

Ride Guide

Introduction

Devizes Cycling Club group rides are organised in packs of about five to eight cyclists grouped according to speed, distance, ability, and interest of the participants. Riding in a pack allows riders to meet and converse with other riders, saves energy (particularly when riding into the wind), and it is easier for the ride lead to guide and direct riders. And, if you suffer a flat tyre or any other problem, you will have other riders in your pack able and willing to help you.

Advantages of Double File

The default formation is double file, changing to single file if traffic and road conditions dictate, provided that doing so does not imperil the safety of the group or pack. Riding double file is the traditional format for cycling groups-it permits easy conversation with other riders, uses the road space efficiently, and minimises the overall size of each group. To share the work riders change positions in the pack (by rotation) so that each rider takes only a short turn at the front, followed by a longer spell of drafting behind other riders.

Stay with the Group

When you join a group it is your responsibility to stay with the group until the end of the tour, or until you advise the ride lead that you are leaving "Checking out" is a perfectly valid option for someone who feels they are having an "off" day, or has miscalculated their group selection – but you must notify the ride lead if this is your intention.

Group Members Responsibilities

It is your responsibility to arrive appropriately dressed for the conditions, and appropriately equipped (a minimum of phone, spare tubes & pump, food and water). It is also important that you become familiar with the terminology and techniques of group riding, and accept the responsibilities involved. This will enable you to be an effective member of the "team", know how to contribute not hinder the group, and know what the other riders are, or should be, doing. At all times, be predictable to other riders around you, avoid sudden movements.

Saturday Club Rides

Purpose: social & low-medium intensity training

For Saturday rides, the club will endeavour to form two groups for two ability groups. The easy riding Ramblers are assumed to be steady riders, perhaps relatively new to cycling or looking for a more social experience. This group will aim to ride at an average speed of approx. 15mph. The Training group are assumed to be stronger riders, with a bit more experience, and looking to roll along at a moderate pace of 16-18mph. Riders self-select which groups and packs to ride with.

Ride leads will brief groups on how they expect to manage the ride for the whole group's benefit. The Ramblers will seek to maintain group coherence throughout the ride, re-calibrating and re-grouping as often as necessary. The Training Group will focus on its average speed, and a consistent level of effort. Where riders are struggling to keep up with this, the ride lead will ensure re-grouping at the top of marked climbs, but also seek to offer up a "support" rider, and if this is not sufficient, will offer options to shortcut or turn back.

Sunday Ride Group Speeds

Purpose: medium-high intensity training

The Pace groups are performance-oriented so riders in these groups are expected to be fit, experienced, and self-sufficient. Higher average speeds will be desirable, but it will be club policy to reduce these speeds in the autumn to assist the movement of riders from Saturday groups wishing to step up. The policy for Pace groups will be similar to the Training Group, in aiming for a steady effort level to meet the average speed, without substantial changes of pace in the ride. Marked hills will be ridden as individuals, but re-grouping at the top of the hill is then expected. No rider will be unknowingly dropped - again a support rider will be offered to drop back to a consistently struggling rider. Other options that will be offered by the ride lead, include highlighting shortcuts and routes home.

Thursday Club Ride - "chaingang"

For Thursday "chaingang" rides, riders form groups again according to their expected speeds. Dependant on numbers, an attempt will be made to form a Pace (20mph +), Training (17-18mph), and Ramblers group (15-16mph), who will set off at 5 minute intervals in this order. Note - these average speeds are higher than the weekend club rides !! If you over estimate your abilities and are dropped by the Fast or Medium groups, please feel able to slow up until you are swept up by the group behind. The Slow Group should endeavour not to drop anyone, and must regroup and recalibrate on the road accordingly.

New or Inexperienced Riders

If you have little or no experience riding in a group or pack, please make this known to the Ride leader or organiser who will be only too happy to offer some guidance. Remember the groups safety comes first which includes you, so please do not feel shy - you will learn quickly and everyone has to learn at some point. To assist with your introduction to club riding, the club intends to introduce a policy of appointing new riders a ride mentor, a practice employed in a number of other clubs. Your mentor will aim to ease you into club riding as seamlessly as possible.

U18 Riders

The club now accepts U18 riders provided they have completed parental consent forms, and have been signed off on a formal club introductory ride. Ride leads will cover the relevant U18 policy during their initial ride briefs, namely: inviting U18 riders to introduce themselves; appointing two ride buddies for each U18 if numbers allow; reminding the whole group that no U18 will be left to their own devices on a ride (simply no "checking out" for an U18, unless agreed with the lead, and accompanied home by ride buddies or a pick up from friends/parents arranged).

Meals/Coffee on the Ride

Lunch/snack/coffee breaks vary from group to group. Some groups stop for lunch at cafes or restaurants and spend an hour or so there, while others catch a quick snack at a convenience store and are on their bikes again promptly. If you have a preference, it's a good idea to check with the leader before you start out. If you do go to a pub/restaurant/cafe, remember that they are businesses and understandably won't take too kindly to a bunch of cyclists bringing in their own food and drink. On the other hand, businesses are usually quite happy to fill the water bottles of good customers.