



# 2023 RIDER GUIDE

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# THANK YOU

## FOR JOINING US ON THE 2023 MS GONG RIDE - THE RIDE TO FIGHT MS

Welcome to the 2023 MS Gong Ride.

Since 1981, this iconic ride has inspired an incredible community of participants, supporters, donors, and volunteers who together have raised over \$45 million to help Fight MS. You are now part of this incredible legacy.

MS Plus is the leader of supportive care for people living with multiple sclerosis and has committed to the development of three state-of-the-art MS wellness centres in New South Wales and Victoria. The MS Plus Wellbeing Centre in Lidcombe, Sydney is scheduled to open in late 2024. These state-of-the-art centres will offer a comprehensive range of services providing a complete wellbeing service model, helping people with MS achieve their personal goals and live to their fullest potential.

Every week more than 10 Australians are diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and the average age of diagnosis is just 30 years old. By taking part in the ride, you are supporting people living with MS to continue to access vital support and services that help them live well, while contributing to medical research aimed at improving treatments for MS and ultimately, finding a cure.

Thank you for joining this amazing group of cyclists, who want to make an impact on the lives of Australians living with MS. It is your support and dedication that ensures no one has to face MS alone, no matter what stage of their journey, while the search for a cure continues.

We are delighted to have you onboard, for this unforgettable and important ride to Fight MS.



**John Blewonski**  
Chief Executive Officer  
MS Plus

## WHAT IS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?

Multiple sclerosis is the **most common neurological condition** among young people.

The average **age of diagnosis is 30 years** of age.

Multiple sclerosis is a lifelong disease for which there is **no known cure**.

**Three out of four** people living with multiple sclerosis **are women**.



### SYMPTOMS

- Extreme fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Difficulty swallowing
- Altered sensation and libido
- Bladder and bowel dysfunction
- Tingling, numbness or pins and needles
- Loss of balance and coordination
- Difficulty walking
- Heat and cold sensitivity
- Tremors
- Pain



Multiple sclerosis attacks the **central nervous system** – the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves.



**No two cases of multiple sclerosis are identical.** The visible and invisible symptoms of multiple sclerosis vary from person to person.

# ABOUT THE MS GONG RIDE

## Congratulations on entering the MS Gong Ride – the iconic Ride to Fight MS!

Thank you for taking up the challenge to complete Australia's most respected community bike ride. For more than 40 years, tens of thousands of cyclists have hit the pavement in this legendary ride, in support of people with multiple sclerosis. By fundraising, you will be committing to make sure over 33,000 Australians are supported on their journey to fight MS.

## More than ever, your support is critical to ensure that no one faces MS alone.

The mission of MS Plus is to provide essential services that help people live well with MS, including Employment Support, Occupational Therapy, Personal Training and Exercise Programs, as well as Peer Support Groups. These services are provided face-to-face, via video conference or by phone.

A host of other supports continue to be available remotely, including Plus Advisor which provides free, expert advice from qualified nurses and social workers, and our free helpline, Plus Connect, which is available 5 days a week to people living with MS, their friends, family and carers.

It is thanks to YOU that these vital services are possible, and no one has to face MS alone. Thank you! We can't do it without you.

## This year we're excited to bring back features to the event.

Brad McGee, World Champion and Olympic Cyclist, has devised a specialised training program to keep you in top form and ready for Event Day. You will enjoy a new fundraising portal which you can customise as much as you like. Stay tuned for new cycling challenges that will inspire, great prizes to reward fundraising and much more! We are excited to have you onboard for the MS Gong Ride 2023!



*"We love the iconic ride and how well organised it is. The scenery, the volunteers, the challenge. It all makes for a memorable experience and has had us coming back year on year since 2006... and it ain't looking like we'll stop any time soon!"*

- Kim, The Soft Cogs

# OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

We know that you love the beautiful scenery of the MS Gong Ride and we are introducing new environmental initiatives to ensure it stays that way.

 **100%** carbon offset shipping

 Event apparel is now **Made to Order**, to avoid oversupply

 Event staff will be leading by example, using **Reusable Cups and Bottles**

 Collaborate with the event venues to provide appropriate **Waste Management**

 **Biodegradable and compostable** mailing satchels for merchandise

 **QR codes** to replace paper event day registration forms and train tickets

 **Going Paperless** where possible, during event planning

 **Single use plastic free site**

# KICK START YOUR FUNDRAISING

Your entry fee covers the cost of running this epic event. With these top tips, you'll be sure to pass the minimum goal of raising \$350 to help people fight MS.



Share on social media @MSGongRide #MSGongRide



Ask your employer about matched giving



Check out our downloadable resources  
[msgongride.org.au/resources](http://msgongride.org.au/resources)



Create a Facebook Fundraiser



Set your fundraising goal and donate to yourself



Tell why you are riding on your page



Upload your photo or an avatar



Send emails



### Our favourite tip:

Lead the way and make the first donation to your fundraising page.

### Did you know 50% of donations come from email?!

We have email templates to help you on your fundraising portal. Email your friends, family and colleagues today.



# DOUBLE YOUR DONATIONS WITH MATCHED GIVING

## How do I find out about my company's policy?

Your Human Resources Department will know whether your company matches money raised by their employees or has a program that supports the charitable causes of its employees. Tell HR about the distance of the ride, the number of members in your team and what you hope to achieve. For example, every \$250 raised pays for an Plus Nurse Advisor to visit a person living with MS through the crisis of a relapse.

## How do I ask?

The most engaging way to ask is to do so in person. If that's not possible, send an email.

We have a template prepared on the website that you can share with your employer that details the event, your request and the benefits to the company of supporting your team. Download it here [msgongride.org.au/get-involved/matched-giving](http://msgongride.org.au/get-involved/matched-giving)

## Other options

If your company does not match funding, they may pay for registrations, donate to the team, pay for a custom team jersey or full kit, or for the BBQ and catering on event day!

Please contact MS Events for any documentation required, including tax-deductible receipts, or a letter of thanks.

## Questions?

We're here to help, contact the MS Events Team on **1300 733 690** or email [events@ms.org.au](mailto:events@ms.org.au)

For matched giving our company details are:

**MS Plus**  
**ABN**

**66 004 942 287**



# TOP FUNDRAISING IDEAS AND INSPIRATION

Whether you're planning on hosting a small fundraising event or bringing together a virtual crowd, below are our top ideas to raise funds this year.

1



## Trivia night

Everyone loves a quiz night! This could be from the comfort of your living room, with friends online, or down at your local pub!

2



## After work drinks

Great opportunity to tell colleagues what you're doing. Charge an entry fee for Friday night drinks or ask for a donation in lieu of your colleague buying you a drink or few!

3



## Movie night

Many cinemas will show a movie just for you. Charge a little extra per ticket and then enjoy the entertainment.

4



## Silent auction or raffle

Get some prizes donated and you can host a silent auction or raffle online or in person.

5



## Set up a bad habits jar

At home, or at work, you will be surprised how quickly a jar can fill up!

6



## Jersey sponsorship

Reach out to local businesses and see who wants to support your fundraising efforts. In return you can pay it forward and wear their logo with pride.

7



## Casual day with a twist

Get your colleagues involved and create some team spirit. Why not let them choose what you wear to work in exchange for a donation?

8



## Food, food, glorious food!

Whether it's a BBQ, bake sale, dinner party or a cooking lesson - everyone loves to eat! Feed your friends, family and colleagues in exchange for a donation.

9



## Grooming challenge

Are you overdue for a haircut? Or does your beard need taming? Cut, trim or dye your hair for donations! Alternatively, you can get event day ready and host a wax-off challenge.

10



## Parking spot

Do you have an envied parking spot at work? Consider giving it up for a premium.

11



## Facebook Fundraising

Just want to fundraise online? Create a Facebook Fundraiser with one simple click in your Gong Ride Dashboard. Most people who use Facebook Fundraiser receive their first donation within 24 hours and raise 10% more!

If you would like help setting up any of these fundraising ideas or have your own fundraising ideas you would like help exploring - we'd love to hear from you. Please remember to register your fundraising event with us. We'll promptly provide your authority to fundraise and some resources to complement your event!

Call **1300 733 690**

Email **events@ms.org.au**



# MEET YOUR FUNDRAISING COACH **DONOVAN**

Your fundraising coach is here to help you succeed and reach your fundraising goal to fight MS! Ask Donovan about:

- Personalised fundraising tips
- MS branded merchandise
- Setting up your team
- Ordering a custom jersey or kit
- Organising a fundraising activity
- Matched giving and much more!

## Questions? Contact us

The MS Events Team will be able to answer any questions you have relating to the event - from operations to merchandise, volunteering or fundraising. Be sure to contact us if you require any assistance.

Email: [events@ms.org.au](mailto:events@ms.org.au)

Phone: **1300 733 690**



# MEET YOUR CYCLING COACH **BRAD MCGEE**

Over the page you'll find your exclusive 2023 MS Gong Ride six week training program, developed by the legend himself Brad McGee, Australian Olympic Coach and Australian Olympic Gold Medalist.

Keep an eye out for more expert advice, including videos, direct to your inbox on topics such as:

- Endurance training
- Skills training, such as climbing, pacing, balance and cornering
- Off bike training
- Motivational and wellness guidance
- Nutritional advice and more

# MS GONG RIDE

## 6 WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM

Ride better with Brad McGee,  
Australian Olympic Gold medallist  
and Australian Olympic Coach



	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	TOTAL	
WEEK 1	Skills Focus	Be ready	S1, S2, S3	S6	S1, S2, S3	Endurance + S6	S1, S2, S3	4.5 HRS	
	Riding time	0	30 mins	30 mins	30 mins	0	2 hrs		1 hr
	Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30 mins		Massage	Activation 15 mins		
WEEK 2	Skills Focus		S1, S2, S3	S6	S1, S2, S3	Endurance + S6	S1, S2, S3	6 HRS	
	Riding time	0	30 mins	30 mins	1 hr	0	2.5 hrs		1.5 hrs
	Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30 mins		Massage	Activation 15 mins		
WEEK 3	Skills Focus		S4, S5	S6	S4, S5	Endurance + S6, S9, S10	S7	7 HRS	
	Riding time	0	30 mins	1 hr	30 mins	0	3 hrs		2 hrs
	Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30 mins		Massage	Activation 15 mins		
----- Half way -----									
WEEK 4	Skills Focus		S4, S5	Endurance + S6, S7, S8	S4, S5	Endurance + S6, S9, S10	S7	9 HRS	
	Riding time	0	1 hr	1.5 hrs	30 mins	0	4 hrs		2 hrs
	Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30 mins		Massage	Activation 15 mins		
WEEK 5	Skills Focus		S7, S8	Recovery	S7, S8	REHEARSAL Endurance + S6, S8, S9, S10	Relax & enjoy recovery ride	8 HRS	
	Riding time	0	30 mins	30 mins	30 mins	0	4.5 hrs		2 hrs
	Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30 mins		Massage	Activation 15 mins		
WEEK 6 <b>Final week</b>	Skills Focus		S1, S2, S3	S4, S5, S7	S8, S9, S10	Bike, nutrition and clothing READY for Sunday Gong Ride	Rest	3 HRS	
	Riding time	0	1 hr	1 hr	1 hr	0	0 - 30mins (easy)		
	Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30 mins		Massage	Switch off		



### Skills Focus Legend

- S1 Starting off
- S2 Stopping and obstacles
- S3 Pedaling ITS
- S4 Hand positions
- S5 Balance and cornering
- S6 Pacing
- S7 Out of the seat
- S8 Climbing
- S9 Following
- S10 Stretch
- Endurance:  
Target heart rate - 75% MHR

# MEET HANNAH

Hannah was only 14 years old when she started suffering from multiple sclerosis symptoms.

She says that one of the hardest things about having MS is the unpredictability of the disease. On the days that are good, Hannah likes to make the most of her life. She loves spending time cycling and going for long walks with her wife, Claire and their puppy, Ziggy.

Hannah loves the sense of community with other riders – all for an important cause.

*“The camaraderie has to be my absolute highlight. There’s a true feeling that every one of the riders are fighting for us, against MS. I meet so many amazing people during the ride with many that have a story of their own personal fight, or a relative, or friend, and so many people are touched by MS which gives such wonderful drive and determination for fundraising and a massive push on the ride, especially throughout that tough climb up to the lookout.”*

*“When cycling along, so many say hello and give each other encouragement along the way. I am always tremendously grateful to the volunteers who without them, the event wouldn’t be possible; so I always shout a big thank you and give a cheer to every volunteer along the route.”*



Hannah says her MS affects her differently each day.

*“It’s like I wake up and start to move around to assess my body and what I will have to deal with for the coming day.”*

Due to MS, Hannah experiences cognitive and memory issues, aphasia, speech difficulty, debilitating fatigue, regular falls, vision problems and chronic pain.

*“MS is unrelenting; it’s all day every day, and that can be physically, mentally and emotionally exhausting.”*

*“It took me many years to deal with my internalised ableism and learn to accept and ask for help; I continue to, and always will contend with that. Invisible diseases, like MS, can be very lonely. A friend just reaching out to check in or chat, makes the world of difference to me; I withdraw when I am struggling, and these small gestures make me feel seen.”*

So, will you take action today and take a stand for Hannah to Fight MS?

# THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE

One in three Australians will be directly impacted by multiple sclerosis through a family member, friend or colleague. The uncertainty of what lies ahead after diagnosis can be a difficult experience, and that's why we are here to make sure no one faces MS alone.

Here's how your fundraising will make a difference in 2023 to fight MS.



**This year, people will reach out over 17,740 times to Plus Connect, and be met with a caring person to listen and help them - whatever stage of their journey.** The gateway to living well with MS, our free helpline provides information and advice, and links people to MS services. Plus Connect helps from diagnosis to living well with MS and is free to access for people living with MS, their family members, carers and healthcare professionals.



**People living with MS will receive over 1,493 hours of specialised advice from caring nurses, occupational therapists and social workers through Plus Advisor.** Without a long waiting list or needing to travel, Plus Advisor helps people with MS wherever they are. Accessible expert consultation is available for free to support people living with MS in areas including diagnosis, treatment options, symptom management and mental health.



**Over 3,885 people will participate in Plus Education webinars and events to better understand MS.** Online and face-to-face programs are available for free to educate people with MS, their carers and healthcare professionals, Plus Education shares the latest evidence-based, accurate information on everything from understanding multiple sclerosis, to living well and managing unpredictable symptoms.



**Plus Peer Support provides over 690 hours of support and social connection for people living with MS and their loved ones** by phone, online and in-person in 8 languages. Plus Peer Support groups help people with MS, their family, friends and carers receive free practical and emotional support through facilitated discussions.



## WELLBEING CENTRES

Development of three state-of-the-art MS wellness centres in New South Wales and Victoria. The MS Plus Wellbeing Centre in Lidcombe, Sydney is scheduled to open in late 2024. These state-of-the-art centres will offer a comprehensive range of services providing a complete wellbeing service model, helping people with MS achieve their personal goals and live to their fullest potential.



## MS RESEARCH

Providing funding which will help bring new treatments closer to reality, with more money to be invested in areas such as enhancing the brains defences against MS as well as protecting against or repairing myelin damage in order to restore function that has been lost for people with progressive forms of the disease and provide therapeutic options for them.



# EARN (WELL DESERVED) REWARDS

## BUFF

Keep your eye out for the 2023 MS Gong Ride Buff. This eye-catching buff will keep you warm in winter and the sun off in summer. To get your buff, **kickstart your fundraising** in the first 48 hours of registering.



## MICROFIBRE TOWEL

\$350 RAISED

\$350 could pay for a whole day of check-in calls, to make sure we're doing everything we possibly can to help people live well with MS.



## ARM WARMERS

\$750 RAISED

\$750 could enable us to develop a whole series of educational podcasts for people who are navigating a recent MS diagnosis.



## \$1,000 CLUB T-SHIRT

\$1,000 RAISED

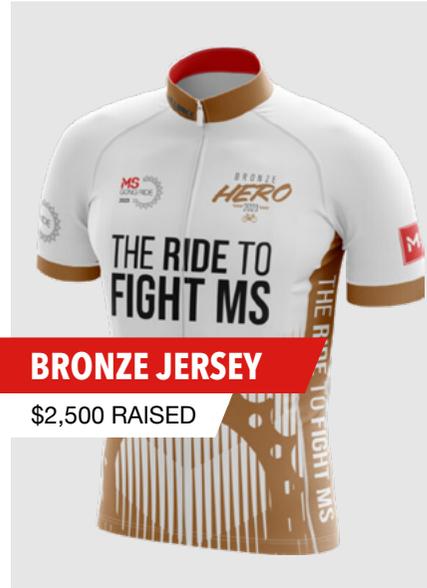
\$1,000 could provide the ongoing guidance and advocacy needed to access financial, emotional and practical support from the NDIS.



Raise over \$2,500 and become an MS Gong Fundraising Hero! You'll be rewarded with one of these awesome jerseys after the event.

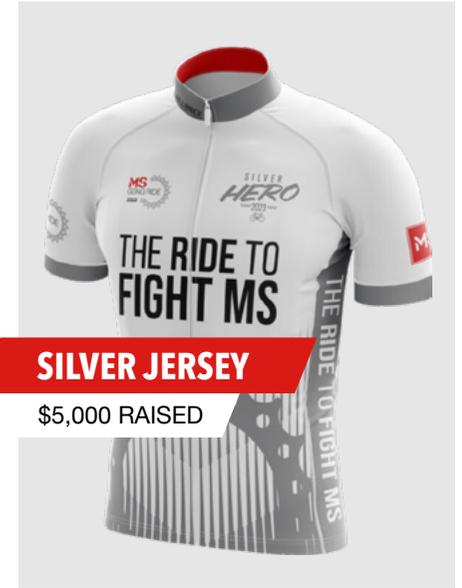
## BRONZE JERSEY

\$2,500 RAISED



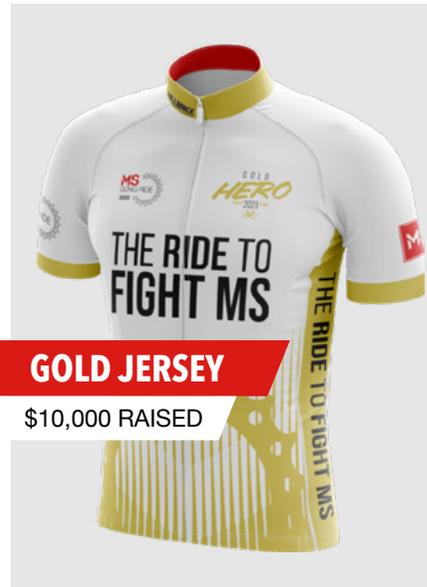
## SILVER JERSEY

\$5,000 RAISED



## GOLD JERSEY

\$10,000 RAISED



## RUBY JERSEY

\$20,000 RAISED



# GET INTO GEAR!

The 2023 MS Gong Ride merchandise range is here! Celebrate this iconic event in one of these awesome event jerseys or T-Shirts.



**\$89.00**

## 2023 Event Jersey

Order by **Thursday, 21 September 2023**, to receive in time for the event.



**\$32.00**

## 2023 Event T-shirt

Order by **Thursday, 12 October 2023**, to receive in time for the event.

Get your gear on our website now at:

[shop.ms.org.au/gong](https://shop.ms.org.au/gong)

All event merchandise is Made to Order and final sale. We are unable to cancel, change, exchange, return or refund your order after it has been placed.



Please carefully check the sizing charts and "how to measure" guide before placing your order.

Hillbrick jerseys tend to be a smaller fit than other cycling jerseys. If you are unsure, or are in between sizes, go up a size. See our sizing chart at: [shop.ms.org.au/gong](https://shop.ms.org.au/gong)

# CYCLING ETIQUETTE AND RULES

Riding behaviour plays such an important part in the safety and atmosphere of the MS Gong Ride.

When participating in the event and during training,, all road rules should be adhered to while cycling. This includes stopping at lights and crossings, and carrying valid identification. It is crucial we all understand cycling etiquette to ensure all our riders, with varying levels of skill and fitness, are able to enjoy their ride together.

**Our friends from Bicycle NSW have put together their top tips for successful “Bunch Riding”, that will have you riding like an expert in no time!**

## Braking and accelerating

- Accelerate steadily and in a controlled manner. This will reduce gaps in the formation being created.
- Only brake when necessary, and in a gentle manner. If possible, indicate by holding a hand above your head.

## Formation

- Most common formation is a two by two style, whilst keeping your handlebars level with those next to you.
- You should position yourself behind the rider in front, with your back wheel slightly to the side of theirs. This increases visibility and allows for more reaction time. When you merge into a narrow road or path that requires single formation, the outside rider should move carefully in front of the rider to the left.
- Always remember to keep left unless overtaking.

## Distance

- An ideal distance is about 30cm to 1m behind the rider in front.

## Pack leaders

- Being the leader of the pack, you’ll be setting the example! You’ll be controlling the speed for the rest of the riders. Make sure you watch out for holes and debris on the road and notify those behind you.

## Middle riders

- Take care not to overlap or touch the wheels of the other riders. Watch the rider in front, not their back wheel. This should help to increase your overall awareness. Pass along any important information about upcoming hazards on the road.

## Back riders

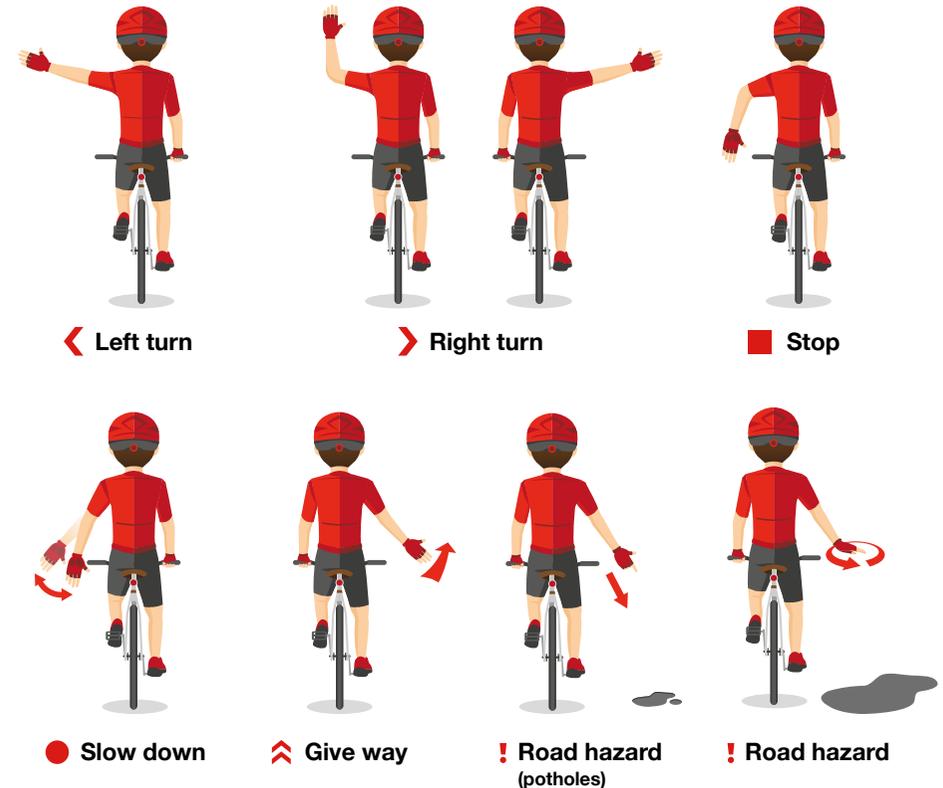
- Riders at the back of the pack must advise the rest of the gang that cars are wishing to overtake. By using clear communication, you can keep the pack alert and safe. Use the simple call of “Car Back”

## Communicating

- Clear cycling communication is key for all riders to have a safe and great ride!

## Hand signals

Although signals vary we’ve included some of the most common for you.



Graphic adapted from illustration courtesy of Bicycle NSW. For more information visit: [transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety](https://transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety)

## Top Tip from Brad McGee - Use your Voice

**“Rider Up”** - notify the bunch that you are approaching a rider ahead.

**“Rider Back”** - notify the bunch a rider is coming up from behind, also if you are the rider approaching, call out to the bunch ahead.

It is crucial that any call that is made is passed both up and down the bunch. This way, everyone knows what is going on. **Communication is the key!**

# MS GONG RIDE



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Thank you to our event partners:

