

HOOTs 2013 Year End Report to the CIBA Board

November 19, 2013

Submitted by John Calhoun & Madelyn Zalon

What to Expect in 2014

Although we expect most of the rides will be in the 9-county central Indiana region, we plan to host at least two events that appeal to teams from the rest of the state and beyond. We will be introducing a weekend event in Batesville, and we'll continue our fine tradition of hosting the Midwest Tandem Rally; this time in Fort Wayne. We'll send out a letter in January describing ways that HOOTs members may contribute to the group, and follow that up with a drive to recruit new ride leaders. We'll continue to advertise events in the CIBA ride schedule.

2013 Ride Attendance

The winter social was attended by about 40 people, and we hosted 11 riding events during the year.

- 38 teams attended one or more riding events.
- 20 teams attended two or more riding events.
- 12 teams attended three or more riding events.
- 6 teams attended four or more riding events.

Although numbers can be misleading, we'll use this as a bench mark against future years.

Lessons Learned in 2013

Many teams have come to expect a grand touring type of event where all riders stay together. In checking the [CIBA Ride Leaders' Manual](#), we found nothing describing HOOTs rides! We immediately created a section for the 2014 manual and sent this to numerous tandem teams for review. Ride leaders will dictate the type of event that they choose to host. However, they will be expected to accurately describe their event and what speed they, as ride leaders, expect to maintain. Rides will follow the [CIBA Ride Leaders' Manual](#).

Unless a ride starts on the north side of Indianapolis, it probably won't attract a "critical mass" of riders. This means that some teams will not find other people in their speed/distance range to ride with. CIBA gives tandem teams many riding options, and teams may choose a ride other than the HOOTs event. These low turnouts can be frustrating to the ride leader and the riders. In 2014 we will try to coordinate with the CIBA ride scheduler, the online calendar, and popular fee rides to select dates that will attract the most teams to our events.

2013 Experiments

Evening Rides - We continued the monthly third Thursday rides. We realize that these are difficult to get to because of rush hour traffic. To help in this regard, we'll suggest ride leaders start their ride at 6:30pm. We'll also suggest starting at locations (such as Fishback) that are close to interstates. We'll also look to start a ride in Broad Ripple area. In 2013 we did host a ride on the southeast side, but the other 4 were on the north side. These rides generally attract 4-6 teams and allow people with busy weekends to participate. The ride leader will select the day of the week for their ride.

Lafayette Weekend – This event was intended to give teams a reason to travel to an event by providing two days of riding. The Wabash River Ride is a Saturday ride hosted by the Wabash River Cycling Club. We added a HOOTs event on Sunday with distances of 39 and 51 miles. We know of five teams that stayed overnight in Lafayette, but we were unable to coordinate any evening activities. The WRR provided lunch after the ride making it impractical to schedule a HOOTs dinner since many people didn't eat lunch until 3:30pm or later. We will recruit a ride leader to host either this event in 2014 or something similar in concept.

Ride to Midwest Tandem Rally – This event worked well although it wasn't easy to coordinate riders starting at different times and locations. We'll do this again in 2014 with a ride to Fort Wayne, but we won't continue beyond 2014 unless the trip can be made in two days or less.

Hope Ride – This event was intended to give teams of different abilities the chance to ride 13 miles together and then share lunch. Teams could ride extra distances before or after this gathering. As ride leaders, it was somewhat embarrassing to miss the start of our own event. Nonetheless, five teams completed the ride together, and we were able to join the group on the Hope town square for lunch. This ride did not meet expectations because the Hope Ride committee advertised incorrect route information. We will recruit a ride leader to host this event in 2014, but they'll need to establish a better relationship with the Hope Ride chair than we had.

HOOTs Website – Some might consider it strange to include the website as an experiment, but we can agree to disagree on this point. Although pundits will freely tell us the future of social media sites, it's reasonable to say that no one really knows. We spend \$240 per year for NING to host this service so we will try to describe the pros and cons. For comparison, HOOTs could attach itself to another CIBA website for about \$20 per year. We opened the website in January to allow anyone to view the website without signing in.

- The website provides a convenient way for us to send emails to members. The year-end survey showed 100% in favor of email blasts. Alternative email solutions include Listserv and Wild Apricot. These alternatives are not as convenient, but they're free.
- The website provides a convenient way for members to post pictures. Slideshows are easy to implement on a standard website, but they require intervention by the webmaster.
- The forum is rarely used and lacks the "critical mass" for active discussions.
- CIBA has several websites and several Facebook groups. It's unclear where this HOOTs website fits into the grand scheme of the CIBA system.

We will continue to monitor the website and whether it meets the needs of the members and the chairs (us).

Midwest Tandem Rally 2014 - Fort Wayne

We are very fortunate to have Kent and Anne Ellis to lead the committee for MTR 2014. They have hosted the Southern Tandem Rally, The Southern Kentucky Tandem Rally, and the Indiana Tandem Rally. The committee also includes Don and Dolly Craft who have chaired two MTRs. Jerry Simon and Kent Ellis, with help from Ron Selby and Thomas Higbie, are trying to use CIBA's Wild Apricot account for MTR registration. Registration is expected to open in late January.

At the beginning of the year, HOOTs cut financial support to www.midwesttandemrally.org. MTR committees had chosen to use their own websites instead.

The Future of Tandeming

We are concerned about the future of tandem events.

- Teams are getting older; it's unclear who will be hosting events five years from now.
- The Tennessee Tandem Rally ended this year after a run of more than ten years.
- The Northwest Tandem Rally was cancelled for the year 2013.
- The Indiana Tandem Rally will not continue.
- Older teams, such as us, tend to prefer to ride with people their own age.

Possible solutions.

- In 2013 Kent and Anne Ellis allowed kids to ride free at the Indiana Tandem Rally. They expect to continue this at MTR in 2014. The goal is to encourage family participation and plant the seed for these kids to ride on their own in the future.
- We will continue to host HOOTs events that appeal to stronger riders with the hope that they will appeal to younger riders as well.
- We will document the process of hosting a major tandem rally (MTR) and make it available globally at the end of 2014.

Addition to the CIBA Ride Leaders' Manual

HOOTs (Tandem) Rides

HOOTs rides have a few requirements; 1) The route shall follow safety guidelines established in this manual, 2) The published description of the event shall accurately reflect the leader's intent for the ride, 3) It must be listed on the CIBA ride calendar and posted on the HOOTs website for at least 48 hours prior to the ride, and 4) CIBA sign-in waivers must be signed by all riders. Although not required, rides should include opportunities to socialize either during or after the ride. If teams will be required to ride more than 25 miles between rest stops, then this distance should be mentioned in the ride description.

Although no one should ever be turned away from a HOOTs event, these rides are designed with tandem teams in mind. Individuals considering purchasing a tandem or single riders within the tandem community should be encouraged to attend HOOTs functions.

HOOTs rides may be hosted by themselves or in conjunction with other rides. An event could occur concurrently with a CIBA ride, the ride of a different club, a fee ride, etc. Furthermore, a HOOTs ride may utilize a route used by one of these groups after their event. If an event is held within a fee ride, the ride description should clearly state that teams are responsible to pay this fee!

Routes shall be identified by using at least two of the following methods; 1) Map, 2) Cue sheet, 3) GPS route or track, or 4) Painting Dan Henrys on the road. But, you should always provide either a map or cue sheet. A ride leader may choose to create their route on a web-based site. In this case, the link to this site should be posted on the HOOTs website at least 48 hours in advance (if used to meet these requirements). The map/cue sheet should include the cell phone number of the ride leader (which should be on during the event). Although the cue sheet/map may be posted on the website, the ride leader should bring 20 hard copies to the ride. Font size should be #10 or greater.

Some rides may not be suitable for all HOOTs members. A fast, hilly century may be undesirable for even some very experienced teams. However, for this same ride, a sub-leader could be solicited to lead a shorter, "friendlier" route. HOOTs members should always be encouraged to create a sub-ride within an event if the posted format is not to their liking. This sub-ride may be posted as part of the ride description or on the HOOTs website.

Rides may be conducted as GT rides as described in this manual. In this case, it's recommended that you state a minimum speed that riders should be able to maintain. Furthermore, you may state a time limit for the event. In this case, shortcuts could be taken to ensure that everyone finishes by a certain time. Be careful about stating "No Drop" in your ride description. Thirty five miles at 8-9 mph makes for a long day!

Conduct a brief meeting at the start of the ride. Discuss any safety concerns, identify new teams, promote future rides, and allow riders to make their own announcements. Discuss the speed and distance that teams would like to ride. If possible, create subgroups that appear to be compatible. Although it can be fun, riding in a large group can create an annoyance to drivers. If traffic warrants it, break into smaller groups.

Try to start the ride on time and leave a few maps under the windshield wiper of your car for late arrivals.

Survey Responses

Q1 – Name, info, etc.

Q2 - Please indicate which years you attended a HOOTs or other tandem-specific riding event.

| Answer Choices | Responses |
|--|-----------|
| None, but I'm looking forward to riding tandem events next year. | 25% 8 |
| 2013 | 59.38% 19 |
| 2012 | 65.63% 21 |
| 2011 | 46.88% 15 |
| 2010 | 50% 16 |
| 2009 | 31.25% 10 |
| Total Respondents: 32 | |

Q3 - Please indicate what distances you would ride during a HOOTs event. Select all distances that you'd ride.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|
| 15 miles or less | 15.63% | 5 |
| 15-25 miles | 43.75% | 14 |
| 25-35 miles | 65.63% | 21 |
| 35-50 miles | 87.50% | 28 |
| More than 50 miles | 65.63% | 21 |
| Total Respondents: 32 | | |

Q4 - Please indicate which rides you would attend. Select all that apply.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--|-----------|----|
| Rides where teams generally stay together and ride as a group. | 68.75% | 22 |
| Rides where smaller groups form based on speed. | 78.13% | 25 |
| Multi-day rides in the Indianapolis area. | 34.38% | 11 |
| Multi-day rides outside of the Indianapolis area. | 62.50% | 20 |
| Total Respondents: 32 | | |

Q5 - We plan to continue HOOTs rides during the week. Please rank the days by your preference. Assign a ranking of one to your first choice, followed by two, etc.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Total | Average Ranking |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|-----------------|
| Monday evening | 12.50% 2 | 31.25% 5 | 18.75% 3 | 18.75% 3 | 18.75% 3 | 0% 0 | 16 | 4.00 |
| Tuesday evening | 0% 0 | 25% 4 | 25% 4 | 25% 4 | 12.50% 2 | 12.50% 2 | 16 | 3.38 |
| Wednesday evening | 12.50% 2 | 0% 0 | 31.25% 5 | 12.50% 2 | 25% 4 | 18.75% 3 | 16 | 3.06 |
| Thursday evening | 31.25% 5 | 25% 4 | 12.50% 2 | 18.75% 3 | 12.50% 2 | 0% 0 | 16 | 4.44 |
| Friday evening | 31.25% 5 | 6.25% 1 | 12.50% 2 | 18.75% 3 | 12.50% 2 | 18.75% 3 | 16 | 3.69 |
| Daytime | 12.50% 2 | 12.50% 2 | 0% 0 | 6.25% 1 | 18.75% 3 | 50% 8 | 16 | 2.44 |

Selected comment: There is no "good week day" for us. Our schedules vary too widely to suggest any day. My suggestion would be to not keep 3rd Thursday and just open it up to any day go any month. I think the biggest problem though is location. Having virtually all of the HOOTs rides on the far north side is not the best plan for the club. It takes us over an hour to get that far north at that time of day with the south split under construction and right at an hour without that construction. We simply won't drive all that way to ride an identical and short ride each month.

Q6 - We plan to host a HOOTs weekend in Batesville, IN the weekend after Memorial Day. Would you pay \$50 per couple for a buffet at the Sherman House on Saturday night?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----|
| Yes! | 35.48% | 11 |
| Maybe | 25.81% | 8 |
| No | 9.68% | 3 |
| Probably won't attend the ride | 29.03% | 9 |
| Total | 31 | |

Q7 - Currently, we have a winter social and an end-of-season cookout / ride. Would you like to see additional non-riding events?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--|-----------|----|
| No, two non-riding events is fine. | 82.14% | 23 |
| One or two additional non-riding events would be nice. | 17.86% | 5 |
| It would be nice to have a monthly non-riding event. | 0% | 0 |
| Total | 28 | |

Q8 - Do you enjoy posting pictures, "friending" other teams, or posting articles on the HOOTs website? Please select all that apply.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--|-----------|----|
| Yes, I like to post pictures. | 21.88% | 7 |
| Yes, I communicate with other teams through the website. | 15.63% | 5 |
| Yes, I like to post articles. | 9.38% | 3 |
| I enjoy seeing the postings of other team members | 71.88% | 23 |
| No, I'd prefer a "static" website. | 0% | 0 |
| I rarely visit the HOOTs website. | 34.38% | 11 |
| Total Respondents: 32 | | |

Selected comment: I do like the pics - haven't posted yet. Would probably be just as happy with a static basic site (updated with calendar info, etc.) and use Facebook for pics (although I have very mixed feelings about Facebook, it's hard to beat the simplicity and ubiquity).

Q9 - Do you find the email notifications of HOOTs events to be helpful?

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|----------------|-----------|----|
| Yes | 100% | 32 |
| No | 0% | 0 |
| Total | 32 | |

Q10 - Please give us your comments and suggestions.

Here are a few comments:

Drop the listing of speed from our ride descriptions and let folks figure out for themselves how to approach the ride. Just make sure any new team is well informed before the ride begins so they are made to feel

welcome even if they are not able to ride the entire ride in a group format, etc. We should want any and all Tandem teams to show up for our rides regardless of ability.

If not already being done, consider communicating directly with every cycling club in Indiana, other than those you already know are engaged, and try to recruit interest from each of them.

We have only joined one HOOTS ride, but would like to join more, if schedule allows and if we know that slower paced riders will be present. Generally, we can keep up at 15-16 mph, but not 20+. The one HOOTS ride we joined [Thur evening] was at a pace of about 18-19 mph and that is a little too fast for us. The group made sure that we did not get dropped, and we certainly noticed and appreciated that, but we struggled to keep up all the same. We typically log fewer than 1,000 tandem miles per year, so we just don't have the fitness that most HOOTS members seem to have.