

2007 MS 150 Training Series - Ride #12 - Katy-Hempstead, April 14, 7:30 am

Wow, is it time for training ride #12 already!

Before we get to the weekly details, I wanted to share some thoughts on the New Ulm ride. Several of you sent me your thoughts and it was amazing how similar your notes were. They all shared some common themes:

- You want to go back to New Ulm when it's not cold & wet
- The wildflowers would have been beautiful if it had not been cold & wet
- It is tough to ride when you have a hard time shifting or grabbing the break lever
- Ditto when you have cold, wet feet
- Finally, you ALL agreed that the volunteers did an AMAZING job!!!

Here is a sample from one note:

"I just wanted to say that the volunteers from the New Ulm ride need to be recognized to the greatest degree possible, especially those at Rest Stop #1. I truly believe that they kept a lot of people from losing it - they remained calm, provided great instructions, made people get out of the weather, forced those that needed it into vehicles, etc. The way they handled themselves under such terrible conditions spoke volumes about their character. The SAG drivers did a phenom job also...their overall efforts to get all of the stranded riders & their bikes back to New Ulm was valiant.

Once the first few groups of riders made it back to the starting point, they jumped right back into their vehicles & went back to help rescue others...it was a truly a team effort & it was very fulfilling to see this effort unfold. Ironically, the BBQ turned into a great social event &, to me, was a great success. Everybody looked like drowned rats, but the food was unbelievable & warm, the room was warm & the volunteers were even warmer. It was a very nice end to a terrible ride."

Shell Captain Andrea Reynolds' parents came all the way from New York and while they were eager to help, they probably didn't expect to spend the morning in the cold rain at Rest Stop #1. All our volunteers were FANTASTIC - in New Ulm and all season!

Here is one very useful tip (in several parts) that I will share.

The key to salvaging any enjoyment on a cold, wet day, is proper clothing. The layered concept is one part of the equation. The most critical factor on wet days is the outer layer.

If you don't have any outerwear designed for wet riding, this is a good time to start collecting some. The winter season is or will be over at local and online bike shops soon so you can find some good buys if you head out to your favorite store and do some shopping over the next 2-3 weeks - while you can remember how cold your hands and feet were.

I noted full finger winter gloves from 9.99 (inner layer) to 59.99+ for Gore-Tex outer gloves. \$60 may sound like a lot for a pair of gloves but these should last almost a lifetime and Gore-Tex and the other new, high-tech fabrics really do keep you warm & dry inside while allowing your skin to breathe. I also noted full coverage booties from \$7.99 to \$39.99. Remembering last week, look for a pair designed to keep your feet dry.

There are many items on sale for your upper & lower body. You can go as low as a rain jacket starting at \$9.99 all the way to Gore legging (\$145) and jackets (\$150). A few weeks ago, I bought some rain pants for \$25 and a Gore Windstopper jacket for \$70. It was not cold enough for the pants but I had the jacket along - it just took a while to get it as my van was being used to carry riders back to New Ulm. (THANKS to Marshall Cohen for the New Ulm VFD t-shirt and to Evan Jones for the loan of his dry jacket & cap!).

I don't get any kick-backs - this is just personal experience speaking.

Now, it's time to get ready to ride...

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The good news this week is no hills to speak of. There are a couple of short ups & downs but nothing that you will mistake for a hill.

I can't make any promises on the rain but the online weather forecast predicts sunny skies, 50-75 degrees with winds out of the north at 10-15 mph. This means that you will need to work harder on the way out - that or find a few bigger riders to tuck in behind on the way to Hempstead! This means you want to start hydrating well today if you haven't already. If you ride all the way to Hempstead and back, the ride totals 66 miles so mileage-wise, this will be our longest ride of the series - another reason to start hydrating today...

For our final ride of the season, we have traditionally done this Katy-Hempstead route. The route is a simple out & back with an option to turn around at rest stop #1 in Monaville (46 miles) or at rest stop #2 in Hempstead (66 miles). If you want more than 46 but less than 66 miles, there is some complicated math that can be used to go beyond Monaville and turn around before Hempstead. I think it involves dividing or adding by 2 or something like that...

The reasons we like this route is that it is flat and there is a good shoulder almost all the way. It is still critical that you start in the right pace group but once we get spread out by pace, you will have a good opportunity to practice riding in a paceline if you have established a group. You will also have the opportunity to ride two abreast (no more) as long as you remember to stay on the shoulder, collapse to single file when passing or being passed, and communicating effectively with other riders if you need to make a pass.

PLEASE note the 7:30 am starting time. Next week, the MS gets under way at 7:00 am so we want to ease you into this starting time by getting away at 7:30.

Katy is near town so you don't have to get up REAL early but you DO need to ARRIVE ON TIME! There were several of you pulling into New Ulm last week as we were heading out - AFTER 8:00 AM!!! This is not a good way to have an enjoyable ride but it is a great way to ride by yourself since everyone else is long gone by the time you get going.

Directions to the Start - Leonard Merrill Center

Our start this week is at the Leonard Merrill Center in Katy. To get there, take I-10 to the second Katy exit (Pin Oak). Stay on the frontage road a short distance to FM-1463 (stop sign). Merrill Center is the large auditorium on the right past the stop sign. Since we are leaving at 7:30, you

want to arrive in Katy no later than 7:00 am. Please DON'T park at Katy High School - there are probably events there and our agreement this week is to use the Merrill Center facility and parking.

NOTE - We are paying a fee for the use of the facility and it will be open so you can use the restrooms. PLEASE remember that we are guests. Don't wander about and don't leave any litter or a mess behind you.

This week, we can once again thank Bike Barn for providing the pre-ride support. Be sure to thank them for coming out. They don't do bike inspections but can provide minor fixes. Labor is free and you only pay for parts, if more significant work is needed.

We will have paved parking again but carpooling is still critical and more enjoyable.

Remember, in case of bad weather check Bike Club messages @ 281-293-2931

If you can't recall the etiquette tips on passing, you can review the archives (plus ride maps, GPS data, etc online at:

<http://www.conocophillipsbikeclub.org>

I'll see many of you in Katy this Saturday...

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