

# Tom's Training Tips & Plan

Ride veteran, Tom Zapalac of team NSM Insurance Company provides you with tips and a training plan in navigating your bike tour experience.

## Tom's Tips

**So you have never ridden a bicycle from Philadelphia to Atlantic City...**

### **Why would you?**

For the 32nd Annual The Ben to The Shore Bike Tour benefitting the Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation. Whether you are brand new to cycling or a seasoned cyclist, here is a training plan to make your experience more enjoyable.

### **50 Mile Option**

If you are new to cycling or 65 miles may seem to be too much of a challenge, you may want to consider riding the 50 mile option. You start at rest stop #1 in Berlin, NJ and have the same amount of time to complete the ride as the 65 mile option. All riders must be off the road by 1:30pm so a shorter distance may be a great choice.

### **Finish Time**

Training is important. All riders must be in Atlantic City by 1:30pm. That's 6 1/2 hours from beginning to end. This is for your safety and the safety of our volunteers and the general public. If you are still on the road, you will be picked up by one of our courteous SAG vehicles who will happily take you to the finish. Plan your starting point based on your ability to finish in under 6 1/2 hours. See "The Route" page on the left for our timing schedule.

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## **Tom's Training Tips**

### **Safety First**

Always wear a helmet while riding and make sure it fits. If you don't know how to adjust the straps, go to your local bike shop for assistance. If you're buying a new helmet, it should have the proper fit before you leave the store. Do not wear headphones while riding. You need to see as well as hear everything around you.

### **What to put in your bike bag and on your bike**

2 spare tubes

ID

Cash

Tire tools and mini-tool kit

2 water bottles

Air pump or CO2 cartridges

Knowledge of how to use the tools to change a flat

### **Bicycle Safety**

Make sure you have a bicycle that fits you properly and is in good working condition. Take it to a local bike shop for a quick tune up. Not only is this mandatory to participate in The Ben to The Shore Bike Tour, they may be able to make some adjustments which will make your ride more comfortable. Visit one of our certified bike shops to have this done for free, and some stores offer discounts on merchandise - cycling shorts with pads are a must!

### **Bicycle Fit**

As you train you may need to make adjustments to your bike. Consider going back to your bike shop and ask about refining your bike position. You should not be stretched out or too cramped. Your legs should be slightly bent at the bottom of the pedal stroke. Stay relaxed. Hold the handlebar lightly. Keep elbows bent. Locked elbows lead to fatigue in your arms, shoulders, and neck. Smile. This will help you relax.

### **Nutrition for Training**

Drink water or sports drink. Rule of thumb is to drink at least every 15 minutes. Don't wait until you're thirsty. On hot days, you will want to drink more. On short training rides you probably will not need to eat during the ride. Eat a light meal an hour or two prior to riding.

During your longer weekly ride, bring a light snack and eat half way through the ride. Experiment with different drinks and snacks to find what works best for you. You don't want to experiment the day of the ride.

### **Nutrition for Race Week**

During this week drink plenty of water. No need to Carb Load. You get enough carbohydrates in regular balanced diet. Stay away from fatty or highly processed foods. Eat foods high in fiber and slow to digest. Vegetables, fruits, chicken, fish, and lean meats are ideal.

### **Morning of the Ride**

Eat a light meal consisting of foods such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, fruits, juices, eggs or whole grain breads or bagels. Eat at least 2 hours before the start.

### **During the Ride**

Drink at least every 15 minutes. There are four rest stops along the way. When you stop for a break, keep it short. 10 minutes at the most. The longer you wait, the more your muscles will begin to tighten. Refill water bottles, get a snack, stretch and get back on the road.

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## **Tom's Training Plan**

The main principle of training for a long ride is to increase your mileage gradually over a number of weeks. By doing it that way, you help avoid injury, burnout and fatigue. Plus you will also be able to detect any issues with your body or bike that you want to discover before the big day.

**For the first week:** Start out by riding for 30 minutes at a time. Don't worry so much about the miles. If you are not comfortable on streets, try riding on one of the many local paved trails. The idea is to increase the mileage of your long ride gradually until you can comfortably ride 50 miles in a day.

**Midway through the training schedule:** Start to increase the intensity and speed of your rides. Get your heart rate up. Ride hard for one minute, and then recover for the next. Do this several times during a ride. These are called intervals. Interval training will increase your endurance. If you have limited time to ride, interval training will build endurance without consuming a lot of time.

**The final week:** You will taper down. Ride 2-3 times. Slow your pace. Stay loose and do about 15 miles each ride. You're not going to gain any more endurance this last week, but you don't want to lose what you've learned over the past nine weeks. The ride is on Sunday, so rest and relax on Friday and Saturday.

Training Plan		
Week	Ride 3 or 4 days each week Length of each Ride	Goal for the Week
1	10-15 miles	30-45 miles
2	10-15 miles	35-45 miles
3	15-20 miles	35-45 miles
4	20-25 miles - increase speed	60-75 miles
5	25-30 miles	75-80 miles
6	25-35 miles	75-80 miles
7	35-40 miles	80-90 miles
8	Ride 50 miles at once. 25-30 miles	100 miles
9	15-25 miles	80 miles
10	Ride 2 or 3 times the final week. Rest and Relax.	30 miles

**A great cyclist once said about training, "Ride Lots."**

**Enjoy the ride. See you in AC!**

For questions about training e-mail Thomas Zapalac of NSM Insurance Group  
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