

Introduction

Being an experienced rider and new to ABQ Cycling Club, you may or may not have been introduced to or participated in structured paceline riding. The ABQ Saturday group rides tend to take advantage of the more formalized style of double paceline riding. There are many special techniques used when riding double paceline and the following document tries to describe some of the more important techniques you will find used on a typical ABQ Saturday group ride.

Double Paceline

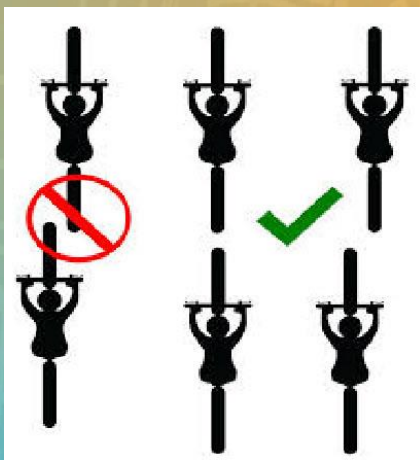
Unless a single paceline is called for by the rider leaders, ABQ typically forms a double paceline for group rides. Riders maintain side-by-side spacing as well as tight front to back spacing in order to maximize drafting efficiency, overall group safety and forward progress. The paceline stays to the right of the roadway with just enough room to provide for the leaders to rotate to the back.

• Group Pace

There are many things that affect the overall pace (speed) of the paceline: wind, grade, group size, rider fitness/experience, etc. Once established, it is up to each individual leader pair (pilot/copilot) to maintain the overall pace. Plan on 'taking a pull' that maintains the pace with little slowing AND allows you a safe, recoverable rotation to the back. The group keeps moving deliberately and consistently at this pace while minimizing individual rider fatigue. A good rule of thumb is to plan for one mile pulls (or even much less is okay depending on fitness/experience) to maintain overall forward progress of the group. Rotate back well before the pace slows or fatigue sets in.

• Spacing/Placement

Riders should try to maintain a close comfortable side-by-side spacing as well as front to back. The best drafting position leaves less than a wheel space between your front tire and the wheel in front of you. Try to avoid looking directly at the wheel in front of you in favor of a view directed down the road. Comfort comes with time and it might be better to spend some time at the back of the paceline in order to improve your comfort in a tight paceline.



Overlapping wheels can be dangerous!

Offset based on wind direction.

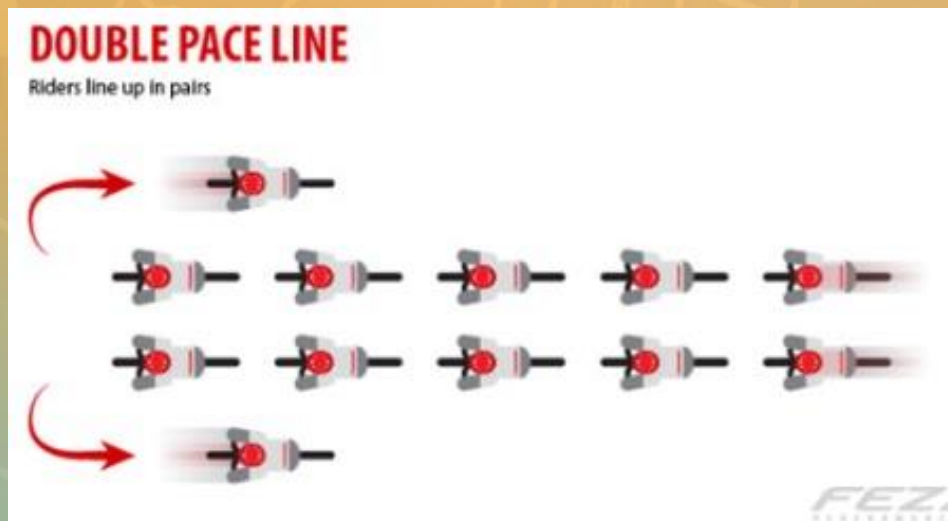
Riding Style Guide

- **Path...Spacing...Speed**

- Hold a deliberate line.
- Maintain side-by-side spacing with the adjacent rider.
- Control speed with very gradual changes if necessary.

- **Rotation**

While leaders are rotating back, stay tight, maintain speed, and hold a solid line to allow the leaders to move to the rear quickly and safely.



Paceline holds a tight, consistent line while leaders rotate back.

- **Pass Signals Early (Hand and/or verbal)**

Passing a signal well in advance of the hazard gives the best chance of making it all the way to the back of the paceline with plenty of time for each rider to react. Many riders make the mistake of waiting to see the hazard themselves before passing the signal. Trusting that the signal is valid and passing it back gives the entire paceline a good chance of missing the hazard.



Signals are deliberate and passed well in advance!

- **Accordion effect and recovering dropped rider(s)**

Successful ride leaders anticipate overall group pace changes due to hills, traffic signals, or changes along the route and make small changes in speed to maintain the entire paceline progress. Slowing slightly at the onset of a hill keeps the group from spreading out too much while increasing pace on the decent ensures good spacing for speed and reaction time between riders. Requesting “Ease Up!” well BEFORE gaps get large helps to establish a solid group pace. If you find yourself (and others) gapped or dropped, try to settle into a recoverable pace either alone or as a group to close the gap. Hopefully, the paceline will slow as well. Work together, as individually sprinting to close the gap simply extends the problem to your mates behind.

Leading the Paceline (taking a pull)

Leading the double paceline can be exciting and exhilarating with a bit of responsibility. You may look forward to your turn in the rotation or you may want to quickly rotate out. Either way, there are a few pointers that will help to make your time at the front more successful.

- Front left can be thought of as the pilot, with the front right as copilot.
- If not comfortable leading the group, it's not a problem, just take a shorter pull and rotate back sooner.
- Check group speed just before taking a pull to ensure consistency. Maintain this speed and rotate back well before tiring or slowing and certainly at the agreed time/distance.
- Be ready to grab the last wheel or be dropped.
- Steering the ship... the really loooooong ship!
 - Plan ahead for paceline changes
 - Maintain a pace that keeps the group together
 - Controlled, deliberate, assertive leading will keep the group moving along together and safely. *Steering The Ship: How much space and time is needed for all riders in this paceline to react safely?*
- Rotating back safely
 - Pilot/copilot agree and coordinate.
 - Aim for a safe, comfortable zone long enough to accommodate the entire rotation.
 - Pilot/copilot rotate back together.

Critical Areas (examples)

The following critical areas tend to be problematic for the paceline and are worth noting.

- **Crossing 528 to the gas station**

Try to stay on shoulder as long as possible. Cross 528 to turning lane quickly and together.

- **Roy Road Roundabout**

Stay to the far right of the outer lane. Stay together.

- **Broadway crossing I25 onramp**

Try to stay on shoulder as long as possible. Cross 528 to turning lane quickly and together.

- **Bernalillo Main Street and ABQ Grande crossing**

Maintain a tight double paceline anywhere along Bernalillo Main street and crossing the bridge over the RIO Grande until the wider shoulder is reached.

- **Tijeras Canyon west crossing I40 onramp**

Maintain a tight group. Try to stay on to the right as long as possible. Cross Old Route 66 just before the I40 onramp and quickly move to the shoulder on the overpass.

ABQ has a NO DROP policy on Saturday rides

There is one rule on Saturday rides: No one gets dropped. No one wants to get dropped, right?

- Avoid gaps helps the ride leaders set an appropriate pace for the group. Announce “Ease Up” if the pace is too high.
- Recovering the dropped rider/s Dropped rider(s) work together to recover the gap while the front group slows. Sometimes recover the gap is not necessary when a regrouping point is near.
- Flats, mechanicals, etc Loudly call out “FLAT” to signal riders around you. When it is safe, gradually start slowing and moving to the right of the road.
- Regrouping points - sometimes it makes more sense to recover dropped riders at the various regrouping points along the route if the group is close.

Safety: Us vs. Them

Although the double paceline riding style can be much safer overall for cyclists, we all know that vehicle drivers can get annoyed and/or aggressive. Unfortunately, just as when riding individually, sooner or later, we will be honked at, flipped off, or otherwise accosted. No matter what, ABQ riders must take the ‘high road’ when dealing with drivers in these situations.

- Vehicles (being metal and bigger) ALWAYS win.
- Try to communicate directly with drivers well in advance of any conflict.
- We are but a small school of fish in the river of traffic.
- Friendly wave is always appropriate no matter what 'they' do.
- All your individual cycling skills apply here as in the group.