

TTIPS VOL. 13/22 – Insights The Rules - Part Two*

“The minimum number of bikes one should own is three. Beyond that, the “1+N” rule applies, where “N” represents the number of bikes you currently own.”

“This equation may only be modified as “S-1,” where “S” represents the number of bikes owned that would result in separation from your significant other.”

INTRODUCTION

My fellow riders. As promised last week, here is the second half of “The Rules.” I hope you enjoyed the first 49 and you finished reading with a smile on your face.

As was the case in last week’s list, for the sake of good taste, I have edited colorful language and substituted synonyms bracketed like [this].

Enjoy the list with good humor, but remember, sometime in the next sixth months there will be a surprise 100-question multiple choice quiz on these. Okay let’s go...

The Rules

50. Facial hair is to be carefully regulated. No full beards, no moustaches. Goatees are permitted only if your name starts with “Marco” and ends with “Pantani”, or if your head is intentionally or unintentionally bald. One may never shave on the morning of an important race, as it saps your virility, and you need that to kick ass.

51. Livestrong wristbands are [skrunchees] for your arms. While we hate cancer, isn’t it better to just donate some money and not have to advertise the fact for the next five years? You may as well get “tryhard wanker” tattooed on your forehead. Or you may well be a bogan (an unrefined or unsophisticated person).

52. Drink in Moderation. Bidons are to be small in size. 500-610ml maximum, no extra large vessels are to be seen on one’s machine. Two cages can be mounted, but only

one bidon on rides under two hours is to be employed. Said solo bidon must be placed in the downtube cage only. You may only ride with a bidon in the rear cage if you have a front bidon, or you just handed your front bidon to a fan at the roadside and you are too busy crushing everyone to move it forward until you take your next drink. Bidons should match each other and preferably your bike and/or kit. The obvious exception is the classic Coca-Cola bidon which by default matches any bike and/or kit due to its heritage. Coca-Cola should only be consumed flat and near the end of a long ride or all-day solo breakaway on the roads of France.

53. Keep your kit clean and new. As a courtesy to those around you, your kit should always be freshly laundered, and, under no circumstances should the crackal region of your shorts be worn out or see-through.

54. No aerobars on road bikes. Aerobars or other clip-on attachments are under no circumstances to be employed on your road bike. The only exception to this is if you are competing in a mountain time trial.

55.. Earn your turns. If you are riding *down* a mountain, you must first have ridden *up* the mountain. It is forbidden to employ powered transportation simply for the cheap thrill of descending. The only exception to this is if you are doing intervals on Alpe d'Huez or the Plan de Corones and you park your car up top before doing 20 repeats of the climb.

56. Espresso or macchiato only. When wearing cycling kit and enjoying a pre or post ride coffee, it is only appropriate to drink espresso or macchiato. If the word soy/skim latte is heard to be used by a member wearing cycling apparel, then that person must be ceremonially beaten with Co2 canisters or mini pumps by others within the community.

57. No stickers. Nobody gives a [darn] what causes you support, what war you're against, what gear you buy, or what year you rode RAGBRAI. See Rule #5 and ride your bike. Decals, on the other hand, are not only permissible, but extremely Pro.

58. Support your local bike shop. Never buy bikes, parts, or accessories online. Going into your local shop, asking myriad inane questions, tying up the staff's time, then going online to buy is akin to sleeping with your best friend's wife, then having a beer with him after. If you do purchase parts online, be prepared to mount and maintain them yourself. If you enter a shop with parts you have bought online and expect them to fit them, be prepared to be told to see your online seller for fitting and warranty help.

59. Hold your line. Ride predictably, and don't make sudden movements. And, under no circumstances, are you to deviate from your line.

60. Ditch the washer-nut and valve-stem cap. You are not, under any circumstances, to employ the use of the washer-nut and valve-stem cap that come with your inner-tubes or tubulars. They are only supplied to meet shipping regulations. They are useless when it comes to tubes and tires.

61. Like your guns (legs), saddles should be smooth and hard. Under no circumstances may your saddle have more than 3mm of padding. Special allowances will be made for stage racing when physical pain caused by subcutaneous cysts and the like ("saddle sores") are present. Under those conditions, up to 5mm of padding will be allowed – it should be noted that this exception is only temporary until the condition has passed or been excised. A hardman would not change their saddle at all but instead cut a hole in it to relieve pressure on the delicate area. It is noted that if Rule #48 and/or Rule #5 is observed then any "padding" is superfluous.

62. You shall not ride with earphones. Cycling is about getting outside and into the elements and you don't need to be listening to Queen or Slayer in order to experience

that. Immerse yourself in the rhythm and pain, not in whatever 80's hair band you call "music". See Rule #5 and ride your bike.

63. Point in the direction you're turning. Signal a left turn by pointing your left arm to the left. To signal a right turn, simply point with your right arm to the right. This one is, presumably, mostly for Americans: that right-turn signal that Americans are taught to make with your left arm elbow-out and your forearm pointing upwards was developed for motor-vehicles prior to the invention of the electric turn signal since it was rather difficult to reach from the driver-side all the way out the passenger-side window to signal a right turn. On a bicycle, however, we don't have this limitation and it is actually quite easy to point your right arm in the direction you are turning. The American right-turn signal just makes you look like you're waving "hello" to traffic.

64. Cornering confidence increases with time and experience. This pattern continues until it falls sharply and suddenly.

65. Maintain and respect your machine. Bicycles must adhere to the Principle of Silence and as such must be meticulously maintained. It must be cherished, and when leaning it against a wall, must be leaned carefully such that only the bars, saddle, or tires come in contact with the wall or post. This is true even when dismounting prior to collapsing after the World Championship Time Trial. No squeaks, creaks, or chain noise allowed. Only the soothing hum of your tires upon the tarmac and the rhythm of your breathing may be audible when riding. When riding the Pave, the sound of chain slap is acceptable. The Principle of Silence can be extended to say that if you are suffering such that your breathing begins to adversely affect the enjoyment of the other riders in the bunch, you are to summarily sit up and allow yourself to be dropped.

66. No mirrors. Mirrors are allowed on your (aptly named) Surly Big Dummy or your Surly Long Haul Trucker. Not on your road steed. Not on your Mountain bike. Not

on your helmet. If someone familiar with The Rules has sold you such an abomination, return the mirror and demand a refund, plus interest and damages.

67. Do your time in the wind. Nobody likes a wheel sucker. You might think you're playing a smart tactical game by letting everyone else do the work while you sit on, but races (even Town Sign Sprints) are won through cooperation and spending time on the rivet, flogging yourself and taking risks. Riding wheels and jumping past at the end is one thing and one thing only: poor sportsmanship.

68. Rides are to be measured by quality, not quantity. Rides are to be measured by the quality of their distance and never by distance alone. For climbing rides, distances should be referred to by the amount of vertical covered; flat and rolling rides should be referred to by their distance and average speed. For example, declaring "We rode 4km" would assert that 4000m were climbed during the ride, with the distance being irrelevant. Conversely, a flat ride of 150km at 23kmh is not something that should be discussed in an open forum and Rule #5 must be reviewed at once.

69. Cycling shoes and bicycles are made for riding. Any walking conducted while wearing cycling shoes must be strictly limited. When [using the restroom] or filling bidons during a 200km ride (at 38kmh, see Rule #68) one is to carefully stow one's bicycle at the nearest point navigable by bike and walk the remaining distance. It is strictly prohibited that under any circumstances a cyclist should walk up a steep incline, with the obvious exception being when said incline is blocked by riders who crashed because you are on the Koppenberg. For clarification, see Rule #5.

70. The purpose of competing is to win. End of. Any reference to not achieving this should be referred immediately to Rule #5.

71. Train Properly. Know how to train properly and stick to your training plan. Ignore other cyclists with whom you are not intentionally riding. The time for being competitive is not during your training rides, but during competition.

72. Legs speak louder than words. Unless you routinely demonstrate your riding superiority and the smoothness of your Stroke, refrain from discussing your power meter, heartrate, or any other riding data. Also see Rule #74.

73. Gear and brake cables should be cut to optimum length. Cables should create a perfect arc around the headtube and, whenever possible, cross under the downtube. Right shifter cable should go to the left cable stop and vice versa.

74. **V Meters** or small computers only. Forego the data and ride on feel; little compares to the pleasure of riding as hard as your mind will allow. Learn to read your body, meditate on Rule #5, and learn to push yourself to your limit. Power meters, heart rate monitors and GPS are bulky, ugly and superfluous. Any cycle computer, if deemed necessary, should be simple, small, mounted on the stem and wireless.

75. Race numbers are for races. Remove it from your frame before the next training ride because no matter how cool you think it looks, it does not look cool. Unless you are in a race. In which case it looks cool.

76. Helmets are to be hung from your stem. When not worn, helmets are to be clipped to the stem and draped over your handlebar.

77. Respect the earth; don't litter. Cycling is not an excuse to litter. Do not throw your empty gel packets, energy bar wrappers or punctured tubes on the road or in the bush. Stuff 'em in your jersey pockets, and repair that tube when you get home.

78. Remove unnecessary gear. When racing in a criterium of 60 minutes or less the second (unused) water bottle cage must be removed in order to preserve the aesthetic of the racing machine.

79. Fight for your town lines. Town lines must be contested or at least faked if you're not in to it or too shagged to do anything but pedal the bike.

80. Always be Casually Deliberate. Waiting for others pre-ride or at the start line pre-race, you must be *tranquilo*, resting on your top tube thusly. This may be extended to any time one is aboard the bike, but not riding it, such as at stop lights.

81. Don't talk it up. Rides and crashes may only be discussed and recounted in detail when the rider required external assistance in recovery or recuperation. Otherwise refer to Rule #5.

82. Close the gap. Whilst riding in cold and/or Rule #9 conditions replete with arm warmers, under no circumstances is there to be any exposed skin between the hems of your kit and the hems of your arm warmers. If this occurs, you either need to wear a kit that fits you properly or increase the size of your guns. Arm warmers may, however, be shoved to the wrists in Five and Dime scenarios, particularly those involving Rule #9 conditions. The No-Gap Principle also applies to knee and leg warmers with the variation that these are under no circumstances to be scrunched down around the ankles; Merckx have mercy on whomever is caught in such a sad, sorry state. It is important to note that while one can wear arm warmers without wearing knee or leg warmers, one cannot wear knee or leg warmers without wearing arm warmers (or a long sleeve jersey). It is completely inappropriate to have uncovered arms, while covering the knees, with the exception of brief periods of time when the arm warmers may be shoved to the wrists while going uphill in a Five and Dime situation. If the weather changes and one must remove a layer, the knee/leg coverings must go before the arm coverings. If that means that said rider must take off his knee or leg warmers while racing, then this is a skill he must be accomplished in. The single exception would be before an event in which someone plans on wearing neither arm or leg warmers while racing, but would like to keep the legs warm before the event starts; though wearing a long sleeve jersey over the racing kit at this time is also advised. One must not forget to remove said leg warmers.

83. Be self-sufficient. Unless you are followed by a team car, you will repair your own punctures. You will do so expediently, employing your own skills, using your own equipment, and without complaining that your expensive tires are too tight for your puny thumbs to fit over your expensive rim. The fate of a rider who has failed to equip himself pursuant to Rule #31, or who knows not how to use said equipment, shall be determined at the discretion of any accompanying or approaching rider in accordance with Rule #84.

84. Follow the Code. Consistently with The Code of The Domestique, the announcement of a flat tire in a training ride entitles – but does not oblige – all riders then present in the bunch to cease riding without fear of being labelled [sissies]. All stopped riders are thereupon entitled – but not obliged – to lend assistance, instruction and/or stringent criticism of the tire mender’s technique. The duration of a Rule #84 stop is entirely discretionary but is generally inversely proportional to the duration of the remaining time available for post-ride espresso.

85. Descend like a Pro. All descents shall be undertaken at speeds commonly regarded as “ludicrous” or “insane” by those less talented. In addition, all corners will be traversed in an outside-inside-outside trajectory, with the outer leg extended and the inner leg canted appropriately (but not too far as to replicate a motorcycle racer, for you are not one), to assist in balance and creation of an appealing aesthetic. Brakes are generally not to be employed, but if absolutely necessary, only just prior to the corner. Also see Rule #64.

86. Don’t half-wheel. Never half-wheel your riding partners; it’s terrible form – it is always the other guy who sets the pace. Unless, of course, you are on the rivet, in which case it’s an excellent intimidation technique.

87. The Ride Starts on Time. No exceptions. The upside of always leaving on time is considerable. Others will be late exactly once. You signal that the sanctity of this ride,

like all rides, is not something with which you should muck. You demonstrate, not with words but with actions, your commitment. As a bonus, you make more time for post-ride espresso. “On Time”, of course, is taken to mean at V past the hour or half hour.

88. Don't surge. When rolling onto the front to take your turn in the wind, see Rule #67, do not suddenly lift the pace unless trying to establish a break. The key to maintaining a high average speed is to work with your companions and allow no gaps to form in the line. It is permissible to lift the pace gradually and if this results in people being dropped then they have been ridden off your wheel and are of no use to the bunch anyway. If you are behind someone who jumps on the pedals when they hit the front do not reprimand the offender with cries of ‘Don't Surge’ unless the offender is a Frenchman named Serge.

89. Pronounce it Correctly. All races shall be referred to by the name given in its country of origin, and care shall be taken to pronounce the name as well as possible. For Belgian Races, it is preferable to choose the name given in its region of origin, though it is at the speaker's discretion to use either the Flemish or Wallonian pronunciation. This principle shall also be extended to apply to riders' names, bicycle and component marquees, and cycling accoutrements.

90. Never Get Out of the Big

Ring. If it gets steeper, just push harder on the pedals. When pressed on the matter, the Apostle Johan Museeuw simply replied, “Yes, why would you slow down?” It is, of course, acceptable to momentarily shift into the inner ring when scaling the 20% ramps of the Kapelmuur.

91. No Food On Training Rides Under Four Hours. This one also comes from the Apostle, Johan Museeuw, who said to @frank: “Yes, no food on rides under four hours.

You need to lose some weight.” Or, as Fignon put it, sometimes, when we train, we simply have to go out to meet the Man with the Hammer. The exception is, of course, hard rides over two hours and races. Also, if you’re planning on being out for more than four hours, start eating before you get hungry. This also applies to energy drink supplements.

92. No Sprinting From the Hoods. The only exception is riders whose name starts with Guiseppe and ends with Saronni. See the Goodwood Worlds in 82.

93. Descents are not for recovery. Recovery Ales are for Recovery Descents and are meant to be as hard and demanding as – and much more dangerous than – the climbs. Climb hard, descend to close a gap or open one. Descents should hurt, not be a time for recovery. Recovery is designated only for the pub and for (using the bathroom).

94. Use the correct tool for the job and use the tool correctly. Bicycle maintenance is an art; tools are designed to serve specific purposes, and it is essential that the Velominatus learns to use each tool properly when working on their loyal machine.

95. Never lift your bike over your head. Under no circumstances is it acceptable to raise one’s machine above your head. The only exception is when placing it onto a car’s roof-rack.

Riders, that’s the second half. The next time you are riding up the overpass on HHI in 20 mph winds, remind yourself of Rule #5.

Until Next Time.....
Make Every Ride Epic,

Darryl

*Content of this article is excerpted in part from Velominati.com.