

2007 BP MS150 - Training Ride #1

Good morning all!

It is time to get ready to ride to Austin...

Before we get to the details about training ride #1, a few learning's from the second beginner ride which saw 136 of you brave some headwind to Monaville in order to have a little wind assistance on the way back.

The first learning was suggested by a couple of you. Many of you have questions. I don't have time to answer all of these. Fortunately, 90+% of the questions I get were actually answered in the e-mail the person included in their reply or have been asked by other riders.

Top #1 is to go to the bike club site at the link below. As soon as you get there do the following:

1. Add this site to your favorites so it is easy to go back
2. Look for the FAQ page (Frequently Asked Questions)
3. Look for the links to find carpools, links to my earlier e-mails and links to all the ride maps/training schedule

The bike club is currently located at:

<http://members.tripod.com/arcc2/ConocoBikeClub.htm>

It will be moved soon to a site without pop-up ads. If we have a few web wizards will and able to help expedite the move, please send a note to Aaron Jacks (aaron@oldschoolcycling.org).

The biggest concern I have at our two beginner rides is that quite a few riders were still pulling into the parking lot at 8:00 or after. This will NOT work from now on. The riding group will be too big and late arrivals will miss critical announcements, safety exercises and other key details. Late arrivals will also probably forget to sign in so we have no way to know they are on the roads. PLEASE arrive at least 45 minutes prior to departure (8:00 am) until you have gotten accustomed to all the starting details. Even then, 25 minutes is the minimum provided you are dressed, ready to roll, and don't need a pit stop.

Please remember to sign in and sign out on the sign-in lists. These are alphabetical lists of all the riders. We will break the list into four lists so the lines are not as long. Please check to see that you are in the right line to save time before the ride.

If you haven't paid your training fee yet (\$75 now), please remember to first go to the rider fee table next to the sign in tables to pay before you sign in. If you are paying at the ride, please remember to write the name(s) of all riders the check covers or, if paying in cash, put the cash in an envelope with all the rider names on the outside as well as on a Post-It on the cash. Please don't fold the cash, use a bigger envelope. It takes a long time on Saturday to straighten out all the payments when things are wadded up - please help make this easier for all of us.

Finally, THANKS to all of you who have dropped notes to point out that the maps online are slightly out of synch with the schedule. About three weeks ago, a note went up on the Simonton City page saying that the bridge over the Brazos River on FM1093 would be closed for repairs from Jan 15 - Feb 15. Our ride planners discovered this pretty quick and we have been scrambling to get approved alternate routes. Once these are approved, the maps online will be updated and I promise they will be up to date by the time we ride! The mileages on the calendar may be off but the maps will be correct. A big THANKS to Greg Schindler, Peter Martin, Lisa Rainey and Critz Cullen who have done a LOT of behind the scenes work to make this happen.

OK, this note will cover the following topics:

- **Training Ride #1 - Klassic Katy, Jan 27, 8:00 am**
- **Beginner Help - Ride #1**
- **Safety Corner - Group Rides, Drafting & Pacelines**
- **APB - MIA Riders**

- Training Ride #1 - Klassic Katy, Jan 27, 8:00 am - 29/37 miles

This week, we kick off the season with one of our classic rides - sort of...

If this ride looks a little familiar to our veteran riders, it is probably because it is a variation on our Katy Klassic only we are riding in the other direction.

This ride is one of our classic opening rides as it is close to town but the roads are not too busy. This ride is almost completely flat with a few dips on the road from Fulshear to Brookshire. Most of the ride is on local roads without a shoulder so you will need to ride single file. We will have Ride Marshals, HPD riders and conscientious riders reminding you to ride "Single File". Please honor these requests so that we are welcome to come back. More on this below.

We will be starting from Katy Mills Mall. A big THANKS to Sun & Ski Sports who is sponsoring our group so that we can start from the mall this week. Sun & Ski will open at 7:00 am for our riders. I will be in there early so Marshall Cohen will stop commenting about the holes in my old socks...

If you are not familiar with the mall, Sun & Ski is located on the east side (the side facing Houston) near I-10. As you enter the mall, turn to the left and come around to the east side and you will see Sun & Ski near the front. Please don't park right near the mall entry but park near the perimeter of the parking on the east side. We will be starting from the driveway outside of Sun & Ski.

The routes this week are 28.6 or 37.4 miles (Greg S is very precise about these). Most of you will be doing the shorter route and that is perfect for the start of the season. Because of the adjustments to the route, there will be one rest stop at the Fulshear Park & Ride. This is right in the middle of the long route and just over 1/3 of the way on the short route.

IMPORTANT Ride Details

We will have twice our normal porta-lets in Fulshear - 8. **Please DON'T use the permanent restrooms at the park & ride!** They are supposed to be locked but, if they aren't, please DON'T use them.

We have lined up 14 officers from the Katy PD. They will be covering all the significant intersections we pass through. Please obey them and be prepared to stop as you approach each intersection.

Riders MUST ride single file on Bois D' Arc and Winner Foster! The residents of Fulshear are upset about the large number of bikers taking up large amounts of space on the roads and the residents have decided they need to do something about it. The residents of Fulshear will

contact the Fort Bend County sheriff's office if they find riders not riding single file. We have been told that the Fort Bend county sheriff's will be out patrolling Bois D' Arc and Winner Foster on Saturday. They asked us to remind riders to come to a complete stop at all stop signs.

A person at work lives on Winner-Foster, the folks there are getting sick and tired of the cyclists riding in packs, taking the entire road and not making any attempt to work with motorists. Some residents are to the point of doing everything legally possible to hammer the cyclists. This is our opportunity to demonstrate that not all cyclists are inconsiderate. PLEASE ride single file and be considerate of local traffic or we will not be welcome back.

Please ride on the shoulder on Hwy 90 from Brookshire back to Katy. You can ride two abreast but please allow faster riders to pass - see the Safety Corner below.

- Beginner Help - Ride #1

For the Jan 27 ride, our beginner mentor extraordinaire, Margaret Shelton, will ride at the back of the group with any novice/beginner cyclists who want a buddy for this 1st large group ride

I will announce this at the start.

- Safety Corner - Group Rides, Drafting & Pacelines

This week, we officially start training to ride to Austin. Our training series is designed to help you get into shape to ride and, equally important, train you how to ride safely and courteously.

Towards this end, I will include a Safety Corner each week focusing on a topic/technique that will help ensure you get to Austin with your skin and all your bones intact. These tips are for your health. PLEASE read them and practice the exercises we will be promoting!

If some of you experienced riders want to contribute a safety tip/topic, please feel free to drop me a well written note for future use. All contributors will be noted and thanked profusely.

Since we are getting ready for our first group ride, I want to talk about some group ride issues/considerations.

Please remember these key tips about a group ride.

Do's

- Ride smoothly and predictably
- Communicate - BOTH ways, call hazards, call when passing and listen to others
- Ride your ride at your pace
- Listen and respect the Ride Marshals, Medics and HPD officers - they are looking out for our safety
- Ride single file or max 2 abreast if on a wide shoulder or a road that is closed to regular

vehicular traffic

- Enjoy the ride - Remember that this is a fund-raiser to find a cure for MS, not a race!

Don'ts

- Cross over the center stripe
- Pass on the right
- Overlap the wheel of the rider in front of you
- Ride in pacelines (unless you are very experienced with the general process and the specific group you are riding with)
- Wear headphones (any type) or talk on your cellphone while riding

I will come back to many of these in detail over and over until we are all familiar with the fundamentals of safe riding.

When I worked as a Ride Marshal at the Tour de Pink (GREAT ride, pencil in Sept 9, 2007!), I witnessed two accidents. Neither was major but one may have resulted in a broken collar bone. Both did not involve any rider contact but both were the result of a slower rider being startled when a faster group passed. The slower rider startled, went off the road to the right, and fell when trying to get back on the road. Here are some details about how to make a safe, courteous pass.

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 they get close
- Slow down a bit to allow buffer space for both riders
- Check the road behind to ensure no approaching vehicles
- Call "Passing on left" after the other rider has acknowledged their presence
- Move over to allow enough room, speed up and make the pass
- 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 - "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 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 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 their line doesn't cut off the passees

The passees should do all the above plus:

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

We will cover these tips in the pre-ride announcements and I expect to see you all practicing this. 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 riding tip. A question I received about pacelines.

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 against pacelines which is "aggressive" drafting in order to increase speed (unless you are very experienced and know your paceline riders well)

On the other hand, there is an opportunity to ride in a group and practice gentle 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 12-24" 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 on the way to Austin
- 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...

- APB - MIA Riders

I have checks from the following riders but they have not signed up for the training series yet.

Elizabeth David
Charlotte Fontenot
Lori Gottlieb-Potocki
Brent Harrell
Peter Hawkins
Bruce (or Carolyn?) Johnson

If you know any of them, please forward this note and make sure they sign up. The link to sign up is at:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB225Y73DRQSU>

Remember the team hotline will be updated by 5:30 Saturday if the weather is questionable.

Remember:

- Put your clothing/eqpt out Friday night
- You must have completed the rider profile/waiver to ride - NO EXCEPTIONS
(If you are getting this note directly from me (no one forwarded it), you are signed up)
- Only riders from our core teams can ride - we need to keep the size manageable

I'll see some of you this Saturday...

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