

Ride Marker System – Help

But can it go wrong? - Yes

How the ride can go wrong is not an accomplice to the "Ride Marker System" but down to rider(s) themselves - bold statement, and true.

What can we do if it goes wrong as and not according to plan?

Response: - That would depend on the exact circumstances at the time.

For instance, here is a few that's happened when I have been on a ride or back marking; I have responded with advisory information to some of the below instances to help.

#1 Riders missing the marker to make a turn or go straight on.

Response.

Riders who miss the marker generally realize and turn around and come back as they see other riders are not following and they see where they are going, sometimes it is possible for another rider or the Back Marker to go and catch up the rider and get them to turn around other time a phone call is made to rider(s) who missed the marker and they are advised directions.

#2 Rider makes wrong turn when shown by marker and other riders follow.

Response.

Same as above, as riders who miss the marker generally realize and turn around and come back as they see other riders are not following and they see where they are going

#3 Marker moving off before others riders and or back marker has come along.

Response.

Difficult one here as relies on other rider not taking wrong direction (left / Right), wait for the back marker whom will then usually advise.

#4 Rider misses instruction from Run Leader to mark.

Response.

Normally on this scenario, second rider from run leader will see what has happened and take marker position, could also be the same as #3 and run leader may have seen that rider has not stopped to mark and will again direct rider to mark.

#5 Rider misses instruction from Run Leader not to mark.

Response.

This has been put here on purpose as then it could lead to #6, which on a certain ride it did and really messed up the ride for everyone.

#6 Rider decides to mark and cause following riders to take a different route.

Response.

The run leader was going to mark a position and decided not too and carried on riding straight ahead the rider behind the run leader decides to take it on himself to mark and point riders to a right hand turn away from the run leader. This was only found out when riders clog up as they do not know which way to turn / go. It is at times like this the run leader and riders on the ride need a back marker who knows the route and where the stops / meeting places are. The back marker then also needs to take control of the remaining riders and quickly find out information to save the ride, questions to remaining riders a) did the run leader put you there to mark? b) Why are you marking a spot where you have not been put? c) Do you know where XYZ rendezvous point is? d) If not then this is a rare time the back marker does go to the front and lead remaining riders to a known rendezvous point. – The action of the rider who marked, when should not have caused a ride to split.

#7 Run leader fails to mark when required. (Note: sometimes no marker is required).

Response.

Yes it can happen, a moment of lapse thinking that riders are close together and run leader going off in a direction the back marker does not know and distance following riders do not see.

#8 Run leader and group move off and leaves back marker behind and then back marker does not know which direction to go as also no marker has been positioned.

Response.

A rare moment when the run leader moves off and thinking the group is all together, but overlooks acknowledgement signal from back marker, and group riders just move away without sight of back marker following.

#9 Back marker does not make sure they are at the back, and becomes part of the group and overtakes waiting Marker and in front of other rider, causing the marker to wait for the Back Marker that will now not ever appear.

Response.

This happened to me in a tour in France when there was a mixture of bikers one in particular alleging they were competent and knew the marker system. I was a marker put in place by the run leader. We even stopped and waited for other riders to catch us up, which unbeknown to me was the back marker whom stopped amongst the other bikes in the group and omitted not stopping at the back. The group moved off, not seeing the back marker and only my brother at the back and the last rider to take off and not the back marker for the day, I stayed put to mark the right hand turn. After 15 to 20 minutes I decided to phone the run leader fearing the back marker who had a pillion passenger had an accident. No signal on the phone, tried again in between the rain, wind, hail and freezing temperatures some 1769 meter above sea level. Eventually some 50 minutes later I eventually got through on the phone to advise the run leader the back marker had not come by, only to be told they were there with him in the café, some 15 minutes away. I was not happy as now I had to find the café and still had some 4 to 5 hrs riding to complete. I was wet & extremely cold riding to the hotel and was not well that evening and was hypothermic.

Be careful of whom you ride with!

What I have given you here is an insight into different rides I have been on with different run leaders and back markers; I hope this helps you on realising the importance of all riders responsibility within a ride!