

From: Ready2Roll Cycling SteveMoskowitz@Ready2Rollcycling.com
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To: moskose@swbell.net

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Overview of Ride Day

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OK, we promised you that you would be receiving two emails today. This first one covered the details for our beginner ride this Saturday. This note will cover all the processes and details about what happens each ride day. Some of these points were covered in the ride day note but we'll cover everything here...

Helmet Rider # Update - Back to the Front!

After the note went out about the update to place your helmet # on the left side, several riders were questioning who's left side which brought back memories (AKA nightmares) about all the stickers on the "other left" side the last time we tried this so, we are going back to our tried and true instructions to **please place your rider # dead center on the front of your helmet.**

OK, back to the news for this afternoon...

Ride Day - the Beginning

Any experienced rider knows that ride day actually begins before the day of the ride. You should get into the habit of checking to make sure your cycling bag has all the basics and extras you always use and then, pack what you need on Friday before the ride day. I also keep a spare lightweight outer shell, arm/leg warmers, glove liners and other cozy items in my bag all the time until the cold weather is totally gone - although the light shell is there permanently, in case we have a rainy day.

As was noted in the Winter Weather Advisory, it's a great idea to keep extra gloves, riding glasses, socks, etc. - anything that would prevent you from riding if you forget to pack it the night before. This way, you won't arrive at the ride and find you forgot something important. It will also make you a popular rider if you have a spare item you are willing to loan to someone who's not as together as you are...

Take a few minutes to check out the weather before you start pulling the clothing you will wear for the ride. If it's cool, but not cold, you may want a light shell to take off before we ride or at the first rest stop, after you warm up. Pull out clothing that is appropriate for the forecast and, if you're on the fence, pull out some cooler, or warmer backups to go in your bag. The main outfit should be out in a prominent spot to put on Saturday morning. Everything else should be in your bike bag. The exception is shoes - you need a pair of shoes to wear before/after the ride to drive/walk to the ride and a pair of bike shoes for the ride itself.

My bike bag has a shoe compartment and my bike shoes live there almost all year and come out just before we start riding. We suggest you try to do something similar so your bike shoes are always in the bag you bring to the ride. We hear calls for a spare pair of shoes several times each season - you don't want to be that guy... My bag also has a compartment for my helmet and it is there all the time except when I'm riding.

Note that no RSVP is required to ride. We have a rough idea how many riders will participate and we use a paper-based sign-in/sign-out process at each ride to keep track of who has started the ride and who is/is not finished. (We are in discussions with some programmers/app developers about a smartphone based process to check each rider in/out and even let us see where they are on the route - hopefully in my lifetime!)

Ride Day - The Real Deal

The first thing to understand about ride day is that, as we get into the season, we'll have some fairly long drives to some very small towns in order to find quiet, safe, hilly roads to ride on. This means you need to allow plenty of time because the drive is long and, when a lot of riders are heading to the only large field, local stadium, or town square, there are not any major highways and usually just one, two-lane road to get there so traffic will back up.

We recommend that you arrive at 6:45-7:00 am so you will be lined up at the start line by 7:45 and we'll start the pre-ride announcements and safety reminders at that time.

Here is what your typical day should look like and some tips about support, safety and courtesy...

- Wake up - Early enough to dress, eat whatever your normal pre-ride breakfast is, pack your bag(s), bike, etc and be on the road early enough to get to the start by 6:45.
- Arrive at the start and get parked.
- Come to the sign-in tables and sign in (you can sign in family/friends).
 - The sign-in list is divided into eight shorter sign-in lists based on the first

- letter of your last name. A-B is in list 1, C-D in list 2, etc. to U-Z in list 8.
 - o I'll note the eight lists in the Friday update note for the first 5-6 weeks until everyone knows which list/line to get into each week. Each line has a large laminated table on the front side of the table so you can see what letters are in each list.
 - o The left hand column of the sign-in sheet is for the rider #. If it's blank, this means this is the first time the rider has participated so ask the sign-in volunteers to please pull a helmet # for the rider(s) who are signing in. If you are signing in several riders and you know this is their first ride, you may want to bring something to write on so you remember which rider gets which helmet #. In an emergency, this could be critical so please make sure each rider gets the correct number. (See helmet # update above)
- After signing in, go back to your car, get you and your bike ready and drop off any clothing you don't need. Make a pit stop at the porta-lets, if needed and head to the rider lineup area.
We use a wave start which means the fastest riders line up at the front and the slowest riders at the back. See more notes below about the wave start.
- At 7:45, we'll start the pre-ride announcements and safety feedback/reminders. Our goal is to have the first group of riders (the 21+ mph group) depart promptly at 8:00 - as long as the weather permits - heavy fog could delay the start on some occasions.
- Since we're using the wave start, we allow about a minute between each wave or sometime, a little more due to a light or intersection nearby. This delay allows riders to spread out quickly and safely and avoids congestion at lights/intersections located close to the start. We have learned, in 25+ years, that allowing extra time to spread out before you start, allows all the riders to settle into their comfortable pace very quickly and very safely and avoids the congestion and need for a lot of passing at the start of the ride. Please be patient and you will really start to appreciate this after a few rides.
- Our routes will start out shorter and flatter, gradually get longer, then get a little shorter as we add hills to the mix. Then, the riders get a bit longer each week and we finish up with a 50-75 mile flat to gently rolling ride from Katy towards Hempstead and back.
- We have rest stops located mostly at 10-15 mile intervals but they are closer on the two beginner rides and there are some rare longer segments on a few of the rides due to land use limitations (i.e. there is a "lite" stop in the Sam Houston National Forest (3/17 ride in New Waverly) where, after many years, the forest allows us to serve snacks/drinks but not to place porta-lets. (The forest is beautiful and worth this small sacrifice).
 - o Our ratio of porta-lets to riders is high than any ride in town - even the BP MS-150. Our riders told us they wanted shorter waits and were willing to pay a modest amount more for shorter lines.
 - o We usually have a choice of 10-15 snack selections ranging from salty, low-fat items like pretzels to trail mix and glazed there-nut clusters to gummy bears which riders love to snack on out of very small, 2 oz cups as a change of pace from the usual rest stop fare. We'll also have a number of really tasty cookies and other snacks which are being donated by Goya Foods. We're even starting beginner ride 2 from Goya's Katy distribution center so you are in for a real treat with new treats to try on the rides.
- All of our route turns are well marked with distinctive yellow and black Ready2Roll Cycling branded signage. If you come to an intersection and don't see a sign or the sign is not a Ready2Roll Cycling sign, please don't turn at that location.
 - o On rare occasions, we may have a partial route overlap with another group. We do compare our routes with the BP MS-150 Recommended Rides which we completely avoid as these are very large rides, like ours. We also compare routes with the two largest training groups (after Ready2Roll Cycling) which are the Energy Riders and Schlumberger Cycling Club (SCC). These are smaller rides so we do occasionally overlap but these are short overlaps and we feel they are manageable. (We actually have a 2.4 mile overlap with SCC this Saturday but we're going in the opposite direction so this should not be a problem - see the notes on this in the Friday late update)
 - o For those who are smartphone savvy and/or have trouble following a map, we added a new app last year from Ride with GPS. This app is installed on your smartphone (iPhone or Android) and shows you where you are on the map at all times and, even better, Siri (or her Android cousin) verbally tell you when to turn and which direction. We can even customize/add our own verbal cues so Siri will tell you when a rest stop is a mile ahead, tell you what side of the road, alert you to rough roads, sharp turns, law enforcement traffic control coming up, etc. There will be a dedicated, special topic note to explain how the ride with GPS app works for those of you interested. Once you figure it out, you'll never need a paper map again, for our rides.
- We also have the highest ratio of SAGs to riders in the known universe because we want to make sure we have plenty of support to quickly assist you, if you need a lift and be available to help, in the rare event of an emergency. Our SAGs are not trained as mechanics - some can help change a flat but most are there to give you a lift, if you need one. They will be keeping an eye on you and will be easy to spot as they have bright yellow, black & white SAG flags waving above the right side rear passenger window. If you need their assistance, please safely and gradually slow down and move off the road, take your helmet off, and wave it to get their attention.
- Finally, we also work very closely with the local governments and law enforcement agencies in the communities where we ride.
 - o Please slow down and be prepared to stop until/unless you get a clear signal to proceed.
 - o Please also thank to officers for keeping us safe and secure.
 - o Please don't leave any litter behind at our rest stops (we have plenty of trash bags spread around) and do the same, if you make any improvised stops - bring the trash back to the start, if you need to and we have trash bags there.
 - o Please be mindful and respectful of the local traffic.
 - o We have a right to ride on almost all the roads out in the country but we also have an obligation to not unreasonably impede traffic so be aware/alert about traffic (cars as well as riders) around you and work with them to allow safe passing, when the coast is clear.
(See the dedicated special topic note coming next week about passing and

being passed.)

- When you finish the ride, please come back to the sign-in area and sign out - you any any other riders who you finished with. Please don't sign anyone out who you don't know finished but, if you get a call from someone you know who forgot to sign out, you can sign them out.
 - Remember that we will follow up with the riders who did not sign out - at 2:00 am on Sunday morning!

OK, that's a good overview of ride day. We will be covering several of the topics mentioned here in more detailed, special topic notes over the next two weeks so, watch for more useful news coming to your inbox.

Tomorrow looks like it will be "volunteer" day. The volunteers for this week will get a detailed note about their duties this Saturday. Then, later in the day, all volunteers who have signed up to help at any ride will receive a general note to reconfirm their availability and assignment and finally, riders who have not yet volunteered, and are on teams that still need to meet their volunteer quota, will receive a note about what duties we still need help with.

We hope our new participants are starting to get used to the rhythm and frequency of our notes. Don't worry - the length, and frequency will both drop off quickly once the rides are under way and you have attended a ride or two and gotten used to all our processes

We are strong believers in communicating to our riders - we find that it makes you safer, more courteous, and more effective cyclists and you enjoy the rides more. We're very proud to report that, as the season rolls along, many of you start dropping into one of the other local rides on a Sunday and (this is the "proud" part), you then send us notes saying you had no idea how safe and spoiled you were on our rides, until you participated in another ride that was not a Ready2Roll Cycling ride!

Keep an eye on the weather and, if you are hoping to ride this Saturday and still haven't read the Winter-Wear Advisory, please go to the Communications page on www.ready2rollcycling.com and read the email in the online archive.

Thanks for you feedback, questions and support!

Steve, Marshall, Robbie and Jan,
Ready2Roll Cycling
SteveMoskowitz@Ready2RollCycling.com



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Ready2Roll Cycling
11027 Holworth
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