

## **Group Riding Etiquette & Tips**

### **Macsim Sydney To Surfers Cycle Tour 2007**

The YOTS Tour is no different to any other bunch ride, other than it is a weeklong and we have the benefit & added safety of a support vehicle.

There may be a couple of things peculiar to the charity ride, however bunch etiquette is pretty much universal.

So for seasoned riders who have forgotten more than some of us know, it's always good to refresh the memory and for those with relatively short experience behind them, it's good to know what is expected.

#### **Share A Daypack**

**Share a daypack** with your mates.

The support vehicle doesn't need the weight of 20 knapsacks in the back. Carry only essentials for the day in the support vehicle. Wallet, mobile phone, spare tube, sun cream, energy bar etc.

If you like to get out of your cleats at lunchtime, bring scuffs. Carry a spare tube & tire levers in your jersey. Track pump will be in the support vehicle.

If you need something during the week and no time to pick it up at the end of the days ride, speak to our support vehicle driver, he will endeavour to have the 'goffer' pick it up for you.

Expect a wet day, however a raincoat is often times too hot. Windproof vest is more versatile; arm warmers seem like overkill in March, however they have been used before, if it's rain all day.

#### **Obey The Road Rules**

First and foremost, obey the road rules.

It is sometimes difficult to be overly rigid in this regard, on those early mornings at home, with no traffic about. However on the YOTS Tour we are travelling late in the day, often on busy roads, it's an absolute must to observe the road rules.

Be considerate and avoid creating dangerous situations, safety and good practice is the keynote.



## Look After Each Other

### **Good bunches look after their riders.**

Wait if the group is split by traffic, stop for mechanicals, regroup after hills and don't leave individuals on their own to fend for themselves.

It can be a different matter if the pace is on. With everyone going full gas and the bunch stretched out, it is impossible to know what's happening with each individual.

However, the group should still regroup and wait for stragglers after they have had a good crack and blown off some steam.

### **When rolling out, keep it smooth.**

Avoid wandering off your line while getting your foot in. If you miss on the first attempt, don't baulk the rider behind by waiting for the click or stare at your pedal.

Make a couple of revolutions with your foot resting on top of the pedal to maintain momentum and finish it off on the move.

### **Sudden movements create problems** for everyone around you.

Keep an eye on conditions ahead. Don't stare at the rear wheel in front of you, but use the back of the rider in front to gauge your distance, while regularly glancing 3 - 5 riders ahead and also up the road to anticipate problems before they occur.

**On the front** the lead pair has the responsibility of steering the group and maintaining a smooth momentum, they must be decisive and anticipate ahead.

It's their responsibility to calculate actions for the group as a whole, especially arriving at roundabouts & traffic lights where an orderly approach is preferred.

It is **better to stop the whole group than split the bunch** on a red light. Jamming the brakes on at the last moment shows a lack of awareness.

## Stay Alert

**When arriving at junctions** all riders should be alert to what is going on up front.

Though the lead riders are guiding the bunch, the concept of the group is superseded by the need for individuals to take



responsibility for their own safety and make the correct call based on their safety.

### **Keep Working Up The Front**

**Keep working while on the front of the bunch**, particularly through the short ups & downs.

**Never freewheel on the front**, unless slowing the whole group is the intention. If you want to sit up after an effort, simply roll off the front.

Soft-peddalling on the front causes a concertina effect down the line and breaks the rhythm of the bunch. The guys immediately behind the lead pair should not have to be on the brakes on the smaller down hills.

If you have pulled up the rise and the legs need a rest, don't soft pedal on the decline, roll off the front and recover as you slide to the back of the bunch or power down then roll off.

**When passing other packs.** Keep it tidy. Be patient and overtake on an appropriate section of road, if need be, wait for their support vehicle to move over.

Don't break up the group in an effort to get past. The whole group should overtake with the support vehicle.

**Sign Road Hazards**, preferably while they are still up ahead, don't wait till the group is on top of the problem.

Point to hazards and I do mean hazards, we do not need to be made aware of every imperfection in the roadway.

Point out hazards that could bring an unwary rider down, not wake up someone who is asleep. This does not abdicate the responsibility of those at the back, to watch the road.

### **Pass Those Signals Down**

**Calling or Signing**, if not passed down, only confuses or gets lost in the wind. The situation is usually past by the time the message gets down the line.

Hand signals are best and communicate in an instant.

Whatever you use, calling or signing, please make it plain what your message is. Keep calls short and to the point. 'Stopping' 'Rolling' etc.



The group does **not need detailed instructions**. 'Car Back' is suitable for all vehicles approaching from the rear. Calling or Signing is not to be polite, it is about safety.

Not wanting to offend, but please keep it to your self, unless it is a genuine hazard.

To be effective, signing has to be consistent & be workable in a bunch travelling at speed.

### **Change Early When The Road Turns Up**

**When the road turns up**, change early, before you lose your momentum.

Take care not to drop-kick the rider behind you when rising out of the saddle. In a tight bunch there is the potential for a crash if the bike moves backward as you lift off the saddle. So as you stand, take your bike with you.

Pull the bike up underneath you when you rise out of the saddle on a climb or change up a gear and power down as you stand.

**Fast downhill.** On a fast downhill, if you roll through, move to the left, allowing faster riders to come through.

If the group stays together, those on the front should start driving the pedals before losing momentum at the bottom.

**Slow moving traffic.** On single lane roadway, where it is difficult for traffic to pass, we ride on the shoulder, but only where possible and a good surface.

When a lot of traffic gets banked up behind the group, we get off the road and wait for the traffic to pass.

When we encounter slow moving traffic there is no benefit in sliding up the inside of vehicles and leaving the support vehicle behind.

**The group stays with the support vehicle.**

### **Merging Safely**

**Merging.** Stay in-touch with the Support Vehicle and be alert on fast moving highway sections.



Remember we are merging at 30 km/h. Following traffic can be traveling over 100 km/h and may not see the group ahead of the support vehicle.

Don't launch out into the traffic without the support vehicle. If there is some doubt, as to the traffic situation behind, wait.

In a large bunch, the tail end riders are best sighted to signal when the road is clear to merge or negotiate lane changes.

Ideally **the tail-end riders should lead the group out** when merging.

### **Pulling Your Weight In The Pace Line**

**The Pace line.** Most of the time, we ride a steady tempo in a double pace line.

When the pace picks up, we will on occasion adopt a single-file pace line or a rotating pace line.

How long each rider pulls at the front **depends on the pace and relative strength** of the riders. In general, it can be anywhere from 10 seconds to several minutes.

Keep your front wheel close to the rider in front of you, your nose out of the wind, your turns at the front smooth & your re-attachment to the back efficient.

When it's your turn to pull maintain the same speed as the riders before you.

**As you pull off, ease your speed** so the rider behind you simply has to maintain your previous speed to pass you.

If the rider rolls off and does not slow down, it disrupts the pace and rhythm of the group and forces the rider behind to almost sprint in an effort to get past.

If you've finished your pull, it's over - ease up, let the group pass, latch on to the back as quickly as possible.

### **Most Difficult Part For A Large Bunch**

The most difficult part for a large bunch is organizing the group's efforts in a rotating pace line and keeping it smooth.

Staying smooth means **maintaining a consistent speed**: don't speed up as you take your turn on the front, don't drop back too quickly from the lead position, be sure and hug the wheel in



front of you while staying close to the other line, maximize the draft so the pace line stays compact and efficient.

### **Good Luck With Your Ride**

The YOTS Tour is the best part of a thousand kilometers. It is a solid week on the bike in anyone's book and particularly if you haven't been putting a lot of hours in.

Good idea to bring chamois cream.

After continuous days in the saddle, the mind and body are tired, edges can get a little frayed, small things can get on one's nerves, a little understanding can go a long way.

### **Thank You**

Thank you to Wayne McIvor for developing the above notes and guidelines and making them available to the Sydney To Surfers Cycle Tour.

Rotary Club of Engadine  
[www.sydneytosurfers.org.au](http://www.sydneytosurfers.org.au)

***Feb 28, 2007***

