



WCCTC Tri News

Cycling in a Group Safety Reminders

There are few keys to riding safely in a group. First the lead person is the primary communicator. He/she tells and points out to the person behind of dangers ahead, cars, dogs, pot holes, when to slow or stop, etc. That information is then propagated down the line. Second, keep a reasonable and safe distance between you and all bikes around you. Third, always look ahead at the riders in front of you and be ready to anticipate sudden changes in speed keeping your hands in and around the brake hoods.

Triathlon Equipment:

Listed below are the necessary items needed for training and racing a triathlon and an approximate cost. An asterisk next to the time indicates it will or may need to be replaced before the race:

Swim Suits: Purchasing a swimsuit is very much an individual choice. The comfort and fit of the suit is a primary necessity. It is recommended that you purchase a lap-swimming suit and not a recreational suit such as thigh length swimming trunks for men and a two piece beach bikini for women. Speedo and TYR are the most popular brand names for suit.

Swim Caps: Purchasing a swim cap is a relatively simple endeavor since there are essentially only three types of caps. A latex cap (\$3) is an all-purpose cap that 90% of all recreational swimmers should purchase. Swimmers with long hair may consider one of the other two types of caps, which are a silicon cap (\$10) or a cloth cap (\$10). Both of these are more accommodating to long hair swimmers as they can prevent your hair from tangling or falling out of the cap during practice. Speedo and TYR are the most popular name brand for caps as well.

Swim Goggles: Purchasing goggles is very much an individual choice. The comfort and fit around the eye socket is a primary necessity. There are many types of goggles to purchase but a watertight seal is necessary without causing headaches from the tight seal is the top consideration. This seal is generally made

tighter with a rubber eye gasket versus a foam gasket. Some swimmers prefer no gasket on the eyepiece and will purchase specialty-designed goggles for this proposes. It is recommended that you purchase lap-swimming goggles and not recreational goggles. Speedo and TYR are the most popular brand names for goggles.

Swimming Costs

Goggles	\$10
2 Swim caps*	\$6
Swim suit	\$15-40
Other equipment is necessary, so for complete costs consult with your coach	

Bike Types:

There are essentially three types of bikes you can purchase to train and complete a triathlon. First is a mountain bike. A mountain bike of course will weigh more and be less efficient than a cross or true rode bike but it is versatile. Training on longer rides will be the biggest drawback of mountain bikes.

Cross or hybrid bikes are mix of a road and mountain bike. This type of bike is more of an all-purpose bike and should have slick tires for triathlon training and racing. For most novice triathletes who are competing in triathlons as part of an over-all healthy lifestyle this is the best-suited bike.

Continued on page 5



Riding in a Group

Group Ride Etiquette

Whether you're touring, training or just exploring country roads, riding with friends can add a lot of fun to your bicycling. With a local bicycle club, you can meet people and share information about routes, equipment and bicycling events. In addition, athletically inclined bicyclists often push themselves harder and improve more when training together.

But you can spoil the fun if you run into one of your companions. Bike-bike crashes are just as common as car-bike crashes, so it's a good idea to give some attention to safe group riding.

The purpose of this section is to explain a few simple guidelines to make them productive, safer, and beneficial to all riders. Note: this article is focused on the casual group or club ride; it is not meant to address rides with a "race ride" agenda

Safety – This is by far the most important goal of a group of riders on the open road where steady traffic is a common reality. Nothing else matters more than getting everyone to the end of the ride safely and with no mishaps. Ride together, allowing 10-12 inches between bikes for experienced riders and up to a complete bike length for inexperienced riders, either side-by-side with **NO MORE than two abreast** or in a single file line. Ride as far to the right of the road as is practical. Every road situation is different and requires common sense to decide how to best organize the group. Obviously when roads are narrow with more traffic, single file is best.

In general, if cars see a tight knit group that looks like they know what they are doing, there will be respect for the group and you will generally be granted more patience by the driver. If, however, the group is all over the road, drivers will get upset, honk their horns and drive too close to the riders to "prove their point." Nothing looks more professional than a tight knit group of cyclists rolling down the road, riding smoothly and confidently. Communicate only with riders next to you, as trying to talk to other riders somewhere else in the group is disruptive to the group's flow.

Technical problems - When a flat tire or some other minor technical problem occurs, a small group of rider should wait together, OFF THE ROAD, and make sure the rider with the problem is able to get fixed and move on. In the hot weather try to find a place that has some shade, so you are not stuck out in the baking sun.

Route – Decide on a route before the ride begins. Try to stick as close as possible to that route and if there are any changes, be sure that every rider is aware of the change of plan. Riders who drop out should agree to alert someone in the group of their intended absence before they leave.

Pacing on hills, rollers and flats – In general, each rider climbs the hills at their own pace. Regroup quickly at the top and stay together as a group on down hills, flat and rolling terrain.

Stopping - Keep the stops as short as possible and to the point. Longer and more stops than are necessary usually result in tired legs and, in the winter, cold riders!!

Pacelines and Echelons – **Pacelines** can occur whenever a group of individual riders want to draft each other in order to go faster and give each rider "rest." In other words, the sum of the whole is great than each individual part. **Echelons** on the other hand are just pacelines that form a diagonal line usually due to wind conditions. The words are often used interchangeably.

To begin, make sure everyone knows that a paceline is forming. Start the paceline slowly, and then gain speed over time. This allows the group to get into a nice rhythm. The key is for each rider(s) to take an equal length turn, or "pull", at the front, without decreasing or increasing the pace. If the pace needs to be increase (e.g. starting down a long grade), then do it slowly.

Continued on page 3



Riding in a Group continued from page 2

Group Ride Etiquette con't

Figure 1 - Basic pacelines (single and double) with wind directly from front or back used when riding steadily down the road



Each rider must take responsibility for keeping the pace smooth. NO rider should “jump” out of the paceline to go to the front. Each rider needs to be patient and wait their turn. Over time, the group can determine how long each pull should be, based on speed and the make-up of the group. In general, the faster the pace, the shorter the pulls and visa-versa, the slower the pace, the longer the pulls. This can range from as little of 5 seconds to many minutes.

In most circumstances, there will be stronger and weaker riders. Given this reality, the stronger rider shouldn't go “harder”, as this will disrupt the group's rhythm and cohesiveness. A stronger rider should **pull longer at the same speed** to give other riders more rest. If a rider is weaker, they have a couple options. 1) Skip a turn and stay at the back of the group, out of the way, so the group can continue to operate. When they are ready, they can pull thru at the same pace as the group, evaluate how they feel, and make the determination as to whether they will try again to take a pull at the front. 2) A weaker rider can also make their pulls shorter, but NOT harder. Keeping the line moving benefits all riders, whether stronger or weaker.

Wind – Wind is pretty much everything when it comes to riding in a paceline or echelon. Each rider should pay special attention to the wind, especially the front rider, as it is up to him to determine how much room he needs to give the riders behind. Remember to take into account safety and how much room is reasonable given traffic conditions. Always be asking: 1) what direction is the wind coming from, 2) how strong is it blowing 3) how will upcoming twists and turns in the road affect the riders behind me. In the diagram below, notice the wind-protected riders are the faster riders moving up to take their turn.

Figure 2: Rotating echelons used with slower speed (left) and faster speed (right) in crosswinds



Pedal, pedal, pedal – When in a paceline or group always pedal at the front and never coast. Even soft pedaling is better than no pedaling.

Continued on page 4



Riding in a Group continued form page 3

Group Ride Etiquette con't

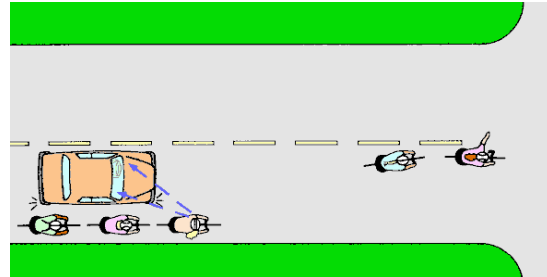
Always remember there are riders behind you and it's the front rider's responsibility to keep the pace moving smooth. No sudden increases in pace and no sudden movements. In other words, **be "predictable."** If you are not going to do your share of work at the front of the group then go to the back.

Road issues – In general, it's each rider's responsibility to know of any potholes, glass or other road obstructions. It should not be the front rider's responsibility to care for the whole group. On the other hand, be considerate and point out any obvious potential hazards for your fellow riders. Try to slowly lead the group around obstructions if possible. For example, yelling there is a rock in the road has little effect on the back rider in windy conditions. Attempt to point to the rock well before you get to it and lead the group around it. In summary, group riding can be beneficial for your fitness and a lot of fun. Just remember that these types of rides are not races and should not be treated as such. Everyone should do his or her share of the work at the front. The pace should satisfy the majority of the group and everyone should respect other rider's abilities. Try to prevent a lot of "on/off" riding and keep the pace flowing and consistent. This way, everyone gets home safely and has benefited from the ride.

Some bicyclists fall for a "herd instinct" when riding in groups - as if the group protected them, or there's nobody else on the road besides the group. It's tempting to play "follow the leader" in a group of bicyclists - tempting but dangerous.

When preparing a lane change or turn, you must look out for yourself. It can be safe for the bicyclist ahead of you to change lane position, but not safe for you, since cars or other bicyclists could be approaching from the rear. You must look back for them just the same as when you ride alone. Look left, right, and left again for traffic at stop signs - don't follow the rider ahead of you into an intersection.

The only exception is in a tightly organized, small group that moves completely as a unit. The first and last riders are understood to be on the lookout for the entire group. Don't count on this service unless it's understood in advance. When crossing lanes, a line of bicyclists should "snake" across, one at a time, each rider in turn. This way, you leave a safe passage for cars. A ragged line of bicyclists blocks the entire lane.



"Snaking" across a lane, the cyclists can allow the passing car to make its right turn, while they turn left. Each cyclist looks back before crossing the lane. Make a neat, straight line when waiting at intersections. Groups of bicyclists who pile up at intersections block the road. This practice is unnecessary, discourteous and dangerous.

When you stop to rest, to read your map or to wait for companions, pull completely off the road. It's surprising how many bicyclists fail to observe this simple caution.

Riding in a Cocoon

Imagine a "cocoon" of space around each bicycle in your group of riders. It's easy to think that you can safely pass closer to a bicycle than a car, because the bicycle is smaller. But the bicycle can turn to the side just as fast as a car. Keep 3 feet of clearance when you're passing another bicyclist - more at high downhill speeds.

At any time, one of your riding companions might be about to pass you, so be especially careful to ride in a straight line. You don't have eyes in the back of your head, and you can't constantly trace the position of bicyclists behind you as you ride.

When you're about to pass another bicyclist, it's your responsibility to do it safely. The other members of your group can't read your mind to know that you are about to change position in the group. Check behind you before you change your lane position. Call out, "On your left" to the bicyclist you're passing, and pass on the left. Never sneak past another bicyclist on the right - if you do, you force the other bicyclist farther toward the middle of the road without warning.



WCCTC Tri News

Tri Equipment continued from page 1

A road/triathlon bike is the best-suited bike for triathlon training and racing. This type of bike though is less versatile than either a mountain or hybrid bike. This type of bike is best suited for the individual who is going to be using cycling and triathlons as his/her primary source of fitness training.

Biking Costs:

Consult with your coach as there are many options to consider.

Running

The best thing about running gear is, like swimming, it is fairly simple and inexpensive.

Running Costs

Shoes	\$65
Socks	\$4/pair
Moisture Wick shirts	\$15-30/shirt
2 pair of shorts	\$30-40

Other items are optional so please consult with your coach.



Swimming Drills part 1 of 5

In developing the skills to improve your swim technique and stroke it is necessary to try to isolate the different phases of the stroke as well as body position. Drill work allows you to accomplish this mission. The following drills are the most common

Drill FIST

This drill is used to develop a more effective use of the forearm during the catch and downstroke phases of the stroke. During the fist drill you are essentially swimming with a closed hand (a fist). The fist is not tightly squeezed but loose. It is important during this drill to get good hip rotation (skate side to side) to allow for a long boat (stretched out body) in the water and to keep the elbow high during the stroke. This will set you up to get as much water under your fist and forearm as possible so you are using as much water as possible to pull you through the water efficiently. This drill is best done in 25-yard increments followed by 25 yards of traditional swimming.

