

2008 BP MS150 Training Ride #8 - Columbus, Sat 3/8, 8:00 am

First of all, a BIG thank you to everyone who participated in and/or volunteered at the 2008 ConocoPhillips Rodeo Run! We had 8,575 runners and walkers register - 21% more than last year.

Be sure to pencil in Saturday, Feb 28 for the 2009 ConocoPhillips Rodeo Run!

Next up, the "Mystery Rider". On Sunday, several of you thought you spotted a rider who was trying to sneak into our training series. We never did get the rider's name. If anyone can identify the 2nd rider from the left in the enclosed photo from last Sunday, please let me know...

<<Mystery Rider.GIF>>

Speaking of last Sunday, I guess you prefer Saturday rides - only 633 of you (including the mystery rider) showed up. It was a tough ride back from Burleigh or Bellville into that wind. The good news is that the prevailing winds in April usually blow from Houston towards Austin. No guaranty but we have had many more tailwinds than headwinds in the 14 years (15 events) I've been riding.

A few more tips that I noted on Sunday and then, on to this week's ride.

Drinks - Backup Plan

I ran into at least two riders who had forgotten their water. It was in the fridge or on the counter back home. I have done this before! Here is what I have done to compensate for my failing memory.

The night before I ride, I get my insulated bottles (I LOVE insulated bottles year round in Texas!) out of the pantry. One is filled with my sport drink of choice. The other is filled halfway with water. Both then go in the freezer (except when it's projected to be below 60 degrees for the entire ride). Here's the key part of this tip - the tops to both bottles go on the counter by the back door, ON TOP of my car keys. I can't open the car w/o remembering to get my bottles. I fill the remaining half of the water bottle, put both caps on, and these are the first items to go in the car. The water is partly melted but really cold when we start the ride. The sports drink is thawed and ready to drink 30 minutes to an hour after the start - about the time the water is gone. It's really good when the sport drink is slushy!

I have several old MS150 bottles that I will throw into the lost & found basket. If you forget your bottles, check the lost & found. After the ride, please take the bottles home, wash them, and bring them back next week so other riders have a backup to their backup plan...

Getting off & on the road when stopping

There are occasions when you need to make a stop on the road. I had to make one to check a message on my cell phone (question from one of the SAGs about our community contacts). To do this, I pulled to the front of my group, told them I was going to ride ahead and check the message. When I got to a driveway along a slightly downhill stretch of road, I pulled completely

off the road, checked the message, made a call to the SAG to resolve the question, and then continued. When getting back on the road, I waited until some approaching riders and cars were past and there was a big break to pull out.

Three key tips here:

1 - If possible, pull off where the road is flat or slightly downhill. It's much easier to get started on a flat or downhill road.

2 - Pull completely off the road and off the cycling route. Especially when on a wide shoulder as stopping on the shoulder may force riders onto the road

Look for a driveway to pull off if at all possible. Most of our routes have flat grassy areas where you can get off the route.

3 - Make sure there is plenty of room before pulling back onto the road. I saw some riders pulling out forcing approaching riders to have to brake quickly

Wait until there is a big gap so you can get up to speed comfortably

Oh yes, one more key tip here - please DON'T stop suddenly! If you have a flat, call out and coast to a gradual stop. Applying the brakes with a flat tire is a great way to lose control of your bike. Stopping suddenly on the MS150, especially when you get to a rest stop, is a great way to be part of the #1 cause of rider falls on the MS150. More riders report falling entering/exiting the rest stops than any other cause.

OK, now it's time to get to the weekly ride news...

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You know the expression: "When life hands you lemons, make lemonade."?

Well, we have not been handed lemons but we have had to do some tweaking to the routes this week and next to allow for roadwork. This week, with a LOT of great help from BP Captain, Critz Cullen, we have an even better ride than ever out Columbus way!

Our normally delightful and scenic north loop that the long riders use to add 10 miles, is currently closed due to construction. To compensate, we tweaked the route and have a spectacular view and a bit of a climb waiting for you on your way to rest stop #1. The rest stop will be in the parking lot of St. Mary's Church near Ehlinger. The church sits atop a moderate rise and offers a much better spot to stop for a break, enjoy the view, and then zip back down to FM-2503 and on your way.

The long route will offer part of the classic north loop but not all of it. The long option only adds about 5-6 miles but, if you want some extra miles, you can ride about a mile past the long turn - to the base of Lone Oak Hill (LOH). This is where the fun begins because you then get to climb back up LOH to come back to the long turn. This adds two miles, unless you repeat LOH. Our

current record for repeats is 12 in a row. I can tell you from personal experience that 12 repeats of LOH is good training for riding in Colorado!

The maps online will catch up to the actual route shortly. Critz, myself, Aaron Jacks and Greg Schindler had a flurry of tweaks this week and Greg is going to finalize the north loop soon. THANKS to this amazing group of guys for taking the time to make your upcoming ride even better!

This week, we will continue the indoctrination to the hills we have been enjoying recently. After departing from Beason's Park and traveling through Columbus, we'll head northwest on a really wonderful rolling route. The long route is about 54 miles and the short, 46 miles.

Did I mention that the next three weeks (Columbus, Chappell Hill, New Ulm) will be the peak of our training series and three spectacular rides? After this string of rides, you will laugh at anything pretending to be a hill on your way to Austin!

If part of this route after Frelsburg looks vaguely familiar, that's because you rode this same stretch in the opposite direction last week. I couldn't tell you this last week for fear of confusing you but this week, it's LEFT on Zimmerscheidt, AFTER ensuring that FM-109 is clear of traffic. Breakpoint #2 is on Zimmerscheidt just after you turn off of FM-109.

Reminder - We will be on country roads. Stay on the shoulder near Columbus and single file, especially on FM-109. These roads are pretty and very quiet but we need to let local traffic pass and be courteous and friendly no matter what. The portions of the ride on FM-109 are definitely single file only at all times.

Directions to the start of the ride:

Take I-10 west to Columbus.

Take the first Columbus exit (90).

The road will curve to the right and shortly before you come to the bridge (Colorado River), you will see Beason's Park on your left.

Turn into the park and proceed to the back or, if it is full, park in the cleared area on the left as you enter the park. If you park in the front, PLEASE remember to come to the sign-in tables and sign in before you start. We have no way of knowing you are on the road if you don't sign in.

We are back to the normal "Pit-Pass" process this week. If you need to get a yellow pit-pass to pit on your helmet, they will be at the sign-in table - or the payment table for those who still have not paid.

PLEASE come over to the sign-in tables to sign in before you ride and PLEASE leave early enough to arrive in Columbus before 7:30 am

Columbus is about 25 miles west of Sealy so you need to be on I-10 passing the tollway no later than 6:00 am if you expect to arrive in Columbus on time. Did I mention that it's a LONG drive to Columbus alone? Carpools are really great for this ride!

Alternate North Ride - Magnolia Miles

Several hundred of you are just "corresponding" members of the e-mail list and train on your own. Many of you live out north and find the rides out west to be a long drive. For those of you up north, here is a new BP MS150 recommended ride in your neck of the woods...

The reason for the note is that I am involved in organizing a new ride in the Magnolia area, which is a BPMS 150 recommended ride. We have routes of 24, 42, 52 & 70 miles, plus a family ride of 11 miles. The beneficiary of the ride is Holy Name Retreat Center and Magnolia Area Chamber of Commerce. I am attaching a link to our website: <http://www.magnoliamiles.org>

We are doing everything in our power to stage a first class event. We've enlisted **Margaret Shelton**, who has been working with us in the planning.

I would really appreciate if you could promote our ride to your huge following.

Thanks for any help you can provide.

Don't forget that you can relive all your favorite rides this season with Tim Hansford's great photos online at:

http://www.feldoncentral.com/photos_enhance/CoP2008/

OK, I have to go get to work. I will be tied up most of the day on a task force reviewing the MS150 Emergency Response Plan. Please check with your team captains on any questions as I am still catching up on non-critical items held from the Rodeo Run.

I will see many of you out in Columbus this Saturday!

Stephen Moskowitz

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