

2008 BP MS150 Training Series - Ride 9, Chappell Hill, March 15, 8:00 am

OK, we have hit the point in the season when the weather is usually pretty grand and the rides are equally wonderful...assuming you enjoy some beautiful scenery and challenging climbs!

As you will soon learn, there is a reason the town we are going to is named Chappell Hill. It sits atop one!

The climb back to town is not that bad - there are three memorable climbs in the last 4.5 miles but two have downhill drops after you hit the top to allow you to recover a bit. Of course, the downhill's will be climbs on the way out of town so you will encounter some climbing quite early in this ride.

The good news is that after you complete the next two weeks, you will be ready for anything on your ride to Austin!

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OK, I may have scared a few of you with all that talk about the climb back to Chappell Hill. Don't worry, the rest of the ride is so hilly that you won't really notice the climbs at the end any more than the hills on the rest of the route!

The short route is just over 45 miles and the long route is about 62 miles. Unlike our earlier rides, there are not flat and hilly stretches, this is all rolling country so settle into a low gear if you need to and enjoy the views along the way.

Safety Notes

As soon as you pull out of town, there is a gentle slope down where you pick up speed followed by a good climb. This will more or less repeat for the next 4.5 miles until you hit a long downhill run followed by a flat run off and then, more ups and downs. We will allow a bit more space between the waves this week as these ups and downs are not a good place to be too bunched up or to ride in a tight paceline. In other words, be sure to start in the appropriate wave based on your average speed and allow room between you and the other riders to get used to the faster descents and the slower climbs. The road out of Chappell Hill is also chip & seal but it's nothing like Hwy 36 north of Sealy.

Part of our normal route is gone this year - the road is being replaced so both routes approach Washington on the Brazos State Park from the north. The road we are taking to the park is OK but the shoulder was gone at the beginning of last week and with the wet weather, it may still be gone. This stretch is about 2/10 of a mile. There is also a short gravel patch just before you enter the park. When you turn off of Hwy 105, please ride at a slow, cool down pace into and out of the park and ride single file. There is no reason to let the mile or so of the ride near the park ruin the other 44 or 61 miles so just take it very easy on this stretch. Next year, the roads to the park should be brand new and great!

Hwy 105 is a major east/west road but it has a very nice, wide shoulder. It is OK to ride two abreast, as long as you pay attention and, if riders approach to pass, merge to single file to let them come by. Riders who are passing need to call your approach, slow until it is safe to pass,

and then, make the pass. We have practiced passing for 8 weeks now. Everyone will really enjoy the ride more if you remember to follow these basic rules of etiquette when passing or being passed. Don't forget to communicate and sprinkle "Thank You's" into your conversation a lot!

Directions to the Start

Take 290 northwest to Chappell Hill (11 miles, first light past Hempstead). At the intersection of FM-1155 & 290, turn right (north) at the light. If you need gas, refreshment or a rest room break there are two stores on the south side of 290 at that light, so turn left instead. Take 1155 a few hundred yards into town and turn right (east) at the parking field on your right. After you park, use the rest rooms and have your bike ready, ride north to Poplar Street. It is a long block to Haller Street. Continue east and the road bends left (north) at the museum.

It is approximately an hour from the Sam Houston tollway to Chappell Hill on Hwy 290. If you are not on 290 by 6:15, you are going to be late!

CRITICAL Reminder - Arrive Early!

There is one way in and out of Chappell Hill so there will be a line of cars. If you arrive later than 7:30, you will have a delay getting to the parking area and will miss the start!

Please take a look at our map for this week to understand the details of our start:

http://www.conocophillipsbikeclub.org/maps/9_2008.pdf

Note the aerial view of the parking on the right just after you turn into town off of Hwy 290. All riders except the support team park in this field. The gates will be open by 6:30. After you park, there will be porta-lets along the fence by the road as well as public restrooms at the corner of Main St and Poplar. The star on the map is the Chappell Hill Historical Museum. The sign-in tables will be in the front and we start here so you have to ride over to the start after parking.

As I noted, if you all arrive late, the traffic will back up and you will miss the start. You do need to come sign in before you ride so PLEASE arrive no later than 7:15!

I will send a traffic update on I-10 construction Friday if it looks like there will be something impacting us. There has been some work the past few weeks impacting traffic heading north on the tollway from I-10 so, if you use this route, you may want to consider taking the 610 loop to 290 or allowing extra time this week.

The Team Captain's Logistics Meeting is this Thursday night so you should look for a lot of information from your respective team captains late this week or next week. Today is one month before we head to Austin so the countdown is under way...

I'll see many of you in Chappell Hill this Saturday...

Thanks!

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