

Cycling Etiquette and Bunch Riding Tips

When riding in a bunch please remember these few safety rules:

1. The number one rule for a safe and cohesive group ride is communication from every single person in a bunch.
2. Point out and call out any road hazards ahead. These include potholes, drain grates, stray animals, opening car doors, sticks or stones, parked cars, etc. You can call these hazards by using word such as left, right, centre or slowing.
3. Be predictable with all your actions.
4. Maintain a steady straight line and avoid braking or changing direction suddenly, especially if contesting a sprint.
5. Remember that there are riders following you closely from behind. To slow down, gradually move out into the wind and slot back into your position in the bunch.
6. Obey all traffic rules, being stop signs and lights. If some riders get caught at traffic lights, the front should ride slower until the bunch is reformed.
7. Do not panic if you brush shoulders, hands or bars with another rider. Try to stay relaxed in your upper body to absorb any bumps. This is a part of cycle racing in close bunches and is quite safe provided riders do not panic, brake or change direction.
8. Never use your aero bars when riding in a group. (you cannot react quickly enough from that position)

Also be aware of the following so that the ride is enjoyable for everyone:

1. Do not overlap wheels (also called half wheeling). A slight direction change or gust of wind could easily cause you to touch wheels and fall.
2. Pedal downhill when you are at the front of the bunch. Cyclists dislike having to ride under brakes. If you freewheel downhill you are doing as much good as sitting in your lounge chair!
3. When riding at the front of bunch, don't freewheel down hills or ride in the small chain ring as those following will be constantly braking.
4. Stay to the left when in front to allow room for others to pass safely on your right, particularly in traffic. Pass other riders on the right hand side whenever possible.
5. Be smooth with your turns at the front of the group. Avoid surges unless trying to break from the bunch. A group will travel quicker when

turns are completed smoothly.

6. Avoid leaving gaps when following wheels. Cyclists save about 30% of their energy at high speed by following a wheel. Each time you leave a gap you are forcing yourself to ride alone to bridge it. Also, riders behind you will become annoyed and ride around you, especially if the bunch is working together to break away or catch a break in a race.
7. When climbing hills, avoid following a wheel too closely. Many riders often lose their momentum when rising out of the saddle on a hill, which can cause a sudden deceleration. This can often catch a rider who is following too closely, resulting in a fall from a wheel touch.
8. Always stay parallel to the person beside you.
9. If you are new, weaker or tired, stay at the back of the bunch until you are more confident.
10. It is the rider at the rear of the bunch's responsibility to indicate to the group that it is safe to merge or change lanes by saying YES or CLEAR loud.
11. If the ride contains a small sprint section, the front of the group should ride slower after the sprint to allow the bunch to reform.