

2008 BP MS150 Training Series - Ride 1, Katy to Fulshear, 7:30 am

First of all, you read the headline correct - 7:30 am is our start time this week - this is for your safety so please allow time.

The good news is that we have a GREAT location for the start and you can sign in in the warm indoors.

At the recommendation of the public officials we have been working with, we are getting our large group away in waves before the Saturday traffic starts up around Katy Mills Mall. We will be trickling back in in small groups but we need to get on the road at 7:30 as the start is a lot more congested.

A big THANKS to Sun & Ski Sports who is hosting our first two ride starts. They are excited to be on board and will be rolling out the red carpet for us the next two weeks. Tomorrow, I will be sending you information on how you can sign up for Sun & Ski's 2008 MS150 Discount & Donation program. This is a great way to get the equipment and clothing you need and raise money to help fight MS. You even earn donations when your friends shop at Sun & Ski - this program helped me raise enough donations to make the Tour of Champions last year and I highly recommend it.

Here's a useful tip for riders who don't have the proper cold weather wear for the probable cold front this weekend:

1. Enroll in the Sun & Ski Discount & Donation Program (see note tomorrow morning)
2. Read my tips on cold weather wear (on the News link at <http://www.conocophillipsbikeclub.org>)
3. Arrive at Sun & Ski early this Saturday and pick out the perfect base layer, shell, or whatever you need before we ride!

This Friday, I will be sending a note focusing on the sign-in process and our wave start. Please read the note as it will help you understand what to do when you arrive and why you need to arrive early enough to get sign in and ready to roll.

One of the other benefits of starting at Katy Mills is that we have plenty of parking so, if you have not found your carpool yet, there is room. This does not mean you can stop looking for a carpool, only that rides 1 and 2 have ample parking so you won't be turned away. Watch for a note focusing on carpooling soon.

I promised to break the mega-notes up so this note will stick to the following topics:

- **Training Ride #1 - Klassic Katy, Jan 19, 7:30 am**
- **Safety Corner - Group Rides, Drafting & Pacelines**
- **Last Minute Reminders**

- **Training Ride #1 - Klassic Katy, Jan 19, 7:30 am - 27/36 miles**

This week, we kick off the season with one of our classic rides...

If this ride looks a little familiar to our veteran riders, it is probably because it is a variation on our old Katy Klassic only we are riding in the other direction at the recommendation of the Katy Police Dept.

This ride is our classic opening ride as it is close to town but the roads are not too busy (if we get away early). This ride is almost completely flat with a few dips between Fulshear and Brookshire. Most of the ride is on local roads without a shoulder so you will need to ride single file. We will have Ride Marshals, HPD riders and conscientious riders reminding you to ride "Single File". Please honor these requests so that we are welcome to come back. More on this below.

We will be starting from Katy Mills Mall. A big THANKS to Sun & Ski Sports who is sponsoring our group so that we can start from the mall this week. Sun & Ski will open at 6:30 am for our riders. You can shop for warm clothing, get help with minor pre-ride mechanical assistance and sign in.

NOTE - There are restrooms in the mall opposite Sun & Ski that will be open for us. **Please DON'T wear your cycling shoes indoors** unless they have totally recessed clips or no clips. You could slip if you wear your clips inside.

If you are not familiar with the mall, Sun & Ski is located on the northeast side (the side facing Houston) near I-10. As you enter the mall, turn to the left and come around to the east side and you will see Sun & Ski near the front. Please don't park right near the mall entry but park near the perimeter of the parking on the east side. We will be starting from the driveway outside of Sun & Ski. We also have four porta-lets that will be outside next to the drive where we start if you need a quick stop just before we head out.

The routes this week are 27 or 36 miles. Most of you will be doing the shorter route and that is perfect for the start of the season. Because of the adjustments to the route, there will be one rest stop at the Fulshear Park & Ride. This is just past the middle of the long route and 11 miles into the short route.

IMPORTANT Ride Details

We will have twice our normal porta-lets in Fulshear - 8. **Please DON'T use the permanent restrooms at the park & ride!** They are supposed to be locked but, if they aren't, please DON'T use them.

We have lined up quite a few officers from the Katy PD. They will be covering all the significant intersections we pass through. Please obey them and be prepared to stop as you approach each intersection.

Riders MUST ride single file on Bois D' Arc and Winner Foster! The residents of Fulshear are upset about the large number of bikers taking up large amounts of space on the roads and the residents have decided they need to do something about it. The residents of Fulshear will contact the Fort Bend County sheriff's office if they find riders not riding single file. We have been told that the Fort Bend county sheriff's will be out patrolling Bois D' Arc and Winner Foster on Saturday. They asked us to remind riders to come to a complete stop at all stop signs.

This is our opportunity to demonstrate that not all cyclists are inconsiderate. PLEASE ride single file and be considerate of local traffic or we will not be welcome back.

Please ride on the shoulder on Hwy 90 from Brookshire back to Katy. You can ride two abreast but please allow faster riders to pass - see the Safety Corner below.

- Safety Corner - Group Rides, Drafting & Pacelines

This week, we officially start training to ride to Austin. Our training series is designed to help you get into shape to ride and, equally important, train you how to ride safely and courteously.

Towards this end, I will include a regular Safety Corner focusing on a topic/technique that will help ensure you get to Austin with your skin and all your bones intact. These tips are for your health. PLEASE read them and practice the exercises we will be promoting!

If some of you experienced riders want to contribute a safety tip/topic, please feel free to drop me a well written note for future use. All contributors will be noted and thanked profusely.

Since we are getting ready for our first group ride, I want to talk about some group ride issues/considerations.

Please remember these key tips about a group ride.

Do's

- Ride smoothly and predictably
- Communicate - BOTH ways, call hazards, call when passing and listen to others
- Ride your ride at your pace
- Listen and respect the Ride Marshals, Medics and HPD officers - they are looking out for our safety
- Ride single file or max 2 abreast if on a wide shoulder or a road that is closed to regular vehicular traffic
- Enjoy the ride - Remember that this is a fund-raiser to find a cure for MS, not a race!

Don'ts

- Cross over the center stripe
- Pass on the right
- Overlap the wheel of the rider in front of you
- Ride in pacelines (unless you are very experienced with the general process and the specific group you are riding with)

- Wear headphones (any type) or talk on your cellphone while riding

I will come back to many of these in detail over and over until we are all familiar with the fundamentals of safe riding.

When I worked as a Ride Marshal at the Tour de Pink (GREAT ride!, pencil in Sept 7, 2008!), I witnessed two accidents. Neither was major but one may have resulted in a broken collar bone. Both did not involve any rider contact but both were the result of a slower rider being startled when a faster group passed. The slower rider startled, went off the road to the right, and fell when trying to get back on the road. Both of these accidents could have been avoided by exercising a little rider etiquette. Here are some details about how to make a safe, courteous pass.

Passing on a bicycle is a two-way event. The passer and the passee both have a few simple responsibilities that will make the pass safe and friendly.

The passer should:

- Call "Approaching rider" as they get close
- Slow down a bit to allow buffer space for both riders
- Check the road behind to ensure no approaching vehicles
- Call "Passing on left" after the other rider has acknowledged their presence
- Move over to allow enough room, speed up and make the pass
- Allow plenty of room before pulling back in to the right

The passee should:

- Be aware of approaching riders (listen, NO headphones!)
- Acknowledge calls to pass - saying "Thank You" is a GREAT way to do this!
- Maintain a steady speed and line - don't suddenly slow down or speed up as you are being passed and don't jerk your handle bars.

The process for multiple riders passing is similar with a few extra variations

The passers should do all the above plus:

- Call "Rider(s) Up, slowing!" as they approach
- Double check for approaching traffic - allow more room for multiple riders to pass
- Consolidate to single file if not already there
- The lead rider should call: "Passing on left, 7 riders" or similar to let the passees know what to expect
- The last rider should call: "Last rider" so the group knows you are all past
- Allow extra room before pulling back in so the their line doesn't cut off the passees
- Don't speed up until you are well past - your group may feel pressured to pass when it is not safe in order to avoid falling behind

The passees should do all the above plus:

- Smoothly consolidate to single file when a group approaches (the lead rider should call "Slowing, Single file")
- Listen for the first and last passers so they know what to expect.

Note that the passers have the responsibility to ease up as they approach and wait for safe conditions to pass. The passees have the responsibility to listen, hold a steady speed and line, and go to single file to make room for the passers to get around.

We will cover these tips in the pre-ride announcements and I expect to see you all practicing this. I also expect to hear a LOT of communicating and "Thank you's" out on the roads this week and for the next three months!

Here is one more group riding tip. A question I received about pacelines.

Q: I've completed several MS150s but never a part of a team. While there have been large groups about, I've never been part of one. The extent of my drafting experience is limited to a group of 3 - and then only sporadically. Will this be covered in the next beginning ride?

A: We recommend against pacelines which is "aggressive" drafting in order to increase speed (unless you are very experienced and know your paceline riders well)

On the other hand, there is an opportunity to ride in a group and practice gentle drafting which does make your work quite a bit easier, especially on windy days. This also makes the ride a lot more fun since it is possible, and probable to meet and visit with other great riders as you go.

The key things to remember are:

1. Allow at least 12-24" between front/back wheels
2. NEVER overlap wheels!
3. Communicate with your group - call hazards, car back, slowing, stopping, turning, standing, etc...
4. Ride steady and predictable
5. Don't ride above your ability - pull off and let the group go if the pace feels too fast

Here are a few more linear thoughts on this topic:

- If a group has trained together, cycling etiquette says to let the slowest rider set the pace, now and on the way to Austin

- The ride is supposed to be fun and it is definitely more fun with a group of friends
- Friends DON'T let friends ride alone...

Hope this makes sense Save this note as it will make a lot more sense as you get more experienced.

- Last Minute Reminders:

- Put your clothing/eqpt out Friday night
- You must have completed your annual enrollment before you ride - NO EXCEPTIONS
(If you are getting this note directly from me (no one forwarded it), you have completed the annual enrollment)
- Only riders from our core teams can ride - we need to keep the size manageable
- Arrive on time!

I'll see some of you this Saturday...

Stephen Moskowitz
Team Captain, ConocoPhillips

281 293-2599

steve.e.moskowitz@conocophillips.com