

Pacelines

Think of paceline riding as team riding. It requires cooperation and a lot more than just keeping up. It calls for focused attention, taking responsibility and leading. When riding in a paceline observe the following:

1. Ride tight to the right – pull off to your left.
2. Ride in a straight line, at a steady pace and pedal constantly (no coasting). Do not swerve or brake without warning. Pedal through bumps in the road – do not swerve around them. Do not panic and jam on your brakes – the bike behind will run right up your rear wheel. Feather your brakes to modulate speed.
3. Keep your head up and your eyes scanning up the road as much as possible. Do not get hypnotized by the wheel in front of you. Use your peripheral vision to monitor the wheel in front of yours while you watch the road and riders ahead. You can then better see the paceline slowing or accelerating, as well as traffic lights and stop signs and you will be better prepared to react to any situation.
4. Do not overlap the rear wheel of the bike in front of you. If your front wheel touches the rear wheel of the bike in front of you, you risk crashing and taking down riders behind you. The cyclist in front may not feel a thing – they always win in this sort of altercation.
5. Keep a constant distance to the rider ahead and adjust your speed by feathering your brakes as you continue to pedal. Maintain a steady, predictable, smooth pace. Close any gaps gradually and gracefully. Jumping to close a gap and then slowing down creates a yo-yo effect that adversely affects the entire group. Doing this all day will wear you out and get you yelled at by the cyclists behind you. Ride smoothly. Ride predictably.
6. When at the front of the group, pedal smoothly at all times, even down hills. You will need to keep pedaling on the downhills so that the bikes in back of you do not have to brake in order to avoid riding up your rear wheel.
7. When at the front, you are the eyes of the paceline. Watch for hazards. Ideally you will see a hazard far enough in advance to move the path of the paceline well clear of it. Call out obstacles or holes in the road as well as your intentions to slow or stop. Every rider in the paceline is depending on you – you at the front of the line. Not every single hole warrants a shout. Call out hazards, do not call out little bumps. Ride through rough spots by rising slightly off your saddle and pedaling through.

- 8.** When at the front of the paceline and it is time to pull off, maintain the same steady pace (do not slow), check for traffic behind you, and then inform the group, "PULLING OFF." Then, still maintaining speed, decisively move to the side and when clear of the paceline slide gently to the back of the line to pull in behind the last bike. Stay at the front only for as long as you are directed, shorter if you are feeling tired. When a rider has pulled off and approaches the back of the group, the last rider should call "LAST" so that the rider coming back will not overshoot the group and have to chase to get back on.
- 9.** When taking the lead in a paceline do not surge or pick up the overall pace. Maintain the same speed as when drafting. As you take over, you will naturally have to put out more effort. Learn to finesse your effort in order to maintain a smooth transition. If you are tired, make your turn at the front as short as possible. No one has to prove anything at the front.
- 10.** Good group riding means working together as a team. We are a team. Forget about your personal competitive urges – it is not about you, it is about ALL OF US.
- 11.** Safety always comes first!