

# 2020 Special Topic - Passing

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## Very Useful Tips on Passing & Being Passed

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Good morning everyone!

We're four days away from Training Ride #1 and many of you have told us how excited you are to start the 2020 training series! One of the things we want all of our new riders to focus on from Ride 1, until they can't ride a bike anymore is the no-so-secret art of passing, and being passed.

As you will soon see, we start all our rides with a wave start - the fastest riders go first and the slowest riders go last. This helps to significantly reduce the need to pass, especially at the most congested part of the ride, but there will still be many times when you need to make a pass, or allow other riders to come by. So, right now, before Ride 1, it's time for one of our most important, and useful cycling tips of the year - how to pass, and how to be passed.

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 its 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.

OK, here goes..

### **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
- Adjust your volume for the weather - if it's calm, you don't need to shout, if it's windy, you will need to raise your voice
- Call "Thank you" as you move past the rider.
- 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 - saying "Thank You" 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 handle bars.

### **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:**

- 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 something similar to let the passees know what to expect
- The middle rider(s) can 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 the 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 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 is one more group riding tip. A question we 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 training series?

A: We recommend avoiding fast pacelines which use more "aggressive" drafting in order to significantly 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 simple 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 in pacelines are:

1. Allow at least 18-24" 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 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 on 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.

I can't remember if I 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. Watch your inbox tomorrow for the Ride 1 details, directions, etc...

Thanks for your support!

**Steve, Marshall, Jan and Robbie**

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