



## **Pace Line 101 :**

**Required Reading for All Tieni Duro Riders and  
Parents**



## Pace Line Skills

- **Never Overlap Wheels.** *Overlapping wheels with the rider in front of you is a recipe for road rash and a broken collar bone.* Don't do it! Leave adequate space between you and the rider in front of you...a few feet is fine to still enjoy a draft but not be too risky. Learn to judge the distance of the rider in front of you by the distance to their shoulders, not by staring at their rear wheel. This is the No. 1 cause of mishaps on our training rides and in races.
- **Hand Position.** Keep your hands on the brake lever hoods (not on the "tops") and be prepared to gently scrub speed by using your **front** brake... not the rear brake which will cause skidding and loss of control. The only time to be on the tops is if you are leading the pace line.
- **Body Position.** Hold your line. Don't weave around and ride sloppily. Most of all, don't over-react when something happens in front of you like a stick, dropped bottle, or a drainage grate or whatever. Just ride over it, gracefully. Swerving will end badly for you and probably others. Ride with good posture and with purpose. Keep elbows bent to act like shock absorbers. This will allow you to keep control of the bike if you hit a rock, pine cone, stick, debris, etc.



## Paceline Skills (continued)

- **Hazards.** Front riders point and shout out road hazards like dead animals, pine cones, rocks, grates, etc.
- **Self-contained.** Carry what you need: tubes, pump, money, food, water, phone, ID, sunscreen, etc.
- **Routes, Rest Stops, and Distance.** Each rider should know where we are going, where the usual stops are, and how far we are going to ride each ride.
- **Warm-up.** The first 30-45 minutes of all groups rides are warm-up. Always. We usually put older riders up near the front to control the pace and to make sure we go the right way. The pace should be between 15-18 mph, even slower in the fall and winter during small ring training. Riders that don't observe this will be sent to the back or otherwise disciplined.



# Pace Line Etiquette

- **Drilling it.** Getting to the front and picking up the pace to the point of popping riders (especially new riders) off the back is considered rude. It is called a ***pace line*** for a reason... we establish a pace and stick to it for an extended period of time. Certain parts of every ride have places appropriate for hammering hard and showing what you have in the tank, but not while we are in formation and working on pacing.
- **“No-Drop-Ride”.** All of Tieni Duro’s team rides are “no drop rides”, which means exactly that. We don’t ride in such a way as to blow up the dynamics of the peloton. Our goal is to become better riding in tight formations and to work as a team. This means stronger riders help those that maybe don’t have as much experience or training. At the top of a Col or summit, strong riders should circle back and pace the younger riders and mentors back up the hill or see if they need help in some way (mechanical, medical, etc.). Show leadership by showing encouragement and selflessness.
- **Ignorant Public & Road Rage.** Yes, it happens. Some guy (or gal), who clearly knows more about how to ride safely than all of us combined, pulls up along our group, rolls down a window in his luxury SUV, and yells something “instructional” (or offensive) toward our team. Ignore him. This is doubly true if you are out alone. Do not engage with any person in a vehicle acting aggressively, other than to say “ok, sorry we got in your way, have a nice day” or whatever will let the guy feel he has won or made his point.



## Pace Line Etiquette (continued)

- **Time Trial Position.** I have recently seen many (good, experienced) junior riders riding with their hands hanging draped over in front of their bars (with wrists resting on the tops), hanging on to the cables (or nothing at all) rather than onto the bars themselves. This is bad, bad, bad. You can play Fabian Cancellara when you are out alone on a training ride, if you feel you must. Better yet, save that for days when you are on your TT bike or a bike with aero bar extensions (talk with Jason about our PedalSoft clip-ons). When you ride with the group, you always keep your hands on the bars. We have all seen Race Officials warn riders of this offense in races, and they are cracking down this year. You'd hate to win in a breakaway only to be DQ'd for dangerous technique. Aero position should be saved for time trials, not for riding tempo in a peloton. It may look cool... right up to the moment you hit something with your front wheel, go down and take 5 guys out with you. Not cool.
- **Feeding / Jacket Changes Up at the Front.** When you are in the front, don't take your hands off the bars to feed or take off/put on a vest, etc. This is not a Pro 1-2 race, it is a training ride. Only bad things will happen when hands are off the bars up at the front. Wait until you are at the back (or go to the back) and do it there. If you get your vest stuck in your front wheel and go down, you won't take 7 people with you. It happens.



## Pace Line Etiquette (continued)

- **Looking Behind You** When up near the front, sometimes you have to look backward to make sure the group has re-assembled. Place your hand on the shoulder of the person next to you so they know you are going to turn your head. They will look out for you (up front) while you take a very quick look behind.
- **Pulling Through.** Let the riders behind you know you are pulling off and indicate so by looking over your outside shoulder. Wave through or elbow flick to let them know. Pay special attention to the lead riders when you are in second position.
- **Verbal Communications to the Peloton.** The convention is to shout “stopping” if the light ahead changes to yellow/red and we can’t make it through safely. We all yell “rolling” if we are going to roll through an intersection that is safe. Yelling “car back” is generally not necessary for every single car that rolls up on us from behind. We basically always have some sort of car “back”. Just yell “car back” when it is necessary to let others in front know there is car hanging out behind us waiting for us to move a bit to the right, for example.
- **Single Up.** Every so often, we are on a road that is very narrow and requires us to really ride close to the edge of the pavement. Like going up toward Southgate on Diablo Road... just past that last stop light at Green Valley. It gets narrow. We cannot ride two across at that point, ever. Same with through Orinda on San Pablo Dam Road on the way out of town. Way too narrow. When somebody (usually a coach or a mentor) yells “single up”, it means single up as soon and as effectively as possible. It is not a suggestion. It is an order.



## Pace Line Etiquette (continued)

- **Signals & Stop Signs.** Riders at the front always have an advantage when rolling out from a stop sign or signal. Don't stand up and stomp on it. The riders in the back are just clicking in, and will suffer a lot trying catch back on to the group. It is considered poor etiquette to not let everyone get back into formation. You will pop riders off the back if you do this, and that is also bad form.
- **Sprints.** Town sign and county line sprints are part of cycling. But they are only done when it is safe to do so (not narrow or busy roads, please). But after the sprint, please sit up and take the pace back down, be aware of the group behind you is trying to catch back on. Work to have a smooth re-merging of the groups. Let the pace line reform. Don't make the newer or less strong riders bury themselves to catch the sprinters after the sprint has ended. It is rude.
- **Communicate.** Talk with the younger riders about your experience in races and relate that to the lessons of riding in pacelines. For example: 1) why holding your line is important in a criterium or technical road race, and 2) why being at the front of a group that is changing pace all the time is easier than at the back. Also, help with thoughtful comments, not snarky remarks.



# Equipment

- **Helmets.** Always wear a helmet. Failure to do so can result in dismissal from Tieni Duro. We are sponsored by Rudy Project. Ask Jason or a teammate about how to get the discount.
- **Gloves.** You can lose all the skin on your hands pretty easily and be out for the season if you hit the pavement without gloves on. So...Wear gloves. Long gloves in winter. Find gloves that work for you. Hammer Nutrition makes a fine summer glove, and we get a huge discount. Order some gloves when you order your Perpetuum or Heed or whatever.
- **Glasses.** Glasses should be worn whenever riding to keep the grit and whatnot out of your eyes. We are sponsored by Rudy Project. We get a really good discount, and we get some glasses to hand out to the kids that have been on the team for a few years too.
- **Under Jerseys.** Get a light under jersey for summer and a warmer one for winter. These wick the moisture away from your body and will keep you cooler/warmer than the lycra jersey ever could.
- **Road ID.** Get one, use it every ride. Include emergency numbers and other relevant information like your blood type, your Kaiser number or whatever HMO you use.
- **Bike.** You need to have bar ends on your handlebars. You will not be allowed to ride in the group and you will be pulled from a race if you ride without bar ends. Keep your bike in good, clean working order.
- **Lights.** You should have little blinky lights on your bike if you have even a remote chance of getting caught out on a winter training ride after school. It gets dark in those canyons, even at 4:30 pm. You could flat, get stuck in the dark longer than anticipated, etc. The lights are cheap. Front white, rear red. Blinky lights at a minimum. Tieni Duro management cannot advocate night riding due to the risk. Ride your rollers in the garage if it is dark outside.
- **Fender.** A rear fender keeps water off of you and the folks around you too. They are \$20 at Sharp Bicycle. Get one.
- **Tires and Brakes.** Don't wait until the tires are shot to change them. Always check your brakes before heading out of the garage for a ride. Ditto tire pressure.





**Grazie Mille!**

