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Great Tips Tricks and FAQs in Here!

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Good evening everyone!

I noted that, after our weekly ride, I would use Monday to send feedback on safety, etiquette, and ways to make your ride more enjoyable. We didn't have a ride this week but I still want to share some tips and tricks and a lot of common sense things we've learned over the years.

Today's note will focus on the following:

- **Email Reminder**
- **FAQs**
 - **Email and Families**
 - **Do I need to RSVP for the Rides?**
 - **Someone Told Me There is a "Hotline"?**
- **Purpose of the Beginner Rides**
- **How Can I Jump-Start My Cycling Clothing Collection?**
- **Passing Perfection (H2 pass and be passed)**

OK – let's get to the tips...

Email Reminder – Read Ready2Roll Cycling

I know that I just sent this reminder out on Saturday but so far, only 62.9% of you have opened the Saturday e-mail with that reminder so I am going to repeat that tip one more time.

I have split the weekly communications up into several smaller notes in order to make it easier for everyone to absorb all the information but I can only go so far and once I send the note, every rider needs to take the time to read it, in a timely manner. If you skip some of the notes, you will miss some important details at some point. I can't explain this any more clearly than this – please read all the emails you receive from Ready2Roll Cycling.

FAQs

Here are a few quick questions and answers that are trending right now...

- **Email and Families**

Several riders have asked why they are getting the weekly email but their spouse, or children are not. In every one of these cases, the reason was because when the riders registered, they used the same email for all members of the family. Don't worry, I have every enrolled rider listed individually with all your information in my master list but the mass email app we use keys on the email address so, if several riders are enrolled using the same address, the mass email app only imports the first rider in the list using this email. Currently, there are about 40 riders who are not on the email distribution list because another rider on the list is also using this address.

If you want to each receive your own email, I need you to please send me a note with the personal email to use for each rider in your family/household.
- **Do I need to RSVP for the Rides?**

Many of you have asked if you need to RSVP for each ride. The answer is "No". You do not need to RSVP for the ride each week - you just show up (45 minutes to an hour before start time) and sign in so we know who is riding. You also sign out after you finish so we know everyone is back.

Each week, there will be a sign-in list at the ride. All riders who have enrolled are listed in alphabetical order and the list is broken up into smaller lists (A-D, E-H, ...) so no one has a long line to sign in. You initial in on the Started column next to your name before you ride. When you are finished, you come back and initial the Finished column so we know you are finished.

The first time you show up to ride, we'll be issuing you a rider number to place on the FRONT of your helmet so we know you are enrolled. Please DON'T take the number off after the ride. You use the number (and helmet, we hope) all season. If you need to get a new helmet, we'll issue a new number but otherwise, please leave your rider number on your helmet through the training series.
- **Someone Told Me There is a "Hotline"?**

In case of inclement weather or last minute ride updates, Ready2Roll Cycling has a dedicated phone hotline number. We suggest you adding this number to your phone and if you are ever wondering if a ride may be cancelled or postponed due to weather or other concerns, simply call this number ride morning for updates. Keep in mind this number is for informational purposes only and is not monitored. **The Ready2Roll Cycling Hotline is at 281-907-9007**

- **Purpose of the Beginner Rides**

Several riders have written to ask if they "have to be" at the beginner rides to help mentor and many more have mentioned that they will be coming to the ride and look forward to "getting back in the saddle".

The purpose of the beginner rides is to help the new riders (brand new or have ridden a little, but never in a large group) get used to riding on the road in a group and to help them learn to follow the rules of the road, recognize, avoid and communicate hazards, learn to pass and be passed safely and courteously and other things we learn with experience. We do this by have experienced riders partner up with 2-3 newbies and ride at their pace while coaching them on group riding skills.

Most of our mentors are Ride Marshals and/or League of American Bicyclists League Certified Instructors (LCI's) or are experienced riders who are comfortable coaching and nurturing the newbies. If you are coming out to get the cobwebs off your bike and out of your legs – this is not the ride for you – those begin on Jan 28 at the first of our 12 regular season rides. We are not trying to discourage anyone but these two beginner rides are fairly small by design so we don't overwhelm the new riders and they can learn group riding skills on quiet roads in small groups.

- **How Can I Jump-Start My Cycling Clothing Collection?**

Many new riders have asked about if there is a cost-effective way to get a few jerseys so they have plenty of those big back pockets to hold snacks, insurance/ID cards, etc.

That's an easy one because at the first two beginner rides, Jan Cohen is organizing our annual Ready2Roll Cycling Garage Sale. She has collected quite a few brand new and gently used jerseys as well as some bike racks and other cycling equipment. All of this was donated by riders and teams so 100% of the proceeds are donated to the MS-Society.

This is a GREAT way to get your collection jump-started and donate to fight MS at the same time. Be sure to arrive early and/or stay late to take advantage of the great deals – many of these are \$50+ items selling for much less – as low as \$10 for some items.

(Hint: Arrive early the first week for the best selection...)

- **Passing Perfection (H2 pass and be passed)**

This last tip is long (2.5 pages) because this is another one of the annual tips (like the Weather Wear Advisory) that is reused and refined each year. I realize that it is long but please read it all a few times and, if you ride in a group already, discuss this with your group.

Over the years, I have noticed a fairly regular issue in our rides and have observed several mishaps when a newer rider is startled during a pass and jerks causing them to lose control of their bike. In most cases, the rider recovers but I have seen a few where the rider did take a spill. These accidents can be avoided by exercising a little rider etiquette. Here are some details about how to make a safe, courteous pass.

We will practice these passing tips below over and over and I will be giving you feedback. After a few weeks, this will become second nature but please read the tips below and practice them as well as observing other riders doing the same. Be sure to communicate effectively and say "THANKS!" to show your appreciation for other riders who are learning/practicing these very useful tips.

Passing on a bicycle is a two-way event. The passer and the passee both have a few simple responsibilities that will make the pass safe and friendly.

The passer should:

- Call "Approaching rider" as you get close (within 10-20 yards)
- Check the road behind to ensure no approaching vehicles
- Move over to allow enough room, speed up just a little and start the pass
- Call "Passing on left" as you pull near the rider
- Adjust your volume for the weather - if it's calm, you don't need to shout, if it's windy, you will need to raise your voice
- Allow plenty of room before pulling back in to the right

The passee should:

- Be aware of approaching riders (listen, NO headphones!)
- Acknowledge calls to pass - saying "Thank You" is a GREAT way to do this!
- Maintain a steady speed and line - don't suddenly slow down or speed up as you are being passed and don't jerk your handle bars.

The process for multiple riders passing is similar with a few extra variations...

The group of passers should do all the above plus:

- Call "Rider(s) Up, slowing!" as they approach
- Double check for approaching traffic - allow more room for multiple riders to pass
- Consolidate to single file if not already there
- The lead rider should call: "Passing on left, 7 riders" or something similar to let the passees know what to expect
- The last rider should call: "Last rider" so the group knows you are all past
- Allow extra room before pulling back in so the your line doesn't cut off the passees
- Maintain a steady speed, don't speed up until the entire group has passed - your group may feel pressured to pass when it is not safe in order to avoid falling behind

The passees being passed by a group should do all the above plus:

- Smoothly consolidate to single file when a group approaches (the lead rider should call "Slowing, Single file")

(Ignoring the "Riders approaching" call and not allowing room for riders to pass is not a good way to make friends!)

- Listen for the first and last passers so they know what to expect.

Note that the passers have the responsibility to ease up as they approach and wait for safe conditions to pass. The passees have the responsibility to listen, hold a steady speed and line, and go to single file to make room for the passers to get around.

I expect to see you all practicing these tips - they make a huge difference in how much we all enjoy the ride. I also expect to hear a LOT of communicating and "Thank you's" out on the roads this week and for the next three months!

Here is one more group/group riding tip. A question I received about pachelines.

Q: I've completed several MS150s but never a part of a team. While there have been large groups about, I've never been part of one. The extent of my drafting experience is limited to a group of 3 - and then only sporadically. Will this be covered in the next beginning ride?

A: We recommend avoiding fast pachelines which use more "aggressive" drafting in order to significantly increase speed unless you are very experienced and know your pacheline riders well.

On the other hand, there is an opportunity to ride in a group and practice simple drafting which does make your work quite a bit easier, especially on windy days. This also makes the ride a lot more fun since it is possible, and probable to meet and visit with other great riders as you go.

The key things to remember are:

1. Allow at least 18-24" between front/back wheels
2. NEVER overlap wheels!
3. Communicate with your group - call hazards, car back, slowing, stopping, turning, standing, etc...
4. Ride steady and predictable
5. Don't ride above your ability - pull off and let the group go if the pace feels too fast

Here are a few more linear thoughts on this topic:

- If a group has trained together, cycling etiquette says to let the slowest rider set the pace
- The ride is supposed to be fun and it is definitely more fun with a group of friends
- Friends DON'T let friends ride alone!

Hope this makes sense. Save this note as it will make a lot more sense as you get more experienced. I will be repeating this tip at least two more times early in the season because it takes us several weeks to master but, one you "get it", you will find that you are a much safer rider and you will enjoy riding even more as well as impressing all the other riders you encounter with your safe, courteous and predictable riding.

OK, that's it for our first weekly cycling Tips, Tricks and FAQs. Watch for more of these each Monday and, PLEASE read all of the Ready2Roll Cycling emails...

Thanks!

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