



General Principles and Rules

~ by Scott Brown

Different groups have different expectations, rules, and customs. What follows are our principles and basic rules. *All riders are expected to adhere to them.* What matters is not that our rules are perfect (far from and not possible), but that all riders respect and follow them so we achieve consistency and safety within the ride. Risk increases when people do things unexpectedly. Consistency helps keep things safe.

Principle 1 - Ride Within Your Abilities

- The “drop and regroup” format enables everyone the opportunity to self-select out of a situation they do not feel comfortable with. Recognize your own physical and technical limits and stay within them. If you’re uncertain or uncomfortable with a situation, safely take yourself out of it then returned to the group at the next re-group point.
- If you do not know what your limits are, first watch and follow; then, when you feel ready, test yourself gradually and in small increments. Recognize that skill and experience take time (often years) to develop.
- Understand that what is scary or impossible for you today will become easy and possible tomorrow, with practice. Rely on your own skill level and experience to determine what’s safe for you; judge based upon your own capabilities, not the capabilities of others.

Principle 2 - Maintain Your Awareness

- Regardless of your skill, experience, or ability, *maintaining a broad field of awareness is the most important safety skill. Understand that you can only ride safely by looking far ahead at all times.* Fear comes from surprise. Surprise comes from the unexpected. When your field of awareness is too small, you invite surprise and increase risk, not just for you but for those nearby.
- Awareness is the foundation skill that all other skills are based upon. Riders are expected to learn awareness skills, including the ability to ride “eyes up” at all times. Everything else (conversations, tactics, etc.) must come second to riding “eyes up”. Riders must learn to analyze what’s ahead and plan for it, both for themselves and those following.
- When in a group, the most important awareness skill is the ability to “look through” obstacles (other riders, vehicles, etc.) to maintain awareness. This means not simply looking past the rider immediately in front of you. *Always try to look past ALL riders in the group and into the space ahead. Look for at the horizon to develop this skill.* Use only brief glances to keep tabs on the road and riders nearby.

Principle 3 - Expect the Unexpected

- Despite best efforts, we all make mistakes. Especially when pushed to our physical limits. *Dangerous riding contrary to our rules will not be tolerated, yet perfection should not be expected. Adopt the mindset that every other rider is part of the course, themselves obstacles you must navigate, not just the course itself.*
- Learn to read the riders around you; develop awareness by doing so constantly. Watch others for signs of fatigue or changes in behaviour; assess if they've lost awareness or are starting to struggle due to fatigue. Anticipate and adjust moment to moment. Leave more space than normal if the situation calls for it.

Type of Bike:

- Road bikes are recommended but not required. Cross or Tri/TT Bikes are allowed. You may have aerobars on your bike, but *riding in your aero-bars is not permitted when leading or riding within the group.*

When Leading:

- Those leading are responsible for ALL riders behind. Pointing out obstacles far in advance is expected *but not sufficient*. Leaders are expected to anticipate and guide all followers *wide, and early* around obstacles and hazards. Use hand-signals early and make direction adjustments in a *slow and deliberate* manner, giving those following – specifically those at the very back - lots of time to recognize, adjust, and follow safely.

When Following:

- Those following are responsible for themselves and for maintaining awareness of what is happening ahead. *Riders should never follow blindly or trustingly*. Always give riders in front enough space to move about unexpectedly (a wheel-width at minimum). Some obstacles cannot be seen or anticipated. Do not rely on those in front of you to be perfect 100% of the time.

No Sudden Moves:

- Attacks are acceptable only during sprints. It is the attacking rider's responsibility to attack only when safe for everyone; the road must also be clear in front and behind, especially if a lane change is required. *Except for attacks, do not make any sudden moves when in the group*. Make all adjustments slowly and early. Recognize the need for sudden moves – by you or those following you – is the result of an awareness problem; discuss and adjust accordingly.

Shouting Out Obstacles:

- Shout-outs are to be avoided. Shouting increases risk because most in the group will not be able to hear or understand what was said due to wind and traffic noise, creating confusion and panic. Recognize that shout-outs are a symptom of awareness problems and poor etiquette by those leading. Instead of shouting, lead safely. Use hand signals, adjust slowly, early, and ride wide of obstacles.
- *If you find yourself riding into an obstacle (debris or a pothole) DO NOT attempt to hand signal. Keep both hands on the bars and ride through the obstacle, keeping a firm grip on the bar with knees and elbows bent to absorb shock, to the best of your ability.*

In the Paceline:

- Always leave at least a wheel-width between you and the rider in front.
- It's not a race between sprints/intervals. The group rides together in a tightly organized paceline (typically double paceline) at a pace that is fast enough to be hard for those on the front but easy for those following (typically 35-40 kph). Keep pulls short (10-45 seconds; shorter as the group gets bigger).
- **Never half-wheel when in double paceline.** *When riding double, ride "handlebar to handlebar"; follow the person next to you, NOT in front of you.* When riding on the front of a double paceline, the faster rider defers to the slower rider. If the pace cannot be maintained by the slower rider, both riders should hand-signal then pull off together. When following within a double paceline, the slower rider should signal early when they need to exit, then do so cautiously. Following riders should then fill the gap, splitting and reforming the line as necessary.

2020 Ride Around The Lake SPEED GROUPS



ESPRESSO

Avg. Speed: 30+ km/h

GARY COLEMAN



CAPPUCCINO

Avg. Speed: 25 to 30km/h

BRIAN THIESSEN



MACCHIATO

Avg. Speed: 20 to 25 km/h

KEVIN VAN