

Subject: 2010 Cycling News - Pre-Season News (incl Excellent Safety Classes!)

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Happy New Year to all!

This is the first Wednesday of 2010 which means it must be time to kick off the 2010 cycling news! This note is fairly long but it contains some important and useful information. Please read the entire note and please save it in a folder where you can refer back to it as needed...Please!

Before I go any further, I want to comment about the weather and the communication process. If you haven't noticed, it's cold outside...actually, make that VERY cold outside! The team planning the Beginner ride this Saturday is closely monitoring the weather and will make the final call on whether they feel it will be OK to ride or not this Saturday. Since this ride is aimed at our beginner riders many of whom don't yet have all the appropriate cold weather wear, it is very likely that the ride may be called off if the current very cold forecast is still in place this Thursday night. I will be sending an update this Friday morning to confirm if the ride is on or not.

While the main cycling news will usually arrive in your inbox on Wednesday, you can expect late breaking news on Friday when conditions or key detail changes warrant.

I have deliberately put the weekly training ride news and the safety class news at the bottom because I really want you to read the rest of the note first!-)

Today's news covers the following:

- **GREAT TIP #1 - The MOST Useful Resource Known to Mankind...**
- **Ride Calendar - Overview**
- **Carpools (More info coming...)**
- **Volunteers Needed**
- **Beginner Ride #1 - Sat, 1/9, 7:30 am**
- **Training Series Sponsor - Sun & Ski Sports**
- **Bike Safety Classes - Sat, 1/9, 9-noon or 1-4**

NOTE - Our first training ride is coming up on Saturday, Jan 23. We do have two rides for beginners this Saturday and next (Jan 9 and Jan 16). We also have several bike safety classes scheduled including two this Saturday. Watch your inbox for lots more news about the upcoming safety classes and read on today for news about the classes this Saturday.

NOTE 2 - Note that the Beginner rides are aimed at our beginners - Duh! Those riders who are very new to cycling and need some experience on the road in a modest size group before the full rides begin. These rides are short, slow and focus on learning how to ride safely and courteously. If you are looking for a pre-season tune-up, these are not the ticket - please...

NOTE 3 - Did I already remind you to watch your inbox? There is a LOT of information and this year, like last year, I will be splitting it up into smaller notes based on content but it is IMPORTANT that you read each of these notes. If a note only applies to some of you, I will note this right at the top of the note and/or let you know when it's OK to stop reading...

NOTE 4 - Please note that I have CC'ed the captains of the core teams who help plan and support the training series. If you have questions, PLEASE direct these to your respective team captain. If they can't answer, they will contact me but most of them are seasoned veterans and should know the answers and respond faster than I can - plus they know the details specific to your team which pertains to many of the questions I get.

This note is going out to all riders who have enrolled for the 2010 cycling e-mail distribution. Obviously, our #1 (and 2 and 3...) focus right now is the 2019 BP MS150 and our upcoming training series so most of the news will be covering these two activities. You can also look forward to news on other cycling related activities in the area. After we finish riding to Austin, the content will slow down but I will continue to share news about area cycling activities and semi-regular, unsupported drop-in rides.

Today, I want to share an overview of what to expect in your inbox over the next 3 1/2 months as well as some tips/guidelines on how to maximize the return on your investment.

For the next 15 weeks, you will get at least one note per week from me. The weekly ride note will usually arrive fairly early on Wednesday morning. It will contain information about the upcoming ride as well as feedback on the previous ride, safety tips, timely local cycling news, and at least 1-2 bad puns, old jokes, or whatever else pops into my head at 3:45 on a Wednesday morning! Today's note is late because I had a Rodeo Run issue to take care of early this morning (more info coming on the Rodeo Run in another note...)

In the early weeks of the season, there will also be a series of "focus" notes which look at one specific topic related to our training such as passing etiquette, hydration, the ride-day timeline, cold weather wear, etc.

It is highly recommended that each of you do the following for each note you receive:

- Read each note - in it's entirety

- Some of the notes may be quite long - There are a lot of ride details and safety tips to share, please read the whole 9 yds.

- Note any important dates/times in your calendar

- Respond quickly if any response is requested (very rare but occasionally I need to validate your status or some key detail)

- Check our News archive (see below) for past notes and common questions or ask your team captain

...GREAT TIP #1 - The MOST Useful Resource Known to Mankind...

...If you have not done so already, go to <http://www.conocophillipsbikeclub.org> and add our web site to your favorites. **DO THIS NOW!**

While you are there, click the links on the left to get familiar with everything posted online. Here are the links on the left side:

- News** - Archive of weekly notes and special topics

- Our most excellent webmaster, Aaron Jacks (Mustang Wood Group), will set up an archive of my notes on our club site.

- Training Calendar** - Schedule, ride maps, Directions and maybe even GPS downloads when available

- The new calendar is still under development but the rides/dates are there with maps/time/details coming

- Links** - Lots of links to local cycling info. (Check the "Newbie" links Aaron put out there!)

- Enroll** - Click here to enroll for the e-mail and possibly, the optional training series

- Please enroll ONLY if you haven't already done so - five riders enrolled a 2nd time this week!

- "Ask Steve"** - Send me a question (also CC'ed to backup whizzes Aaron Jacks and Peter Martin)

- Bike Exchange** - A great self-service page to list cycling items for sale or that you are looking to buy (or borrow)

- Tip - There are several promising listings right now

- Tip 2 - Remember to update or take your listing down when you sale/buy something

- Tip 3 - Remember to include key info such as the frame size so riders know if the bike is one they should be looking at

- Car Pool** - Another self-service page to facilitate finding carpool partners. (9 postings there today)

- Tip - First look at the current listings and see if there is one in your neighborhood - if so, check the details and see if this may work

- If there is not a good carpool for you, then post your own listing

- List your neighborhood in the title of your posting to make it easy for other riders to find you

I will be sending a focus note on carpooling shortly

Ride Calendar - Overview

Here is an overview of what the calendar holds.

- Beginner Rides - Jan 9 & Jan 16, 8:00 am

These rides are short (14/22 miles) routes to help brand new riders get used to riding in groups and on the road.

These are not beginning of the season tune-ups for experience riders, these are short, easy paced rides with a lot of hands-on mentoring

If you recruited some brand new riders, you are welcome to come to mentor them - at their riding pace!

- Training Rides - Jan 23 to April 10

Fully supported rides - snacks, drinks, porta-lets

Long and short route options each week

500-1,000 riders participating each week

Sign-in/Sign-out process at each ride

The rides will start out short (25-30 miles) and get longer and hillier as the season progresses

Most rides will start at 8:00 am (arrive at least 45 minutes prior to start)

Jan 23 and Jan 30 start at 7:45 am and Apr 11 starts at 7:30 am

For more details, please go to the club site and check out all the info. That calorie counter is fun (& useful) to play with and take a look at those great maps...

Carpools (More info coming...)

With 500 to 1,000 riders participating each week, it is critical that everyone, except the weekly volunteer support team, carpool to the weekly rides. In order to ride safely, we need to start out past the Houston suburban development. This means that parking will be tight at most of our starts. I will be sending more information on carpooling very soon.

If you don't have a carpool setup already, you should start looking at the online carpool listings - note that most listings include the neighborhood where you live or want to start from. This makes it much easier to zero in on possible carpools you can join. After you look, if you don't see any carpools that will work, place your own listing, and watch for the carpool focus note that is in the works... Your team captain may also be able to help but this applies more to the small teams - the large captains will let you know if there are team carpool initiatives for your team.

When carpooling, remember that you can meet near home, the office, or a café or business that you will frequent before or after the ride (i.e. Panera Bread, Starbucks, Denny's, etc.). Many of these businesses are happy to let you park (on the perimeter of their parking area, not right in front please) as long as you stop in for a drink or snack before or after the ride. Ask the manager so they know - we have many carpools who are regulars at their neighborhood café or coffee house.

Volunteers Needed

Each team that is participating in the training series helps to provide volunteers at three of the rides. If you have not been contacted yet by your team captain, you can go to the training schedule online and look at the Hosted by: column (on the right) to see which weeks your team will be providing volunteers. Please contact your team captain to let them know which date(s) you (or a spouse) can assist. This is a critical item as we all depend on a good volunteer team to keep us safe, well fed/hydrated, and well supported on the road.

The primary ride day volunteers are

SAGs - Drive support vehicles on the route. Carry pump and spare tubes (provided by bike club) and stop if assistance is required

Ability to change flats is not required but is a bonus

If bike can't be repaired, carry rider(s) back to start

Rest Stops - Carry snacks/drinks to/from rest stops, setup and serve

Drive the largest vehicle you have as the team has a LOT of food/water to carry

Water Wizards - We also need a small team of volunteers before/after the rides to carry 4-6 ten gallon water coolers

back & forth. These are our Water Wizards! We'll need 10-12 Water Wizard teams as we need to carry 40-60 coolers back and forth each week. The work is easy - read on...

Being a Water Wizard doesn't prevent you from riding - all the work is before and after the rides and during the week (basically just cleaning and handing off coolers, etc). A pickup, mini-van or good size SUV is usually needed to carry everything. The WW's will work in teams of three. Each of you help at 4 rides during the season - the teams will review their calendars and decide who works which dates (without calling me please!). If you are willing to help as a WW, please reply - I will be organizing the teams (confirming dates & details) next week.

Volunteers should contact your team captain ASAP to find out the weeks that your team is scheduled to support the ride. Each team has three assigned dates to help. We NEED plenty of volunteers each week to keep us safe and well supported. Please don't make your team captains beg - they have plenty to do without having to worry about getting their quota of volunteers every week.

- Beginner Ride #1 - Sat, 1/9, 7:30 am

Our new riders have a SPECIAL treat in store for our first two weeks before we start the regular season. Margaret Shelton, with a lot of help from several of our riders has put together a two week pre-season beginner mini-series of rides. At this point, I'll move over and let Margaret have the floor. Here is Margaret's overview of what our brand new riders should be doing (weather permitting), the next two weekends.

Take it away Margaret...

The novice training rides are designed for new cyclists and cyclists not yet used to large groups
-- with support from seasoned cyclists as mentors

Ride Objectives:

- Making folks feel welcome into the ConocoPhillips training group
- Giving folks a chance to meet other new cyclists and seasoned cyclists
- Providing some safety training
- Initiating guidance about possible hazards while cycling
- Discussing training tips
- Handing out a welcome packet
- Practicing riding in groups
- Knowing that you CAN do organized rides with multitudes of other cyclists
- Encouraging cyclists to participate in safe riding classes

Mentoring Cyclists:

- Be prepared to coach, reassure and help the novice cyclists
- Be prepared to hear a safety discussion prior to the ride
- You make a HUGE difference for those just starting out!
- Sign in with KATHI CRAWFORD at the start

SAG drivers:

- Different teams from the training series will provide SAG drivers, along with any other kind soul who wants to help out
- Sign in at the start

Safe Riding

Please go on-line at <http://bikeed.org/> Traffic Skills 101

This on-line course is free of charge, can be completed in steps, covers basic safety information, equipment information, skills information

Ps - I recently completed the course - found it very useful!

With this on-line course completed [and your completion record printed out], you will be eligible to take on bike skills classes offered by

LCI [League Certified Instructors] instructors.

We are working towards having the on-bike skills class available, for a small fee to pay for the instructors time, after the novice training rides

- Riders should bring liquids for the ride
- We will have maps at each ride
- We will have SAG drivers for each ride
- We will have a mid way rest stop

Cyclists can contact Margaret Shelton by e-mail: sheltonm@uhd.edu

Or by phone: cell: 713.962.3778; home: 713.666.4190; UHD: 713.221.8963

Margaret is the silvery long haired gal!

There is **no requirement** that anyone contact me before coming to the training rides

And ... I am delighted to talk with anyone having questions or concerns!

Two novice rides are planned.

I plan to be at the ride start by 6:45 am – just in case eager folks show up very early!

January 9 Sat

Royal Elementary School to Dewberry Farm [on FM 362] and return – about 14 miles total

7:30 – 7:45 am Meet at the second parking lot of the Royal Elementary School outside of Brookshire

Directions: take I10 west to the 1st Brookshire exit to hwy 359, turn right at the light, go to the next traffic light, at old Hwy 90 and turn left
go to the 2nd traffic light at FM 359 and turn right – you will then go over some railroad tracks when the highway splits, bear left and stay on FM 359 [FM 362 goes off to the right]
go the blinking light [~ 2miles], turn right on Durkin Rd

Royal Elementary School is the 1st school in the area – go to the 2nd parking lot

Sign in and sign a waiver at the table set up on the school walkway next to the parking lot

Additional parking will be in the front parking lot of the school

CARPOOL PLEASE

7:45-8:30 am [more or less] welcome, safety, questions/answers before leaving eastbound on Durkin Road for an out and back ride

Facilities: We will have port-a-potties on site

Teams involved with the ConocoPhillips training series will provide rest stop support at the beginning and at Dewberry Farms 7705 FM 362

January 16 Sat

Royal Elementary School to Monaville and return – about 22 miles – FM 359 north and return

7:30 – 7:45 am Meet at the second parking lot of the Royal Elementary School outside of Brookshire

Directions: take I10 west to the 1st Brookshire exit to hwy 359, turn right at the light, go to the next traffic light at old Hwy90 and turn left
go to the 2nd traffic light at FM 359 and turn right – you will then go over some railroad tracks when the highway splits, bear left and stay on FM 359 [FM 362 goes off to the right]
go the blinking light [~ 2miles], turn right on Durkin Rd

Royal Elementary School is the 1st school in the area – go to the 2nd parking lot

Sign in and sign a waiver at the table set up on the school walkway next to the parking lot

Additional parking will be in the front parking lot of the school

CARPOOL PLEASE

7:45-8:30 am [more or less] welcome, safety, questions/answers before leaving on Durkin Rd and getting over to FM359

Facilities: We should have port-a-potties on site

Riders can buy snacks and more liquids at the Monaville General Store in addition to using our rest stop support!

January 23 Sat

the “official” training series begins

I will leave after the general group leaves with any “new cyclists” who need a familiar face with whom to ride

----- Training Series Sponsor - Sun & Ski Sports

This is a BIG deal...we will now have FULL mechanical support, before, during AND after our rides! Read on for details...

Sun & Ski Sports is proud to be the exclusive sponsor of our 2010 BP MS150 Training Series. They will be providing full bike maintenance support before, during and after each training ride.

Sun & Ski Sports is a full service bike shop that offers bike sales, apparel, parts and accessories, bike repair and custom bike fittings. They outfit customers with quality merchandise, exceptional service and outstanding values. All employees are knowledgeable of the products and help provide the best possible fit.

Store Discounts and 5% Pledge Rebate Program

Sun & Ski Sports offers a store discount program to all participants in this training series plus include their exclusive 5% pledge rebate program to all who sign up. This program gives you a 5% rebate on all sales made at Sun & Ski Sports by you or your supporters towards your MS150 pledge. To enroll for store discounts and the 5% pledge rebate, just click here: www.sunandski.com/events.

Bike U, January 22-23

Sun & Ski Sports will host its annual "Bike U" Customer Appreciation night on January 22, 6-10 p.m. and Saturday, January 23, 1-4 p.m. at Sun & Ski Sports, 6100 Westheimer. The free event is open to the public and will feature:

- Customized bike fit sessions
- Cycling Clinics
- Women Specific Clinics
- Hands-on demonstrations
- Free food and drinks
- Cycling-orientated door prize give-a-aways every two hours
- Many manufacturers On-hand

- Bike Safety Classes - Sat, 1/9, 9-noon or 1-4

This is another GREAT deal and highly recommended. The MS Society as well as our coordinating teams are each offering several classes to help riders learn to ride more safely as well as how to be comfortable handling your bike in a group and how to safely avoid hazards, look behind you, etc. This class starts with a classroom presentation for a bit over an hour and then, about two hours of on-bike exercises. This is a great opportunity for any riders who are new or new participants in large group rides to get some excellent hands-on training. There will be 4-5 instructors and a maximum of 30 students per class so this is a GREAT opportunity. The class does cost \$30 but this is a bargain for the skills you will learn.

The first two classes are being hosted by ConocoPhillips here at our main campus this Saturday, Jan 9. There will be a morning session from 9 am to noon and an afternoon session from 1-4 pm. Please read the info below from the MS and click the link if you want to participate. Hurry because there is a 30 rider limit per class. I know it will be cool Saturday but the morning class won't be going outside until about 10:30 and the afternoon class will head out about 2:30.

Saturday, January 9, 2010 [Choose morning or afternoon class]

- Morning Class from 9 a.m. to noon
- Afternoon Class from 1 to 4 p.m
- Conoco Phillips @ 600 North Dairy Ashford, Houston, TX 77079

Course Requirements

- Course Fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.
- Students must be 18 years of age or be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian age 21 or older.
- Course consists of 2 sessions; 1 hour of classroom instruction and 2 hours on the bike instruction.
- Students must attend both sessions in their entirety to receive course completion certification.
- Admittance to course will be denied if student is not able to attend both sessions.
- Students must bring their own bike and helmet to participate in the course.
- Students should dress appropriately for cycling and bring their water bottles.

Description of Course: Bicycling in a group is one of life's more enjoyable activities when done right. Cyclists have several options for obtaining the knowledge and skills that will make their cycling safe, courteous, efficient and enjoyable. By far the best option is to take the Group Riding Skills course offered by the League of American Bicyclists and a League Cycling Instructor. To ride safely in a group, you should first be familiar with the techniques for riding predictably, on public roadways, as an individual — such skills as proper lane positioning and emergency bike handling. However, cycling in a group places added responsibilities on each cyclist, so all must understand and practice the principles of group riding. This course is designed to give you the principles of group riding so you can safely enjoy riding in the BP MS 150 and other group rides.

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/chapters/bp-ms-150/safety-information/safety-and-training/group-riding-skills/index.asp>

Click the link to sign up (\$30 fee)

OK, that is plenty of information for today!

Tomorrow, watch your inbox for my annual treatise on winter wear. I'm sending this note a bit earlier than usual - for obvious reasons!

Austin, here we come, but first, we'll stop in Katy, Columbus, New Waverly, New Ulm, Chappell Hill, etc...

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