

Riding in the Rain

It seems like just yesterday that Judy and I were packing in preparation to attend the chapter conference in Kissimmee on January ninth and tenth.

This was an important date for us, as we were stepping up as the new district ride educators, and assuming the responsibility of keeping our Florida district at the top of the list for rider education, now as I sit here shaking my head trying to get the rocks in my head moving so that I can write an interesting yet educational article for all to read and enjoy, I realize that this is our fifth monthly article and I thought who ever said that time sure flies when you're having fun sure was right.

In the past years as an educator I guess I've talked about everything there is in rider education so here's a little more of it.

I guess the best advice you'll hear regarding riding in the rain is don't do it. Bad weather and wet roads raise motorcycling to a whole other level of complexity and let's not pussyfoot around it (danger) having said that, there is another side to this. That is riding in the rain can be an enjoyable, rewarding experience. While you may not seek out this kind of fun, you can't always be sure that a trip that starts out with sunny skies will end that way, especially here in Florida so like it or not, let's deal with riding in the rain. The key to doing it safely and enjoyably are in the management of three highly variable factors. Traction, Visibility, and Comfort.

Traction

Let's talk about traction this month.

One of the most overlooked improvements in the world of motorcycles over the years is the performance and quality of the tires on which we depend. Today's touring tires are marvels at accommodating all the various surface, high mileage, intense heat, and wet road conditions that are continually up against. Despite all this tires still can't give you the same degree of traction or confidence on a wet road as on a dry road. How you deal with this difference will determine your success with the wet.

Rule number one is simply slow down. Your braking distance is increased and a lower speed will offset this, by slowing you can reduce your lean angle in turns.

Rule number two Keep it up right. Keep in mind the more up right you are the more weight is applied to the traction patch thus increasing your traction. Avoid last second turns.

Rule number three Learn to read the road, the worst rains of the season are the first ones. The oily scum has yet to be washed away. This makes the surface particularly treacherous, especially at stop signs, traffic light, and toll booths. Subsequent rains tend to wash the sand and gravel onto the roadway, being ever mindful of pools of water that can make you motorcycle tend to hydroplane. (are we noticing a trend here?) The best strategy is to assume that every turn is dirty and ride accordingly. Slower is better in wet weather.

More on this next month

Till next we meet
Keep the Shiny Side Up &
The Rubber On The Road

Don & Judy Danbury
Master Tour Riders
Florida District Ride Educator