

# Veloce Santiago Cycling Club

## Rules of Entering the Club and Moving through Riding Groups

We have a great club. But, it is not right for everyone. That's why we have rules.

In the last several years, the Board has implemented rules concerning how you enter the club, and how you move from one riding group to another. As far as I know, the rules have never been set down in print before.

**Rule No.1:** Because we focus on safety, we insist that potential new members start riding with our orientation/instructional group, and that they ride all of the routes before they are considered for invitation to ride with a higher level group.

**Rationale:** We don't know who the new folks are; they may be strong, but the odds are that they don't know how to ride in a group as we do. Just because someone raced previously does not give them the skills to ride in a structured group. We want to train potential new members to ride the way we do. We don't assume they have the needed skills. That's why we have Debby Kelly and other experienced riders shepherd the instructional group, so we can teach how we ride, and also assess when a rider is ready to move to a faster group. Remember, things happen faster the faster you ride. We also want to make sure that a new person knows our routes. We ride fast and tight in a group, and one person who doesn't know the route can cause disaster.

**Rule No. 2:** No one rides with the first ("A") group unless you have been invited to move into that group. The first group is not an instructional group, nor is it a "no-drop" group. Just because you are strong does not make you safe to ride with the first group. If you aren't happy with this, then Veloce Santiago is not for you. A good rider knows his/her limitations. Riding at the edge of your ability at 28 MPH does not make you safe; one small mistake can mean broken bones for a lot of people. That's why skill level is assessed before you are invited to move up. And, if the invitation turns out to be premature, based on your riding, you may be dis-invited, and asked to go back to the next slower group. This is not a clique thing, it is for your own, and everyone else's safety.

**Rule No. 3:** Use your common sense. Some days you will be a great rider, and other days you may be so-so. You know when those days occur; if you aren't on your game, ride with a slower group. Don't endanger your friends by riding over your head.

**Rule No. 4:** Know the routes, and know the riders you are riding with. (This is really part of Rule No. 3, since it is common senses)

**Rule No. 5:** Unless someone is invited to become a member, which occurs only after successfully riding all the routes with the instructional group, that person will not automatically become a club member. Some people may be required to ride in the instructional group for a longer period of time, or may even be asked to ride somewhere else. Decisions like these are made with the safety of all club members in mind. "Vouching" for a rider is only allowed in very specific cases, such as where

someone has ridden with the group previously, but for some reason, has not ridden with us for a while.

**Rule No. 6:** Know and practice all the club rules of the road (Veloce Santiago's Rules of the Road) that are posted on the web site.

**Rule No. 7:** We have different levels of groups (see Rule No. 2), and often split the "B" group into two or more groups. This is for safety on the road. Big groups can be a problem when crossing intersections. For example, we have found that a group size of 12-15 is perfect to ensure that should a light turn yellow, and the leader or leaders of the pace line yell "rolling" then all of the group gets through safely. Any bigger than that, and the pace line may still be going through the intersection when the light turns red. The groups are often split according to capability, that is, how fast can you go for the entire route. Don't sandbag, and if you do, ride to the speed of the others around you. Don't get in the fast group if you know you aren't up to it. If you aren't sure, then ride at the back, and stay at the back so if and when you fall off, you don't disrupt the group.

**Rule No. 8:** We stop for mechanicals and flat tires. By we, I mean the whole group, and we wait until the problem is fixed. We wait at regroup points (the A group excepted) a reasonable amount of time, say five minutes, for stragglers in the B and Instructional groups. That's what teams do.

**Rule No. 9:** We take short pulls at the front. Sitting on the front for mile after mile does not prove you are a stud or studette; it only shows you don't know how to ride efficiently in a pace line.

**Rule No. 10:** Each group should warm up at an appropriate pace when we leave the shop. If you are in the second B group, and you are capable of warming up at 23 MPH, then you are in the wrong group. If you leave with the A group and can't warm up at 23-25 MPH, then you are in the wrong group. Use common sense, and see Rule. No. 2.

**Rule No. 11:** See Rule No. 3!!!! And be safe.

Not a rule, but still common sense: The instructional group is not "dangerous" per se. We occasionally hear from a new rider that they don't think they should have to ride with the "instructional" group because they are strong and the group is dangerous. Since I ride with that group more than occasionally, I know this is incorrect. We are a riding "team", and to quote the tired, but true old saw, "there is no "I" in "team". That is usually what the problem is. A good rider can ride a slower pace; indeed, if you want to be fast, you should ride at a slower pace occasionally to recover. What is dangerous is when a hot-shot decides to ride like a non-team member when required to ride with the instructional group. They usually either cause a problem, because they do something unexpected, or they become involved in something because they were too busy paying attention to themselves to be aware of what the group was doing.

Let me know if you have any question or comments. I am always happy to discuss these topics.

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