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# THE SPINNING WHEEL

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## Mission accomplished...and how!

Cyclefest 2019 is on the books! **Focus Cycling** exceeded expectations by averaging over 20 mph for the duration of the century ride and, more importantly, precisely as what they are: **a team**. Spearheaded by Senior Coach Leonardo Torcat, our team of 15 riders kicked its pedals out of the



starting gate, completed every segment and returned home as the aggressive peloton that they have been trained to become. We dedicate this effort to all of our members, those who could not make it and those who will be ready for the next one as we continue with our training programs.

As it was the case with the Tour de Reef a few months ago, the secret of the success of our team is to adhere to formation and rotation. Something that

**Left to right:** Ricardo Pavan, Fabian Sánchez, Mauricio Ambrogi, Lili Vici, Adriana Ruiz, Oscar Benito, Lazmel Melendez, Rey González, Gladys Espinel, Lucy Firmani, Carlos Scandiffio, Wilson Escobar y Karin Steegmayer

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this group has proven beyond expectations. Next stop, the first of several Gravel Gladiator efforts (yes, we are moving into gravel racing now) right after the holidays and immediately thereafter, the Miami Beach Marathon. To this end, our Coach Jeand Duno has been arduously preparing the members of our Club who will participate in the Marathon and Half Marathon in February, 2020. So, stay tuned, we grow, we expand and we deliver.

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## Focus on our new Coach

An accomplished cyclist and triathlete in his own right, Ricardo Paván is the new addition to our coaching lineup. A father of two lovely children and a trained professional specializing in Neurolinguistics and Psychology for children and adolescents, he has become Focus Cycling Club's athlete responsible for designing and implementing sports and rehabilitation programs for children afflicted with Autism, Asperger, Down syndrome, ADD and selective mutism.

If you thought that Focus Cycling is "just another social riding group," think again. Ricardo spearheads efforts started long ago by our leader, Karin Steegmayer, with emphasis on assisting children with Autism reach optimal levels within our very own "I Can Ride" program. This gist of this program is to assist individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder ride a conventional bike without training wheels and, above all, without fear.



Coach Pavan's dedication and contributions to this cause go beyond his professional background. It is a personal quest turned into a crusade to help children. And he is surrounded by unselfish members of our club who donate time and effort every week to ride along with him and side-by-side with our kids. Our director, Karin Steegmayer said it best as she expanded on the old adage "Autism Speaks," to turn it internally into "When Autism speaks...Focus listens."

And there you have it. An introduction to one of our talented coaches who goes beyond a social or competitive rider. Ricardo exemplifies the spirit and *true focus* of our entire team.

**"I am committed to helping those children who seemingly cannot help themselves. It's not just my profession, it is also something that has touched my own family and made it a personal quest."**

-RICARDO PAVAN

## Our rides expand

In an effort to accommodate our members, Focus Cycling Club will expand its routes as of this month. This change will allow more members to join our rides “a little closer to home,” more often than before. In addition to this, our routes will now be more varied, covering a myriad of distances and riding skills while enhancing the ride through new sightseeing experiences. Members have very few excuses not to join us! Check our new and improved web site for details and schedules. From Doral to Homestead Bay

Marina and From South Beach to Key Biscayne, Focus now offers guided and supervised rides for all skills. So if you are a social rider, or want to train with our Senior Coach and State Champion Leo Torcat to compete in local races, Focus Club is the perfect Club for you. Join us at [www.focuscycling.com](http://www.focuscycling.com).



## Training that goes beyond cycling

**SAFETY  
DOESN'T HAPPEN  
BY ACCIDENT**

Safety is not a gadget, it is a state of mind. Watches, computers, GPS gadgets, bumpers, flashing lights and helmets do not equate **safety**. Your mind does. When you finally get on your bike, your car or your running shoes thinking about others around you, then you have achieved the starting point of safety. In today's world, we are better served by reminding ourselves and our neighbors that safety and awareness are the most important aspects of our community. Along these lines, Focus Cycling has changed its approach radically. How radically, you ask? We'll tell you. Starting on December 1 of this year, Focus will begin to offer specific training for cyclist, motorist and pedestrian in the form

of educational programs designed to improve safety for all.

These programs are based on material endorsed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHSTA) and adhere to the Florida Cycling Laws, as updated regularly by the State. To achieve the paramount goal, Focus Cycling has reached out and is currently working with Miami-Dade County and the local Police Association in an effort to advance Focus' education series through presentations and classes for all ages and levels of expertise.

At the present time, Focus Cycling offers the following types of training, with emphasis on safety and the concept of **sharing the road**:

- **Cyclist Training:** Complete curriculum covering a range of experiences, knowledge, and interest in bicycle safety practices.

- **Motorist Training:** Complete curriculum covering safety and awareness for motorist as they interact with cyclist and pedestrians.
- **Pedestrian Training:** Complete curriculum covering safety and awareness for pedestrians as they interact with cyclist and motorists.
- **Children Training:** Without doubt, our most valuable asset and one that must be educated while young in order to perpetuate habits for life.

In addition to the training above, Focus Cycling Club has designed—adhering to guidelines and parameters established by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration—a **Cycling Test** in the form of an on-line questionnaire interacting with Video presentations, in an effort to ensure that at least our members are aware of our laws and safety measures. This certification is Focus’ own and based on State and Federal laws and regulations. If nothing else, take advantage of a test that will help you understand the law, your rights as a cyclist, and your part in sharing the road with motorists, pedestrians, and other cyclist. Remember that everyone has the right to use and feel safe in our public roads.

Remember that awareness is extremely important when demanding your rights. The last thing you want to do is claim your rights as a cyclist if you have not taken the time to understand what those rights are. At the very least, download and read the laws of the State of Florida. They are available through our website and they are free.

Over the next few months, Focus Cycling will work in earnest with the County and several Chambers of Commerce and regional



associations to gather consensus and support towards establishing our awareness and safety programs throughout the County. Similarly, our management team is working arduously with local businesses to drum up support for our videos to be shown in showrooms, service stations, and any other location where they may be of significant impact. Next stop: public schools. Another way in which Focus Cycling Club gives back to the community.

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If you are interested, please visit us on line at [www.focuscycling.com](http://www.focuscycling.com).



As we approach the critical date of the Miami Marathon and Half Maraton, it is important to remember that if your training has not started by now, you need to get going. It will take a while for your body to get used to distance running so, the sooner you begin your training—whether with Focus, on your own, or through another club—the better prepared you will be for the first week-end in February.

It is equally important to remember that there is a threshold for your body to either be prepared to cover 13.1 miles of constant exertion, or encounter a rather “rude awakening” at the conclusion of your run. So, please, take a moment to ponder on the old adage “I’ve got plenty of time for this.” It is not so. With the holidays upon us—well, as early as this week—your time is at a premium and so is your body.

Regardless, if you have not started your training yet but are determined to participate, please heed some of these simple, but highly significant points:

1. Running gear must help, not hinder.
2. Invest in supporting running shoes.
3. Make sure your socks are for “running”.
4. Lube is your new best friend, trust me.
5. Consider—at this point—run-walk training.
6. Slow your pace on bridges and hills.
7. Pace yourself! Forget those around you. This is all about YOU.
8. Build “tiny daily goals” in order to make your victory sweeter.
9. Eat clean to train dirty.
10. Drink before you are thirsty, eat before you are hungry.

I will be giving you more tips as we approach the final date, but I sincerely hope you are thinking about February, and seriously. Of course, you could join our members and run with us every week as we all prepare for the Miami Marathon. We are currently preparing all skills according to their personal pace and maximum heart rates. So, don’t hesitate to pick up the phone and call us to arrange for a demonstration. Naturally, you can also visit us on line at [www.focuscycling.com](http://www.focuscycling.com)

All my best and I look forward to hearing from you!

## 10 Rules to Group Ride...like a pro

We all know that there are basic rules that every member of our team should follow to ride properly as a group. What we don't seem to remember is that they have less to do with competition and a whole lot to do with safety. And this applies across-the-board. From beginners to veteran riders. So, Mr. Simeon Green from PezCycling News categorizes them as follows:

### Rule No. 1: It's not a race

Regardless of the size of your group, showing your teammates how strong you are by launching an attack off the front is a silly idea. That's what races are for. And even then, you will find that group remain coherent and protecting each other until the very end. So, if you are going to "ride" you are not going to "race."

### Rule No. 2: Bar-to-Bar principle

As important rules go, this one must be at the top of your list. Whenever riding in a group, you should be riding two by two, side by side (with only a few centimeters between you). Do not sprint ahead because you would be disrupting the flow of the group. Even if there is a corner ahead, stay side by side and try your best to go through the corner in a synchronous manner. When you half-wheel (that's when your handle bars are ahead of the rider beside you) you create a potential problem. Coordinate your move with the rider next to you. The secret is in doing your best to remain at the same distance with rider beside you. The folks behind you will react accordingly and everyone will move forward as a single group.

### Rule No. 3: Peeling off

This type of peeling means that the two riders in front (pulling the pack) are tired and want to be relieved. This move needs to be systematic and well coordinated with the other members of the group. Both riders move to the outside of their respective lanes (left or right) and slowly let the group come through middle. The group needs to make sure that their speed is not increased suddenly and must make every effort to maintain an even rate of speed.

### Rule No. 4: Pulling through

When two riders ahead of you "peel off," it becomes your responsibility to come through to the front and pull the group along. Once you are in second wheel, you must come through to the front of the group without speeding up or getting out of the bar-to-bar formation. The key here is to maintain a steady speed, squeeze through the gap and maintain formation and speed at all times.

### Rule No. 5: Too tired to go to the front of the formation

If you were too tired to go to the front and help your teammates, then you should sit at the back and let the riders coming back from the front slot ahead of you. It is not acceptable to work your way up to the front of

the group and then slow the group down because you don't feel strong enough to be at the front. The least you can do is take what is known as a "token pull." Go to the front for a minute or two and agree with the rider beside you that you are both peeling off and go to the back.

## **Rule No. 6: Gaps**

All riders must endeavor to avoid gaps in the line. The moment a gap opens up between riders in the group, it must be filled immediately at a steady and controlled speed. No need to sprint into the dead space and then be forced to slam on the brakes. Fill the gaps gradually but firmly and then maintain speed.

## **Rule No. 7: Moving about in the group**

If you need to go to the back of the group, or need to move away from the side of the road because of hazardous conditions, steadily move in whatever direction you want to gradually and steadily. No sudden movements that cannot be anticipated by riders behind you. You must inform the rider next to you of your intention so as to allow him/her to emulate your movement in a steady and orderly manner so as not to affect the rest of the group.

## **Rule No. 8: Obstacles and hand signals**

Use hand signals that at least two lines of riders behind you can identify. When you see an obstacle on the road, put your hand down and out and point in the direction of the obstacle. STOP SCREAMING. You are riding with a large number of people and there is better than fair chance that the guys at the end of the group will not hear you. Have you ever hear the pros riding around on their preseason training camp yelling at each other when they come upon a vehicle, gravel or a read light? Precisely.

## **Rule No. 9: Slowing and adjusting speed**

This is the most serious cause of accidents in group rides. Do not yank on the brakes. Instead, move to the side of the rider in front of you. Technically, you should be riding slightly to the side of the rider in front of you, not precisely on his wheel. Just an inch or so to the right or left to the rear wheel so in case of emergency you can use a technique called "wheel overlap" as a buffer zone to avoid accidents.

## **Rule No. 10: Stay with your group**

Do not stress about these points, but do your best to stay with the group. Find your position within it and let the formation take you forward. If your group is well organized and managed, you should be just fine. ENJOY YOUR RIDE!

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## From the Desk of the President

A few days ago, we had the privilege of being invited to attend a networking lunch held by the Greater Kendall Business Association. Our management team attends numerous events similar to this luncheon in an effort to carry our message for safety, awareness and health. And if indeed it is true that we don't always report on such events, I must admit that this one was particularly revealing.

First and foremost, this group is not just friendly—as most associations usually are in similar circumstances—but they are also fun. Clearly they love what they do and seemingly they appear to be in that peculiar “moving forward” mode that makes them (in our humble opinion) a successful group with equally successful endeavors. Our management team took seats in different tables, for obvious reasons. However, we were pleasantly surprised when the Association's President grabbed the mike and turned what was lined up to be “just another networking luncheon,” into a series of live performances by different participants and presenters that turned the room upside down to the point of forgetting the lunch that was served before us.

As we continue to approach different associations in the County, we will hope that all of them have the drive and sense of community that these folks do at GKBA. Even better, we hope to establish a strong relationship with them in the hope that we can continue to further our efforts to promote safety and awareness.

Focus Cycling Club is a non-profit organization established to promote health, safety and awareness. Although the organization's original purpose was related to cycling, it has now turned into a multi-discipline training club that encompasses training and education. Visit us at [www.focuscycling.com](http://www.focuscycling.com)

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