distance becomes too long.
- Pass other packs in single file and only when it is safe traffic-wise and space-wise, otherwise wait behind until it is safe to pass.
- Once the passing decision has been made, all riders to accelerate and ride hard past the pack, slowing when well clear to allow the remainder to catch up and for the pack to reform before continuing as normal.
- If another pack is to pass, pull to the left and single up to allow them room if necessary

### **USE OF LANES**

- Ride on the left shoulder of the road if there is one and it is safe to ride on it
- One file on the left of the shoulder line and one on the right of it when the shoulder is too narrow for two files
- On multi-laned roads take the left hand lane when it is safe to do so.
- Be considerate to motorists
- Don't cut corners thus blocking motorists.

### **ROLLING - rotating the lead riders**

- Share the lead over the ride by changing the lead pair. This is done by "rolling" forward from the right hand file.
- Rolling is initiated from the lead pair who when fatigued call "rolling"
- The left hand leader slows slightly, the right hand leader overtakes and pulls into the left hand lead position when safe to do so and also slows waiting for the rider behind him to move up to take the right hand lead position. All riders in the right hand file move forward by one position. The tail rider of the left file moves across to the tail of the right file.
- We may also do a "double roll" to change and give both front riders a rest. This is achieved smoothly by doing each one at a time following the same pattern.

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND SIGNALS**

- Ensure you know and use calls and signals such as STOPPING, SLOWING, POINTING TO OBSTACLES, STANDING, ROLLING, CAR UP, CAR BACK.
- The riders on the front cannot safely be looking back to see if anyone has dropped off. If you have been dropped, call it out. Riders at the back must communicate to the front, and vice versa. When you are back on, call "all on".
- Ensure the back of the bunch communicates very clearly if riders have been dropped, and the leaders ease up in order for them to rejoin the bunch.
- Ask for guidance from more experienced riders if you are unsure about anything or feel uncomfortable/unsafe at anytime.
- Lead riders - scan the road ahead and communicate by signalling bumps, holes, defects, debris
- Do not run over sticks as they can kick up dangerously

### **Rules for Pack Riding**

- Each rank of riders then passes on the signals to those following.
- Lead riders to assess whether single filing may be necessary calling "single up".  
Carefully make space for each other to slot in.
- Rear riders may also call "single up" if traffic behind or passing packs makes this necessary.
- Rear riders call "Car Back" or to warn of unseen traffic dangers from behind.

### **INDIVIDUAL RIDER STRENGTHS**

- In any group there are going to be stronger riders. Stronger riders will be especially noticeable on climbs so it is important they stop at or slow over the top of a hill to wait for the last rider
- Each rider should ride within their ability: Tired riders = less concentration = greater risk to personal and team safety.
- There will be a range of abilities in the pack
- The pack needs to be riding comfortably at a similar level to stay together as a pack and to enjoy.
- Riders receive the greatest protection when in the middle-rear of the bunch (but not left dangling off the back of the bunch).
- Stronger riders may like to beat themselves up, uphill, or take long turns pulling at the front into the wind to give themselves a good workout.
- Strongest riders should be pulling at the front rather than hiding down the back to store energy.
- Have some fun though...there are some stretches of quiet road when it is safe to have a bit of a sprint but care is essential.