



WELCOME!

Everything You Need to Know to Bike MS!

The Ride – you have options

The first thing to know is it is **not a race**. It's a ride. The next thing to know is you have options. Everyone knows this as the MS 150. They think of it as a 150 mile bike ride. The thing is, the ride can take several forms with differing lengths, none of which is 150 miles.

One-Day / One-Way - you only complete the first day of the ride. If you take this option, there is a shuttle service available (but not mandatory) which can take you back to the starting point. It comes with a fee, which makes it one of the few decisions you have to make early on. Some people do the one day option, party in Daytona Saturday night with friends who drive down, and ride back with them the next day. It's an option.

150K Option - that is a bit shorter than the standard ride. It has a different Saturday start/Sunday finish line than the standard ride.

150 mile...not really - Differing routes may change the distance a little, but it's pretty much 80 miles each way. In the recent past, that route has been from the St. Augustine Airport to Daytona and back. In past years it has started at the World Golf Village. In other years, the first day destination was Jekyll Island, near Brunswick, Georgia. Always though, it has exceeded 150 miles.

Century Option - which means you ride 100 miles the first day. You could combine that with the one day option and take the shuttle back home, or you could ride the additional 80 miles (plus or minus) home on Sunday.

You make a selection from the above when you register. Apart from the one day option (because you have to pay for the shuttle service), the options aren't set in stone. You can, for example, decide to take the century option while riding the route the first day.

The Equipment – it makes a difference

First there's the bike itself. On the ride you will see all manner of two and three wheeled vehicles. You can do this ride on a beach cruiser, if you choose. You can do it on a mountain bike. You will see people who do. Most people will choose neither of these options. By far, the bike of choice is a road bike with skinny tires. The tires are sometimes called 'slick' tires. The difference in weight and road friction between a mountain bike with fat knobby tires and a road bike with skinny tires is substantial, and makes a big difference in the difficulty of the ride. If you want the challenge of doing it on a mountain bike, go for it. A road bike will make this endeavor easier. Some people who own road bikes will replace the wheels/tires with skinny road wheels/tires. That's an option to make it easier, too.

The seat on the bike is another matter. You will prefer the small skinny seat of a road bike. If you're riding anything less than 20 miles, big cushy seats with shocks feel great. On longer rides, they lose their appeal.

If you start from scratch when you start training, you will probably ride less than 20 miles. If that's the case, doing it in shorts and a t-shirt is fine. As you go farther though, and you will, you'll want to invest in bike clothes. Bike jerseys and shorts pull moisture away from your body, which helps regulate your body temperature. Bike shorts include padding right where you need it. You'll want all that.

Also, as you venture farther from home, you will want to bring a few things with you. You'll want to bring some ID, some money, perhaps a cell phone and perhaps a flat repair kit. You don't want to be stranded, 20 miles from home with a flat tire.

Fundraising- It's easier than you think

Yes, the ride is a challenge, but here's the real reason we do this, and it permeates everything else. After you register for the ride, you will be given a web page on the MS Society web site. This is a great tool to help you raise money and track what you do. It will come with some text by default. Take some time to personalize that. It will help. It comes with a default fundraising goal, which is the minimum you are required to raise. Feel free to make that the first thing you change. People can go to this site and donate using a credit card. This is especially convenient for you, since you don't have to track that. As you get cash and checks, you can manually enter those amounts using this page, so the fundraising total on the page accurately reflects what you have done. Again, the fundraising minimum is \$200 but, most people raise more than the minimum. **To be eligible for prizes you must raise \$450 or more.**

You will get an envelope from the MS Society in the mail. You can save all your cash and checks people give you in that and turn it in toward the end of this journey at check-in. If you don't feel comfortable doing that, you can mail the checks (I wouldn't recommend mailing cash) to the MS Society at any time. Our address can be found at the 'Contact Us' link on your web page. If you do this, enclose a note with your name/team so they know the checks are from people sponsoring you. You do need that envelope they send you though. You have to turn it in when you check in.

Fundraising Clubs

Beyond prize eligibility, there are many other reasons to raise above the minimum. There are various Bike MS Fundraising Clubs that you should know about. You truly are an insider in one of these prestigious clubs.

Above Average – This is a new club for 2008. The national pledge average for all Bike MS rides across the country is \$691. The North Florida Chapter is challenging ALL of our cyclists to be Above Average! Raise more than \$691 and be part of a club that is going above and beyond! There will be special recognition throughout Bike MS for this special group.

Top Banana - You will hear the term "Top Banana" early and often. You become a Top Banana by raising a thousand dollars. **To be eligible for Top Banana status for 2008, you must have \$1000 turned in by August 19th**, which is also the date of the Top Banana Reception. This club is where you'll find the serious perks!. Just as the amounts for each level may change, so may the perks, so we won't list them here. Just know they exist and being a Top Banana is the best way to Bike MS.

Training – Do it NOW!!

The fun begins. Start this early and do it often. This part differs for everybody. Training will make it possible for you to complete this journey you're undertaking. It won't make it painless.

A good way to jump start training is to participate in the Summer Saturday Training Series. This series will be 3 training rides throughout the summer. The first is June 21st at the PGA TOUR Headquarters. These alone won't get you ready, but they will help. I highly recommend you take part in at least one of these, as they are very educational if you've never done this before. They have all the trappings of the real ride without all the miles. You have motorcycles riding with you looking for people who need help. Bike shop vans are there to assist if you have mechanical problems. Many riders are there, giving you a feel for what it's like to ride with a lot of people. Training rides with your team help you meet people you may be spending a lot of time with on the ride weekend. They help you get used to riding with them.

Pre-check in- Don't wait until the morning of

At some point you have to check in. You will bring your envelope containing cash or checks you have collected. **Please have the money counted, the envelope sealed and filled out before checking in.** Just because you hand in the envelope doesn't mean you have to stop fundraising. People can still use your web page to donate online with their credit card. You can still collect checks and mail them to the MS Society for about a month after the ride. The deadline to be eligible for prizes is October 31st. (yes, that's Halloween)

Check-in options:

- *Top Banana VIP Check-in and Reception* – This is a private check-in for Top Bananas. This also serves as the deadline for Top Banana eligibility for 2008.
- *Team Check-in* - If you are on a team there may be a pre-check in 2 weeks the 2 weeks before the ride. If this pertains to you, this is your best option.
- *2 Mass Pre-Check ins* – The week of the ride there will be 2 mass check-ins. One at the Florida Theater during the day and one at Sneakers in Jax Beach in the evening. Check the website and emails for specific dates.
- *Friday Evening Out-of-Towner Check-in* – This check-in will be at the Comfort Suites near the World Golf Village, the night before the ride. It starts at 5pm.
- *Morning of the Ride* – If you plan to check-in the morning of, arrive early and please be patient.

When you check in, you'll get a goodie bag, along with your jersey and t-shirt. The bag will have your rider number on two pieces of paper. You will pin one to the back of your jersey for the ride. The other gets attached to your bike. Make sure you have these. A luggage tag that goes on your overnight bag will be mailed to you. It should also have a number, and that number should match the other two. It's how we know which bag to give you when you reach your Saturday destination. If any of the three aren't there, don't walk out the door without knowing what somebody is going to do about your missing number(s). You don't want to be getting the answer to that question on Saturday morning of the ride if possible.

Planning the Day of the Ride

The objective is to plan, so the morning of the ride, all you have to do is get there, turn in your overnight bag, get your team picture taken and get on your bike. Anything else is painful.

Packing – you can bring one overnight bag with your luggage tag on it. Make sure you have clothes for Saturday night and riding clothes for Sunday. You may also want to bring a change of clothes for Sunday afternoon when you finish the ride. A bathing suit is a good idea as well. If it's hot you can dive in the pool at your Saturday destination. If you wear cycling shoes, bring others to wear Saturday.

Biofreeze – You will probably get a small sample of this in your goodie bag. There may be other samples at rest stops during the ride. Biofreeze is a product like Ben Gay or Icy Hot, but better.

The night before the ride, set your clothes out for the next morning, get organized so the next day you just get up and go.

The Day of the Ride

Leave home early. You will be surprised by the traffic getting into the St. Augustine Airport (assuming that's where you start) at 6:00 in the morning. Plan on being there before then. Remember, a few thousand bicyclists are planning to do the same thing. Hopefully you are already checked in, so you aren't standing in line. If not, join the line and plan on being there a while. There will be trucks there (probably semis from Landstar) waiting for your overnight bag. Turn it in there. There will be team photos. Someone with a bullhorn will be calling for you when they do your team picture. Then it's a matter of being ready to go. The top three fund raising teams from the prior year get to leave first. If you aren't on one of those teams, stay clear of the start/finish line. The ride begins at 7:00.

The start is a slow cautious exercise. This is one reason you want to train on the "dollar" rides. They will give you an idea of what this is like, but this will be bigger. Remember, there are probably over 2,000 people on bikes trying to get on the road. Ride defensively; at least until you get a few miles down the road and things thin out some.

Don't be in a big hurry. It's not a race. The object is not to get there first. It's to get there.

There will be motorcycles riding with you, warning motorists to watch out for you. There will be vans from bike shops along the route to assist you if you have mechanical problems. There are also SAG vehicles. SAG stands for Support and Gear. Mostly, the mission of these vehicles is to pick you up if for whatever reason you elect to catch a ride to the next rest stop.

Rest stops – There will be one approximately every 10-15 miles. They will have food and drinks. The drinks will be cup-less, so make sure you bring at least one water bottle. They may also have other things, like more Advil and/or Biofreeze. There will be porta-potties. It's a good idea to stop at most of the rest stops. Grab a bite to eat and refill your water bottle(s). You aren't required to stop at any. Most have fruit, like orange slices and bananas. Sometimes there are candy bars and PB&J sandwiches.

Meals

Over the course of the weekend there are 5 meals served; breakfast, lunch & dinner on Saturday and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. Lunch on Saturday is served on the route. With the exception of Sat. lunch, your family and friends are welcome to eat with you. They can either pay \$5 for one meal or \$15 for the whole weekend. Wristbands will be sold on site as well as both mass check-ins.

Saturday Overnight

Hopefully you made your hotel reservations early. You will finish at the Plaza Resort Hotel, where all the evening festivities and meals will occur.

Bike Parking – Is located under the hotel in the parking garage. Look for signs. You won't need a lock, there will be a security guard all night. If you are a Top Banana, the VIP Bike Parking is inside the Plaza Hotel.

Luggage – On your way to park your bike, you will see the luggage. The volunteers will need to see your bib number to get your luggage.

Shuttles – There will be shuttles running to all the official hotels. You can jump on a shuttle in the U-shaped driveway in front of the hotel lobby.

Tent Village – Whether you are on a team or an individual rider, the tent village is the place to be on Saturday. Enjoy the pool party too!

Saturday Dinner & Program – A spaghetti dinner is served at 6pm in the Plaza Ballroom, followed by a program by the NMSS. There will also be live music.

Sunday Breakfast – A hot pancake breakfast is served starting at 6am in the same ballroom as dinner.

Coming Home

The trip home begins at 7:00am. Most riders will leave then, but you don't have to. Some have been known to sleep in a little and leave at 8:00am. You have to be on the road by 8:00am.

You will probably be sore. The Advil and Biofreeze from your goodie bag come in handy on day 2. If you bought more Biofreeze, you will be popular. Remember the object is not to get there fast. It's to get there.

There will be lunch and entertainment at the Finishline. You can stay a while or leave immediately, but the feeling you will have makes everything you did to get ready for this moment well worth it.