

**Subject:** 2021 Training Series Special Topic - Passing

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**From:** Ready2Roll Cycling

**To:** Steve Moskowitz

## Very Useful Tips on Passing & Being Passed

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We have some very important safety information to share but first, two very brief news items...

- **The Pedaling the Prairie ride this Saturday is going with a rolling start and the routes will open at 8:00 am.** (Active.com says 9:00 but the ride site notes 8:00)
- **The Wallis Columbus Hall is hosting a Lenten Fish Fry fundraiser each of the next 4 Fridays** (2/26 to 3/26) from 5-7 pm. In these COVID times, it's a drive-thru only offering at \$12.00 per plate - LOADED! "The best fish and lots of it!" Wallis Columbus Hall, 703 Columbus Rd

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Another four letter word we hear frequently in cycling, is "Pass". This season, it has not been as prevalent because our rolling starts spread riders out much sooner, and further apart. Nevertheless, passing, safely, courteously, and effectively, is one of the most important cycling skills you will learn.

This weekend, many of you may be dropping in on the Pedaling the Prairie Ride which could be your first larger ride open to the public, so we wanted to share our annual tips on passing, plus a few related ride feedback items.

First off, Marshall Cohen, my Ready2Roll Cycling partner, sent some observations/feedback from our rides to share.

Take it away Marshall...

### **Safety Tip – When Passing Riders:**

As one of the organizers of Ready2Roll Cycling, I have the pleasure to also join in and ride in the weekly rides. My ride begins once all of the rest stop volunteer teams are done

loading and in route to set up the rest stops. Over the past few weeks, I have observed a few riders with what I will call a "dangerous and bad habit" that I want to not only point out to raise awareness but more importantly, cause an immediate change in behavior.

Again, remember with my late start, I am approaching our riders from the back and observing rider etiquette. What I have seen is on occasion, a rider will approach another rider in front of them and although I am not close enough to hear if they communicate "approaching," "passing on the left," etc., what I do see is the rider DOES NOT look back behind them and instead just moves left to pass. In fact, rather than pass these riders just a few feet to their left, these riders have moved way out into the lane of the roadway where a vehicle would travel. On a few occasions, the vehicles approaching from the rear had to dramatically slow down until the rider made their way back over to the shoulder to complete their pass. All of these issues can be disastrous!

When you are passing another rider, obviously communicate that you are approaching and passing on their left. Then, look over your left shoulder and be absolutely sure that no riders or vehicles are approaching and you have enough room and time to safely complete your pass. Then, once you have established you are safe to proceed to pass, DO NOT ride way out into the roadway but rather keep a safe distance just a few feet to the left of the rider you are passing. When I hear a rider behind me indicating that they want to pass me, I always move over to my right, making it that much easier for them to pass safely without having to venture into the middle of the traffic lane. They appreciate this very much and often will say "thank you." At Ready2Roll Cycling, we are a community of such responsive and caring individuals and it is our responsibility to implement excellent rider etiquette that helps to ensure everyone's safety.

It is important to point out that although you in fact might have the "right of way" to share the road and that a bike is a vehicle and allowed on the roadway too, not all drivers respect such or are even paying attention. Further, as my friend Russell says, "the car will ALWAYS Win." You simply NEVER want to obstruct vehicle traffic – NEVER! It won't be long that we will be on quiet, country roads and vehicles pulling horse trailers and other farm-related equipment will be quite likely. These vehicles take time to slow, stop as well as steer and we absolutely don't want riders too far in the lane of traffic where they might create a hazard.

Again, please be sure you are safe to complete the pass, look behind you and do not ride way out in the traffic lane and obstruct traffic.

### **Safety Reminder - Stay As Far Right as Practicable**

One of our SAG volunteers shared with us that, last Sunday, a local driver (who is also a cyclist) stopped him and commented that he saw a number of riders drifting well out into the lane. As Marshall noted, we have a right to the lane, but we also have a responsibility to allow traffic to pass safely. Please keep this in mind while riding it will make every ride you participate in safer and make you a more respected and considerate rider.

### **Ready2Roll Cycling Special Topic - Passing (and Being Passed)**

It's time for one of our most important, and useful cycling tips of the year - how to pass, and how to be passed.

Here are the highlights - soak these in and then, repeat reading throughout the series and put the tips into practice.

The keys to safe/courteous passing are:

- **Consistent, predictable riding** - no one is making any sudden or unannounced changes or moves.
- **Effective communication** - every rider is speaking clearly, concisely, on point, and loud, and every rider is alert and listening and prepared to effectively respond, as appropriate, when communicated to. Use as few words as possible but enough to get the message across.
- **Learning the Art of Anticipation** - riders analyze the situation as they approach

- and anticipate risks and take measures ahead, to avoid the risk.
- **Patience** - Wait until all conditions are safe and clear and don't rush/force a pass.
- **Passers are Primarily Responsible for making a safe pass** - the passee needs to be alert of their surroundings, consistent and predictable, hold their speed and riding line and move over/go single file but the Passer has the responsibility to ensure it is safe to pass and there is room, no approaching traffic, and that the riders being passed are aware.

This tip is fairly long because this is one of a rider's core skills that we need to learn, practice, and refresh every year. This tip is VERY important because, if you truly master the art of passing and being passed safely and courteously, it will make you a very respected and admired rider and make your cycling safer and more fun for the rest of your life. Please read this one a few times and, if you ride in a group already, discuss this with your group and practice it at each of our rides. (Please note that this tip also explains how to pass, and how to be passed - unless you are VERY fast, or VERY slow, you will be doing some of both over your lifetime of cycling...)

### **This tip is important enough that it deserves it's own, dedicated email!**

(It's also important enough to remind you to please save it in the folder you set up for your Ready2Roll Cycling correspondence)

Over the years, we have noticed reports on a fairly regular issue - near mishaps when a newer rider is startled during a pass and jerks causing them to lose control of their bike. In most cases, the rider recovers but we have seen a few where the rider did take a spill. These accidents can be avoided by exercising a little rider awareness and etiquette. Here are some great lessons about how to make a safe, courteous pass - or be passed.

We will practice these passing tips below over and over and will be giving you feedback. After a few weeks, this will become second nature but please read the tips below and practice them as well as observing other riders doing the same. Be sure to communicate effectively and say "THANKS!" to show your appreciation for other riders who are learning/practicing these very useful tips.

### **Passing - The Basics**

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 "Rider approaching" as you get close (within 10-20 yards)
- Check the road behind to ensure no approaching vehicles
- Move over to allow enough room, speed up just a little and start the pass
- Call "Passing on the left" as you pull up to the rider (Several riders I spoke to said they call out "Left". This is too short - it doesn't effectively get attention or inform riders ahead)
- Adjust your volume for the weather - if it's calm, you don't need to shout, if it's windy, you will really need to raise your voice
- Call "Thank you" as you move past the rider.
- Allow plenty of room before pulling back over to the right

#### **The passee should:**

- Be aware of approaching riders (listen, NO headphones and music speakers at reasonable volume!)
- Acknowledge calls to pass - saying "Thank You" or a left hand thumbs-up (keep hand on the bars, only thumb goes up) is a GREAT way to do this!
- Maintain a steady predictable speed and line - don't suddenly slow down or speed up as you are being passed and don't jerk your handlebars.

### **Multiple Riders Passing**

The process for multiple riders passing is similar with a few extra variations...

### **The group of passers should do all the above plus:**

- The leader of the passing group calls "Rider(s) Up!" to communicate internally as they approach...  
...they also typically spread out slightly to allow extra reaction time, if something unexpected occurs.
- 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, seven riders" or something similar to let the passees know what to expect
- The middle rider(s) should say: "Thanks" and/or: "Four more riders coming" to inform the riders being passed
- The last rider should call: "Last rider, Thank you" so the group knows you are all past
- Allow extra room before pulling back in so your line doesn't cut off the passees

Maintain a steady speed, don't speed up or slow down until the entire group has passed and is clear of the group you passed. Groups of riders may feel pressured to pass when it is not safe in order to avoid falling behind - don't succumb to the pressure to pass if vehicles are approaching.

The passees being passed by a group should do all the above plus:

- Smoothly consolidate to single file when a group approaches (the lead rider should call ", Single file")
- Listen for the first and last passers so they know what to expect.  
(Hint: Ignoring approaching groups that communicate their approach/pass is not safe or a good way to make cycling friends)

Note that the passers have the responsibility to ease up as they approach and wait for safe conditions to make their pass. The passees have the responsibility to listen, hold a steady speed and line, and go to single file if they are two abreast, to make room for the passers to get around safely.

### **Passing - The Impact of a Headwind**

This should be pretty obvious but riding into a stiff headwind can have a definite impact on passing.

- First of all, if you gradually catch another rider, or group, and it is taking almost all your energy just to stay with them, trying to pull out and pass, into the headwind may be pointless - it may be better to keep a safe distance back and if some of your group are feeling more refreshed and able to maintain a faster pace to make a clean pass, then let them go but make sure they don't break your group up powering into the wind at a pace the group can't maintain.
- Second, the ability to communicate to riders ahead will likely be severely limited until you are pretty close. We recommend literally "barking" out "Riders Approaching" as you are getting close- It's important to be really loud. The riders ahead likely won't understand but they should at least hear the noise and be aware someone is approaching. Then call out as you approach 1-2 more times so they can hear the voices getting louder and sense how close you are getting. This take practice but be aware that you may really surprise riders ahead if riding into a stiff wind unless you take extra measures to alert them before you are close.

We expect to see you all practicing these tips - they make a huge difference in how much we all enjoy the ride. We also expect to hear a LOT of communicating and "Thank You's" out on the roads this week and for the rest of the series!

Here are a few more related thoughts on this topic:

- If a group is training together, cycling etiquette says to let the slowest rider set the

- pace
- 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!

**PLEASE save this note and refer back to it** as it will make a lot more sense as you get more experienced. We will be focusing and providing feedback on passing quite a bit early in the season because it takes us several weeks to master. Once you "get it", you will find that you are a much safer rider and you will enjoy riding even more as well as impressing all the other riders you encounter with your safe, courteous and predictable riding.

We can't remember if we mentioned to PLEASE read and re-read this tip and practice it every time to are passing or being passed at our training rides until it's built in to your brain. This will make you a much more admired, appreciated, approved and accomplished rider and it significantly reduces accidents while significantly increasing your stature and friends in the cycling community so it's well worth mastering this very important and useful skill.

OK, that's it for today's tip. Be Safe!

Thanks for your support!

**Steve, Marshall, Jan and Robbie**  
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