

## **Guide to Collegiate Road Racing**

### **-Finding a Person to Ride With**

- Find someone you will be racing with, it will give you an equal training partner
  - When it comes to a race, you will both know each other well and who is better at certain skills

### **-Learn to Ride in a Group**

- Learn to find wheels and how close to go to them
- How to pull through on the front
  - Important for TTT
  - Pull through at a steady speed and try not to accelerate
    - If you do accelerate, be sure that it is not sudden
- Not falling off the back of the group
  - It may only be 10 feet, but it's hard to get it back once you're out of the slipstream
- Never spend too much time on the front
  - Waste of energy
  - Most good racers will stay in the front quarter of the race and will hardly ever go to the front.
    - By staying near the front you can watch for breaks and will stay out of the trouble that can take place in the back of a pack
  - You may feel like you're fine at the front for long periods of time, but the more you ride at the front means that there will be more people that have more energy than you
    - Only times that I go to the front are to pull back or block for a break, to pick up the pace on a hill to drop people, or to start a break
- Observe the people around you
  - For races it will give you an idea of how people are feeling and if they can challenge you later in the race

- Only way to learn is to try

### **-Practice Riding and Racing Skills**

- Will be having a TTT and a Crit skills practices in January
- Thursday Night practice Crits Feb/Mar, has riders from all over Philly
  - Only can use the small ring the first month
    - Keeps the race under control and helps to work on your form and how to spin and not push too big of a gear
    - Will meet up as a group and ride over
    - Had many people do it last year and it prepared them for racing
- Climbing, find a hill and do repeats up it
  - For strength use a large gear
  - To practice form, use a high cadence; try to stay in the saddle
  - Don't try to push too big of a gear
  - If you can't find a good hill, find a nice flat stretch of road, and do short but hard intervals on it

## **-Training**

- Plan week to week
  - Build upon each week, have recovery weeks built in every couple of weeks before a big event
  - Do not try to increase too much each week, or start off training at too long of a distance
    - Will end up hurting your body in the long run
  - Know what your body can handle, if you not a good endurance rider, don't try doing really long rides, until you have enough of a base that you are comfortable
    - Or if you know you don't need long miles to do well, don't do them, if you know you ride better doing short but harder rides, then train that way
- Plan long rides for weekends if possible
  - Will give you more people to ride with so you don't get bored
- Everyone trains differently; don't always do what you see other people doing
- Training the week before a race will not affect that race
  - Affects the next week
    - Don't train for a Road Race that week, train for it a couple of weeks before
    - Use races to train for later in the season
    - If you find yourself off the back, it is a good way to get in an interval work
- Plan ahead
  - If you have a test that week, change around your training so that you're not tired for it
- Make goals and build a schedule around them
  - Make realistic short term goals but also make long term goals
    - Example, freshman year, I set a goal of doing A's and going to nationals in a couple of years, each year I have built towards that goal, where this year, I'm racing A's. Short term goal was to finish races and learn how to race and get upgraded.
- If you don't have time to do a long ride, do shorter but more intense rides
  - You can simulate hills by doing intervals on flat trails.
- Talk with people that have been riding/racing for awhile, they can give you a good idea on what to do to get in shape for racing

## **-Know your body**

- Find what your limits are and make sure you don't go beyond them
- Use your heart rate or if you have a power meter; your wattage
- Nobody else knows what your body is capable of, other than yourself, if your body doesn't feel good doing something, even if other people are training that way, don't do it
- Learn to drink and consume food before you bonking, not after
  - Make sure you drink a lot during the cold because it is harder to tell if you are dehydrated
- Figure out what your body is fine with eating before a race while training
  - You don't want to have to use getting sick as an excuse for not racing well
- For races pack plenty of food for snacking and eating, especially for long trips
  - Bring simple foods like PB & J, bagels, Gatorade, pretzels, cereal, etc.

## **-Racing**

- Communicate with each other before and during a race
  - Make a plan, but realize that things can change and be ready to trash the plan and try something else
  - Have a designated sprinter (if enough people) that will never do any work until the end
  - Have people try to go in breaks, if one gets caught send another; use this method if you don't have a really good sprinter
    - Try a breakaway close to the end if you have a really powerful TT rider
  - Talk during the race; ex: Stefan, Me, Hunter, & Pratt will get together during races and figure out how each other a feeling, who we think on other teams are doing well, and what to do next. Will also talk about something that someone did wrong if need be, so that it doesn't happen again.
  - Planning for a race is where riding with people that you'll be racing with pays off
- Talk after the race, even if you have raced for awhile you can always learn something, or teach something to less experienced racers
- ECCC has Intro categories which teach you how to race in a pack
  - Each week you go over different skills for the first part, and then race the second part
  - After each race you get together and talk about what is learned and what happened during the race
  - Have had many riders continue racing and enjoying themselves, one even ended up as an A racer the next season
- Know the course if possible, ride the Crit before hand so you know the corners
- Read previous race reports or talk to senior members, they are here to help you
  - Many of us have done these courses a couple of times and can give tips on what to look out for
- Always bring food; you never know what will happen during the race
  - Bring two bottles, even if it's a Crit. Many courses have some holes in them and you don't want to loss your only bottle to one of them
  - If you loss a bottle, don't be afraid to ask a teammate for a drink
- Warming up for races is important
  - Always warm up for a Crit or TT, for at least a half an hour, these races start at a higher pace, therefore your muscles/body must be ready
    - If you don't have a trainer or rollers, ask a teammate or ride somewhere that is close to the course
  - Circuit and RR aren't as important, warm up can be shorter; you can use the race to get ready
    - Just make sure you legs have been spun out before the start
- Keep your hands on the bars; otherwise the people on the Microphone will be making fun of you
- Cool down after your race
  - Once you finish your race, get on a trainer and spin for a couple of minutes
  - Drink lots of fluids and eat food, you'll want to replenish your energy stores for the next day as soon as possible
- Chamois Time is over after about 20 minutes

**\*IT IS NOT ALWAYS THE STRONGEST PERSON WHO WINS, IT IS ALMOST ALWAYS THE SMARTEST PERSON\***

**-Categories in Racing**

-Collegiate: A/B/C/D/E (A/B/C for Women)

A: Very Experience and strong Riders, have some Pro's racing in it

B: Experience Racers, have raced before and done well

C: Rider who have raced before, or New racers who have lots of experience

D: New racers who have riding experience and decent skills

E(Intro): New racers, who haven't ridden a lot and don't have many skills

-USCF – Cat 1/2/3/4/5

-Cat 1/2: Very Strong and Experience Racers, who are former pros, or about to be pros

-Cat 3: Elite racers, will race with Cat 1/2 racers

-Cat 4: In between beginners and elite, will race in Cat 3/4 and Cat 4/5 races

-Most racers are Cat 4

-Cat 5: Beginner Racers

-Requirements for Racing in a Collegiate Category

-A: Cat 1/2/3

-Women A: Cat 1/2/3

-B: Cat 3/4

-Women B: Cat 3/4

-C: Cat 4/5

-Women C: Cat 4

-D: Cat 5

-E: Cat 5

**-Conclusion**

-Find people that you can ride with and learn about them

-Know what your body can handle

-Racing is meant to be fun, enjoy it

-Best way to learn is to go out and try it

-RUBBER SIDE DOWN, SHINY SIDE UP

## **Race Weekend Guide**

### **-Collegiate Weekends**

- Most weekends will consist of 3 races spread out over 2 days
  - A few of them will have a fourth race, but it is not common
  - Will sometimes have USCF races, too
  - General Format is ITT/TTT, Crit, and Circuit/Road Race
    - Will sometimes have a second ITT thrown in
  - Most weekends in the beginning of the season will have easier and shorter Circuit races, and as the season gets older they turn into longer and harder Road Races
    - Allows you to get in shape during the season
  - Crits will also become longer, but not necessarily harder during the Season

### **-ITT/TTT**

- Almost all Collegiate weekends will have a ITT or an TTT
- ITT stands for Individual Time Trial
  - Are from 2 miles up to 8 miles in length
  - Will sometimes be an uphill TT
- TTT stands for Team Time Trial
  - Are generally longer than the ITT, normally 8 to 15 miles depending on the Category
  - Must have a minimum of 2 members for B/C/D/E Categories and 3 for A (Men)
  - Time is on the wheel of the final person (out of the required number) to cross the line
- Equipment that is used depends on the Race organizer
  - Rutgers style – No Aero Equipment what so ever
  - ECCC Rule for this year, Aero Equipment can only be used by people racing in Men and Women's A's, all other categories are not allowed to use aero equipment

### **-Crits**

- Are from 1KM to about 1 mile in length, but multiply laps, at least 10 for lower divisions
  - Length of races is in minutes and the number of laps are figured out after the timing of the first few laps
  - Some will be smaller but much more technical
    - Crit specialist are best at this kind because you have to have quick acceleration and be able to handle your bike well through turns at speed
    - Will generally end in a much smaller bunch than started, with many people not finishing
    - Breakaways are easier to stay away in and have a chance to lap the field
  - Others will be longer and be a basic rectangle
    - Easy to hang on it
    - Will finish in a big group

### **-Circuit Race/Road Race**

- Longer laps consisting of 5 or more miles in length
  - Road Races will have 2-3 laps, circuit will be about 5-12
- Have hills in them and are on the open road

- Yellow line rule, not a closed course
- If you get dropped from the group, you must obey the rules of the road
- Lower categories bring plenty of food and water with you, Higher Categories will have feed zones
- Dress warm
  - For races in New England, the top of the Mountains are cold and the descents are even colder
- Races in the beginning of the year will be relatively flat and simple
  - Allows the group to stay together and gives everyone a chance to win
- Road Races will generally have a long climb or two in them that can be a couple of miles long
  - Group will generally become broken up after the first major climb
  - Find a group and work with it to get the best possible finish

### **-Packing**

- When packing for a weekend, be sure to look at the forecast the day that you are leaving
  - Always bring cold weather gear, it could be forecasted to be sunny and warm, but can turn into snow and rain
  - Bring two kits when the team travels for the whole weekend
    - You don't want to wear the bibs/shorts you wore the previous day, especially if it rained, don't expect to be able to wash them at a hotel
    - Layer your clothing, so that if it warms up during the race you can take off some of the gear
- Food/Nutrition
  - Bring a gallon of water and at least two bottles
  - Clif Bars/Power Bars/Gels/Gatorades, etc, whatever works for you
  - Bring Peanut Butter, Jelly, Pretzels, things that are easy to eat and don't require refrigeration
- Bring a Tube or Two
- List of What I Pack for every weekend, no matter what the weather is
  - Two Kits
  - Leg Warmers
  - Knee Warmers
  - Sunglasses
  - 2 pairs of Arm Warmers
  - Cycling Cap
  - Winter Skull Cap
  - Couple of pairs of socks
  - Jacket (Wind and Cold)
  - Aero Shoe Covers
  - Cold Weather Shoe Covers
  - Winter Gloves
  - Normal Gloves
  - Under Armor Long Sleeve
  - Base layers
  - Helmet
  - Cycling Shoes
  - Race Numbers and Pins
  - Two Tubes
  - Bike Pump (Team)
  - Towel
  - Tool Kit (Team)
  - Trainer/Rollers
  - Food
  - Gallon of Water
  - Ipod
  - Clothing for Afterwards

## **TTT Practice**

### **-Discuss the rules for the ECCC**

- NO aero equipment for B/C/D/E Categories
- Need 2 people for B/C/D/E
  - 3 People for Men's A's
- Maximum of 4 people
- Can do mixed Categories, but get placed in the highest category rider's category
  - Can have 1 A, 2 B's, and a C, but get placed in A's

### **-Strategies and General Procedures**

- Finishing with all of your people
  - Everyone takes equal pulls, gives you more recovery, and have to do less work
- Or finishing with the minimum amount
  - Have the other people go harder in the beginning and then drop off
- Select your order of riding before you start and then line up that way
  - Have an order that you will fall into when you break from the line, whether its starts on the left or the right side
  - Warm up together on trainers and if time allows ride as a team around an area by the course to get ready
- Figure out your length of pulls before the start
  - Generally around 20-30 second pulls
  - If you have someone that is stronger, have them take longer pulls, and if there is a head wind have them pull into the wind
  - If you have someone good at climbing have them lead up the climb, but make sure that don't go too hard that they kill everyone else on the team and the other people can't recover
- Pull through gradually; don't accelerate when you hit the front
  - Will cause a slingshot effect through the team and will cause the other riders to waste energy catching up and they won't be able to recover
- Take care of drinking and anything else when you are the last rider in the group
- Select a side that you will pull off on and always pull off on that side
  - Determine what signal you are going to use to peel off
    - elbow, hand, head, etc
- Be in communication with the rest of your team
  - Voice yourself if you aren't feeling comfortable
  - If someone is being dropped or is pulling away, shout to the leader
  - Don't look back if you are in the front, let the other people tell you what is going on
- Don't concentrate on the wheel that is right in front of you, look a couple of feet beyond

## Collegiate Women

### **-3 Categories**

- A/B/C(intro to racing)
  - A's are for USCF Cat 1/2/3
  - B's are for USCF Cat 3/4
  - C's are for USCF Cat 4
  - USCF Cat 4's are beginner racers, and Cat 1 is the closest you can be to a pro racers
  - If you have no experience racing, and have just gotten into riding races the intro category
    - Coaches and A racers(Men and Women) teach different skills each week before you race, and then ride with you doing the race helping the racers out(Joe, Adam, and Tim [all from DU Cycling] have all helped out with Intro categories last year and will be doing it again this year)
  - If you have raced before, or have been riding for awhile then do B's
    - Most women will be doing the B category
    - it consists of a mixed group of riders, and just about anybody has a chance to win every weekend.
  - If you a very good racer, have lots of experience, or have had success in B's then do A's
    - “A” races have about 20-30 people in them and are dominated by about a half dozen of those people.
- If you are unsure of what category you should be in ask the experienced racers for their opinion.
  - Remember that you can always upgrade or downgrade your category if you don't like how it is going
  - Look at who you are riding with, if you are comfortable at the pace they do, and they know what category they are racing in, ride that category
    - Warning:** You can always overextend your limits on a ride to hang with someone, but it is hard to do in a race.
- It is more important for you to have fun and enjoy riding, then doing too hard of a category and getting down on yourself.

### **-Team Time Trial**

- TTT teams can be made up of members from different categories, but get placed in the category of the highest ranked racer.
  - If you are the only women on your team, you can form a composite team with riders from other schools; you will get placed, but will receive no points.
- All women team's must be made up of at least 2 members, but no more than 4.