

2008 MS150 E-mail & Training Series - Re-enlistment Time!

I told you this note would be a LONG one. Sorry for the length and the long way you need to go to get to the 2008 enrollment link but I need to ask everyone to PLEASE read this note and make sure you understand the details. You will see all these details again but probably not in one place.

OK, this is the moment you have all been waiting for...

...that's right, it's time to enlist in the 2008 BP MS150 E-mail distribution and our optional Training Series and get ready to ride to Austin!

Before I get started, let me give you the executive summary for those who will stop reading after 2-3 more sentences...

- Everyone, including yours truly, has to re-enlist to participate in the 2008 training series, receive 2008 e-mails, etc.

- This is the first of the three reminders you will receive to re-enlist.
- If you don't re-enlist, you will stop receiving e-mail after Dec 12, 2007
- The link to re-enlist is in this note.
- Unless you have already memorized everything I am about to say, it would be a GOOD idea to read this entire note and save it!

OK, here we go...

Today's note will focus on an overview of the series and what you need to do to register. There is a LOT of information here. Please read ALL of this note and keep it around to refer to. It should answer most questions you have. There will be more details coming about specific aspects of the series over the coming weeks. Please read each of these notes and keep them all in a folder to refer to.

The items covered today are:

- **12 Week Training Series**
- **Parking/Carpools**
- **2008 Enrollment (link is now live!)**
- **Club Web Site Update**
- **Payment**
- **Ride Marshal, HPD, Medic Bonus (Free Offer!)**
- **Core Teams**
- **Communication**
- **Online Bike Exchange**

Please read this entire note. If you have any questions, please contact your team captain first. If they can't answer the question and you didn't see the answer on our FAQ page, then drop me a note but don't count on a quick reply from me.

Out of town riders - You don't need to commute hundreds of miles to train with us but you do need to enlist now to remain on the e-mail distribution. Hopefully all the weekly ride notes and safety tips, etc. will help you to plan your parallel training activities until you come to join us on the road to Austin...

12 Week Training Series (Starts Jan 19)

The best way to have a fun, safe ride to Austin is to train properly. ConocoPhillips, BP, HP, the Houstonian, and several newer teams have joined together to coordinate a training series for our team riders to help them prepare for the ride.

The series starts on Jan 19 and includes 12 training rides. The rides are all on Saturday with the exception of Mar 2. Mar 1 is the date of the 2008 ConocoPhillips Rodeo Run which many of us are involved in planning and/or running. The ride on that weekend will be on Sunday, Mar 2.

Did I also mention that we have two pre-season rides just for beginners? These rides are scheduled for Jan 5 and Jan 12. They will be easy, out and back rides of 14 and 22 miles. They are designed to help new riders get comfortable on their bikes, on the road, and in a group. Experienced riders should not apply unless you are bringing one or a few new riders and plan to ride with them and serve as their mentor. These rides are supported but not to the extent that the full rides are and we don't expect more than 150-200 riders including mentors.

The rides start at 8:00 am with the exception of the final ride which starts at 7:30 am (to prepare you for the 7:00 am MS 150 start). If we have a really cold morning, we may delay the start to 9:00. This will be communicated in the weekly note or, more likely, via our club hotline at 281 293-2931. The message here will be updated if there is any change in our start. We'll ride in light rain but not if there is lightning.

The ride series starts out short and fairly flat and gradually builds up in distance and elevation. The longest we ride is 65 miles but this is enough to prepare you for the MS 150. Actually, after having completed the Chappell Hill and New Ulm rides, many of you will come up to me in Austin and laugh about the "hills" you flew up on your way.

Each ride starts out in a school, town square, or other area where there is adequate parking (more on this later). When you first arrive, check in at the sign-in table and get ready to ride. There will be porta-lets at the start but they are limited as we are in small towns. The weekly ride notice will mention some of my favorite nearby pre-ride stops which you should consider stopping at for cold drinks, ice and a pit stop.

We bring quite a bit of food and drinks but we can't bring enough to provide snacks and drinks before the ride. Please bring your bottles full of liquid and a snack if you need one before the ride and let us take over from there. The Smart Drinks crew will be on hand before and after each ride with delicious hot coffee and wonderful smoothies before and after the ride.

If we behave ourselves, ride considerately, share the road with local traffic, and support the local businesses, then the towns start sending me wonderful e-mail notes asking when we are coming back next year. Your support will make a BIG difference here.

Since we're a big group, we start the ride in waves based on pace. The faster riders leave first followed by progressively slower riders. Please start with the appropriate group. This eliminates the need for a lot of passing early on when the group is large and tightly clustered.

Each ride will have a short and a long option. Don't try the long option until you have built up your base mileage. With a 12 week series, there will be plenty of time to get in the mileage you need. The options will both be covered in ride maps which include the map, distances, and the cell numbers for the weekly support team.

The weekly support team will provide snacks and drinks at the designated breakpoints as well as mobile SAG vehicles. The purpose of the SAG vehicles is to look after our riders and provide assistance if you need it. The SAG drivers are volunteers and some may know how to change a flat but we can't guarantee this. You should carry tubes appropriate for your tires and be prepared to change a flat or ride with friends who can.

I highly recommend the "riding w/ friends who can" option. A few years ago, I had not one, not two but three flats on the Chappell Hill ride. No one would let me change any of my flats. Talk about GREAT friends (and a bad front rim)!!!

That reminds me - if you are new to this, cycling is a LOT more fun with a group. Ride at a pace that is comfortable and introduce yourself to the riders around. By the end of the season, you will have discovered a wonderful new set of friends and your ride will be a LOT easier by taking turns pulling the group. By the way, it is considered good etiquette to stop when a member of your group has trouble as long as they have been sharing the load and are not a drop-in sitting on the back while you do all the work.

Bring your cell phone but leave it off unless you need to make an emergency call or are on medical call. If you have difficulty, you can refer to your map to track down a driver if they don't come along shortly.

When you complete your ride, PLEASE remember to come by the sign-in table and initial that you have finished. I do like to review this sheet and check in with you at home if it appears that you did not finish. Since some of you are faster than others, I have found it best to call you at 2:00 am in the morning after the ride to be sure you made it home!!!-)

Please be sure to thank the volunteers for their support and support the local communities where we ride. I will be reminding you many times that the more we do to befriend the local communities, the more they will look forward to our return. Many of us like to grab lunch in the area before heading back. Your body needs the replenishment and it helps create goodwill in the community. I will be mentioning some great dining spots in or near several of our rides. Please also remember to take all your trash - we want to leave the community as clean or cleaner than when we arrived.

Parking/Carpools

Speaking of ways to enhance our public image - a BIG one is parking. Our rides will draw 400+ riders early in the season and will average in the 500's with a peak of 700+ at our final few rides. If we all come in our own car, this overwhelms the local parking.

Many of our experienced riders already have carpools. If you are new, check with your team captain and start working on carpool options now.

Peter Martin at HP has set up a HP Cycling Club Web Forum at:

<http://pub24.bravenet.com/forum/show.php?usernum=2000958103&cpv=1>. This is a simple site to post if you are looking for riders from your area or have room for riders in your carpool. Post your zipcode, neighborhood, your name, phone & e-mail. We DON'T do compatibility testing but no one has reported anything to me except having a LOT of fun. As we move out to the hills, you will have some long drives to the start. Carpooling makes this time fun and it passes quickly. NOTE - if you are receiving this note at work, this site may be blocked. If so, forward this note to your home e-mail to access the cycling forum. Our wonderful Webmaster, Aaron Jacks, will be posting my notes on our club web site (see below). If you misplace one, you can go to the "News" folder to see all my greatest hits...

NOTE - Carpooling is not optional this year! This is our biggest challenge and ALL riders must carpool to the rides. The only exception is the weekly support team, many of whom will need an individual vehicle. At all of the small town rides, you will be turned away and may have to head home or park several miles from the start if you arrive alone. We are starting the registration process a month early so PLEASE start working on a carpool now...

NOTE2 - We are working with a company that may be able to give us an even better carpool tool. This tool will help you find riders within a mile or less of your home. I hope to have more details on this before the end of the year.

Enrollment for the 2008 E-mail distribution and (optional) 12 Week Training Series (...is now live!!!)

All riders who plan to participate in the training series and/or continue to receive my e-mail MUST register, even me.

There are NO paper registration forms - you MUST complete the waiver/form online. If you have a friend without web access, invite them over to complete the form or they can do this at any public library. Your team may also require a specific team waiver. Please check this out with your team captain ASAP.

Here are the key things to note about the registration:

- **ALL riders MUST register BEFORE they can ride.**
- **The cut-off date is 11:59 pm the Wednesday prior to the ride.**

If you have not registered by then, you MUST wait a week to ride.

- You must accept the waiver or have your guardian accept for you if you are under 18
- You must indicate your team (more on core teams below).

Please click the button next to your team.

I will ask each team captain to confirm all riders registered on their team so...

...please be sure you are properly registered on your team before registering for the training series

Please register ASAP...PLEASE!!!

If you don't want to continue on the e-mail distribution for 2008, you don't need to do anything.

After Dec 12, only riders who have completed the 2008 waiver/registration form will continue to get cycling e-mail from me.

To register, go to the page below. You will be finished in under 2 minutes...

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zqi?p=WEB2273KPFDA6G>

For the next three weeks, I will be sending weekly notes to the 2007 and 2008 lists. Once you register, you will get my notes twice if you are also on the 2007 list. This duplication will stop after Dec 12 so sorry for the temporary extra e-mail.

Club Web Site Update

After you submit your registration, you can click on any text on the "Thank-you" page to be directed to the ConocoPhillips Bike Club Web Site. You can also go straight to the site at the link below:

<http://www.conocophillipsbikeclub.org>

Be sure to add the site to your favorites once you get in. You will want to come back many times.

The site has our full schedule, directions and maps of each ride, a FAQ page with a lot of your most commonly asked questions, links to many of your team sites and many other great links such as the Cycling Forum which we will use to facilitate carpooling.

Again, a BIG THANKS! to Aaron Jacks with the Mustang/Wood Group for doing such a great job as our Webmaster.

Payment for the 12 week Training Series

The cost of the entire 12 week series is \$80 per rider if received prior to Dec 31. The fee will go up \$10 beginning Jan 2 and then, another \$10/week after Jan 15. The cost increase is purely a function of encouraging payment BEFORE we start the training series. When January arrives, we need to turn our attention to looking after all of you and put the accounting behind us. You have 6 weeks to take advantage of the \$10+ "discount". Also note that 100% of the fee increase is donated to the MS Society. I do want you to pay up early but, if you prefer to wait, I am happy to accept your donations to help fight MS. PLEASE send in your payment ASAP (see below)

Please make checks payable to the ConocoPhillips Bike Club. If you are paying for several riders, please list each rider (alphabetically would be great!) down in the memo section of the check as well as in an attached note or Post-It so I can properly account for all riders.

Please drop your payment (payable to ConocoPhillips Bike Club) in the mail to me ASAP at:

Steve Moskowitz
11027 Holworth
Houston, TX 77072

You can also pay via PayPal. I have an account setup for the Bike Club. It is under my e-mail address - steve.e.moskowitz@conocophillips.com. PLEASE be sure to note the rider(s) you are paying for and please include \$3 extra (\$83 total) to cover the PayPal fees.

If you prefer to pay by cash or register just a few days before your first ride, you can bring your payment to your first ride. Please keep the cash unfolded and, if possible, put it in an envelope and list the rider(s) that are covered by the payment. If the check is for multiple riders, please note this on the envelope. It is MUCH easier to account for all the payments if they are organized just a little bit. PLEASE take a moment to do this if you are bringing your payment to your first ride.

Your attention to these seemingly minor details will save a LOT of time during the first few weekends compiling and recording your payments.

Ride Marshal, HPD, Medic Bonus (Free Offer!)

Since Ride Marshals are a very important part of ensuring that large rides are safe, we are offering all the RM's from our teams the opportunity to do the training rides FREE!!!

In order to qualify, you must first volunteer as a Ride Marshall (see http://www.ms150.org/ms150/volunteering/more/ride_marshalls.cfm). Once you have been confirmed, please send a copy of your confirming note to me as well as your team captain and you are good to go.

Did I mention that the Ride Marshal crew is headed up by our own dynamic duo – Barron Lozano and Brian Hatt? You will see Barron and Brian at almost all of our rides. Brian VERY patiently keeps an eye on the back of our pack - the VERY back.

This offer also applies to Medics and HPD riders who are participating in the 2008 MS150. We are working with the MS staff to figure out the best way to confirm HPD and EMS riders.

Core Teams

Our ride series has grown to the point that we have to limit the number of riders. In order to do this, ensure that we can adequately support you on the rides, and answer all your questions off the bike, we have had to limit the series to riders who are members of a set of core teams. The core teams consist of four very experienced teams, BP, ConocoPhillips, HP and the Houstonian plus several newer teams. These teams help support the training series

Here is our list of core teams for 2008:

Apache
BP
CGGVeritas
Coca-Cola
ConocoPhillips
El Paso
Gensler
Granite Properties

Houston Chronicle
Houstonian
HP
IBM
Marathon
Mustang/Wood Group
National Oilwell Varco
Newfield Exploration
Redi Clinic
Shell
Texas Children's Hospital
Texas Exes
WellFit Group

Each year, we take in a few new, small teams to help them get started on their way to becoming a big MS 150 team. These teams usually ride for a few years until they grow large enough to go out on their own. Please welcome Gensler, IBM, Mustang/Wood Group and Redi Clinic to the series this year.

This may look like a large list but it looks like after we factor in the graduations, consolidations and acquisitions, we'll be only slightly larger than last year's group. If you are registered to ride with one of the teams listed above, you are eligible to join the training series. PLEASE don't pass this note along to your friends unless they are riding with one of these teams. We need to enforce the rider limit in order to keep the training series manageable..

Communication

As I mentioned above, everyone must re-enlist to stay on the e-mail distribution list. There will be three reminders (this is #1) going to the 2007 distribution list. After Dec 12, all correspondence will only go to those who have completed the 2008 enrollment form.

At a minimum, you will get a weekly note from me. These usually go out early Wednesday morning. I do have a real job so occasionally, they may be late but this is rare. Early in the season, there will be a few extra notes and later on, there may be supplemental notes.

If you have spam filtering software, please be sure to add me to your safe senders list. I occasionally use an idiom or phrase that causes some spam filters to reject a note. I also send the note to quite a few addresses at one time. Both of these trigger alarms in many spam filters so, if you add me to your safe senders list, the filter will let the notes pass. I PROMISE that I won't forward any spam, bad jokes, etc.

OK, I know that some of you are going to accuse me of sending many bad jokes over the years but that's a matter of taste and I know that eventually, you will come around...

If you have a question, please first check with your captain, a fellow rider or our FAQ page. I have a rule on my Outlook inbox to route my cycling e-mail to a holding folder and I won't be able

to provide an answer as quick as these other channels in most cases. If you do need to ask me something, CC to my home address as well (moskose@swbell.net). This may get a faster response.

You should also be getting notes from your team captain. Please be sure that you have registered with them as I will be asking them to validate that you are on their team list.

Online Bike Exchange

At this time of year, there are a lot of new riders looking to buy or borrow a bike and a lot of veterans got new bikes over the summer or for Christmas.

To facilitate the exchange of bikes, HP's Peter Martin (Peter is AMAZING!) set up an online bike exchange site for us. This site allows you to post what you have to offer or are looking for and you maintain/update it yourself.

There are only a few current postings but I expect that to change very quickly after you all see this note. To view or post a bike exchange listing, go to the link below. NOTE - if you are receiving this note at work, this site may be blocked. If so, forward this note to your home e-mail to access the online exchange.

<http://pub24.bravenet.com/classified/show.php?usernum=2000958103&cpv=1>

Please be sure to update/delete your postings when appropriate. Hint - put an expiration date so, if you forget, it expires without your intervention.

Well, that's not all I have but plenty for the kick-off note. If you think this is a long note, just wait... We probably lost Marshall Cohen after the third sentence so I'm not sure if he will ever make it to the registration stuff way down here. Someone may want to be sure to let him know that the registration link was included in this note.

I look forward to seeing all the new faces and the returning veterans on Jan 19.

Austin, Here we come...

Stephen Moskowitz

Team Captain, ConocoPhillips

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