

Subject: 2010 BP MS150 Training Series - Ride 1 Feedback
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To: Undisclosed recipients;

Ride 1 is now in the books and we have found it to be very useful to provide some feedback, especially after the first rides to give everyone time to read the feedback and let it have some soak time before the ride next week.

This week, the number one issue, as many of you have guessed, is Safety. Please read this feedback and keep it close to your heart. This is what really sets us apart from all the other rides in town and this is what will ensure that you are ready to ride to Austin on April 17...

Rider Spills - Causes and Cures

Our number one issue to improve on is to do everything we can to avoid taking a spill.

We had several spills which resulted in ambulance transports last Saturday. In most cases, the reports I received indicated that the cause of the spill was riders overlapping wheels, touching front to back and the rear rider taking a fall. There was also a report of a rider who lost control of their bike and a rider who went down when both wheels slipped into a pavement joint on Pin Oak Rd on the way out of Katy Mills Mall.

We are only one week into a twelve week training program which is why I made a lot of pre-ride reminders to ask you to please take it easy, allow extra distance and ride at least 5-6 miles before trying to settle into your expected pace. At this point in the season, we have a mixture of experienced and new riders. Add to this the fact that most of the experienced riders have not ridden in a large group in many months. It also takes a few weeks to get used to the new riders who may have joined your riding group as well as the occasional slowing and speeding up that occurs early in the season while we're all getting back into the groove.

In other words, the most predictable thing about our early rides is that they will be unpredictable!

At this time of year, many of us are also very excited, very eager, and very happy to be meeting a lot of new friends with a common interest. This is a great recipe for distraction and loss of focus to the point that one quick slowdown by the rider ahead or a swerve to miss a rock and the next thing you know, you're on the ground. You should never overlap wheels with the rider in front of you unless you are professional riders and have experience riding in a professional peloton. For the rest of us, never means NEVER. Wheel to wheel bumps are a sure fire recipe for a spill. You also need to be very focused on the ride itself, the riders and potential hazards around you so hold up on the great conversations in until the group has spread out to the point that you can safely converse. Here is a tip - the faster you ride, the longer it will take before you can visit - if at all. This is because you need to be very focused on the riders around at higher speed because things happen so much faster.

The bottom line is this...

...It is extremely important that each of us start in the appropriate wave (see below), start off easy and allow extra room to the rider in front of you. Once we get under way, continue to allow plenty of room, ride smoothly and predictably and communicate hazards, anticipated speed changes, etc as quickly and effectively as possible. Only when there are no riders or groups bunched up ahead should you start to settle into your group's desired pace and, maybe start catching up.

We will all get better at this over the coming weeks. As we are getting better, it is important to follow these tips so that you don't suddenly find yourself a spectator at the ride. We still have plenty of time so please be patient, enjoy the ride, and appreciate the gradual build-up over the coming weeks as we move out into the quiet countryside, put Winter behind us and start to appreciate the beautiful wildflowers and mostly gently rolling hills in store...

Wave Start

The good news on Saturday is that this was the best job I have ever seen for Ride 1 of estimating your

pace and getting into the appropriate wave to start. We are not perfect yet but overall, the small 100 or so rider waves seemed to be fairly well seeded with the riders at the appropriate speed for that wave.

Here is how to tell if you started in the right wave or should adjust next week.

- If a lot of people passed you in the first miles of the ride, you should move back 1-2 waves next week.
- If you passed a lot of riders last Saturday, you should move up 1-2 waves next week.
- If a moderate number of riders passed you or you passed them, try to move up or back within the wave you were in.

Those of you who are new and don't know your speed yet, you want to start in the back or near the back this week. The rule is the same - if you pass a lot of riders after you start, then move up the week after or vice versa.

I am going to have our GREAT Ride Marshals help to mark the waves at the start area. We have RM's at all paces so they will station themselves to help you find your wave and they will depart with their wave to help keep all of us safe and under control.

I will also leave a slightly larger gap between the waves next week because there are some funnel points on the way out and the extra gap will help let you settle into your pace sooner.

Road Hazards - Communicate

One of our riders took a hard fall when their tires slipped into one of the road joints on Pin Oak just after we departed the mall. The bad news is a broken collar bone. The good news is that they love cycling and they are determined to pull into Austin on two wheels on April 18. They should be in good shape as they have 12 weeks to heal and get into shape.

The learning here is that it is important to verbally call out road hazards and use a visual - point - as long as there is room to do so and not bump a rider next to you. This part of the road, we were pulling over to the left to go up the Pin Oak overpass so it is hard to see the crack and concentrate on the traffic and listening to the officers directing us. As I mentioned, we will leave a larger gap so the waves are not bunched up here and I am asking each of you to take it real easy on the way out, allow extra distance to make it easy to see the hazards and avoid them plus call them out to make the riders behind aware. We will be departing the mall to the east this week and heading north though the edge of old Katy. There will be even more officers than last week so just enjoy the early part of the ride as a proper warm-up and wait until we are past town and on Katy-Hockley Cut-off at the earliest to start setting into your pace. In 12 weeks, you will reaply appreciate this advice!

If you do find yourself slipping into a crack or losing control, the key is to try your best to relax and hold on to your handlebars until you land. Extended arms are very prone to breaking or twisting the heck out of the shoulders, collars and sockets that hold them in place. Arms in may get bruised but the impact is usually spread and absorbed better. You may hit your head but, if your helmet is adjusted properly, you should make a quick recovery. If you do hit your helmet, you want to replace it before your next ride. Even if there are no visible cracks, there may be a internal weakness. Your brain is not worth the risk - at least not anyone's brain that I know!-)

Other Improvements

Here are a few more changes you will notice next Saturday:

- Some of the SAGs will be pre-positioned on the early part of the route and one will depart behind each wave start with wave #3

This will help them to catch up to any accidents as soon as possible.

- More powerful sound system - it may not arrive by next Saturday but we'll beef up the volume so no one will miss the pre-ride announcements
- More reminders to start slow and easy and control your speed until we are well down the road
- We'll split up the sign-in so that the 1st three lists will go straight and the 2nd three lists will go right as you come into Sun & Ski

- More signage We had a sign 100 yards before each key turn and one at the turn - we'll add some and try to make them more obvious

This may take two weeks to get completely upgrade signage with an interim this week
Please do study the map so you have a good idea of what to expect.

More Tips

Here are some tips that you should find helpful based on feedback and personal experience after our first ride...

More pre-ride preparation so you don't forget anything...

- Here's something else to put on the counter on top of your keys so you don't forget to bring it to the ride...

..YOUR BIKE!!!

Thanks to Marshall and Jan Cohen for picking up **MY BIKE** Saturday morning...

...That's right, I remembered all our ride materials and forgot my bike - I even moved it over to get the spare helmets and still, left it behind!-)

WHAT was I thinking...

If paying by check at the ride - PLEASE write the rider name(s) on the check

- I have two checks turned in Saturday that I can't match to a rider - no one can figure out the signature and there is no rider name or phone number

One is from Texas Home Maintenance and the other has no name or address on the check (really!) - it's from Chase bank.

If you can send me the check number and rider name for either of these, you will get credited for payment

OK, I wanted to keep this note fairly short so you could get through it before bed time. As I said, please read this note and let it sink in all week. Then, when you come to ride, practice exercising patience and focus to ensure you have a great and safe ride every week.

Thanks!

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