

# Riding in a Pace Line

A 'pace line' is a tight group of riders that follow some rules to optimize efficiency. The group achieves a much greater speed than a single rider with the same effort. It does require that all riders are in roughly the same shape. Small differences can be compensated by letting stronger riders spend more time in front, which takes the most strength because they are the only ones who feel the full force of the headwind.

**Double pace-line.** A double pace line consists of two columns. Everybody keeps a distance of about 1/2 wheel diameter to the rider in front to catch as much of the draft as safely possible. When the two riders in front get tired, they accelerate a bit, go to the sides (one a bit ahead of the other to avoid having four bicycles side by side), and let the group ride through the gap. The PBA rarely rides in double pace lines.

**Single pace-line.** A single pace line is a rotating peloton of two columns of riders. One column is always moving forward (the column protected from the wind) and the other column is always moving at a constant speed (the one taking the brunt of the wind). When the leader of the moving forward column passes the leader of the constant column, he/she pulls over to become the leader of the constant column. The two columns are continually rotating. The leader of the moving forward column must never surge ahead to pass the leader of the constant column. This causes gaps in the column and the rest of the riders start yo-yoing. Each rider spends about 10 seconds as the leader of the moving forward column. This is the most common type of pace line ridden by the PBA.

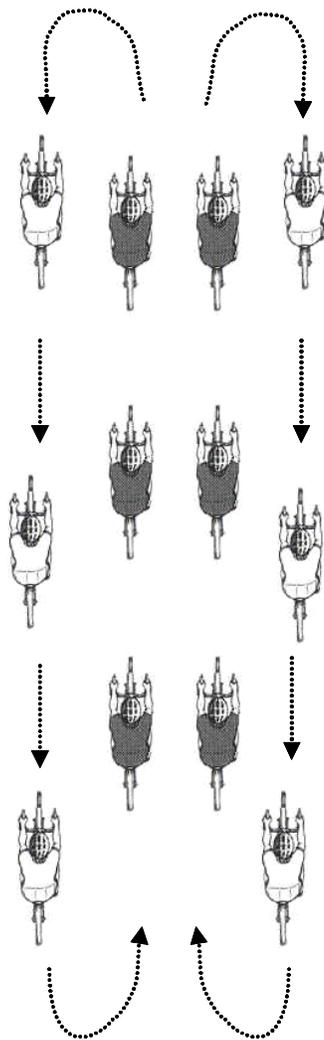


**Single file pace-line.** A single column of riders. When the lead rider is finished with his/her turn, he/she pulls to the left or right (usually the left) and slowly drifts to the back of the column. The next rider in line becomes the lead rider. When becoming the lead rider, never surge forward to take the space vacated by the previous lead rider. Just keep the constant speed of the pace line. A turn in front should never be more than 1 minute while 30 seconds is more normal.

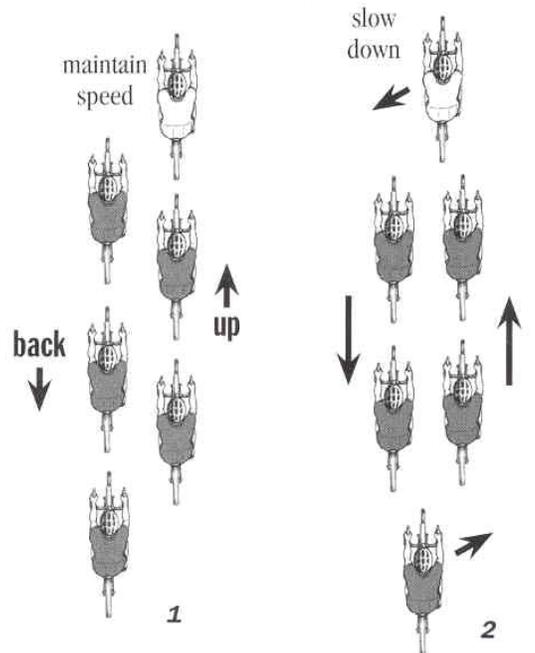
**The key to riding in this way is *keeping the speed constant*.** A gap of 18 inches at a speed of 20 MPH does not leave a lot of room for error. This means that:

- You watch the rider in front of you while keeping your eyes on the road ahead; never stare at the wheel.
- Never, ever brake without announcing it with the agreed-upon hand signs well in advance, it's better to break out of line than to brake in emergencies.
- Accelerate and decelerate very slowly if the terrain changes; remember that the group doesn't reach the incline or dip all at the same time.
- Don't suddenly stand up because that shifts the bicycle backwards as your center of gravity moves forward.
- **Hold your line** because the front wheel of the rider behind you might overlap your rear wheel. If you make a sudden move to the side, you could kick his/her bicycle out from under him/her. If the rider in front of you does this to you and your wheels touch, steer into him/her *hard* - the worst that can happen to him/her is that you displace his wheel, but the alternative is crashing and having the rest of the group run over you.
- Never use aerobars when in a pace line. You will be looking in the wrong place and you will not have time to react to emergencies.
- Remember that when you are in the front position you take responsibility for the entire group. You are their eyes, and you have to think ahead for all of them. For example, don't blast through yellow lights because the last riders will be forced to stop.
- It helps to put a hand on your neighbor's shoulder when turning to look back to avoid swerving.
- Eat and drink when you are at the back of the columns.
- Always stay abreast with the rider next to you in a double pace line.
- Don't ride too close to the edge of the road or parked cars. If you miss an obstacle or a car door opens, there will not be enough time for the entire group to react.

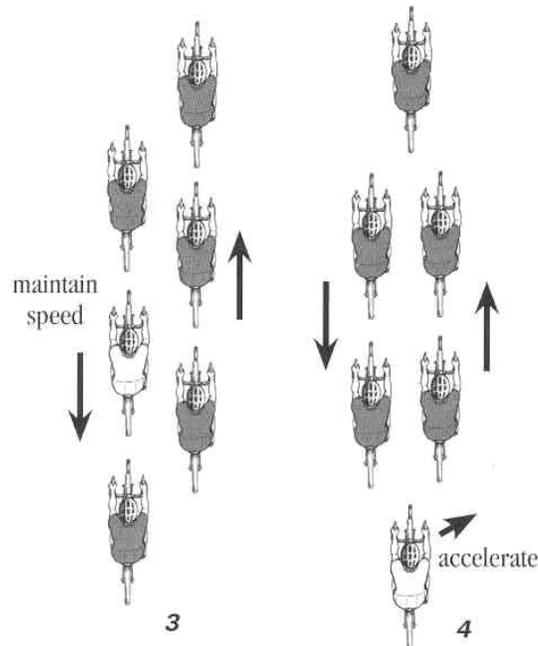
# Double



# Single

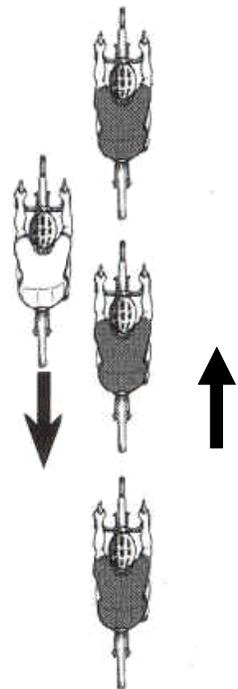


1. On the faster "up" side of the paceline, you (white rider) are reaching the front. Maintain your speed until there is room to pull off. 2. Once the previous rider's front wheel clears your rear wheel, move over and reduce your speed immediately.

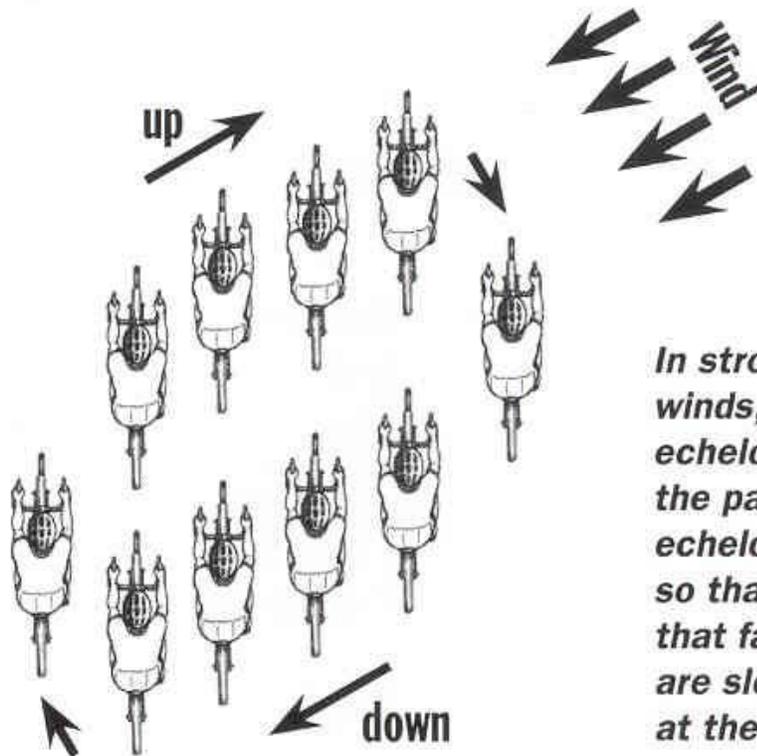


3. Now you move toward the rear of the paceline on the slower "down" side. 4. Once you reach the rear, move to the "up" side while accelerating to the "up" side's speed.

# Single File



## Riding in an echelon



*In strong cross-winds, a rotating echelon replaces the paceline. The echelon rotates so that the riders that face the wind are slowing down at the same time.*