

MCCC RACING TIPS - May 2016

Introduction

We are a relatively small competitive racing club, and while we have a limited number of Commissaires, we do not have an "umpire" in each group to call the fouls and associated penalties as most other sports do, it is up to everyone to behave safely and compete in a spirited but honourable fashion. After all, everyone wants to go home at the end of the day having had "fair go" and feeling satisfied.

Each season we run races over about 20 weeks there are few prize money days, and no "Sheep Stations" up for grabs here. In addition to providing excellent local racing, we are a proven spring board or training ground for those with ambitions at an "Open" or "State" level, where racing may be more "cut throat" and pressurised.

Every time you go out to race you have a decision to make. Do you try win the race at any cost OR do you win respect by the way you ride and maybe win the race. Either way you may win, but one is a short term win, the other is a long term win.

There are many riders that everyone is comfortable riding with because they have earned respect and can be relied upon to ride smoothly and in a way that considers the safety of the whole group. Think about what type of rider/racer you want to be known as and behave accordingly.

Try to remember that this is "Club Level" racing and whilst we love the competition, there is also a lot to be gained from the feeling of having had a good workout and doing your personal best.

If you are new to the sport and are unsure of how things work on race day, ask the race secretary at sign on to identify someone that can help explain expectations and answer your questions.

Rules That Must Be Obeyed

Centre line: Do not cross the centre line and ride on the right hand side of the roadway. If an echelon forms and you cannot get cover from the wind on the correct side of the road then you will have to consider forming a second echelon behind the first one. If you do cross the centre line in the last 200 metres leading up to a sprint point or race finish point, you will be relegated to the last position of the group that you are riding with at the time.

Being lapped: As a general rule you can only ride with other riders who are on the same lap as yourself and in the same race as yourself.

- In a Graded Scratch Race you are not permitted to ride with riders competing in another grade.
- In a Scratch Race, if you are being lapped by a faster rider or group of riders, you are not permitted to join with those riders.
- In a Handicap Race, if you are being lapped, rather than being caught, by a faster rider or group of riders, you are not permitted to join with those riders. This also applies to situations where you have completed a lap before a faster group start their race, and that group passes you, in effect "un-lapping" themselves. If a faster group e.g. "Scratch", catch you, and you are all on the same lap, then you are permitted to ride with them if you are able to.

Etiquette That Should Be Observed

Sprinting in the finale: The road is only wide enough for a certain number of riders, it may be that 2 or 3 can effectively block the road in a sprint completely. Sitting on the group 2 or 3 rows back from the front is all well and good, but if that is where you are in the last few hundred metres of a race then there is a good chance that you will be boxed in or unable to find a safe way through to get clear air to the finish line. If that happens then you need to accept that this is not your day to win. Barging through gaps that are not wide enough is dangerous and will see you relegated to last position in the bunch, or potentially disqualified from the race. Do not use your head/helmet, hips, elbows or shoulders to push another rider off their line.

There is a racing regulation that requires riders to "hold their line" in a sprint. This means maintaining a line that is parallel to the edge of the road, not varying left or right. Failure to "hold your line" in a sprint will likely see you relegated to the last position of the bunch that you are in.

Cornering safety: Riders will take a variety of lines through corners for various reasons. Sometimes the rider in front of you will start shallow into a corner and drift wide on the exit, others will start wide and close down tight on the apex. A corner is not the place to try and improve your position in the group, "bombing" up the inside of a rider in a corner will quite often end in disaster. The smart thing is to maintain your position into the corner and move up as the group accelerates out the exit side.

Moving up into a better position: If you want to move forward in the group, pay attention to what is happening a few riders in front of yourself, gaps are always opening throughout the peloton and there will be ample opportunity to move up safely into one of these gaps. It may be that the moving up on the windward side of an echelon is your best option, particularly if you think you are good enough to stay there until the next direction change in the road.

Grabbing/Holding other riders or changing your line to block other riders: Simply put, DON'T DO IT!!!

Overlapping wheels: This is when a rider allows their front wheel to partly overlap a rider in front's rear wheel. If there is a big peloton with riders more than 2 abreast (and we know that this is only permitted on closed roads) then overlapping will unavoidably occur. If there is a single line or double line of riders, then there should be no overlapping of wheels, this is dangerous, particularly in windy conditions or if riders are using deep section or aero wheels that can catch a wind gust or be pushed by the wind in a change of direction causing riders to suddenly change their line.

Remain in control of your bike: If you need to stretch, stand up off your saddle, take a drink, retrieve items from your pocket or put items away, do this when you are on the back of the group not when you are on the front or near the front of the group as you will be putting other riders and yourself at risk.

Terminology

Echelon: A line of riders that are in a formation that shelters them from the wind unless they are the one on the front of the line.

Up the road: Either refers to a rider or group of riders that are ahead of you in the race. **OR** alternatively as described below.

Move up the road: Move to your Right, towards the centre line.

Move down the road: Move to your LEFT, towards the road edge or gutter.

Pulling a turn: Taking your turn at riding on the front of the group providing a wind block for the others in the group, then roll off the front towards the direction of the wind and make your way to the back of the working group. There may be two riders, or any larger number of riders, "pulling turns".

Working: Doing an equal share of turns on the front of the group.

Sitting on: Not working. Riding at the back of the working group without coming through to the front to take a turn in the wind. If you are sitting on the back of a group, you should call to each rider as they come to the back of the group to move into the working lane in front of you. This will help cause minimum disruption to their rhythm.

Making a gap or "Gapping": When the rider moving to the front of the group accelerates and opens a gap to the second rider in line leaving that rider to also push into the wind.

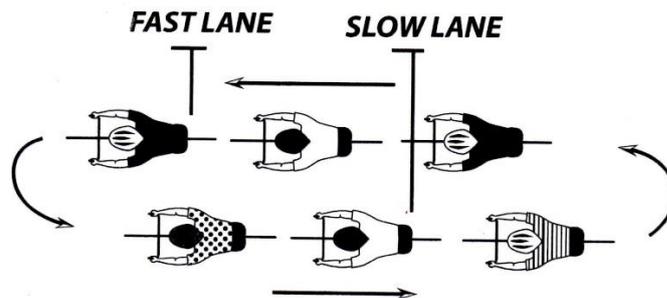
Holding the wheel: Maintaining a close distance to the rider in front. Not allowing a gap to open.

Losing the wheel: Failing to maintain a close distance to the rider in front. Allowing an increasing gap to open.

Letting the wheel in front go: This occurs when a rider deliberately allows a gap to open up between them self and the next rider in front. An unfriendly or unappreciated act if another rider then has to do extra work to close the gap to avoid being dropped.

"Fast lane" or "Shelter side": In a rolling pace line formation, the side that has shelter from a cross wind, where riders move from the back to the front of the group. Usually about 1 kph faster than the slow lane.

"Slow lane" or "The windward side": In a rolling pace line formation, the side that has the wind blowing onto it where riders move off to the back of the group. Usually about 1 kph slower than the fast lane.



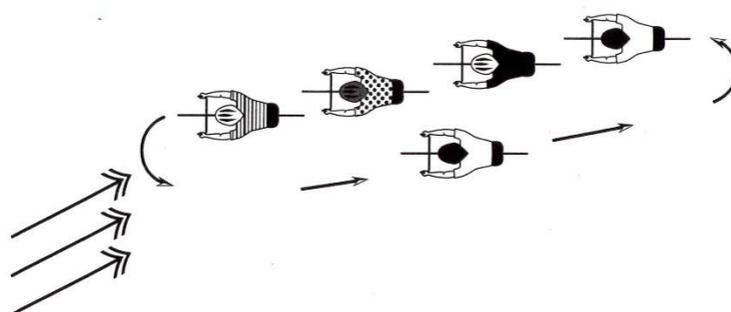
Limit: The first group away in a Handicap race. The group that are expected to be the slowest group.

Chopping Block: The second last group away in a Handicap race.

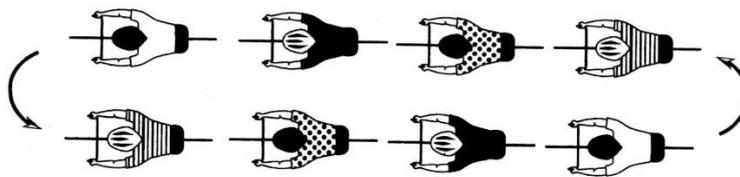
Scratch: The last group away in a Handicap race. The group that are expected to be the fastest group.

Time Trial Turns: Riding in a single line with the rider on the front pulling for a period of time then rolling off to the back leaving the rider who was second in line to take a turn in the wind, and so on. When you decide to roll off the front, always peel off into the wind and "flick" your elbow on the side that you expect the next rider to come past you. TT turns usually works best if there are 7 or less riders working. The key here is to only stay on the front while you can maintain speed, slowing down and speeding up is counter-productive to the group's progress.

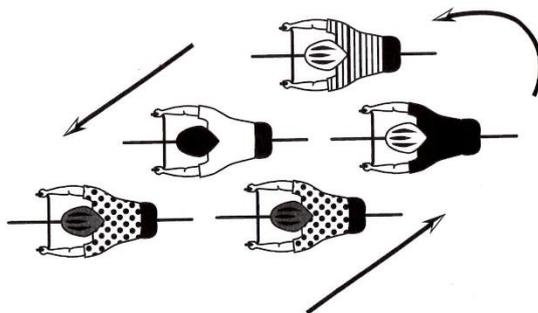
If you find that you can no longer work at the speed the group is travelling and you are going to sit on the back to recover, remember to call to the riders as they are rolling back, to move across in front of you.



Rolling Turns or Rolling Pace line: A double row of riders rolling through to the front then off to the slow lane like a continuous chain. Usually works best with 8 or more riders working. The key here is to keep the speed consistent and smooth without accelerations.



The shape of the group may change if the wind is hitting the group from the side (Cross wind), but the principle is the same. Move up on the protected side and move back on the windward side.

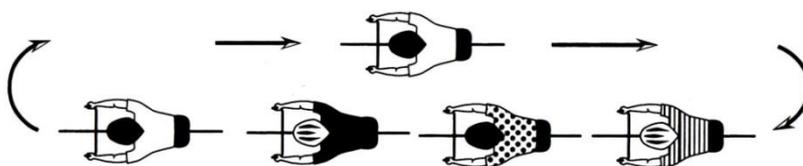


If you find that you can no longer work at the speed the group is travelling and you are going to sit on the back to recover, remember to call to the riders as they are rolling back, to move across in front of you.

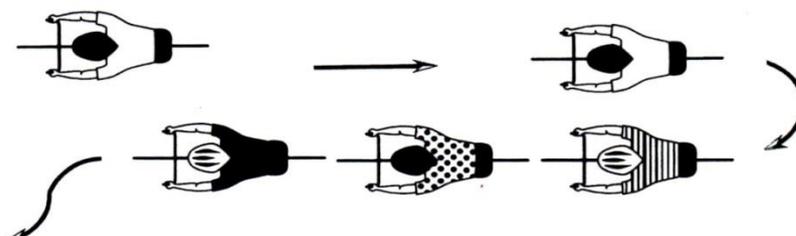
Rolling Paceline Change of Direction

When riding in a rolling pace line formation, i.e. two rows, (Fast lane & Slow lane), the rotation is either “Clockwise” or Anti-clockwise”. There will be times when a change of direction of the rotation is called for due to a change in the road direction and therefore a change in the direction that the wind is blowing onto the peloton. By utilising this change of direction technique, the pace line continues in a smooth, uninterrupted manner, without any rider having to take an additional or “double” turn.

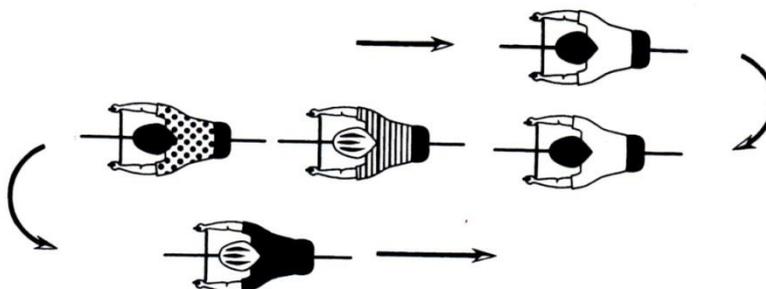
The group is rolling in a Clockwise direction



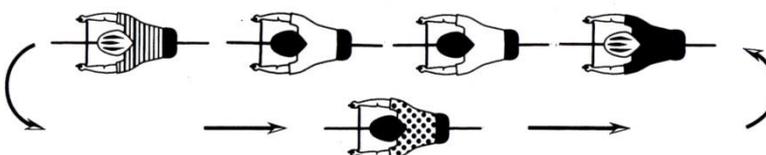
The road direction changes and the rider in the black jersey decides to change the direction of the rotation to Anti-clockwise. The rider in black moves to the left side of the road instead of following the rider in white down the right side of the road.



The rider in polka dots continues on through the centre then moves to the right side of the road following the rider in black. At the same time the rider in white continues to move to the back of the line, and for the period of the transition, riders are 3 abreast on the road



The rider in black moves to the back of the line, completing the transition from Clockwise rotation to Anti-clockwise rotation.



The same process applies, but in reverse, when the rotation needs to change in the opposite direction.

Scratch Races

In a Scratch race, everyone starts together at the same time. Also termed an “All In” race. The winner will either come from a break-away group, or be a sprinter with the best finish who has been strong enough to not be dropped by the group in the process of the race.

Graded Scratch Races

These are separate races, on the same course, that are started in order of "fastest grade first". i.e. A grade, then B Grade, then C Grade, then D Grade. Again, the winner of each race will either come from a break-away group, or be a sprinter with the best finish who has been strong enough to not be dropped by the group in the process of the race. You are not permitted to sit on, or gain benefit from, another Grade. e.g.

- Riders from C Grade catch up to riders from B grade. Riders from the two grades cannot work together to gain advantage over other riders in their grades, these are 2 separate races.
- Riders from a faster grade lap riders in a slower grade. The lapped riders cannot ride with the riders from the faster grade to gain an advantage on others in their grade.

Handicap Races

The handicapper will break the race into groups comprising riders who are at approximately the same level on the day, and set staggered starting times with the aim of all groups coming together at the finish line. Any group that works exceptionally well together will be able to ride faster than the Handicapper anticipated and so have a better chance of winning the race. Each group effectively become a "team" for this race with the primary goal of catching all other teams that start in front of them and staying away from all other teams that start after them. This gives the members of your team, including yourself, the best chance of filling the top finish positions for the race. There will always be stronger and weaker riders in a group. If you are feeling particularly strong then when you come to the front, raise the speed gradually over 15-20 seconds, then stay on the front maintaining that speed for at least 30 seconds. The group speed needs to be such that the majority of the group can stay together (there is strength in numbers) while some individuals may not be able to ride at that pace and be dropped from the group. The placings in each group as they finish should go to the riders who have done the work and then contest the finish

Behaviour that would be considered legitimate race tactics in a Scratch race will probably be "**UNAPPRECIATED**" in a Handicap race, e.g.

- Leaving a gap and making another rider work to fill it.
- Letting the wheel in front of you go and allowing a gap happen then sprinting across leaving riders behind to either drop or work harder to close the gap down.
- Causing the group speed to fluctuate rapidly by accelerations.
- Making the race hard for others in your team where the terrain suits your characteristics as a rider. Instead you will be "**APPRECIATED**", if you are a climber and take the front on climbs but without setting a speed that the bulk of the group cannot maintain. If you are stronger on the flat, again take the front, and run the speed up gradually without "breaking" the group up.

At the end of a race, if you have not been able to work with the strongest of the group you are finishing with then it is unethical to contest the sprint, particularly if you are with the Scratch bunch. Sitting on for the last 10km and then sprinting will be unappreciated by those that have continued to work and you will gain an unwanted reputation. The Scratch riders will probably be racing for fastest time, so if you haven't worked with them, keep out of their way and let them sort out fastest time on the day. If you decide to contest the finish with the group that you are in, then you are also sending a message to the Handicapper that you consider yourself strong enough, and would like to start with the strongest of that group in the next race.

Towards the end of a handicap race, usually in the last kilometre or so, or when "Scratch" has caught all riders in front of them, the race effectively changes into a Scratch race.

Advice if you aren't at the top of your game OR you're in a group that is overall stronger than yourself:

1. Work for your team until you have no more to give.
2. Sit on and get a lift home.
3. Don't sprint because you have not earned that "right" today.
4. If you do this you will "**Win respect**" and be able to consider it a good day!