

# The Unlikeable World of Club Cycling, MAMILs, and Rude German Cyclists

*Shôn Ellerton, January 3, 2026*

*Why I dislike cyclists in general including the elitist, snobby, and arrogant world of club cycling, rude German cyclists and bicycle races which disrupts road traffic.*



What is it about *middle aged men in Lycra*, otherwise known as *MAMILs*, in the world of club cycling, that make them so unlikeable? And, it's generally men who get the blame, and not women.

And look, I'm not the only one who thinks this way. I've raised this subject with many of my friends and acquaintances, most of whom, are in agreement with me.

One of my ex-colleagues at work in Adelaide, with whom I had gotten on quite well, just so happened to be a club cycle member. I didn't ask if he wore the prescribed Lycra or Spandex but I assume that he would have worn tight-fitting clothes as do all serious club cyclists.

So I asked him why the club cycling community is notorious for being generally unlikeable, even for budding cycling enthusiasts.

I was expecting some sort of a kickback to my statement, but he went much further to explain into some detail how toxic it can be as a club cycling member. It got to the point that he eventually quit because it was drowning out other elements of his personal life.

Naturally, he made it clear that not all cycling clubs are like this. However, a large disproportionate amount happen to be.

In Adelaide, club cycling is extremely popular. It's also very elitist as well with many clubs being more picky on who they choose than some of the best golfing clubs. It's not uncommon for high-flying executives and wealthy lawyers to be the fitting persona of one who's allowed entry into some of these exclusive cycling clubs.

My cycling friend told me a few stories of some of the cyclists in the club being bullied into having to attend every meet, regardless of family circumstances. It's as if they take this hobby so damned seriously and earnestly, that any fun in taking part of it, is taken away. Moreover, they're not chilled but, rather, always seem to be edgy as hell.

They also have this virtue-signalling '*I'm better than you*' attitude to other road users which I abhor. No doubt, many of those reading this piece have come across angry and quite nasty high-and-mighty Lycra-fitted middle-aged men on twenty-thousand-dollar bicycles. And, my God, do they constantly boast about their next accessory piece for their bicycle made of gravity-defying and highly expensive '*unobtainium*'.

This is in total contrast to motorcycle clubs, of which, I had been a member of one back in the UK.

Motorcycle clubs have *the* nicest and coolest people I've come across and they come from *all* walks of life. You'll often see them on a nice day in the countryside going in procession popping from town to town and meeting up at popular cafes and bakeries to have a bit of a get-together and a feed.

Yes, I know, the engines of many of these bikes do make a bit of a racket as they pass through. Especially the Harleys with their iconic '*Potato, potato, potato...*' sound!

Like cycling clubs, there are always exceptions to the rule. I'm sure there are some bad-ass motorbike clubs out there terrorising everyone else on the road, but I've never personally come across any of them. I've certainly encountered quite a few unpleasant situations involving cyclists, however.

In the motorbike world, nobody cares if your bike doesn't have the best exhaust pipe or the latest set of the most expensive Diablo tyres. You might get a little bit of a ribbing if you have chicken strips on your tyres but only *if* you have a super performance bike like a GXR1000, Hayabusa or a top-spec Aprilia. For those not familiar with bike rider parlance, tyres which have visibly new-looking sides but

the centre of which is more worn out suggests that the rider isn't getting 'his knee down' on the corners enough!

But cycling clubs seem to be quite snobbish and condescending when it comes down to what people own. At least, that's what my cycling colleague had to say about it. Several years prior in another workplace, I had a friend and colleague who epitomised everything a young-and-upcoming club cyclist would come to be. He did, indeed, develop a sort of snobbery lending to his character that he was somehow better than everyone else. And then he started to accessorise and purchase incredibly expensive bits of kit for his bike, which left unchained, would have probably floated up in the air due to its ultralight weight.

Most cyclists are as thin as a rake, and no doubt, they are probably very health conscious as well. At least that's one redeeming feature about them! However, there's nothing funnier than watching a fat dude dressed up in tight-fitting shorts, some of which sport worryingly garish colours, riding an ultra-light expensive piece of kit. The most ironic, and sad, part of all this is when they get excited about replacing something on their bikes for loads of money just to be a few grams lighter.

Surely, losing weight is a far more effective solution!

Not long ago, this incredibly bad-mannered man on a bicycle dressed in pink Lycra, rode past the hood of the car I was sat in while stationary at a traffic light. He barked something out furiously at me raising his fists as if I did something wrong. Honestly, I don't recollect doing anything out of the ordinary or doing something which might have irritated the cyclist. But considering this lunatic was weaving frantically through the stationary traffic as if he, alone, had some special privilege over us for being king of the road, I dismissed the thought entirely.

And that's what it is. This king-of-the-road attitude combined with arrogance and self-serving privilege. It's no wonder that many car drivers secretly get a kick out of watching a clan of cyclists stumble upon each other when they get hemmed in by heavy traffic.

But a word of warning. It's quite likely that the cyclist that you might ram into or squash up against the barrier at the side of the road might be some high-power attorney-at-law who'll sue your sorry ass the very next day.

As for *conventional* cycling, I've got absolutely nothing against it. Especially if it is a means from getting from A to B without using the car. I used to do it when

I lived closer to the city and I enjoyed the fresh air and the exercise. I had an average bike which worked fine enough for me, although, for some reason or another, I seem to get more flat tyres than other cyclists and experience those horrible drops with the pedals as you clamber up a hill when the gears slip. Actually, that, and getting constant flat tyres, has become a cycling phobia of mine. The fear of clambering up a long hill when the pedal will unexpectedly drop because the gears slipped.

Now, keeping on the subject of those using bicycles to get from A to B, I must mention a particular group of cyclists I thoroughly enjoy taunting.

German cyclists!

I've been to Germany many times, usually to see family members. And to act the stereotype, there are always rules and rigid customs in Germany and if you do not obey them, you can be absolutely certain that someone will, very quickly, point them out to you.

For example, one of my pet irks is when I am minding my own business walking down some path reserved for pedestrians and cyclists alike. And then, I hear a cyclist coming towards me from behind and then he rings that little bell.

*'Ting-a-ling.'*

I don't feel the need to acknowledge as something like fifty other cyclists had been doing the same thing during my walk.

I'm not even hogging the path but keeping to one side.

*'Ting-a-ling. Ting-a-ling'*

Then the angry cyclist admonishing me for not acknowledging him starts to shout some sort of retributory comment as he whizzes past me.

In Germany, there are some pavements, or sidewalks if you're an American, which have two lanes of different colours. One for pedestrians and one for cyclists.

When the path is generously wide and has very little pedestrian traffic on it, I purposely ignore these colour codings and defiantly walk on the cyclist side. I know it's childish, but I *feel* the need to taunt rude German cyclists.

I remember it being a quite wide path which wasn't busy at all. The pedestrian bit was much narrower and seemed to be worse for wear with lots of little bumps

and potholes in it. Being the rebel which I sometimes am, and wanting the better surface to walk on, I kept to the far edge of the cyclist bit. Indeed, there was *plenty* of room for any cyclist who wished to avoid running into me. And any sane cyclist would do just that.

But not in Germany!

Sure enough. Not long after walking a few paces. Behind me.

*'Ting-a-ling. Ting-a-ling'*

But this time, it was accompanied by angry Teutonic shouts.

I tend to prepare myself for a collision by bulking and tensing up on the spot because, on one occasion, this silly clown on a bike actually *did* run into me which surprised me to the core that someone had the temerity to assume that I would magically make way for him. I wasn't hurt but the cyclist did fall off, gave me a poignant glare, hopped back on his bike and pedalled away, I guess, hoping to regain what dignity was left.

But this was a long time ago during the 90s. Perhaps things are different in Germany these days!

And then there are the big cycle races which thoroughly disrupt road traffic for miles and miles. I won't say much more about them as it only happens occasionally, but when it happens, I ensure that I don't schedule anything that requires travelling around the roads during that time.

One last thing to say about groups of men riding bicycles in tight-fitting Lycra hogging up whole lanes on a busy road holding the traffic.

They look absolutely ridiculous.

I'm sorry, but it really does. Especially if you're the car nearest to them and they're right in front of you.

You get that occasional turning of the head from the cyclists as they disapprovingly look at you for pressing up against them in a four-wheeled metal cage.

And what do they do?

Do they go single-file and let the cars pass?

No!

They will expect *every* car to find a safe time to overtake the whole lot of them by forcing them to pass using the *oncoming* lane.

You patiently sit there in the driver's seat, waiting for a safe opportunity to pass, going up a hill at a relative snail's pace while you watch ever-so-slightly gay-looking bottoms of cyclists frantically going from side to side at a rapid speed because they're all in the lowest gears struggling to get up the hill.

I don't want to see anybody getting injured but I always have that seminal image in my head when the Blues Brothers, in that iconic 1980s comedy film starring Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi, decided to break up a modern-day Nazi demonstration which was blocking road traffic because they were occupying a road bridge spanning a river. With hilarious defiance, the Blues Brother driving the car, not liking being impeded by the demonstration, uttered,

'I hate Illinois Nazis!'

and then speedily drove right towards them, the last moment which, they all made a dash and jumped into the river.

And thus endeth my rant of club cycling!