

SAFETY FIRST MESSAGE: Riding In A Group

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Whether you do your training rides solo or with a Group, you will most always be in a group situation on the MS 150. Riding in a group has different forms. You can be in a group at the start and several riders will continue on riding together side by side. Or you can be in a pace line, or a line of riders traveling the same speed. This will be a different experience than riding by yourself. Riding with other cyclists all around you may cause you to feel trapped.

First of all **Relax**. It is most important to create and maintain your own safety zone. This may vary depending on the speed and ability level of the people you are with, so be flexible. Either slow down or speed up to pass slower riders if you are not comfortable riding with. Let others know you would like them to give you some space.

Riders around you (or behind) are expecting you to maintain control of your course and speed. Also they are expecting you to communicate or signal if you need to change your course and speed. You have a responsibility to others for the overall safety of the group.

Your responsibilities in a pack include:

- Be aware of others around you.
- Communicate well in advance. Use hand signals as well as verbal commands (talk to riders around you).
- Ride with your head up. Look well down the road, not at the person or wheel in front of you.
- Maintain a comfortable control and speed of your bike (even when going downhill).
- Have an escape plan. Just like when driving a car, if something unexpected happens in front of you, plan which direction is safe to move to avoid a crash (left / right, be aware of bicycle and vehicle traffic).
- Avoid sudden sideways movements.
- Be careful when stopping or slowing. Communicate (call out) your actions.
- Know your limits.
- Group mentality is not always safe. If you are feeling unsafe or uncomfortable, slow down and properly move out of the group you are in.
- Never overlap wheels with the rider in front of you. Most of the MS 150 crashes because of wheel touches (protect your front wheel)
- Do not use aero bars in a pace line (not in the front, middle or back of the pace line). Move out of the pace line to ride on aero bars.

- Be aware of how weather will affect your kike. Riding in wet conditions requires slower speeds and greater braking distance.
- Be respectful of other riders. Keep to the right and pass on the left.

Ride Safe, Ride Smart!

For questions or more information on Safe Group Riding, contact Coach Alan – asbazard@yahoo.com