

My Thoughts Riding With New Cyclists (Group Riding)

Last month I talked about hand signals during turns. Modify what was written about using your left arm for a right turn signal. The upper arm should be positioned horizontally but perpendicular to your bike (like a left turn signal) with your forearm vertical. Otherwise as seen by a motorist it may appear you are raising your arm vertically, signaling nothing of interest to them though it may get their attention.

On a group ride in our level areas of Tidewater you will in time realize some ride leaders maintain a somewhat constant pedaling effort. As result they slow a bit on a gentle up slope, speed up going down, slow up into a head wind and increase speed a bit going with the wind. The more experienced leaders, generally moving at higher speeds will attempt to maintain their constant speed on the up slopes, speed up going down, maintain their speed in a head wind but speed up remarkably in a tail wind.

Realizing that, you learn to anticipate what will happen and prevent overtaking or falling behind, be it a pace line or a loose group. Most leaders will point out and in anticipation will very smoothly steer around pot holes, etc. If you are in a pace line smoothly following them makes for a more pleasant ride. Responsible cyclists use bike mirrors. The best are mirrors that clip to your glasses where you can watch behind while looking ahead.

Responsible means you can see overtaking vehicles or other cyclists then predictably control your bike as they pass. You can see overtaking cars and cars ahead and be prepared because those cars as they pass you may pass each other at the same time.

-John McKee -