

J. Communication During the Ride

UWE: Hello, it's Uwe and Kyle. Let's talk now about how you'll communicate with your partner during a ride.

KYLE: First, we should say that there is usually lots of communicating on a Trailblazers ride, and a lot of it's social. On our rides, Uwe and I have talked about life, work, soccer, ...

UWE: ... coffee shops, ice-cream,
vinyl records, sports, politi..

KYLE: Right. But you have to be
able to interrupt those
conversations during the ride so
that you can talk about the actual
ride: turning, slowing down,
stopping. Remember, captains, we
are the eyes of the team. Make a
point of giving advance notice
where possible, like "Red light
ahead", "Turning left in 3-2-1..."

UWE: Also, potholes and bumps. Captains, please communicate “bump” to the stoker. Then we can stop pedaling and roll over the street bump. Tree branches. Try and steer around them if possible but if you can’t and have to duck, remember tell your Stoker to duck, too.

KYLE: And be sure to communicate gear changes. Captains should announce when they shift gears up or down so that the stoker knows to pedal differently during the

gear-change and to expect a change in pedal resistance. You'll learn more about gears on tandems in a later segment.

UWE: Now, sometimes you will want to coast. Sometimes it makes the most sense to stop pedaling and just roll, or coast. Either the captain or stoker can request to coast for a bit. Let's say you want to adjust your position on the seat or take a sip from your water bottle. Just check that it's OK with

your ride partner so you can --
together -- stop pedaling.

KYLE: Don't forget to announce
hills - up or down -- ideally a little
bit in advance.

UWE: Sometimes I can't feel it
right away when we're on a hill,
but if the captain tells me we're
climbing I will know to pedal
harder. Also, it's good if I know
how much further up hill there is to

go -- 50%, 75%, almost there, and so on.

KYLE: Captains, discuss with your stoker if they'd also like any commentary about the surroundings: things like interesting trees, birds, buildings, parks...

UWE: Please mention also when we are riding past restaurants, bathrooms or water fountains. These can be good opportunities for a pit-stop.

KYLE: And when you do stop and dismount somewhere, the Captain becomes the sighted guide as the two of you walk the bike.

UWE: When you're walking the bike together, the Captain holds the front handlebar and seat, the stoker holds the rear handlebar and seat. Make sure that you are both walking on the same side of the bike, so that the captain knows exactly what's coming up ahead of the stoker.

KYLE: So that's a sampling of how Captains and Stokers communicate on a ride.

UWE: There will be more about communication coming up soon when we talk about gears and gear changes.