

Club Race Rules

Introduction

Ramblers Cycling Club abides by the rules of Cycling New Zealand, which are based on the UCI Rules. These can be found on the BikeNZ website: www.bikenz.org.nz

It is important that members obey all road rules. This is why we require all riders to sign in each week before a race and attend the pre-race briefing to reinforce these rules which are listed below.

Most of the Club's events involve racing in ability based grades. This means that members are able to ride with others who are at a similar level of skill and ability, whatever their age or gender, and whether they are just starting out in the sport or are experienced racers competing at national or international level.

This arrangement means that anyone who comes along to Ramblers, whether they are an experienced rider from out of town, a young person just starting up, a bored swimmer or broken down harrier, or an older person who has suddenly found the urge to take part in some healthy activity, will find others to ride with.

To cater for women who prefer to ride only with other women, we also have a "Fem grade", restricted to women and girls.

We currently have 7 ability based grades – from G grade, which caters for the new riders and where on the bike riding skills and training advice is given, up to A grade for the top racers.

We race all year round, unlike many other clubs, in 4 seasonal series of races – spring summer autumn and winter. Each series has about 12 Saturday races, and riders win points in their grade according to finishing order, accumulating to produce grade winners in each series.

Grading of riders is decided in discussion with the Club Captain. Normally grade winners will be promoted to the next grade. If a rider is finding a grade too difficult, then they can go down to one better suited to their ability and fitness. Often a rider will start in a grade finding it hard, but by the end of a series discover they are able to handle racing at that level.

Most grades will race over the same course, starting at different times. It is important that riders from one grade do not get mixed up in or interfere in the race of another grade.

Saturday Registration: 1.10pm – 1.50pm at Venue (see series program)

Race Briefing: 1.50pm, all riders must attend or you will not be allowed to start.

Race Starts: 2.00pm

Electronic timing is used for results, so you need to be a financial member to get your time recorded

Race Rules

- An approved safety helmet must be worn at all times.
- The race is on open roads and all road rules apply in particular ***no crossing centre line.***

Most grades will race over the same course, starting at different times. It is important that riders from one grade do not get mixed up in or interferes in the race of another grade.

- Obey all the road rules - especially ***KEEP LEFT.***
- Where required, marshals will stop cyclists not traffic.
- Hold your lines - do not half-wheel.
- Riders to warn bunch of oncoming or following vehicles and other traffic hazards.
- Do not join on to other grades; riders may take no part in any grades race other than their own.
- Obey the commands of your race captain.
- Slow down after finish line - all riders must report to finish line, even if DNF.
- Keep finish order when coming in between cones.
- Failure to follow rules may lead to disciplinary action - refused start/deduction of race points/banning from races or club.
- There are no special privileges for cycle races.
- No abusing of race officials, volunteers or fellow riders will be tolerated.

Riding Tips - Bunch Riding

Below is some cycling tips from CNZ Chairman Mark Ireland.

For a bunch to work well, you need to be able to trust the riders around you. On a slower ride like the Sunday rides, the rules are a lot more casual, but when the pace is up a bit or particularly if you are in a race, it pays to know the drill. You still need to be able to shift quickly to single file riding when traffic conditions require it.

Riders at the Front

You are the eyes for the whole bunch – only you can see the potholes, glass, cars at intersections and so on. You need to point out hazards well in advance, so the bunch can smoothly avoid them. At intersections, it's your call as to whether the whole bunch can get through or whether you bring the bunch to a gentle halt.

Riders at the Back

You are the ones that warn the bunch of cars wanting to pass or let the bunch know that someone has punctured. Bunch riding is about looking out for each other, not abandoning fellow riders on the side of the road without a second glance.

Lapping

This is rotating through so that everyone takes a turn at the front. Some folk are notably allergic to the front of the bunch, but if everyone contributes, the ride is easier for everyone. Normally there will be two lines, one moving up to the front, one moving down to the back. Ride close together – don't leave gaps, keep close to the wheel in front and close to the rider beside you.

Which side do I lap on?

Take note of the wind direction. If it's coming from your right, the line moving to the front will be on the left. If the wind is on your left, you "come through" on the right. The rule of thumb is that the riders coming to the front are always protected from the wind, so that they are fresh when they hit the front.

How fast should I go through to the front?

Most people get this wrong – the guy at the front pulls over and the next guy in the queue takes that as a signal to hit the gas. You only want to maintain the previous speed. Just gently apply enough pressure to meet the extra wind resistance. Don't accelerate! That sends a shockwave through the bunch, the effect of which is huge by the time the riders at the back are affected. Again, it's all about riding smoothly.

How long should I stay in front?

Generally, the faster the pace, the shorter the turn at the front. Just watch what others are doing and aim for that. Ultimately it's up to you – if you are not feeling that strong, just hit the front and then pull over. If you are feeling strong, stay a bit longer. In a very small bunch, everyone will have to take longer turns at the front, but a big bunch can just keep rotating fairly frequently. The speed difference between the riders going forward and backward should only be a couple of km/h at the most.

What if I can't go through?

This is known as sitting and is not a problem, provided you sit towards the back of the bunch. Don't "sit" in the middle of the bunch, you can end up acting as a "cork in a bottle", preventing other riders from coming through. Make it obvious you aren't coming through by keeping your front wheel out of the vision of the rider in front. You might need to encourage the rider to take the gap until everyone is aware you aren't going to come through. When you've rested up enough, just decisively jump on the wheel in front. In a large bunch, there might only be a small group working at the front, with a lot of riders sitting.

Look Ahead

Riders often focus just on the wheel in front, but you need to keep looking ahead at what is happening at the front of the bunch (and beyond), to avoid pile ups when stopping or hitting pot holes etc.

Keep the pace even

To adjust your speed down, rather than braking, just move out into the wind slightly. You'll scrub off the speed and avoid the shockwave effect that goes back through the bunch – otherwise the guys at the back end up bungy-ing up and down in speed. Likewise, if a gap opens up, don't panic and hammer it to get there, just build the pace smoothly and drag everyone up with you. If you go hard out, you drop those behind and then have to brake again when you catch up – with the shockwave again affecting anyone behind.

1. NEVER overlap wheels with the bike in front.

2. Keep a steady speed, this avoids the bumpy effect for those further back in the group.
3. Avoid sudden movements like braking, swerving or sudden acceleration
4. You are the eyes of the riders following – point out pot holes, road kill and other hazards
5. Riders near the back need to advise riders ahead of cars needing to pass
6. Keep an eye on the riders around you, if someone punctures, check if they need a hand
7. Show courtesy to other road users. Go single file where the road is narrow.

By Mark Ireland – CNZ President