

Class 5 - Intermediate Group Riding

- Take responsibility for yourself (Discussion!)
 - Don't say "clear" so others can run stops.
 - Don't trust others when they say it.
- Take responsibility for others
 - Remember Lane Changes. Think of your lane as "straight ahead."
 - If you need to move to the side for whatever reason, execute a lane change.
 - If there isn't time to do this safely, it might be safer to ride over the hazard.
- Drafting
- Etiquette

Drafting (Pacelines)

- What it is
 - That thing you see fast road cyclists doing.
 - Following someone closely enough to reduce wind resistance.
 - Tailgating!
- Why we do it
 - It's a way for a group of similar strengths to travel faster than one can alone.
 - It's a way for riders of different strengths to travel together.
- How to Learn
 - Start with just two, then lead up to pacelines.
 - Learn to follow first.
 - Safety is Paramount!

In Back

- Only follow someone you trust.
 - Person in back is usually who goes down in an accident.
- How far: 1-2 feet Don't overlap wheels!
 - 6 inches is for very experienced riders, familiar with each other, and accepting the risk
- Be observant!
 - Learn to look around the person in front of you.
 - Keep distance using peripheral vision.
 - Don't focus on the wheel in front of you.
- Talk to the person in front.
 - They have no other way to know if they are going too fast (or too slow) for you.
- Start slow and learn technique. Then get up to actual speed.
- Under anything but ideal conditions, back off.
 - Bad road - rough, potholes, downhills (especially ones with curves), higher speeds.
 - Bad traffic conditions - heavy traffic or frequent intersections.
 - Fatigue - when you or the person in front is tired, reactions slow.
 - Bad wheel - if the person in front of you has the tendency to slow suddenly, swerves, or fails to point out hazards.
 - Unfamiliar wheel - you've got to trust the person in front of you.
- Don't follow someone unless they know you are there (more on this later)
- Don't use aerobars.

In Front

- Be consistent!
 - The person in back is trusting you.
- Try to ride at a constant effort (not necessarily a constant speed).
- Don't do things that cause you to slow without telling the person behind ahead of time
 - Braking! If you're leading, keep off the brakes except with notification.
 - Large Shifts
 - Standing
 - Coasting
 - NO BRAKES!!!!
- Ride in a straight line. Don't make any sudden moves.
 - Swerving from side to side makes it hard for the person behind you to stay in your draft.
 - If you need to ride around an obstacle, move to the side slowly so the person behind can follow.
- Point out obstacles
 - I used to think that the signs were universal - now I don't. Learn whether clues are verbal or visual. Ask the people you are riding with.
 - Don't endanger your riding to point out hazards. Be comfortable taking a hand off the bar before doing this. And if the road conditions make it difficult to take your hands off, suggest breaking up the paceline rather than get in a crash.
- Don't get heroic
 - If you suspect that you are one of the slower riders in your paceline, make your pulls short. If you try to be a hero, you'll end up off the back. Allow yourself to be pulled along, and congratulate yourself on a faster total time and staying with your friends.

Changing Places

- Pulling off
 - Check that the "lane" where you are going is clear by looking.
 - Indicate that you are pulling off (for many, that check you just did will be enough)
 - Pull off to the side - usually the left so you don't get squeezed off the road but it can change if there's a big shoulder or closed road or type of paceline. Should be clear ahead of time.
 - Soft pedal until you get to the back of the line
 - It helps if you know who the last person is.
 - If it's changed since your last rotation maybe they'll tell you they are the last.
 - As you slide past the last person, get back up to speed and fall in behind and enjoy the rest!
- When at the back, take care of any chores you need to do
 - Get a drink or bite
 - Blow your nose
 - Stand and stretch.
- Coming to the front
 - As the person in front pulls off, check your speedometer.
 - Maintain that speed at first and feel how hard it is at the front
 - Try to maintain that effort as the road goes up or down or the wind changes.
 - If the person who just pulled off is tired, you may even need to slow down a little until they get settled in behind you. As they get more experienced, they will get better and also remember to pull off before they are too tired.

In the Middle

- In back - be observant. In front - be consistent. In the middle - DO BOTH!
 - Take care of housekeeping when you're in the back.
 - If you don't feel strong enough to take a pull, let them in in front of you.
- Try to eliminate any Accordion effect.
 - If people in front of you are less experienced and can't ride at a steady pace, gaps may open in front of you.
 - Don't sprint to close gaps. Accept some distance opening in front of you and try to close it at a consistent effort. Speeding up rapidly just causes the accordion effect.
 - If you are catching up to the person in front, try going to one side or sitting up more to catch more air to slow you down.
 - If you must touch your brakes, feather them very lightly and try to do it early so you don't cause the accordion.
 - If the person in front of you slows suddenly, go to the side, shout "slowing," and then consider braking.

Pacelining Summary

- In back - Be observant and cautious
- In front - Be consistent
 - Constant Effort, not Constant Speed.
 - NO BRAKING!
- In the middle - both! Also, work to smooth out the paceline.
- Everywhere - Trust must be built. Don't assume it's been given and don't give it too freely.
- Congratulate yourself on your new skill.
 - Following and getting there faster.
 - Leading and helping out friends.
 - Both and both!

Century Etiquette (any Pick-up Pacelines)

- Never draft off a person who doesn't know you are there (even a friend whom you know well!).
 - They may decide to brake for any reason, and the consequences are entirely your own fault.
 - Pacelining is best done with people you know. Whose foibles you know and understand. To take up this exercise in trust with a totally unknown person is to place your life in their hands.
 - They may be physically strong, but not comfortable in a group ride.
 - The best suggestion I've heard in a while is not even to come up behind and ask, but to come alongside and strike up a conversation. Then you can suggest some drafting.
 - With someone new, always allow more margin for their behavior. Even if both of you are very good at pacelining, it takes a while to learn to communicate.
- From Racing: "If you don't pull, don't contest the sprint."
 - It's a lot more complicated than that simple statement, as in real races that will be broken. But you make enemies doing that, and if you do it consistently
 - Applied to social situation - acknowledge the stronger riders for the pull. Accept your role - check the route sheet for them; figure out where the next turn is. There are contributions to be made other than the muscle power.
- One tactic for centuries (or longer) rides is to ride at a pace where you have something left over, and wait for a paceline to come by. Then you should ask as you jump on. Remember to judge both your ability and the abilities of the paceline you've joined.

Club Etiquette (any Organized Group ride)

(How to be invited back!)

- Basically, be considerate of others
 - They are volunteers, they aren't being paid for this. It's their time too and they want it to be fun.
- Be on time for rides
- Choose rides that you can do.
- Get your chores done at stops so that you're ready to leave with the group.
- If you're slower than the rest.
 - Know that they've all been there.
 - If it's significant (you've made a mistake about where you are), acknowledge it early - maybe talk to them about where
 - Try to be the first out of the stops.
 - Ride smart - learn to draft, and thank them for the draft.
- If you need to leave the ride, make sure the ride leader is informed.
- Trying out a new group
 - Purposefully start with an easier ride than you know you can do to meet the group.
 - Ask about other rides.