

Cambridge University Cycling Club

Handbook

2023-24

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Overview

Welcome to Cambridge University Cycling Club! This handbook gives members a range of essential and basic information about the club: when and where we ride, what racing we're involved in, how to get involved with our social activities and annual training camp, as well as some key skills for those new to group riding.

To keep things (relatively) brief, this handbook doesn't cover everything. If you've still got questions, head over to the website, or get in touch with members of the committee, whether in person or by email. If you're new to cycling - and even if you're not - the sport can sometimes seem a bewildering world of jargon, hand signals and expensive equipment. The club exists for those that excel in elite level racing and to bring new students into the sport, help them develop and hopefully fall in love with the sport of cycling. Whether that means a gentle 30km social ride to Cafe Amigo's for coffee, or smashing round the famed 'Botty Triangle' we try to cater for everyone.

Cycling is a great social sport where you make friendships with people you might never have otherwise met through the Cambridge system. Cambridge can be a real bubble at times, so getting out and about outside the city on your bike, can really help to clear your head after a hectic week of essays or labs.

We hope you have a great year with the club - see you on the road!

Ben Proctor
CUCC General Secretary 2023-24

This handbook should be read in conjunction with, and with reference to:

- [CUCC health and safety policy](#)
- [British Cycling Best Practice Guidelines](#)
- [Cambridge University Sport website](#)

Training Information

Weekly Schedule

Below is our standard term time schedule. Times often change, however, so watch out for updates on our WhatsApp groups.

- Tuesday
 - Winter months: Turbo session, 18:30 @ University Sports Centre
 - Summer months: Chaingang, 18:30 @ TBC
- Thursday
 - Winter months: Turbo session, 18:30 @ University Sports Centre
- Saturday
 - Club rides, 09:00 @ Brookside
- Sunday
 - Club rides, 09:00 & 13:00 depending on group (see weekly emails) @ Brookside

Training Pace

These give a rough indication of the speeds and format of our weekend group rides:

- Social **Green** Ride, ~30km @ ~22 km/h
 - Chatty rides for those new to cycling or looking to get into the sport
 - No rider left behind
- Casual **Blue** Ride, ~ 50km @ ~25km/h
 - The best group to join for casual riders wanting to explore a little further out of Cambridge
 - No rider left behind
- Medium **Red** Ride, ~80km @ ~28km/h
 - Longer continuous rides, popular for new riders to find their feet in a large group of cyclists and work on their fitness and endurance
 - No rider left behind
- Fast **Black** Ride, ~100km @ ~32km/h
 - High tempo rides for experienced club members
 - Riders may be dropped so make sure you have a copy of the route
- **Off-Road** Ride, ~30km @ variable speeds
 - Fun rides going over grass, mud, gravel, and more
 - No rider left behind

What to Bring

Nothing here is necessarily essential, but they all come strongly encouraged. If you don't have expensive lycra or fancy equipment then don't worry; just make sure to wear clothes that are comfortable to ride in. However, if you do want to invest, then there are lots of reputable online retailers like Wiggle, Chain Reaction, and Sigma Sport. The club will also have an order window for custom CUCC kit, likely in the middle of Michaelmas term.

Health & Safety Provisions

If you require specific medication, please bring this with you in addition to whatever first aid you deem necessary. Training rides do not have first aid cover.

For added peace of mind, apps like Road ID for iOS and Medical ID for Android are recommended. Some members also have bracelets with this information, to be worn whilst riding. This enables the fast retrieval

of potentially vital information about allergies, blood type etc. in the (very unlikely) event of being knocked unconscious after an accident.

All conditions:

- Bicycle in full working condition
 - We recommend you check your bike before every ride and have it serviced regularly
 - No tri-bars are allowed on group rides
- Helmet
 - This is essential for our insurance
 - You can not join club rides without a helmet
- Two spare inner tubes, a hand pump, tyre levers, and a puncture repair kit
 - Don't rely on others having a spare tube
- Multi-tool
- Water
 - Two 750ml bottles are advised for long rides. Each individual is different and your water requirements will vary with the weather, but it's better to bring too much than not enough
- Food
 - You should aim to eat something roughly every 30 minutes
 - Bring slightly more than you think you will need
 - Energy bars can be expensive but flapjacks, bananas and cereal bars do the job
- Money
 - For café stops and/or a taxi home in case of an unfixable mechanical
- Phone
 - To call for assistance in cases of emergency
- Lights
 - Particularly for late afternoon and evening rides
- Sunglasses
 - These prevent grit being thrown into eyes in the wet
 - Clear lenses can be used in low-light conditions

Cold conditions (in addition to the above):

- Overshoes
 - These stop the wind whistling through your shoe vents and keep your feet a lot warmer
- Long-sleeved jacket
- Bib tights or leg warmers
- Warm gloves
- Cycling cap and/or a buff
- Extra layer
 - Always bring one more layer than you think you will need in case of an emergency

Wet conditions (in addition to the above):

- Waterproof jacket
- Mudguards with long flaps
 - Prevents yourself and others getting splashed with water
 - Saves your components from grit

Turbo sessions:

- Bicycle

- Water
- Two sets of kit
 - Cycling shorts and a jersey to turbo in
 - Warmer kit to ride to and from the university sports centre
- Lights
 - To get to and from the university sports centre
- Towel
- A turbo-specific tyre/wheel
 - Optional and not strictly necessary
 - It might be possible to store your turbo wheel with the trainers in the sports centre. If you'd like to do this get in contact with the ride captains

Turbos and turbo skewers are provided.

Road Group Riding

Here you'll find a basic introduction to group riding. It might seem like a lot to think about and remember, but don't worry: group rides are not a 'test', and experienced riders are not looking to 'catch you out'. Most of these tips are simply designed to keep everyone safe. So long as you are considerate to others, and are receptive to constructive feedback, that's all that matters. These are things you will learn as you progress through Blue, Red and Black rides - you are not expected to know everything straight away, but we do expect members to be committed to learning them over time. Just ask questions, keep practising, and soon enough you'll be a safe, efficient, and fast group rider.

Single Training Line

This is when riders form a single-file line. At 3 to 5 minute intervals the front rider pulls out to the right (checking behind first) and eases off, rejoining the line at the back. The new cyclist at the front should not increase the group speed, but will have to exert more effort to maintain the original pace due to greater wind resistance. Bikes in the line should be approximately half a wheel length from each other.

We will normally only ride in a single training line when a small group is doing a hard effort, or when a larger group needs to go single-file on a narrow road to allow traffic to pass safely.

Double Training Line

Riders form two equal length parallel lines. After approximately 5 minutes on the front, the rider at the head of the right hand line draws forward smoothly and then left, so is the new leader of the left hand line. The new head of the right hand line pulls forward, so they're alongside the new head of the left hand line. The other riders in the right hand line stay on the wheel of the lead rider, so are drawn forward. The rider at the back of the left hand lane should then pull forward and across, onto the tail of the right hand lane. If there is an odd number there will be a single rider in the back row.

It is important to keep the pace the same during such changeovers, and not to 'half wheel' (riding slightly ahead of the person next to you, causing the pace to gradually increase) when at the front. All riders should get their turn on the front, so don't bother moving to the front at junctions. If you are struggling, it is more than acceptable to remain at the back; just keep good communication with the rest of the group so they know what you're doing.

This is the most common way we ride on club runs as it allows everyone to change who they are talking to at regular intervals.

Chaingang

Similar to the double pace line, only the changeovers occur much closer together, with the two lines moving like a chain as riders spend a minimum amount of time on the front. When you get to the back, call out "last man" to the rider adjacent to you as you pull through, so they know to follow you across to the other line. You can also call "clear" to let the rider moving off the working line know that there's room to pull in front of you. This is usually done on short fast-pace rides on continuous sections of roads. You should be confident riding at speed in a double training line before moving on to a chaingang.

General Road Etiquette

Here we elaborate on some more general riding etiquette. Though we give more explanation below, the key takeaways are:

1. Don't overlap wheels
 2. Look before changing your road position
 3. Alert others to potential hazards
 4. Avoid braking suddenly
 5. Use mudguards if it's wet
 6. Don't run red lights and obey the highway code.
- Be on time
 - Rides will leave no later than 10 mins after the advertised time
 - Ride at a sensible distances from other riders
 - Do only what you are comfortable and confident with, but if you can then stay about half a wheel behind the rider in front so there is no overlap. If they pull out and you are overlapping wheels you will crash, as will the riders behind you
 - Laterally, stay at about half a handlebar width
 - Ride about half a metre from the curb
 - Communicate with the other riders in your group
 - Call out hazards on the road ahead and assume that the people behind you won't be able to see potholes, parked cars and gravel. Draw their attention to these by calling out or pointing with your hands
 - It's better to be safe than sorry: if you think a hazard deserves to be called out, let others know
 - Keep your head up and pay attention to the road ahead
 - Do not brake suddenly if you are in a group
 - Try not to use your brakes at all when riding in the group. Instead, moderate your speed by coasting (i.e. briefly stopping pedalling) or by moving yourself out slightly 'into the wind'. This will come with practice and experience of group riding. If the group as a whole needs to slow down or stop - for instance, approaching horses on the road, or a junction - those at the front of the group should clearly shout 'slowing' or 'stopping' before they begin to use their brakes.
 - As a general rule in group riding, smooth is always better. Sudden, unexpected movements are what cause crashes
 - Use mudguards on wet rides
 - If you do not have mudguards, you will have to ride at the back of the group to prevent other riders getting a face full of mud, grit and water
 - Keep the pace constant and steady
 - Unless the session dictates it, don't increase the pace on every hill and drop half the group

- The pace may rise up some hills, especially on the Black ride, but these efforts should be communicated beforehand and allow re-grouping at the top
- Obey road laws
 - You are allowed to ride two abreast on UK roads
 - Remember to signal, don't swerve, and don't shout abuse at cars in any situation
 - You are wearing - or will be with people wearing - club kit. Be a good representative for the club

Signalling

These are some of the common arm signals which you can use to communicate changes in direction or hazards while group riding. Don't worry if you don't know all of these immediately: you will quickly pick them up through group riding. If in doubt, just loudly call out the hazard verbally.

- Arm straight out left or right
 - Only use for road junctions, not just where the road twists
 - Accompanied by calling "left" or "right"; this makes sure those in the group who maybe can't see your arm can still anticipate the turn
- Arm straight out and moved up and down
 - Used to indicate slowing down e.g. before a corner, junction or obstruction
 - Accompanied by calling out "slowing"
- Pointing
 - Used to indicate potholes, speed bumps etc.
 - Accompany by shouting "hole"
 - Use well in advance of a hole so the group can move out to avoid it.
- Arm across your back
 - Used to indicate overtaking a parked car or other obstacle
 - Note its difference from that to indicate a road junction

Verbal Signalling

These are some of the terms you will hear when out group riding. Do try to learn them over time, as they help to quickly communicate hazards and keep everyone safe.

- "OFF/PACE"
 - Someone has been dropped
 - This call is usually passed from the back to the front, who should drop the pace accordingly
- "CLEAR"
 - Shouted at a junction if there is no traffic on the road being joined
 - It is very important to only shout this if you're sure the whole group can get across
- "HOLE LEFT/RIGHT/CENTRE"
 - Accompanied by pointing out the hole
 - The group should move around it accordingly and safely
- "CAR UP/BACK"
 - Car approaching from ahead or behind, respectively
- "LINE OUT/SINGLE OUT"
 - A car/obstruction ahead prevents the usual training double lines
 - The left hand line should pull spread out allowing the right hand line to slot in every other cyclist

- After the car/obstacle has been passed, you should resume your previous place.
- “LEFT/RIGHT TURN”
 - Use at junctions with the appropriate arm gesture
- “SLOWING/EASY”
 - To accompany the straight arm moved up and down ahead of a junction/obstruction
- “PUNCTURE/ MECHANICAL”
 - The whole group should stop for this

Turbo Sessions

We run turbo sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the winter months. Signing up for these is done through a spreadsheet sent via email. We run structured sessions, based on a progressive training plan designed to get you in peak fitness for the BUCS racing season. However these are not only for racers, and are good for those just wanting to get fitter as much as those wanting to compete in races. You can also do your own thing if you want, but there will always be something structured going on.

It is important to sign up to this as we do have a limited number of turbos.

Ride Routes & Meeting Points

Popular cycling routes both on and off road can be found [here](#), whilst common meeting points can be found [here](#). Please be respectful of other road users when accumulating at these points being mindful not to block the road.

Ride Leaders

We are always looking for new faces to lead rides. If you are willing to do this, please get in touch with the current Ride Captain(s) (listed on the club website). It wouldn't be possible to run club rides without people volunteering as ride leaders. It's an easy job and comes with the advantage that you get to choose the route and what café you stop at. Below is some guidance if you're interested in being a ride leader.

- Find a suitable route, either your own or from the club's own list. Make sure you can navigate in some other way using either a phone or a bike computer
- Have a quick look through the emergency procedures section below – everyone is ultimately responsible for their own safety but as ride leader you should manage the group should an incident occur
- Make sure you have your mobile phone in case of an emergency
- Introduce yourself at the start of the ride. It may be useful to ask if anyone is new to riding with us, and explain what to do as necessary ie. basic group hand signals
- If the group is large, split it into two and designate an experienced rider to lead the second group, either following the same route roughly five minutes behind or on a different route
- At Brookside people will choose which group to ride with based on estimated speed and distances, so as far as possible try and stick to what is advertised
- Set a good example of riding. Maintain the pace of the ride, telling people to increase or decrease the pace as necessary. If someone is not signalling or riding dangerously, have a word and explain what they should be doing.
- Do regular head counts to make sure you haven't lost anyone (and make sure anyone peeling off early lets you know)

- If a few people are flagging, are happy to return to Cambridge and know the way, this is okay. If people are flagging and do not know the way, reduce the pace of the group. Do not leave people to find their own way home from the middle of nowhere, even if they seem willing to be left
- We may cancel club rides in the event of snow or ice. However, if you are at all uncertain about the conditions and think it is too dangerous to lead a ride, cancel your ride
- Please read through the road risk assessments on the website

Ride leaders are not a qualified guide and carry no legal responsibility for the rest of the group. Although risks can be reduced, riding on public roads remains a potentially dangerous activity.

Emergency Procedures

- Puncture
 - The whole group should stop and wait off the road, although if safe it is acceptable to continue to ride up and down a small stretch of road to keep warm
- Other Mechanical
 - If this can be fixed by the combined expertise of the group, then do so. If this reduces the performance of the bike, bear this in mind and reduce the pace of the ride and/or return via a more direct route
 - If the bike is unrideable, the rider should call a taxi or a friend with a car. Most Porters Lodges have cash to pay a taxi in the event that the rider does not have money on them
- Extreme Cold Weather
 - Rides will be cancelled for ice or snow
 - However, riders may get very cold on general winter rides - it is therefore essential for riders to bring enough clothing to keep warm and dry
 - It is best to keep moving in such a situation; staying still will only make riders colder
- Riding in the dark
 - Rides are scheduled for this not to occur. However, if you are riding after sunset for whatever reason, you should have lights. Carry them even if it is unlikely they will be used
 - If every member does not have lights, put a front light at the front of the group and a rear at the back, at the very least
- Accident
 - The first priority after a crash is to ensure the injured parties are not then hit by a car. Riders not involved in the crash should position themselves in such a way to warn traffic - this may involve cycling to the far side of a blind corner or over the crest of a hill
 - The next priority is to check airways, breathing and circulation - ABC. If required, call 112 from a mobile - this enables the call to be more easily traced than 999 (if the exact location is unknown)
 - It is unfeasible for the club to provide full first aid kits due to the mobile nature of riding. If the injury requires the contents of a first aid kit, riders should be dispatched to the nearest public building to fetch theirs
 - Riders with minor injuries should either get a taxi back to Cambridge or cycle directly back

Off-Road Cycling

What to Bring

These are the things you will need for a day out off-road cycling. For weekend trips you will need additional items such as a sleeping bag and casual clothes for the hut.

- Bicycle in working order
 - Should be a bicycle suitable for off-road cycling
- Helmet
 - You may also consider gloves and/or body armour
- Puncture repair kit
 - Including tools, spare tubes, and a pump
- Eye protection
- Personal first aid kit
- Food and water
- Layered clothing
 - Including a hat and gloves
- Waterproof clothing
- Casual clothes and shoes to get to and from the trip
- A map, compass, GPS, or guidebook
- Bike light and torch
- Mobile phone
- Survival bag and blanket
- Whistle (for emergencies)

Trips

Most trips take place for a full day at the weekend. Details are announced on the mailing list. Bike hire is usually available.

Off-Road Trip Policy

The Cambridge University Cycling Club organises off-road cycling trips. Our primary function is to facilitate the planning of trips by bringing together cycling enthusiasts. We cycle together as a group of friends. Each person is responsible for their own safety and the implementation of the control measures described in the club risk assessment. In practice this means bringing appropriate kit and judging your own abilities. For practical reasons, a 'ride leader' who is familiar with the route may be assigned. They are not a qualified guide and carry no legal responsibility for the rest of the group. Although risks can be reduced, off-road cycling remains a potentially dangerous activity.

Emergency Procedures

In the case of a crash or accident, uninjured riders will assess the situation. They will decide whether it is necessary to call emergency services. All riders are encouraged to carry a mobile phone and a personal first aid kit. If there is no mobile phone signal part of the group will stay with the casualty whilst others go to get help or find a phone signal. Mountain rescue can be reached by dialling 999 and asking for the police. An appropriate signal with a whistle or torch is six blasts or flashes, to be repeated every minute. The reply from rescuers would be three blasts or flashes. The six blasts or flashes should be continued until help arrives, and should not be stopped if a reply is heard.

Track Cycling

What to Bring

- Shoes with the appropriate cleats for hire bikes
 - If you don't own any, track bikes come with shoe cages for use with flat shoes
- Helmet
 - This is essential
- Mitts
 - This is essential
- Food
- Casual clothes
 - To wear when not on the track

Training Sessions

We may choose to run track training sessions before the BUCS track competition. These are usually to Welwyn, Derby or the Lee Valley Velodrome in London. You don't have to have done track before to come along to these sessions. Track bikes are provided - either club ones or rented at the track. We often ask for a small contribution for the transport and hire costs. These sessions will be advertised via the weekly club email.

Track Etiquette and Safety

This is somewhat different from on the road. A good guide can be found [here](#).

The key points are:

- Track bikes do not have brakes
 - You can not stop pedalling and you can not brake to avoid an obstacle
 - Be careful of this after a sprint - you can't freewheel as you might after doing so on the road
- Be very mindful of other cyclists on the track
 - Don't undertake, and always check over your right shoulder before pulling up the track
 - Communication is key
- Do not ride on the blue band at the bottom of the track
- At slow speeds, the sharp banking at each end seems impossibly steep
 - The physics, however, says that you won't slide at speeds above ~20kph

Emergency Procedures

Velodromes are public venues. As such, they will have qualified first aiders on hand to treat injuries or call for further assistance. If an accident is serious, remember not to move the injured party until qualified medical assistance arrives.

Club Kit

Training Kit

The club kit order is placed in Michaelmas and usually arrives in early Lent. Watch out for kit ordering info in the weekly emails.

Casual Kit

Casual clothing is usually ordered in Michaelmas term.

Membership

For 2023/24, one year membership costs £45, and three year membership is available at the discounted rate of £110. Whilst membership is not required to attend group rides, please note that membership is required to use club turbos, to purchase club kit, and compete for CUCC. Additional membership benefits can be found on the club website.

If you do not wish to pay membership at present, but would like to attend club rides, we still request that you complete our Health & Safety form, which can be found [here](#).

To become a member, please complete the CUCC membership form through our British Cycling membership portal, which can be found [here](#). You will also need to register an account on British Cycling if you didn't previously have one, though membership of British Cycling, though advised by the committee, is not a requirement of membership.

Any queries should be directed to the junior treasurer, Tom Wade (tjw84).

Racing

Members are highly encouraged to take part in races throughout the year, whether you are a novice or an experienced racer. The traffic free circuits at Redbridge (aka Hog Hill) and Lee Valley are within easy reach on the trains to London, and both run winter series which make a great introduction to racing. Starting after the clocks change in the spring, there are evening club time trials run by Cambridge Cycling Club. There are many time trials within riding distance - have a look at the calendar for London North (F), London East (E) and East (B) districts published by Cycling Time Trials in the new year.

Most local road races are affiliated to the Eastern Road Race League (ERRL), of which we are not a member. Preference is given to members of affiliated clubs but often there are places leftover available to non-members as well. We encourage those interested in road racing to start by racing crits as there are many more opportunities, and they provide a condensed environment in which you'll pick up the skills you need to race successfully a lot quicker. Contact our men's captains Matt and Tom (mlar2 and tjh93), or our Women's captains Phoebe and Jo (prab2 and jgm42) if you have any further questions.

What to Bring

BUCS Races

- Bicycle in full working order
 - Bring tools, tubes etc. in case of a mechanical problem warming up
- A helmet
 - Compulsory
- Front and rear light
 - Compulsory for BUCS and CTT time trials
- Casual clothes
 - To wear before and after the race
- Food
 - To eat before and after the race

- Water
 - The venue may not have somewhere for you to fill up bottles
- Cambridge ID card
 - You will require this for signing on at BUCS events

Public Races

- The above, plus your British Cycling Membership card

Race Schedule

BUCS races are as follows:

1. BUCS Hill Climb (Often late October)
2. BUCS Track (Often late November or early December)
3. BUCS 10 Mile TT (Often late March or early April)
4. BUCS Downhill Mountain Bike (Often in the Easter break)
5. BUCS 3up TTT (Often late March or early April)
6. BUCS 25 Mile TT (Often late March or early April)
7. BUCS Road Race (Often late April)

A Varsity XC mountain bike race is also held, usually during Lent term.

If possible, the club will cover entry fees and transport for BUCS races.

CUCC Members also regularly compete at open events around Cambridgeshire, such as:

- Ely Hardriders (Often late February)
- Northroad Hardriders (Often early March)
- Hog Hill Winter Crit Series (From early February to April)
- Lea Valley 25m TT (Often in March)
- Ike Saul Road Race (Often in March)

The men's and women's captains will collate a race calendar at the start of Lent term. If you have any further questions, please get in contact with them.

Emergency Procedures

Race organisers will have accident and emergency cover in place. If the course is a TT, you can shout to competitors to alert the next marshal that you are in trouble. If a road race, there should be a following car. If you know there won't be (e.g. Sportives), it would be advisable to carry your mobile for such an eventuality.

Training Camp

We usually organise an annual training camp in January to a sunny location in Europe, either flying out with bikes or hiring bikes at the location. The training camp is an intense week of putting in a solid block of training and getting away from the cold British weather. We often bump into many professional World Tour teams holding their own training camps. You can check out a video made from the 2022 training camp [here](#). The training camp is organised part way through Michaelmas term and will be advertised in the weekly bulletin.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints relating to the running of the club, club activities or other relevant things must be submitted in writing (e.g. by email) to a member of the Executive Committee (President, General Secretary or Junior Treasurer). Complaints will be treated with due confidentiality and will not be distributed publicly or shared with the rest of the Committee, unless where relevant. Complaints against a member(s) of the Executive Committee may be lodged with the Senior Treasurer, or, where a further conflict of interest arises, with the Sports Service who will advise on the appropriate procedures depending on the nature of the complaint. The Executive Committee will meet to hear any member complaints as soon as realistically possible, or within 21 days of a complaint being lodged.

Anti-Doping

CUCC adopts a zero tolerance policy to doping of any form, whether in competition or not. Any member found to be using any performance enhancing drugs that are prohibited by WADA will face immediate expulsion from the club, and reported to the UK anti-doping authority, Cycling Time Trials and British Cycling to face further action.

Social Media

The club has two main social media accounts, Facebook (Cambridge University Cycling Club) and Instagram (@cambridgeuniversitycyclingclub). We may upload photos of club members onto these accounts from time to time, but if you do not wish for any photos featuring yourself to be published, please let the General Secretary (Ben, bhp27) know. The club asks all members to remember that their own social media accounts can reflect upon CUCC too. We politely ask that members do not post anything that may bring the club into disrepute. Should the committee be made aware that this has happened, we reserve the right to deal with the member through our complaints and discipline procedures.

Other Information

All policy documents, such as the club constitution, health & safety policy, welfare policy and privacy notice can be accessed on the club website [here](#). Any further queries should be directed to the relevant committee member, with contact details available on the clubwebsite. General enquiries should be directed to the General Secretary (Ben, bhp27).