

Valley Spokesmen Club Ride Ratings

All rides are rated according to predicted difficulty.

Out of consideration to the other riders, if you are uncertain that a route is appropriate for you, check with the ride host to determine whether you should participate in a particular ride.

Terrain

Terrain ratings are numbered 1 through 5 and defined as follows:

1. Generally flat with a few easy grades; suitable for beginners and casual riders. (Iron Horse Trail, San Ramon Valley Blvd.)
2. Mostly easy grades with a few rolling hills; a challenge for beginners (Crow Canyon, Collier Canyon, Bollinger Canyon to Las Trampas)
3. Moderate grades; some challenge for the average rider (Redwood Rd, Calaveras, Del Valle)
4. Steep grades with some relief (Mt. Diablo Junction, Mines Rd, Mt. Hamilton West)
5. Mostly steep grades; for strong riders (Mt. Hamilton East, Diablo Summit, Tunitas Creek Rd)

Pace

- ND – No Drop – The group will do its best to not drop any rider. There will be frequent regroupings.
- L – Leisurely; many regroupings
- M – Moderate; occasional regroupings
- B – Brisk; few regroupings
- S – Steady; strenuous, rapid pace

To determine which of these paces is most appropriate for you, imagine pedaling a flat 15-mile route. Our club's average rolling speed will be:

L = 12mph M = 16mph B = 19mph S = 22mph

Each person is responsible for assessing his or her riding ability and comparing it to these ride ratings before attempting a ride. If you are concerned about the level of rides to try, start at the lower level and ride there until you feel comfortable moving up to the next level. Although there are periodic regroupings and most hosts do their best to keep the group together, only rides specifically labeled ND are no-drop rides.

Rides listed as 'Beginner Friendly' will sometimes be ridden by our most experienced riders who prefer that day to ride at a more leisurely pace. They will assist newer riders if requested. These events are likely attended by slower riders, and they will sometimes be labeled ND. Rides may be listed as 'Beginner Friendly' if the route is an out and back, and you can pedal these events at your own pace and turn around whenever you like. Calaveras Road is a good example of this kind of route. If in doubt, contact the ride host for detailed information about a specific ride.

Events listed as 'Advanced Rides' are fast paced, where riders may work together in a pace line with few or no regroupings. These are not recommended for new or slower riders.

Everyone is welcome to attend any ride scheduled, as long as you are prepared to pedal the route alone if the event is above your level. Route directions are usually distributed at the start of a ride unless it is listed as a Show-n-Go, in which case the group will decide the route and no route slips are provided.

Our goal each month is to provide a wide variety of rides and to help guide our members and guests to enjoy events best suited to their preference or experience level.

If you see no rides on [the calendar](#) that you are comfortable pedaling, contact either of the [two Ride Chairpersons](#), who will assist you in hosting a ride with a pace and route you prefer. A notification is sent to the [VS email list](#) to notify VS members of new ride opportunities or changes. All ride hosts must be current members of the Valley Spokesmen Touring Club.

Check the Online Ride Calendar

Please check the [online Ride Calendar](#) regularly for last-minute ride updates as well as additional postings. Rain or significant chance of rain will likely cancel an event. All notifications are sent to vslst, the Valley Spokesmen's members-only email list. Club members can [join the list](#) at any time.

Mountain Bike Ride Ratings

Ride Difficulty Rating

1. Easy: Mostly flat with few hills
2. Easy / Moderate: Increasing hills but mostly flat; of short distance
3. Moderate: Generally hilly terrain with some rough terrain and occasional obstacles
4. Strenuous: Long; steep ascents and descents and very rough terrain
5. Most Strenuous (Gonzo!): Better have a few espressos before saddling up – ridiculously long, steep climbs and drops; lots of obstacles

For example: a 15-mile ride with a rating of 3 will generally be hilly with some rough terrain, and about 15 miles long. Out of consideration to the other riders, if you are uncertain about your ability to complete a particular ride, please check with the ride leader to determine whether you should ride that route.

Always bring adequate water and food.