

2014 Tour de Pines FAQs

Are you thinking about riding the Tour de Pines but have some questions? Take a look at this information written by Tour de Pines planning committee member Mike Thompson.

- 1. I like to ride my bike and it sounds like fun but I've never ridden 50 miles at one time so I'm not sure how I'll do.**

Don't be worried about the distance, the Tour De Pines is the easiest 50 miles you can do! Including lunch, we generally stop three times. We average 11-13mph in the main group, and our cue sheets are vetted so if you want to go faster you can. There is plenty of support available in the main group and we have never left anyone behind! Just make sure you are comfortable on your bike for about 10-15 miles or so at a time and you should be good to go.

- 2. So do you just ride straight thru start to finish on any of the days?**

We stop to eat each day. On two of this year's rides, your lunch will be transported to a scenic Pinelands lunch spot. Just make sure you pack a disposable lunch. The other three lunch stops are also fun.

- 3. So what type of ride is this - is it like a group ride?**

We are riders who live in and/or love to ride in the beautiful Pinelands on quiet roads and through historic places at a leisurely pace. But anyone who likes to ride is welcome to our Tour at whatever pace they adore. We just don't expect you'll be winning the scavenger hunts on days 1 and 5!

- 4. Do people really ride all 5 days?**

Most riders in the Tour De Pines ride one day or two - but if you are lucky enough to take 5 days away from your normal routine then you can experience the magic of a 5 day scenic bicycle tour right from home. You can add more adventure by traveling with the tour either by camping or staying in country motels. This was the original plan for the tour. There is nothing like it. So close to home yet so far away! This is a great chance to do an epic to tour in the Pinelands National Reserve. It's easier said than done, but there are several of us who take off days to do the whole ride.

- 5. My friend and I are planning to ride 2 days in this year's Tour De Pines and while we are looking forward to it we would like to know that we are preparing properly. We want to be able to enjoy and not be sore and beat up at the end! Is this possible and how far should we be riding to get ready? We don't have too many openings day to day to ride 45 miles.**

If you want be sure you can ride a tour day and enjoy it - start with getting comfortable on your bike for 10-15 miles. You only need to ride long enough for all the things that could make you uncomfortable to happen and this generally occurs within the first 10 miles or so and tends to repeat itself over and again with more distance. Minor setup adjustments generally fix whatever discomfort you may experience during your short rides. When you are able to cruise thru your short rides at 11-13mph feeling just fine,

you are ready to have some good days out on tour! If you are unsure what adjustments to your setup you need, a good bike shop can help. Just tell 'em where it hurts. They will need both you and your bike as you want to test the new adjustments.

6. Our kids are all good riders, they are ages 9-11 and we ride with them often. We were wondering how they would do on something like this?

Our ride is not intended for children, most of our riders are way over 22!

7. Am I going to have to go out and get a new bike just to do this?

Chances are you don't need a new bike. Traditional road bike, touring bike, hybrid bike, vintage bike, mountain bikes, trikes, recumbent bikes, tandem and single speed have all been on tour. Basically you need handbrakes and to be able to keep up with 11-13mph so just make sure it is running good.

8. I do fast shop rides and a few of us race a little. We are really trying to get faster - it sounds fun but it doesn't fit into what I am trying to do. Going slower than I can for that long could end up making me slower right?

You are sitting on the golden goose! Quite the contrary, this ride is the type that every competitive amateur shop rider and triathlete say they need to do. Long recovery rides are essential for success in competition. The only reason many successful riders are more productive is that they have spent adequate time in the base-building recovery zone of training! It is difficult to do recovery, you have to slow down! Recovery is not rest - it allows shredded muscles and tissue the chance to rejuvenate within the essential activity. Trainers of winning athletes don't let recovery base building zone training off the hook. The Tour De Pines is ideal for a competitive athlete as a complete recovery zone base building ride. So tell your spouse you are going on a ride that is long enough for you that they will also enjoy. Start reminding yourself to stay in the small chain ring only. You will have charge and natural glow in your muscles after successive days of training in this zone and many an athlete has been able to kick it up a notch. In my experience most non-professional competitive athletes will improve performance immediately after successive days of recovery zone base building. Riding at a talking pace every so often also makes you faster when the day comes to put the hammer down!

9. I used to ride a lot and it only took me two or three weeks to be ready for a big ride. I think I should still be ok with that kind lead time (even though I have been off the bike a while). Is this still about right (I ride nearly every day during those three weeks) or should I add an extra week because of time off the bike?

Don't go by what you remember - get back on your bike get it running right and get out for an hour when you can! You'll be less likely to have problems and you will have a good ride.

10. I have done some big rides and they have all had a van that cruises along to help you if you need it. I feel the vans are good to have out there to make sure everyone gets home and I would like to know why you don't offer support?

Unsupported is really not accurate and I understand the type of rides you are accustomed to. We ride with a very small footprint we only use a vehicle to transport lunch to our "cool place to have lunch". All of our rides are loops and there is never any shortage of tech support available in the group. There is always a ride leader and someone bringing up the rear (the sweep) we have integrated smartphones into our communication protocol. We have never left anyone stranded on Tour. The part you may not realize is the Tour De Pines highlights the million acres of still unspoiled beauty and serenity that we want to keep enjoying. We do cross more populated areas but there many more miles of quiet open spaces with few cars and vast beauty. We may in time have to add more support to our low impact event, but only cautiously. We see no need breathe any more fumes than necessary while riding.

Mike Thompson

*Tour de Pines committee member Mike Thompson is a student of cycling and human power and is presently a resident indoor cycling instructor at 2 gyms and a guest at others. He trains with cycling indoors and out and his list includes pro volley players, speed skaters, pro boxers, tough mudders, triathletes, and of course on and off road cyclists. Most notably, Mike was team leader for first American solo class finisher and rookie of the year in the Race Across America (RAAM) in 2009. To many, RAAM is considered the world's toughest bicycle race. His team took 10 days 12 hrs to travel nonstop from west coast to east! He has done our ride every year since 2005. Feel free to ask him any questions about getting ready for the ride. **You can reach Mike by email at pocketjet2@gmail.com.***