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## TRI-COUNTY BICYCLE ASSOCIATION

### RIDE LEADER INFORMATION

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## **RIDE LEADER INFORMATION**

This is an update of information created by  
Sara Kanya in about 1994

### **Ride Incentive Program**

The purpose of the ride incentive program is to promote recreational group riding in the Tri-County Bicycle Association. It is presumed that members already have an interest in bicycling and do not need to be encouraged to ride their bikes. Consequently, the incentive program is intended to encourage group riding and to reward members for various levels of participation in club rides. Obviously, not every situation that may arise in administering a ride program can be foreseen in a manual of this type. Therefore, when in doubt, the purpose of the ride program should serve as the guiding principle.

Each mile ridden on the ride and each mile ridden to and from the member's home via the shortest and safest route is a ride mileage point. The ride leader earns ride leader points for setting up and leading the ride.

### **Ride Classes**

Rides are divided into several speed classifications called ride classes. They are established to enable riders of similar abilities to ride together and to communicate the ride leader's expectations of the ride to potential riders. Categories are based on average overall ride speed, as follows:

<b>CLASS</b>	<b>SPEED</b>	<b>TYPE OF RIDE</b>
A+	19+	Very fast, usually pace lines
A	17 to 19	Standard, the intent is to ride in groups
B	14 to 17	Standard, the intent is to ride in groups
C	12 to 14	Standard, the intent is to ride in groups
D	Under 12	Standard, the intent is to ride in groups
Z	Per Individual	Over 40 miles, riders ride at their own pace
M	Per individual	Mountain bike trails

## **Types of Riders**

The riding interests of the club members vary. Some are focusing on improving physical limits and how fast or how far they can ride. Others are interested in general fitness and weight control or are cross training from a major interest in another sport. Still others are recovering from or preventing heart disease through an aerobic activity. Most enjoy the social aspects of group cycling.

On some rides the entire group is compatible and will ride together. On other rides, the group will split into several groups and spread out over the entire route. Sometimes not everyone will want to eat on a breakfast ride. This is okay and to be expected.

Expect riders who ride faster than the usual top speed for a class. If this is the only ride scheduled for a particular day or in a particular area, many riders will be there. If these condition results in the ride leader riding alone, it would be very nice if at least one rider would ride with them.

## **Evening Rides**

The minimum speed and the amount of daylight are used to determine the maximum distance for an evening ride. Daily sunrise and sunset charts are available in the “Chainwheel Chatter” and on the club web page. The maximum mileage can be calculated by multiplying the remaining daylight expressed in hours (as a decimal) by the minimum riding speed for the class. For example, if a Class C ride is to start at 6 p.m. and sunset is at 8:30 p.m., multiply 2.5 hours x 12 mph for a maximum ride distance of 30 miles. If a stop is planned on the route, the appropriate stop time (generally 15 minutes is sufficient for an evening ride) should be subtracted from remaining daylight before this calculation is made (in this case 2.25 hours x 12 mph = 27 miles). Remaining twilight time should be reserved to resolve mechanical problems.

General rule of thumb: if car headlights are on, bicycles should also have lights on or not be riding on the road. It is very difficult for a car to see a bike at dusk.

Some evening rides begin after sunset, requiring the use of headlights and taillights. Such rides should be clearly identified as moonlight rides. A route will look and sound very different at night than during the day.

## **Suggestions for Routes**

A starting location should be selected that will provide adequate parking for the number of riders that might be reasonably expected for the ride. The ride leader is responsible for securing parking permission. Signs reading “customer parking only” would probably suggest looking for a different starting location. Permission should generally be obtained from the property owner or management, rather than from an individual business in a strip mall.

The route should use low volume paved roads. A paved shoulder allows a bicycle to move out of the flow of busy traffic.

It is suggested to ride or drive the route before preparing a map or a cue sheet. This checks the accuracy of the route and its mileage. The time of day will make a difference in the traffic volume. A road that is fine Saturday at 9 a.m. may have too much car traffic for an evening ride.

“Borrowing” maps from other ride leaders is a common practice. Using Monday night’s map on the following Wednesday is a little too soon to recycle maps.

## **Problems on the Road**

Bicycles do break down. Common problems are flat tires and broken chains and cables. The ride leader is not a bicycle mechanic. Usually, someone on the ride can fix a flat if the rider is carrying a spare tube. If no one knows how to fix the bike, the leader should offer to either drive a car back for the rider or call some one to pick up the stranded cyclist.

Riders can break down too. Bonking happens when a rider has eaten too little or ridden too long without food or ridden on the wrong foods. Water is very important. Leaders can and should make constructive suggestions about training and nutritional needs. If the rider is not receptive, do not suggest any more.

Occasionally, a rider will be involved in an accident. If the rider cannot continue riding, someone should stay with the injured cyclist. One person should be designated to get help. Knowledge of first aid is nice but not required. The ride leader is not expected to be an emergency medical technician. It is a good idea for both ride leaders and riders to carry cell phones if they have them. The 3 biggest causes of bicycle accidents are riding on the wrong side of the road, riding at night and disobeying traffic regulations.

## **Ride Leader Responsibility**

Group rides shall not be scheduled to conflict with monthly club meetings, the club picnic, the fall party, the holiday party, the T-Shirt Ride or the Women on Wheels Ride. Rides going to these tours are permitted. Any club member over 18 years old may lead rides. The ride leader accepts responsibility for all aspects of the ride and gets extra mileage credit for doing this. This includes the following:

- Announcing the ride
- Setting up the route and providing maps or cue sheets
- Having riders initial and sign the ride roster
- Ensuring that policies for club rides are followed
- Submitting the completed ride roster to the Ride Mileage Keeper

## **How Does a Ride Leader Schedule a Ride in the Newsletter?**

After deciding to lead a ride, the leader has to promote it. Both recurring and single-day rides are published in the monthly newsletter. Postcards are available at club meetings to provide ride information, or ride leaders may complete an on-line form. Deadline for submitting ride information to the newsletter is the second Saturday of the month preceding the ride.

## **How Does a Ride Leader Schedule a “Called In Ride”?**

Non-recurring (i.e., one-time only) rides may be placed on the called-in ride line (517/882-3700). Ride information may be either called in to the ride line extension or submitted via an on-line form available on the web site. The ride line is updated twice weekly from early June through mid-October, and once weekly during the rest of the year. Deadline for submitting ride information is noon on the day of the ride line update, and rides must appear on the updated ride line for at least two days prior to the ride.

## **Information Needed To Schedule A Ride**

- Name of Ride Leader and their phone number
- Class of ride (only 1 class per ride)
- Day and Date of Ride (be sure these are accurate and consistent)
- Time of Ride (include AM or PM)
- Expected mileage or a reasonable ranges (10-15, 40-60)
- Starting location of ride (provide specific and complete information)
- Any extra comments (it is assumed that rides will not depart in rain)

## Creating Maps - Ride Leader

The map or cue sheet needs to be accurate. If your route follows a particular road for a considerable distance, be sure that signage is consistent with your cue sheet. Name changes often occur at the township or county line. Also, although maps do not always indicate so, continuing in the same general direction on some roads requires a “jog” on another road. So, be sure that there is either a directional sign at that location or a notation on the cue sheet that this is required. If a route has not been used in over a year, it is a good idea to re-drive the route to ensure that major changes have not occurred.

Both maps and cue sheets are suggested if it is a long ride or not in the local area. Extra cross streets on the map help a rider who has missed a turn to figure out where s/he is.

The practice of leaving cue sheets on a car windshield for late-arriving riders frustrates the purpose of group riding and is strongly discouraged, as is that of distributing cue sheets to riders leaving well in advance of the designated starting time. Riders not present to sign in immediately before the ride "start time" are not regarded as participants for the purpose of the Ride Incentive Program.

This is an example for a cue sheet and a map for a short ride from Holt Junior High School:

Start at Holt Junior High School (Loop, 4.5 miles)

L	Aurelius
R	Wilcox
L	Eifert
L	Harper
L	Aurelius
R	Holt Junior High School

Short rides often do not have a rest stop. Longer rides (>25-35 miles, depending on ride class) will generally have food, water and toilet stops. Suggested stops and cumulative riding distances are helpful for riders planning for their nutritional and hydration needs. Most rides use the low volume county roads with short distances on busier roads going into towns.

## **During the Ride – Ride Leader**

The ride leader is responsible for on the road supervision for all rides except Class Z. S/he is required to bring up the rear. If riders are riding slower than the ride class, the ride leader may ride at the class pace. However, the minimum riding pace for a particular class should be interpreted as an average pace for the entire ride, not necessarily the “cruising speed”. The wind direction and speed as well as topographical features of the route (hills, chip seal and other construction hazards, etc.) must be considered before abandoning slower riders. A slower rider may be on this ride because s/he does not know what pace s/he rides.

It is a judgement call to suggest the rider try a slower class ride in the future or to ask them if they will be okay and ride ahead. Never leave a struggling rider alone. If a rider has been left behind and does not finish the ride in a reasonable time, the leader should backtrack and try to find the rider.

Class Z rides have no "on the road" ride leader supervision. It is especially important the Class Z maps are detailed and accurate.

## **Ride Sheet Paperwork – Ride Leader**

The ride leader for each ride must prepare a ride sheet. The ride sheets need to be complete and readable.

## **What is expected from Riders?**

The rider should choose a ride appropriate to his/her ability and should arrive early enough (15 minutes) to sign the ride sheet and be ready to leave at the designated starting time. Riders that are late for a ride are very inconsiderate and this happens frequently. They hold up the ride leader enough that the ride leader may end up riding by themselves after the rest of the group left on time. Leave on time.

The rider should have a working bicycle, a helmet, and a water bottle. The incentive program does not give ride points to a rider without a helmet or using headphones. Because the routes are on public roads, the rider cannot be kept off the ride. However, a ride leader is not obligated to provide a cue sheet to such an individual or to someone who declines to sign the ride sheet. Instead, a notation is made on the paperwork.

If a rider is planning to leave the route or will not be completing the route, s/he should notify the leader. This can occur when a person is riding home after the ride without returning to the starting point. This should be clarified beforehand so the ride leader does not end up waiting for that person in the parking lot.

Riders that depart from the designated route do not get mileage credit. Riders that want to extend a ride to get more miles do not get credit for the extra miles. The ride leader's answer to requests like this should be "absolutely not".

### **Ride Sheet Paperwork – Rider**

The rider must initial the first column, which indicates that they accept the "Waiver" information. The riders should PRINT their names, last name first and first name last. The name should be consistent throughout the season. Mileage for Bob Smith, Robert Smith, Bobby Smith, and Bubba Smith are for four different individuals.

There are two mileage columns: the ride leader fills out the first. This is the actual mileage the riders completed on the ride. The second is for the rider that bicycles from home. A rider is given credit for the shortest, safest mileage to and from the ride to one's home. The purpose of the home mileage credit is to provide an alternative to driving one's car to a bike ride. It is not intended to reward additional mileage ridden to or from the ride or off the route.

The last column is "club member." Appropriate entries are YES and NO.

### **Ride Officials**

The Ride Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the signup sheet for the newsletter ride calendar. S/he makes the signup sheet available at the club meetings and formats the ride calendar for the newsletter editor. The newsletter deadline is published in the "Chainwheel Chatter".

The Ride Line Coordinator is responsible for collecting called in rides and updating the ride line.

The Ride Mileage Keeper is responsible for deciphering and recording ride sheet data. There are hundreds of rides each season. The ride sheets need to be turned in within 30 days of the ride. It is not reasonable to expect the Mileage Keeper to enter all rides into the computer in December.



## **Summary**

There are advantages to being a ride leader. The ride always goes where you want it to ride, when you want to ride, the distance is always just right and you get extra mileage credit. Ride leaders get 100 points for leading a class D ride. They get 50 points for leading all other rides. They get 10 points if no riders show up.

The ride incentive program provides awards to ride leaders for leading rides. There is also the prestigious Ride Leader of the Year Award.

Arnie Johnson & Katie Donnelly

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