

BIKE SAFETY

When you ride as a group, your conduct will directly affect the flow of the group on the road.

Riding in a group such as this will have a mix of experienced riders, and those who have not fully developed their pack riding skills.

It is important to recognise which category of rider you fit into, and act accordingly.

Strong riders need to protect the weaker – don't expose them to the dangers on the road.

Weaker riders need to make the group aware they are struggling, uncomfortable with the current situation or unsure of how to handle the current conditions.

When we are looking after each other while riding, the added dangers of traffic, obstacles on the road, adverse weather, mechanical problems & refuelling will become much more manageable.

Remember the back of the pack is NOT necessarily the easiest place to sit. You will obviously have an easier ride into headwinds, but will have to continuously adjust your riding to the groups pace change, avoid obstacles without a good view for what is coming up, and basically are not able to relax behind such a large number of riders.

It is important when we break down into smaller 'teams' that the team leaders have the weaker riders sheltered at about 2nd – 3rd wheel. That way everyone can keep an eye on them and they are in a most comfortable position in the group.

Below are a number of key points to be aware of throughout the ride. Everyone needs to have a clear understanding of how the group is planning various 'recoveries' – eg how are we going to ride the rotating turns, how will 'calls' be made, our plans for flat tyre changeovers...etc.

When everyone knows the procedure, we will be more efficient as a group.

PACK RIDING

- **Keep your eyes forward**

There should be no reason for you to turn around – especially the front riders. The most common way to crash is to ride down or into an obstacle, resulting in putting the whole group in danger. Looking at where you are riding is the only way to avoid this.

Traffic is the usual reason for riders to look behind. The last riders in the pack should be able to hear traffic, and call “car/truck back”. They may look behind occasionally, but remembering a split second mistake is all that is required to cause a fall.

** (way to look back is to rest your hand on the rider beside you, so your steering stays intact)

- **Make the group AWARE of obstacles**

Pointing out obstacles & taking your hands off your bars often becomes dangerous in a large group. Try to call out any obstacles so those behind are aware of the upcoming danger.

- **Hand Placement on handlebars**

The safest place are your hoods & drops. These hand placements keep you in close range of your brakes

- **Braking**

Rather than braking hard in a group pack situation, try to ‘feather’ your brakes. This requires you to remain aware of what is going on around you, so excessive braking is not required, and those behind you will not be put into a sudden braking situation also. Feathering is really just gentle, controlled braking.

- **Peddalling**

Similar to braking above – smooth pedalling is required by everyone in the group so there is a constant rhythm in the group. When pedalling is erratic, those behind will not have a comfortable wheel to follow. Uneven pedalling breaks up the group dynamics, as those behind can’t relax.

Try to continue pedalling when taking a drink also – keep the group rhythm going.

- **Correct water bottles**

Please use correct water bottles for each ride. Sports drink bottles do not fit bidon cages properly, can bounce out and bring others down.

- **Do not half wheel**

The enjoyment of riding in a group is having others to get you through the ride. Constantly riding half a wheel in front of your training partner is probably one of the most frowned upon habits for cyclists. Don’t do it.

- **Do not overlap wheels**

There is no recovery from a front wheel deflection. Overlap your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front & you will put yourself in great danger of crashing.

- **DO NOT LEAVE STRAGGLERS**

Basic survival rule. One day it will be you. No one is immune from a bad day out on the bike.

- **Rolling Turns/Pack Dynamics for Turns**

Taking a turn does not mean you have to be going flat out on the front. More often than not, you are just needed to take a bit of the workload for the group.

For weaker riders, try to take your turn after a weaker rider or side with a weaker rider (depending on format the group is using), so you don’t have to work too hard to get to your turn.

It is important you let the turns to roll, don’t make it difficult for others to roll up to the front.

If you notice a gap forming, either fill it (safely) or communicate with those setting the pace to slow up slightly.

Once you have finished your turn, roll off in a smooth fashion. There should be no need to stop pedalling. Soft pedal until the new leaders come through. If you are returning to the back of the bunch, start applying more pressure to your pedals so you slip back into the groups pace once in position.

- **Coping with traffic**

No one likes traffic out on the bike. There are a number of important points to remember to adhere to while coping with traffic.

- Don't look behind.
- Be decisive, signal, make decisions that will keep the entire group safe – not just yourself.
- Obey traffic rules.
- Leave drivers to worry about overtaking, don't pull over.
- Decide on the pack rotation you are going to use and stick with it – stay a decisive group in the traffic.
- BE PREDICTABLE

If we do break into 'teams' it is important to remember that riding single file often makes it harder for traffic to overtake (as the group is now longer), and traffic can attempt to squeeze past. A thicker group is quite often the safest option.

- **Climbing**

To make climbing easier, ensure you –

- Ride the correct gear – try not to grind
- Standing – if you need to stand, change gears to compensate for the slower cadence, allowing you to stand up smoothly & keep a steady pressure on the pedals
- Sitting – use the opposite technique to the above. Change down to keep steady pressure on the pedals.
- Do not 'roll back' – this occurs when you either change from sitting to standing (& vice versa). If this is done badly, you will slightly roll back – and be close to bringing the rider behind you down.
- It is often better to drink on the uphill rather than downhill

- **Descending**

It is important the leaders continue to pedal downhill, as the draft effect is accentuated when going downhill.

If you are following, back off a couple of bike lengths as often the leaders will not be able to go any faster.

No one should be freewheeling an entire descent. Soft pedalling also helps to remove the lactic acid built up in the legs from the previous climb.

A lot of the above information is common sense, and most riders have developed these skills over the past few months during our training rides. A final thing to remember is to stay relaxed. Anytime you are riding in close proximity with such a big group, there is always the chance of 'bumping'. A relaxed rider will absorb the bump, and cope...a tense rider will be surprised, will over react with a swerve and put themselves & the group in danger.

The key is – Have fun!

Nutrition □The following includes some advice I received and strategies I used throughout my

career.□□

Please don't hesitate to contact me (emma@emmacarney.com) if you need further advice.□□

During endurance riding, carbohydrates (CHO) are an important fuel source. Run out of CHO and you slow down. Storage of CHO in the body is limited, but consuming CHO during exercise supplements CHO stored as glycogen and is proven to increase endurance performance. □It is important to note that delivery of CHO ingested during exercise to working muscles is typically slower than the rate that CHO are burned during exercise. That is why it is recommended to start consuming CHO early and keep ingesting them regularly during endurance exercise. □□The maximum rate that CHO can be digested, absorbed and utilised by working muscles is approximately 60 grams per hour, so this serves as the recommended upper limit of CHO intake during exercise. □□CHO can be liquid, gel or solid forms – depending on YOUR personal preference, gastrointestinal tolerance and availability. It is important you put together your own personal plan and practice/experiment in training. During the Canberra to Melbourne event, you will then be sufficiently fuelled to get through each day. □□It can get very confusing and technical to work out how to keep your body fuelled during exercise, so I will try to keep it simple... □□

Energy Balance □Maintaining energy balance is the key goal for endurance events. Energy balance occurs when total energy intake from food matches energy intake from daily activity. The energy requirements of an individual are influenced by factors such as body size, body composition goals and the energy cost of the daily exercise. □Energy is provided by the CHO, protein, fat and alcohol in foods and fluids. □It is important to note:□• CHO are the key nutrient. They provide the major fuel for exercise, especially during prolonged continuous exercise. CHO requirements are largely influenced by the activities each day. □• Protein - current sports nutrition guidelines do not promote the need for high protein diets or special protein supplements.□• Other nutrients – popular health messages recommend a reduced intake of fats and oils, increased intake of fibre rich food and a moderate alcohol intake.□□

Fuelling Up/Prior to Riding □It is important that CHO stores are refuelled at the start of each training session and ride. Low muscle-glycogen stores can impair training performance, leading to poor energy levels and basically a terrible day out on the bike. □For those technically minded, research suggests that endurance performance is improved when you consume 200-300grams CHO in the 2-4 hours before exercising. □In layman's terms, this really means you need to have a breakfast which is high in CHO □• Cereal/porridge etc with low fat milk □• Toast/crumpets etc with jam/peanut butter□• Beans/spaghetti on toast □• ½ tin of rice pudding if you are really late & eating in the car!! □60 minutes prior to exercise (this may not really be necessary, as I am sure we are all having breakfast and going straight out on the bike) you may 'top up' your CHO with – □• a sports drink □• cereal bar/banana □□**Fluids** □Dehydration causes fatigue, impaired muscle endurance, reduced gastro emptying and impaired mental function. □In normal circumstances, thirst is a sufficient indicator of when to drink. When exercising, especially for prolonged periods and in harsh environmental conditions, it is important to have a structured hydration plan you stick to. □Immediately prior to exercise, it is recommended you consume 300-400ml of fluid. Water is suitable, but it is important to note that the use of just water may cause you to need to go to the toilet during the first 60-90 minutes of the ride. If you put some diluted sports drink into your pre-ride fluids, it tends to 'go through' you slower, and there is actually a better result, as you have also topped up your electrolytes. □This is not in the 'recommended nutritional findings', but most elite athletes tend to buy the Cottees natural cordial and have it diluted in their water bottles. This does not provide electrolyte replacement, but provides a little more than water. The sweetness also encourages you to drink more often. □□It is important to note that you can over hydrate (Hyponatraemia). This is basically where there is a dilution of sodium levels in the blood. As long as you start the ride hydrated and stick to a simple drinking plan this is quite avoidable.□□

During Exercise □The optimal rate of CHO is estimated at between 30-60g per hour. □I would recommend trying to eat something every 30-45mins. Try to take on fluid when you eat to make it

more digestible. This may be: □ • ½ to 1 energy bar + 200-400ml water □ • 1 energy gel + 200-400ml water □ • 2-4 snakes or something similar □ • ½ to 1 banana □ • dried fruit or half a jam sandwich if you prefer real food

□ □ The recommended amount of fluid is 400-1000ml per hour. This equates to trying to consume ½ a water bottle each 30 minutes. Individuals have different hydration and refuelling requirements. If you are feeling bloated it is important you do not keep taking food and fluid, as you may develop gastro discomfort – something else that ruins a bike ride!! □ □ A very good pattern to follow is to sip/drink every 15-20 minutes and eat something every 30-45 minutes. You may like to skip the first hour eating. □ □ For our long Saturday training rides, to be properly prepared, I would recommend you have 2 full water bottles with a diluted sports drink/cordial. □

Food depends on your preferences – □ • energy gel 2-4 □ • energy bars 1-2 □ • snakes/lollies – approx 10 □ • \$\$ to buy something at the half way point □ You may like to experiment with what you prefer to eat out on the road. Lollies are obviously the cheapest alternative, but gels and bars tend to be more sustaining. The different brands of gels have varying consistencies. Due to this, I would strongly recommend you use the **CarboShotz** in training. We will be provided with these out on the road during the trip, so it is best to get used to that exact product you will be relying on. Fortunately they are also very easily attainable - and heavily discounted - with the special order form on this website. □ Bars vary a lot in taste and consistency too, so rely on what you like the taste of.

□ □ **Recovery & Refuelling** □ At the end of each ride, it is really important to refuel. You need to restore muscle glycogen, repair muscle tissue following the exercise and replace fluid and electrolytes lost. □ Often the last thing you want to do is eat/drink something, but in order to be refuelled for the following days ride it is important to have a refuelling plan to follow. □ □ It is recommended a combination of CHO and protein, plus a drink should be consumed within the first 2 hours. The first 30 minutes try to consume a sports drink if you cannot face food. □ It has been suggested that moderate to high GI foods may be better for fast glycogen replacement. □ □ It is important you try to consume nutrient rich CHO while off the bike.

Lollies and fast energy replacement foods are good in the short term, but you need to try to maximise your refuelling while you can eat 'proper' food and meals. This also goes for 'snacking' while not training. □ Eat well, and you will perform better. □ □

Alcohol & Coffee □ I think you would be hard pressed to find a cyclist who doesn't drink coffee. Caffeine is a diuretic, it can dehydrate – this also depends on how much you consume, if you consume caffeine daily etc. There is an argument that if you are used to having a pre ride coffee, and stop you feel terrible. Test out what works for YOU. □ Alcohol – there is nothing wrong with a post ride beer. Obviously you need to be in riding shape the next morning though. □ □

I hope all that makes a bit of sense. Nutrition is a key issue with regard to how much you enjoy or suffer on your endurance ride. Start refining your plan now and it will pay off.

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