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Want your parents to ride with the Team?

As you may or may not know, we DO encourage parents to participate in team rides, especially on Sundays. From a risk management perspective, every able-bodied adult who is on the trail with the kids can help deal with risks inherent in the sport. Our parent league, NICA, does allow this, and requires that parents who ride regularly meet "Level 1" requirements defined [here](#). Basically, sign a waiver, do a background check, and look over useful materials on concussion protocols and risk management. If you think your parents are going to be going on multiple rides with the team, then please send Otis and Rob a quick note from your personal email address, and we will invite them to become a Level 1 coach

(general volunteer). I know that as a new parent, I was very happy to learn that the adults riding with my son way out in the middle of nowhere had background checks and basic risk management skills! There is a small fee involved with the background check; since they are helping the team, let us know if you would like the team to cover that cost. These requirements need to be completed by Feb 15th 2017.

Time trial grouping

The weather thus far has been quite uhh challenging. While we love the rain and the greenery, it does keep our ride schedule and plans hopping around, in particular our second time trial. The [time trial](#) (explained in the preceding link by Ronan, one of the [captains](#)) is important because it allows us to break our 60-rider team into skill-similar groups of ~15 Riders or less so that we are not breaking Marin Open Space or MMWD usage rules. The table below shows four approximate riding groups based on the time trial and/or our perception of what we think a Rider can do. We will text each Rider individually to let them know what Riding group they are in, and ask them to confirm with a reply:

Purple - 12 min or less

Blue - 12 to 17 min

Green - 17 to 20 min

Gold - 20 min +

If you feel that you should be in a different group than the one we put you in, please let us know. And Riders, you are not required to always ride in the group we put you in – if you are feeling that a shorter ride or slower ride is appropriate, then make sure you go with that group and identify yourself to the Ride Leader and Ride Sweep well before the ride begins.

Bike fit

Bike fit can be something of a black art, and different bike shops can give kids different advice on how to fit a bike to a particular individual. Thankfully, NICA has some materials that simplify this art down to [a process that even novice Riders can do at home](#). Try it out at home! especially if rides longer than one hour make any

part of you unusually sore. There is a permanent link to this on the <http://drakemtb.org/riders/> page too.

Training

[Eddy Merckx](#), one of the most dominant cyclists ever, said it best “Ride as much or as little, or as long or as short as you feel. But ride.” The best way to get better on a bike is to.... RIDE. Otis and I could develop the most advanced scientific training plan ever, but getting stronger as a Rider means RIDING. The NICA rules specify that we can only have four official team rides per week (Pelo counts as one of them), but what Riders do on their own, outside of team practices, is up to them. Over the years, Riders on the Drake team have tended to fall into three broad categories:

- Novice: “This is my first year riding a bicycle as an organized sport”
- Intermediate: “I’ve ridden on a team before, and want to get stronger or more competitive”
- Advanced: “I’ve been on a podium before, and want to win races”

For the Novice, simply getting on the bike and riding as much as possible will result in amazing gains in strength and endurance over the course of the season. Going to at least two team rides a week, and doing Pelo with a power number that does not stress you out, will have a huge impact on your overall strength by the time May rolls around. We see it happen every year! So, follow Eddy’s advice, and RIDE.

For the Intermediate, a little more focus is required so that you are getting the most benefit from the time that you spend on your bike. Make sure that you go on the Sunday rides, and work hard in Pelo (but not so hard that you dread going). Pick either a Tuesday ride or Thursday ride to be with the team, but take it slow; your strength gains during the week come from Pelo, so riding at a slow or medium pace the day before or after will help your legs grow in strength. You may want to consider a non-team ride on Saturday if you feel like getting in more training specific to your needs (sprinters working on climbing, climbers working on leg

speed, etc... road riding can be a nice and more-easily-controlled alternative... ride with friends and be safe!).

For the Advanced, riding with the team is your opportunity to build comradery and relationships, and add to your training “base”. If you have podiumed in the past, then it is likely that team rides are NOT going to push your physical limits as hard as you need to grow in strength and power. So why ride with the team? Because we are a team, and the folks you ride with are the ones cheering you on lap five of Hurl Hill, or the ones that pick up the slack if you have an injury. So make sure you do the Sunday rides, and put your Pelo power number where it will give you strong interval training (but again, without burning you out or making you dread going). If you do a Tues or Thurs rides, use that time to mentor new kids, spin the legs for recovery, and get to know the names of all the other kids before anyone else. Organize Saturday rides with stronger riders if need be – there are plenty of local road racing teams who could use a challenge.

As a team, overall, we try to follow the principles outlined in [Friel's Mountain Bike Training Bible](#). What does this mean? Simply, we work to build a “base” in the first eight weeks of training by riding successively longer rides over a three week period, followed by a week of less riding to let teenage legs grow muscle. We will do this cycle twice before our first race at the end of February, and have one restful week during the season. As Joe Friel says “Fitness = workout + recovery”... more workouts do not always lead to more fitness, particularly if the body does not get adequate rest.

Happy Riding!

Otis and Rob
