

HOUNSLOW & DISTRICT WHEELERS

GROUP RIDING ON CLUBRUNS

For those new to club cycling riding in a group can sometimes seem rather daunting, but when riding with a club it is traditional to ride in pairs in a group and to observe certain rules which are important for the safety and enjoyment of the ride. There are good reasons for this:-

Riding in pairs is more sociable, you can talk to the person next to you, and:

- It makes cycling easier; the person in front “slipstreams” you meaning less effort particularly into a headwind
- It helps ensure everybody stays together and riders don’t get dropped
- It makes it less likely that riders at the back get caught at traffic lights and roundabouts
- It makes it easier for those at the front to communicate with those at the back and vice versa

If you haven’t ridden in a group before (or even if you have!), listed below are some guidelines that will help you become proficient at group riding as quickly as possible.

- 1) Ride **directly behind** the person in front and as close as conditions and safety allow.
- 2) **Do not ride off the front**, stay in formation even if this means braking downhill, only go to the front if you want to take the pace and the leader agrees.
- 3) Uphill, go at your own speed and regroup at the hill top.
- 4) Watch for turn hand signals from the front and give them yourself to those behind
- 5) Listen to commands to “single out” from the club captain or back riders. Single out generally by moving into a gap in the left hand line of riders.
- 6) If you are at the front or back warn the group of approaching or overtaking vehicles on narrow roads by calling out “car down” (your throat!) for vehicles ahead and “car up” (your bum!) for vehicles behind.
- 7) Signal bad obstructions, holes or bumps to the rider behind by signalling with the hand or shouting “hole” or “bump” or “on your left (or right)”
- 8) Avoid sudden loud shouts that might make riders brake suddenly unless really necessary.
- 9) Avoid using your brakes sharply unless really necessary, instead try to steer your way out of trouble. If you have to brake hard to stop yell “stopping” to warn those behind. If braking less hard yell “easy”.
- 10) If you are at the back of a group and you know there is a rider or riders “off the back” let the leaders know. If the group turns off the main road wait at the junction or roundabout to let those off the back know where to go.
- 11) If you are at the back **DO NOT** wave cars on to overtake. A mistake could put the whole group in jeopardy so leave it up to the driver.
- 12) If you are not a strong rider then try to keep as near the front of the group as possible, this will mean less effort for you, and the leader not having to worry about riders off the back.
- 13) If you have a puncture yell “puncture” to make sure those in front and behind know and pull OFF the road to the side to replace the tube, the rest will wait for you.
- 14) As a general safety point always ride with your hands gripping the bars not just resting on top. This ensures that if you hit a hole or a bump you do not lose control and endanger those behind.
- 15) THE RULES OF THE ROAD MUST BE OBSERVED AT ALL TIMES

If possible use mudguards if wet and carry at least one spare tube, tyre levers and a pump with you on all rides. It is advisable to eat breakfast before a ride and to carry water with you. On training rides carry energy drink or food as well.