

# “Rule 19 – The correct number of bikes to own is $n+1$ , where ‘n’ is the number of bikes currently owned”

Criticised for not taking his column seriously, **Martyn Brunt** shares his “dung-crackers of wisdom” on the world of road cycling... in his inimitable style, of course

**R**ecently I was criticised for not taking this column seriously and wasting your time with “jokes and sillies” instead of dispensing purse-mouthed training advice and adopting an air of judgemental arm-crossing about your failure to be as good as the Brownlee children.

Normally this kind of humourless chuff from someone I'd describe as an 'enthusiastic self partner' would make my ears want to throw up. However, having watched someone at the Vitruvian heading out of T1 with their aero helmet on back to front, I wondered whether there were any dung-crackers of wisdom I could hurl at you after all.

I've noticed it's become popular at this time of year for innocent triathletes to try out a ride with their local cycling club for winter training. All over the UK, fresh-faced triathletes are turning up in pub car parks on Sunday mornings on carbon bikes with tri-bars with their Garmin's bleeping away, only to be met by dead-eyed, siney blokes on steel-framed Raleighs who silently ride with you to the middle of nowhere and then crank up the pace until they drop you.

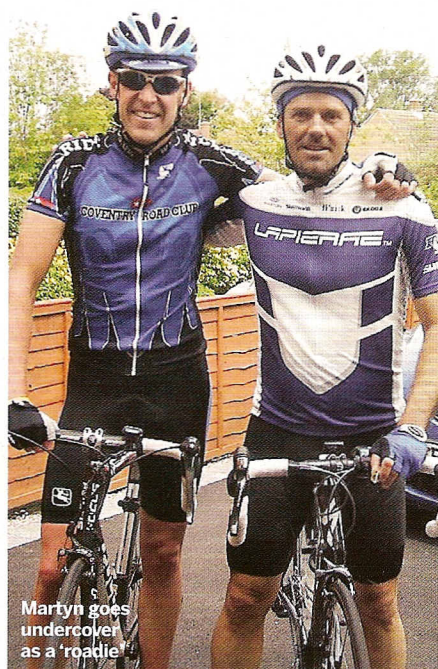
It's widely known that 'roadies' think triathletes can't cycle because we see headwinds as an opportunity to work harder rather than something to hide from. However, there's more to it than that because road cycling is a complex world of fashions, rules and treacheries that, unless you know them, all mark you down as an outsider.

Since I've been a member of my local cycling club from the time when I had hair on my head instead of my shoulders and had no idea what Preparation H was for, I thought it might be helpful to share some advice on how to fit in with this bunch of cutthroats and weirdos...

**Rule 1** Waiting for others pre-ride, you must be casually deliberate, resting your backside on your top tube rather than your saddle, with one foot clipped into your pedal.

**Rule 2** Tan lines on your arms and legs should be cultivated and kept razor sharp – and sleeveless jerseys should NEVER be worn.

**Rule 3** Race numbers are for races. Remove race stickers from your frame because no matter how cool you think it looks, it does not.



**Rule 4** Championship and race leader jerseys must only be worn if you've won the championship or led the race. Pro team kit is also questionable if you're not paid to wear it.

**Rule 5** Cycling caps can be worn under helmets, but NEVER when not riding, no matter how 'road' you think you look.

**Rule 6** No visors. Road helmets can be worn on mountain bikes, but NEVER the other way around. If you want shade, see rule 5.

**Rule 7** The arms of your eyewear should ALWAYS be placed over your helmet straps.

**Rule 8** Humps are for camels: hydration packs are NEVER to be seen on a road rider's body.

**Rule 9** Legs are to be carefully shaved at all times. If, for some reason, you leave your legs hairy, make sure you can dish out plenty of hurt to shaved riders.

**Rule 10** Speeds and distances shall be referred to in kilometres. This includes while

discussing cycling with non-cyclists, serving to further mystify the sport as much as possible.

**Rule 11** Legs speak louder than words. Unless you routinely demonstrate your riding superiority, refrain from discussing your power meter or heart rate.

**Rule 12** You are not, under any circumstances, to employ the use of the washer-nut that comes with your inner tubes.

**Rule 13** Unless you are followed by a team car, repair your own punctures. You will do so using your own equipment, and without complaining that your tyres are too tight for your puny thumbs to fit over your expensive rim.

**Rule 14** The announcement of a flat tyre on a ride entitles – but does not oblige – all riders present in the bunch to cease riding without fear of being labelled wimps. All stopped riders are thereupon entitled to offer stringent criticism of the tyre mender's technique.

**Rule 15** The bikes on top of your car should be worth more than your car.

**Rule 16** Any walking conducted while wearing cycling shoes must be strictly limited. When stopping for a wee during a 200km ride at 38km/hr (see rule 10), one is to stow one's bicycle at the nearest point navigable by bike and walk as few steps as possible.

**Rule 17** Never half-wheel your riding partners; it's always the other rider who sets the pace. Unless, of course, they are on the rivet, in which case it's an excellent intimidation technique.

**Rule 18** It never gets easier, you just go faster. Riding is like fighting a gorilla. You don't stop when you are tired, you stop when the gorilla is tired.

**Rule 19** The correct number of bikes to own is  $n+1$ , where 'n' is the number of bikes currently owned. This equation may also be re-written as  $s-1$ , where 's' is the number of bikes owned that would result in separation from your partner.

**Rule 20** It's ALL about the bike. Anyone who says otherwise is talking twat-waffle. **220**