

# LONDON DYNAMO

## Richmond Park Ride

### Guidelines

#### 1. Summary

- We hope you find these notes helpful to your enjoyment of a cornerstone weekly ride hosted by our cycling club. The notes' purpose is to assist new members, as well as to allow "old hands" to brush up their technique.
- We meet in Richmond Park at 8.30am March through November; 9am December to March, every Saturday morning at Pen Ponds Car Park, break into Groups of 8 and ride 4 anti-clockwise laps of the Park doing "through and off".
- New riders please identify themselves to a member. Members – please befriend new riders.
- First Group out is fastest, last slowest.
- Pick a Group which you think best matches your fitness.
- If an experienced rider from within the group does not "emerge" as leader, experienced member riders should please "call the shots" when required. For example to slow the group to wait for a dropped rider, or give the go-ahead to overtake a slow moving car. Do not be afraid to assert yourself - in the interests of safety and caring for your fellow riders.
- If the Group you ride with is too quick, drop to the Group behind, but tell the Leader/Group.
- If the Group is too slow for you, then please accept the situation and ride at the Group's pace – do not surge or try to force the pace in frustration. Pick a faster Group next time.
- We finish just short of 4 laps at the car park before Roehampton Gate. Many of us stay for a coffee at the cafe.
- After a couple of "experimental" rides, new riders will for insurance reasons please join London Dynamo. See "Membership" on the website

## **2. Objectives**

- To ride and work together as a Team. By replicating a race team technique, (“through and off”) average pace can be maintained well above that of the individual, for the same amount of effort.
- To ride together smoothly and at a pace that suits the fitness of the Group – the Leader/Group should be able to gauge this.
- To ride in close formation, safely, and putting the interests of the Group and other Park users above self.
- Please concentrate, be smooth, be safe, and when it all comes together, as it so often does, - it’s hugely satisfying.

## **3. “Through and Off” - The Basics**

- The Groups initially ride in 2 parallel lines of 4 riders past The Royal Ballet School and turn left at Sheen Cross towards Richmond Gate.
- Remember, it’s not a race. This is a ride for members who are riding together as a Group. If you want to race, go racing.
- Other slower cyclists can find our faster moving groups a little intimidating. Please allow other riders plenty of room when overtaking.
- Soon after Richmond Gate “through and off” should begin.
- The outside line of riders smoothly picks up a pace about 1 mph faster than the inside line.
- As the front rider in the outside line passes the front rider on the inside line, he/she moves to the left to take the lead position in the inside line. (For the purposes of these guidelines, “he” or “him” also imparts the female gender)
- A new front rider on the outside line is revealed and he does the same – and so on.
- A conveyer belt of riders or “chain gang” is created.
- As the last rider on the outside line passes the last rider on the inside line, he must say to him “last man” – to make the “last man” aware of his position and ensure the “last man” isn’t left stranded at the back – struggling to then catch the rider ahead in the outside line – disrupting smoothness.
- The last rider on the inside lane then checks behind (just in case of a false call) and moves into the outside lane too – saying “last man” to the rider that was in front of him on the inside line – and so forth. You must say “last man”

– rider order can change, or a random rider might have caught the group and be trying to get involved or overtake.

- Gaps between the riders should be narrow to facilitate drafting or slipstreaming to reduce rider effort, and assist the Group's pace and smoothness. But no overlapping of wheels please – very dangerous.
- “Slowing”, “Stopping”, “Horse”, “Deer”, “Rider left”, “Single file” and appropriate hand signals should be used by all when appropriate. Don't expect somebody else to shout – use your common sense, particularly when nearer the front.
- However, we have found other cyclists in the park often misinterpret our warnings. “Single File”, for instance can be interpreted by other cyclists riding two abreast, as London Dynamo demanding they get into single file for our overtaking benefit. Or “Rider Left” as London Dynamo demanding riders on the left beware because we are coming through! So, hand signals deployed in good time are therefore recommended instead, with spoken warnings given only when necessary.
- NO overtaking of moving vehicles in the Park unless the Leader/Group consensus suggests so, and then in single file.
- If a slow rider chooses to drop to a slower Group, he should make his decision clear to the Leader/Group to avoid misunderstanding.
- On the last lap, riders may choose to breakaway, individually or in smaller groups.
- On the final straight, take particular care to ride considerately and safely. Never not move out of position without first looking ahead and behind under any circumstances.

#### **4. “Through and Off” - Acceleration and Deceleration**

- The only time a rider should normally need to accelerate is when he joins the outside lane of riders at the rear of the Group, having been riding at the slightly slower pace of the inside line i.e. c1mph faster, that is all. Clearly there are exceptions such as when the Group has been broken up at a traffic island or on a hill.
- The most common mistake is made by a rider when on the outside line. He finds himself nearing the front. As the rider in front moves to the left, he feels compelled to push harder than necessary, and accelerates. There should be no acceleration or surge of speed. MPH should be maintained only. To do so, measured effort is likely to be required, since as the front rider, you will be fully exposed to the wind, and instinct may lead you to put in too much effort, leading to acceleration – wrong. By judicious use of your power, you

should manage to maintain not loose or gain speed, and consequently a disruptive gap has not opened up behind you.

- Another common error occurs when moving in to the inside line at the front. Positioning is important. Take a look before you cut in. Try to maintain a narrow gap between yourself and the rider who is now behind you. Too sharp a manoeuvre, and you'll cause a concertina of braking (very dangerous). More often, the rider cutting in will forget to gently slow down by 10mph, and the inside line feel compelled to speed up to close the gap. They should not. The "speeding" rider should realise that nobody has overtaken him on the outside and he has made an error. If this happens to you, gently reduce your pace to that of the inside line i.e. the riders behind you. Equally, do not ease off too much, since undesirable, unexpected and potentially dangerous braking maybe required by riders behind you.

## 5. "Through and Off" - Finer Points

- Downhill, gaps maybe increased to allow extra room for reaction time.
- Steep descents and overtaking of cars or two-abreast cyclists should be ridden in single file for safety.
- Slow riders can be encouraged back to the Group or dropped for a group behind to sweep up as appropriate.
- When it occurs, surging is the most frequent cause of disruption to the smoothness of the ride. It's usually down to 1 or 2 riders in a Group, and they are invariably unaware of it! So don't be embarrassed if it's you who are singled out. Surging causes gaps to open up behind the surging rider. Slipstreaming is reduced, rider effort increased, smoothness reduced, and so the Group's pace. Frustrating and not enjoyable at all.
- Do not jump out of position to fill a gap when the Group is in formation. However, positions may change at junctions or on hills – so be careful not to follow your usual rider – wait for "last man" and always concentrate and look out.
- Should you get a puncture or suffer mechanical difficulty, put your hand in the air and shout your problem. You cannot expect assistance, but somebody in the group may stop to help you or ask whether you require assistance – make your requirements known. By putting your hand in the air and shouting, the group will avoid your slowing bike and a potential accident.
- In the unlikely event of an accident, the leader will stop the group and take appropriate action, or resume if sensible.
- Finally, you could be forgiven for thinking that this whole process is overly complex. Trust us when we say we've survived for years without these notes,

and thoroughly enjoy our Saturday rides. We just thought these paragraphs might assist the learning process, and frankly, remind the “old hands” that you aren’t too old to brush up.