

# Riding with the Lakers



## Tips and rider expectations

### Coming for a Lakers ride? What you need to know

Cycling like all sports has its dangers, however these can be reduced by following a few guidelines. Riding with the Lakers also brings certain responsibilities to look after yourself and others to make sure that everyone returns home safely.

Bunch riding is the safest and most enjoyable when a few simple guidelines are followed.

1. Check before you ride
2. Rides - know which group to join
3. Safety and etiquette
4. Calls - what do they mean and who makes them

### **1. Check before you ride:**

Get this stuff sorted before coming along for a ride and you'll be starting out well. Spend the time and the money to make yourself comfortable, protect your head and body and have the skills to control your bike.

a) Helmet - No helmet is natural selection in action. Wear your helmet!

b) Gloves - Give you better control whilst riding and some padding in case of a fall

c) iPod/Headphones - definite NO NO in the bunch. They have no place in a group ride and are generally very dangerous to use in any road cycling (traffic) situation.

d) Bike - Must fit properly and be well maintained with good tyres and bakes (pads, cables and adjusted correctly) at a minimum. A poorly maintained bike will fail more regularly and therefore hold up the bunch and spoil your ride. It may even end up causing you injury. Go to a reliable mechanic to service your bike and ask for a safety check.

e) Comfort - Have high quality cycling shorts to minimize discomfort and distraction. Cycling kit is purpose made and more practical and comfortable than t-shirts and casual shorts.

f) Glasses - Personal choice, but offer protection from flying hazards. Make sure the arms are on the outside of your helmet straps so that they can dislodge in a fall.

g) Visibility - Be visible. Have good lights front (white) and rear (red), and turn them on during dark rides!

h) Weather - Wet roads are slippery, wet metal plates and paint are lethal and visibility may be reduced.

i) Training - Practice bike handling in various conditions, ask for advice and attend training on offer. Make sure you are comfortable clipping in and out of pedals before joining a group ride.

j) Fatigue - Concentration levels are reduced, handling compromised. Leave more room between riders when tired. Firstly, choose a ride within your capability.

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### On the day

- a) Check your tyre pressure.** Make sure your tyres are properly pumped up before every ride. This will help you avoid unnecessary pinch flats.
- b) Make sure your lights are working.** As well as it making good sense, you are required by law to have working front (white) and rear (red) lights during hours of darkness.
- c) Check your tyre changing/emergency gear.** Every cyclist should carry (and know how to use) tyre changing gear. At a minimum, you will need a spare tube, tyre levers and a handpump or CO2 cylinder and dispenser. You can carry this in a saddle bag or in your jersey pockets, your phone and enough cash to get a cab home if needed.
- d) Fill up your bottles).** It's a good idea to carry at least one bottle (with either water or electrolyte) for any ride. For rides of 2 hours or longer, you'll need 2 bottles or more.
- e) Don't forget your helmet.** Helmets are compulsory.

### **2. Which ride?** See our Rides section for more information on rides.

When you arrive at the meeting point, you should already know or quickly determine which ride you are planning to join. You should at least know which route, so that you are properly prepared for the distance and can help the group leader out if required. If the designated group leader cannot make the ride it pays to know where you are going.

If you're coming along for the first time, we always recommend joining an 'easy' group or one that you should not find too challenging to stay with. You can then concentrate on learning how we ride rather than worrying about hanging on. You can always join a more challenging ride next time.

Choosing the correct group is important please choose the group based on your current fitness and ability.

#### **Current ride leaders**

- Group 1 (average 30kmph) – James Clough
- Group 2 – (average 25-28kmph) - Steve Diamond
- Coastal Crew – (average 25kmph) - John Bains

### **3. Safety and etiquette**

#### **Configuration**

Pairs - We ride in pairs, which means keeping your handlebar aligned with the person's next to you. Any more than two abreast and the middle person is unable to avoid obstacles. When you sit half a wheel or so ahead of your partner, it's called 'half-wheeling' which is not only poor form and annoying as it causes surging in the group with riders constantly trying to align with the wheel in front, but is also quite dangerous as the rider in front may swerve unexpectedly e.g. to avoid an obstacle, and will clip your front wheel if it is overlapping.

#### **Give everyone a turn and share the load.**

No gaps but leave space - Gaps (more than a metre) reduce the drafting benefit, disrupt the pairings, encourage riders to pull in on you and make negotiating intersections when signals are changing much more hazardous than a single continuous group acting as a single entity. Conversely it's not a race so keep back 30+cm from the wheel ahead and stay slightly offset. Try and stay one side or other of the bike in front rather than moving back and forth.

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### Handling

Smooth movements - Be predictable and smooth in the bunch. Signal your intentions to fellow riders and don't make unexpected changes of speed or direction.

Brake smoothly and call "stopping" or "slowing" first if necessary. Don't over brake as you have people following just 30cms behind you. If you have to brake hard try and leave the maximum room for those following you to react and stop.

Be aware that if you stand up out of the saddle (when going up a rise) your bike can often lurch behind you. Make sure you are well clear of the rider behind in this case. When leading off from a standstill, eg. A red light, ease the speed up slowly so that the bunch can stay together.

Riders at the back should call 'on' to indicate when the bunch has regrouped and is ready to gradually increase the speed. Always keep pedalling when on the front of the group, especially when going downhill, so that the rest of the bunch are not forced to sit on their brakes.

Look forward – Don't look back, down or sideways. Things happen fast and a moment's lack of attention can be all it takes. Calls for lane changes should come from the back of the group.

Hands – Keep both hands on the bar with at least one finger hooked under the bar to avoid being dislodged when hitting unexpected turbulence (bumps, holes). Never take both hands off the bar when in the bunch.

Aero/profile/Tri-bars - are for time-trialling and non-drafting triathlon. Aero bars are not to be used in the bunch as they take your hands away from ready access to your brakes and reduce your control. You may ride a TT bike or a road bike with aero bars on group rides but hands are to remain on the hoods while in the group.

Wet roads- are slippery. Slow down, watch out for painted surfaces and metal plates.

Don't stop where it is dangerous to do so. Fix flat tyres etc in a safe place. Be prepared to remind others who may be preoccupied with the events at hand to notice the danger they are in.

### Traffic Rules

One lane - We share the road and expect drivers to have patience and respect us. We can reciprocate by using a single lane on multi-lane roads, not blocking the road, not making groups too big, leaving enough space between bunches and going in single file on two-way roads/ narrow sections.

Red lights - We stop at red lights. If approaching an orange light, the front pair will call either 'rolling' or 'stopping' based on whether they believe the bunch can safely stop/continue before the light turns red. When we stop, we are still a bunch, we stay in our pairs, stop behind the traffic and do not filter through between cars/ up the left side to get to the lights.

### Bike Lanes

Bicycle lanes are for the exclusive use of bicycle riders. These lanes are indicated by signs and road markings, which operate during the times stated. If no times are stated, they operate at all times.

If you are riding on a road with a bicycle lane, you must if practicable, ride in the bicycle lane. You may move out of the bicycle lane to avoid debris, potholes, or to safely overtake another bicycle rider. You must only ride in the correct direction in the bicycle lane.

Where there is insufficient room for two riders to ride abreast in a bicycle lane, you must ride in single file. During the bicycle lane operating times, you must not ride outside a bicycle lane abreast of another rider unless you are overtaking.

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Other road users are permitted to use a bicycle lane only when:

1. the bicycle lane is not in operation
2. stopping in an emergency
3. entering or leaving the road from private property, a parking area, including a parking lane, or another road (and then only for up to 50 metres)
4. overtaking a vehicle turning right or making a U-turn (and then only for up to 50 metres)
5. avoiding an obstruction (and then only for up to 50 metres)
6. driving a bus or taxi picking up or dropping off passengers (and then only for up to 50 metres).

### **4. Making calls**

Call out/point out - Sitting in a bunch means the view forward is often blocked by riders ahead. Everyone behind is relying on you and the riders ahead to make them aware of obstacles, be they holes in the road, pedestrians/joggers, slower cyclists, parked cars, oncoming traffic, metal plates, glass, grates, debris, animals. If the obstacle is dangerous enough then shout it out as well as pointing it out. It is up to the riders at the back of the bunch to determine when it's clear to change lanes and call this out as well. If you are 'last wheel' remember this is your responsibility so that the riders at the front are not straining to see behind when time to change lanes. The call should be 'clear... over' if clear to change. If a car is approaching/overtaking the call is 'car back'. Make sure you pass the calls up and down the bunch as well.

#### **Calls primarily from the front**

'car up' - beware of slow/parked vehicle ahead. The bunch will need to check if clear to go around

'rider/runner up' - beware of a cyclist or pedestrian ahead. Also used to alert the cyclist/pedestrian to the group's approach

'stopping/slowing' - the bunch must prepare to stop

'rolling' - the bunch will keep moving or start moving off

#### **Calls primarily from the rear**

'easy' - slows the pace momentarily to close gaps and allow riders in difficulty to get back on the bunch

'on' - indicates all riders are back in the bunch and the normal pace can resume

'car back' - a vehicle is overtaking the bunch

'clear' - the road/lane is clear to enter

If you have queries or are after more information please let the ride coordinator know.