

Do's and Don'ts for Passing

In a perfect enduro, where every rider is able to ride the posted speed average, every rider would be on time and there would be no reason to pass.

In most enduro's, however, there is at least one section where the hosting club attempts to separate the slower riders from the faster riders by "taking points". This means asking the riders to ride a mile per hour speed average that even the fastest riders cannot maintain on the course so everyone will "drop some points".

On the trail, slower riders can expect to be passed during the day at some point. All of us will be passed, except for one or two guys. And even slower riders will improve riding skills and someday pass other riders on the trail. It's a real motivator and helps you go faster in the woods if it is done right.

Heck, the way I figure it, I'm going as fast as I can. If another rider can CATCH me, he can PASS me. He's not going to slow me down by being in front of me. If I can keep from stopping or falling and not slow him down I can learn from chasing him a little after he's gone by....

Here are some tips for both faster and slower riders to remember when passing or being passed.

Slower riders : Because enduro trails are often very narrow it is necessary that slower riders pull over for faster riders. Do not try to race when someone is passing you. If possible indicate which side he should pass on. Now this is not always possible, and some faster riders would rather you not point where you want them to go.

Faster riders : When approaching a slower rider make your presence known so that he may pull over. Do not expect him to automatically know you are there and want to pass.

Some Do's and Don'ts about BEING PASSED:

DO Look behind you if you hear another faster rider coming up on you. He might catch you a lot quicker than you think. Start looking for a place to pull to the side if the trail is really tight.

DO nod to acknowledge when someone catches up and is ready to pass if it's really tight.

DO Try to maintain your speed without panicking.

The faster riders do not want to make you crash or slow you down.

DO Get out of the way as SOON as you can. Every second counts in the special test sections for A and AA riders. If you are already so late the other riders are catching you, there is not that much point in slowing them down too, even if the guy is IN YOUR CLASS, he's already got less points than you simply by the fact that he caught you.

DO Look back after letting someone go by to make sure there isn't a group of riders. It gets nasty when you pull onto the trail right in front of someone.

DO HOLD YOUR LINE when getting passed.

DON'T Drop back on the trail after you have picked a line to let someone pass. You risk tangling both of you up.

DON'T Ride off the course and slam into a tree, or risk crashing to let someone by. You will hate yourself and them. You will also expend more energy and clog up the course getting back up and going.

DON'T Just stop in the trail. The faster rider might crash into you and neither one of you want that.

DON'T Stop in a turn.

DON'T Stop and lean the bike over. Most riders would rather go around rather than drive OVER your motorcycle.

DON'T Try to race faster when someone catches up to you. You will risk riding faster than your ability and crashing, hurting yourself, or getting run over because you are not helping the situation. Remember, the object is finishing the race, and you are not racing this guy behind you, you are racing the clock.

When a faster rider comes up on you from behind, they are already looking down the trail ahead of you to see where they can get by. If the trail is wide enough to crash through a little bit of brush on the left, that is usually where they will go and you can simply ride a tiny bit to the right, without slowing down too much and losing your pace, as they squeeze by.

You can use this technique yourself and watch how it is done until you are passing others.

Some Do's and Don'ts about PASSING OTHERS:

DO Whistle, or yell "Let me go, Please!" or race your engine once or twice to let the guy know you have caught him and you are ready to pass.

DO Look down the trail to see if the slower rider has someplace he CAN pull over to let you go by.

Stay close enough that when the opportunity comes up you can take it without causing the slower rider to fall, stop or completely pull off the trail.

DO Say "Thank You!" as you go by. Even if the rider has crashed, he still deserves the acknowledgement that you recognize his efforts and you might have to get by him again after the next reset.

DON'T Scream obscenities at the slower rider. This guy paid his entry fee just like you and does not deserve to be treated with disrespect no matter how much time you need to make up from YOUR crash or missed turn.

DON'T Bump the slower riders back wheel. After you get by, he will get a good look at you, and it's a small world...

Here are some EDITED EXCERPTS from some comments on the subject....

From a "B" rider about being passed.....

I think it really comes down to courtesy and manners. I'm a medium fast B rider, so I pass AND get passed quite often. When I come up on a slower rider, I make a couple of "whoop-whoop!" sounds from about 25 feet or so. More often than not, the slower rider would hear and move out of the way. I always make it a point to yell "thank you". We are all professionals and should treat each other as such.

By the same token, when I am overtaken, I signal that I heard them, and then usually ride off the outside of a turn so they can take the inside or I ride in the bush for a second or two. The important thing to remember is that If you can keep moving, it is very easy to get back on your pace. A second means just as much to a B rider as an A rider, and I respect that. What gets me torqued? When someone in front of me just stops in the middle of the trail, and leans their bike over. - they get used for traction. Or, when someone comes in from behind, bangs your wheel, and starts a barrage of obscenities. I still move over, but I just wait until I see them mixed up in a laurel bush in a few hundred yards and chuckle.

From another "B" rider about being passed.....

I've caught guys from five rows in front of me and suddenly they decide it's time to race. When an A or B guy is coming you can hear the motor working and you can gauge when you need to be out of the way. I think the people that need educating are the slower riders. When I rode C I knew I wasn't particularly competitive and learned how to give way without burying myself or holding up the faster rider. Even as a "B" rider I still need to get the hell out of the way of the AA's and A's, as a courtesy you need to be aware of who is coming up behind you. It is going to happen that sometimes you just *can't* get out of the way. All is forgiven.

From a "AA" rider about being passed.....

It works pretty well for the most part. Problems can arise when a faster rider post enters the day of the event. There may not be any earlier numbers available. He could wind up 1 or 2 minutes behind you. Which means you will get passed many times by this same rider. Don't worry about it. Just ride, have fun and move over when the need arises. Use common sense. Just realize that what you perceive as a only a few seconds is an eternity to a AA. Most are courteous enough within reason. Just don't dilly dally. If you take too long to move over he may think your one of the many riders who will actually try to race him. Don't do it. Again, don't ride in fear, use common sense and you'll do just fine.

From an "A" rider about being passed.....

Every single second counts. Every second your holding them back could mean a place for them. These guys are not only trying to win at this event but their also accumulating yearly points. These guys know how you feel. They've all been there too. Do whatever you have to do to get out of the way. Everyone will live much happier that way.

From an "A" rider about passing.....

In the tight stuff you need to allow a few seconds for the lead guy to find a place to get to the right, and IF AND WHEN a second track to the left opens up for a short distance, LOOK for the lead rider to slow-up and let you pass to the left.

From an "A" rider about passing.....

Basically, we are all out there having fun. Yes, everyone gets passed. When approaching a slower rider, most of them will pull over when they can. If there is not a safe place (in their mind) to pull over and they drag out the ride on the trail, find your spot when you can pinch your bike and your body past by theirs and nobody gets hurt. Normally, they are impressed with your pass and will learn something about how to get through the trail ahead by following you instead of taking all their air away by making them stop.

If you are a beginning enduro rider, DON'T let any of this dim your enthusiasm.

In any "racing" event, there will be passing. In enduro's we are all friends and the passing is only a necessity we all deal with and learn from each other.

Take these tips and keep your head about you on the trail. The idea is to finish in one piece and be able to get back on the bike next weekend to do it again with the same bunch of great guys.