



# **Triathlon Australia**

## **Draft Legal Age Group Racing**

### **Bike Skills Guide**

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# Draft Legal Age Group Racing | Bike Skills Guide

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As a guide for aspiring DRAFT LEGAL AGE GROUP athletes and their coaches, athletes should be able to demonstrate competency and an understanding of the following bike skills as a minimum requirement to compete in the Draft Legal Age Group races.

## **Be predictable**

This is the key to all bunch riding. This means no sudden movements in any direction. Maintain a smooth steady straight line and avoid braking or changing direction suddenly. Remember that there are riders following closely from behind. Assess your level in the group and of the athletes around you. Their reaction time might not be as quick as yours.

## **Do not overlap wheels.**

A slight direction change or gust of wind could easily cause riders to touch wheels and fall.

## **Hand position**

In a bunch, sitting on a wheel whilst having hands on “Brake Hoods” reduces reaction time and is not advised.

## **Paceline Strategies**

A sudden swerve could take out the whole bunch behind you so ensure you understand and can execute the following strategies including:

- “Swapping Turns” or “Rolling Through”, and understanding the role of pace and retreat lines and anticipating reactions needed by athlete. When coming past someone and moving in front of them be sure not to cut them off.
- the ability to peel off and retreat on correct side according to conditions.
- reading the bunches reaction to the terrain, understanding when “concertina” and “whiplash” effects occur in the bunch.

## **Cornering lines**

Don’t weave across the road; keep your relative position from the edges of the road even when cornering as a bunch.

Judging whether riders can pedal around the whole corner or whether it is necessary to lift inside pedal up, cease pedalling and judging when pedal cycles can recommence.

## **No sudden braking**

Any changes in speed become increasingly more difficult to deal with the further behind you someone is.

## **Announce hazards and signalling**

Where there are situations that need pointing out such as turning, potholes, glass, you can do by announcing and signalling. The announcement and signal is passed from rider to rider going back.

Point out and call out any road hazards ahead. These include potholes, drain grates, stray animals, opening car doors, sticks or stones, parked cars, etc.

Bear in mind that there could be riders behind you who cannot see the hazard. This could be accidentally dropping a bottle in the middle of the bunch. Call “Bottle” and point to the direction of the hazard if you have dropped a bottle don’t stop.

## **Climbing**

When climbing hills, avoid following a wheel too closely. Many riders often lose their momentum when rising out of the saddle on a hill, which can cause a sudden deceleration. This can often catch a rider who is following too closely, resulting in a fall from a wheel touch.

When you stand to get out of the saddle, make sure that you don't push the bike back, and exert slightly more pedal pressure to keep the speed constant.

### **Descending**

Typically the front few riders keep pedalling and the riders behind will freewheel or soft tap. Keep both hands firmly on the drops – you stand more chance of keeping your bike upright on the drops when hitting a hole or bump at speed.

### **Don't look back**

Most riders, when they look back, change their line and speed causing chaos and also don't see what's about to happen. If you hear something happening behind you, keep looking forward.

### **Watch for Erratic Riders**

Look out for riders who are dangerous, and steer clear of them. A rider who is not holding a straight line, who is taking his hands off the bars all the time, whose bike isn't in good shape, or who isn't looking ahead is someone to keep away from.

### **Relax**

Don't panic if you brush shoulders, hands or bars with another rider. Try to stay relaxed in your upper body to absorb any bumps. This is a part of racing in close bunches and is quite safe provided riders do not panic, brake or change direction.

Relax in the pack and learn to move with the flow of the group. Be calm, focused and observant. This will help to improve your bike handling skills and make informed tactical decisions.

### **Coaching for Draft Legal Racing**

Triathlon Australia Accredited Performance Coaches can provide further coaching and development of Draft-legal bike handling skills/knowledge.

Please contact your State or Territory Triathlon Association for a list of Performance Coaches in your area.

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