

Dear rider,

The 100/200 is this Saturday, the 20th, and the weather report is looking pretty good. Three days is about the limit that you can have anything approaching a reliable weather forecast in Vermont. If the forecast holds, temps will only get up to the low-70s and it will be overcast, which is good for a long day in the saddle. It's a good idea to bring a change of riding duds, not only in case the forecast changes, but also because cleaning up and putting on fresh kit in the second half can make a huge difference in how you feel and ride. Changing in Ludlow can make you feel like a new rider, even if it stays dry.

I've posted on the website information related to the course for riders and sag drivers, especially those portions where we deviate from Rte. 100 and the locations of planned breaks. I'll have copies at the start. In the case of detours and short cuts, if you get separated from the group and are not sure of the route, just stay on Rte. 100 and you'll be back on the route within a few miles.

We will not be doing the Wardsboro / Mt. Snow climb this year! The road is being completely reconstructed and is not suitable for road tires. Instead, there are two options—an "official" route that continues on VT-103 to Chester, then VT-35 through Grafton, and a second option that continues on VT-100 over Terrible Mtn., but continues on VT-30, instead of turning off for the Mt. Snow climb. The two routes meet in Townshend, and continue on VT-30 to Brattleboro, following the river on VT-142 to the state line.

A number of us who are staying overnight near the start will be meeting for dinner at 7:00 pm at the Jay Village Inn, on VT-242 in Jay. You are welcome to join us! Call them directly to make reservations, 802-988-2306.

Be sure to read the updated information on the ride website, <http://100-200.org>, especially the information about the route options. As far as training is concerned, it's time to taper off. Keep it easy when you ride to give your body time to build up your reserves. Remember, now is not the time to be trying new shoes or saddle! Be sure that you check your bike out well and have the proper spares. **You'll definitely want to bring a tail light with fresh batteries and it is an excellent idea to pack a headlight, as well. Vermont law requires both when riding after dark. Reflective leg bands are an excellent idea, as well, just in case you finish later than you expect. There are always some riders who finish at dusk or later.**

Ride Tips

I was reviewing some comments from riders in previous years, and a couple things come up repeatedly; pace yourself and keep the breaks short. You've been training and you're going to feel very strong at the start. Someone is going to set a fast pace early on and you're going to want to jump on their wheel. That is very often a big mistake. Pace lines are key on this ride, but if you're going to push the pace, do it in the LAST 50 miles, not the first! That person setting the blistering pace may not finish, so don't let their tactics take you down with them. Rider Jeff Warner has noted that keeping breaks to 15 minutes would enable an easy 17 mph pace and you would finish an hour and a half earlier than many fast riders do. Pushing yourself so hard that you want to stay off the bike longer may be fun, but it's not the best strategy for this ride.

I've been on a few rides over the past year where a rider has been injured. I'm grateful that I was not involved in any of these accidents, though I witnessed them. In all these accidents, I noticed a common theme, and that was that they involved riders who were riding outside their ability. This led to sloppiness that directly contributed to the accident, and it was not always those riders who paid the price. Here are a few tips that I would give to keep riders safe:

- Stay within your comfort zone. If you feel you're riding too fast, drop back to another group. Unless you're the lanterne rouge, there's bound to be someone shortly behind with whom to share the ride.
- When riding in a bunch, keep at least some distance between your front wheel and the rear wheel of the person ahead. If you find you must "cross wheels," drop back to a safe distance immediately. If your front wheel makes contact with the other rider's rear wheel, you will almost certainly go down. Even if you don't get hurt, it might cause someone behind you to go down and they might not be so lucky. If you feel someone contact your rear wheel, don't slow down! Speed up, if you can.
- When getting out of the saddle on a climb, make a special effort not to throw the bike backwards when someone is drafting you. It is entirely natural for your bike to slow dramatically for a split second as you get out of the saddle. If the rider in back happens to be close, they might cross wheels with you and this could cause a crash.
- Don't come alongside a rider on the right, even if there is a shoulder. Conversely, be aware of other riders' positions and look before moving laterally.
- Observe the universal "center line rule." Don't cross the center line of the road.
- Related to the above, make a special effort to be aware of vehicles and single up to let traffic pass. We have made no contacts or special arrangements with towns along the route and have no special permissions for riders. In Vermont, it is ok to ride two-abreast as long as it does not impede the flow of traffic. Generally, this is taken to mean that riders need to single up when traffic is approaching from the rear. You'll find most drivers to be considerate, but no one likes to be stuck behind a group of cyclists who are chatting away. Many drivers will pass cyclists unsafely, such as where sight distance is restricted on curves or before the crest of a hill. There are always a few drivers who hate all cyclists, so don't give them an excuse to be nasty. Cyclists are required to adhere to all vehicular traffic regulations and can be ticketed for violations.
- Always ride with safety first and keep it fun!

I hope you are as psyched about the ride as I am. This will be my 15th run of the 100/200 (our first was over 30 years ago!) and I look forward to it now as much as I ever have. I think you will agree that the 100/200 is truly one of the country's most enjoyable and memorable endurance rides.

See you at 5:00 am, Saturday at the Canadian border!

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