

START LINE * SAFETY * MECHANICS * REST STOPS *

PLATOON LEADER GUIDE

OVERVIEW

The Foster 100 is different from many cycling events. Our riders are not pushing for Strava awards, but have the opportunity in each platoon to work together, support each other, and get to know other riders while supporting a great cause. The platoon setup creates a unique opportunity for riders to get to know each other and you can encourage this prior to the ride.

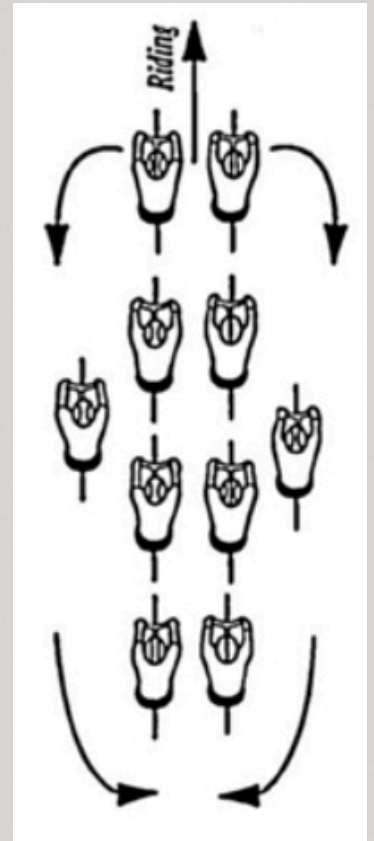
- Take the steps to make this ride as special as it can be for your platoon members and build the camaraderie that will make it an event for them to remember.
- A couple weeks out, you will receive a platoon member list with emails. Introduce yourself and your assistant platoon leader to your riders. Help them appreciate why riding Foster resonates with you and encourage them to share their stories. Don't forget your SAG drivers (if assigned yet) in these exchanges.
- Recruit a SAG driver. Team Foster will recruit volunteers for SAG but being able to recruit your own SAG gives you comfort in knowing the person keeping your platoon supported and safe.
- Ahead of the ride, provide riders with information and tips like what supplies, food, etc. riders should bring. Team Foster will send out rider checklists to help with this.
- Communicate timing: your platoon members should be at the start 45 minutes before their scheduled roll out time. Explain parking and start point information and encourage them to be on-time. The platoon will not wait.
- Communicate about pace expectations (both average pace and traveling pace range) and provide tips on how to ride safely in groups as well as riding 2 x 2 (see below).
- Team Foster will provide you and your SAG driver all of the emergency contacts for your platoon and ride support staff.

RIDING 2 X 2

Platoons will spend a fair amount of time riding 2 by 2. Riding 2 by 2 helps make the ride a more social and team oriented experience.

When riding 2 by 2 keep the following in mind:

- Keep pace and ride parallel to the rider next to you.
- Front riders - pull off to the outside Right and Left of the main rows and float to the back.
- Riders move to the front through the center.
- Watch the road for both riders - if one needs to move out to avoid a pothole, the other does as well.
- When you come to the front, don't over accelerate, keep the pace steady.
- Leaders should stay in the LEFT column so they can see the road, cars, etc. on the left of the group and give direction on when to take the lane for turns, etc.



GOING THE DISTANCE

Platoon leader tips to manage your platoon over 100 miles

Group Management Tips

- As cyclists we are determined, often dismissive of our limits - I can go that fast, I can ride that far, etc. As a platoon leader, you need to gauge this tendency vs a rider's reality for those in your group.
- Ask questions at the start or in pre-ride communication: Who are first time century riders? Who is stronger? Who might need help?
- Every group WILL have those who can go faster and those who will struggle. Encourage stronger riders to show their strength by working on the front, but don't push the pace.
- Monitor those who are first time century riders and/or who you think may not be as experienced or capable. Check in with them periodically, make sure they are eating and drinking, offer riding tips, etc.
- If necessary, make the tough decision to have riders take a break in the SAG car to the next stop when it impacts the ability of the group to keep moving.

AT THE START

- Introduce and count your riders
- Get to know your driver(s). Introduce them to the platoon. Exchange contact info and treat them as team members.
- Share the mission of the ride, the goal of doing it - together - as a platoon.
- Have the safety talk: Talk about pace. Talk about safe riding fundamentals. Review how the platoon will ride (2x2, single file, etc) and areas to watch on the route when advised (road conditions, bike path etc.).
- Briefly review riding 2 x 2 and safety key points with group at the start. Guide them at the start.

SAFETY

- Pace is safety. State expectation/goal in terms of: 1) average and 2) flat road traveling pace (ex: 18.5mph avg, travel 19-20 mph but uphill will be lighter, etc...). Enforce it!
- Hills/rises will spread your group apart. Keep an eye and pause to regroup if needed. Slow the pace going up (most in first 30+ miles).
- Assess rider condition - conversations are a good proxy. If a rider cannot carry on a normal conversation they may be struggling. Move struggling riders to the back/mid-point of the platoon - their attention may fade, riding will be easiest. Stay with them or assign someone to monitor them.
- Re-assess at 60-70+ miles - fatigue, discomfort will start to settle in from the 3rd rest stop on. Riders may not share how they are really feeling.
- REVIEW how to pass groups on the road with your riders (see below).
- IMPORTANT. Assess and be honest with yourself along the way. Don't spend more time than you can handle on the front. It's much harder to lead from inside a car and if you are struggling, your attention will suffer.
- HYDRATE! HYDRATE! HYDRATE! The body can only absorb so much water at a time. If riders fall behind it is nearly impossible to catch while riding. Harp on this until they are tired of hearing it and then harp on it some more.
- Heat exhaustion/Heat stroke - understand the symptoms. Encourage riders to speak up (excessive sweating or lack of sweating, nausea, fatigue, irregular or elevated heart rate, chills, goosebumps, redness in the skin, etc.). Get riders to shade, get them liquids, call 911 for help if needed. Put a rider you suspect is suffering from the heat into a car, at least until they have a chance to recover. Heat Stroke is deadly. If in doubt, call for help.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

- Assess situation
- If head or significant injury is present or the rider unconscious, call 911 immediately. 911 will need to know your location – assign someone to locate you road and town location (cross street if possible).
- Clear road of cyclists except injured if required. Injured cyclists should not be moved until they demonstrate they are able to move. Do not risk moving someone who might have a spine or other significant injury
- Position SAG vehicle on road to protect the injured and assign someone to manage traffic
- Move platoon members and bicycles to safe location
- Assess situation and decide on vehicle transport if bicycle(s) is not repairable

MANAGE REST STOPS

- Too short, people don't get the break they need. Too long - muscles get tight. 10-15 minutes is a range to consider.
- Take count of riders before departing. Revisit safety points if needed. Share some motivation!
- Hydration - bottle an hour as a guide (some will need more, some less). If you don't hydrate - it WILL catch up to you on a 100 mile ride. Make sure all riders fill their bottles at all rest stops.

TAKE CHARGE

- Keep the group motivated. Keep them together. Encourage them. If people are struggling and the group spreads out, decide how flexible you want to be with speed to keep them together - or if you need to put someone in a car to keep the platoon moving.
- If you have people in the group pushing the pace, riding irregularly, etc., have a conversation with them. Make it as constructive and as private as you can but have the conversation. If it can wait until a rest stop, great. If not, have it when needed. If necessary, move to the front and 'reset' the group pace.
- Mechanicals: safety first. Stop as a group. Get people off the road. Assign people to watch traffic if needed. Find shade, etc.

ENCOURAGE, ELEVATE, BE POSITIVE, BE SUPPORTIVE

- Even the strongest riders can flag over 100 miles. Keep them talking to each other. Keep sharing encouragement.
- Take pictures at the rest stops. Check in with your riders. One-on-one conversation will tell you a lot about how riders are doing.

THE ROUTE

- There are changes from last year in the first section and last section
- Start - the majority of the up/down is in the first 1/3 of the route.
- Be careful with the pace in this section as people will find it harder
- After the rest stop #3 car traffic may escalate. If traffic grows, single up the platoon and keep both the cars and the riders moving.
- End - flag - Erma fire station on Lexington as an exchange spot just prior to end.
- Direct your riders to ride single file when the road gets tight or traffic escalates. Keep both riders and cars moving and safe.
- Singling up in areas where the shoulder disappears helps to minimize rider interactions with traffic.