

John Macgowan: Hi, and welcome to another episode of the Indoor Cycle Instructor Podcast. I'm your host John Macgowan, and as always, I'm very appreciative of your listening. Joining me today is a master trainer from Team ICG, the Indoor Cycling Group of North America Jim Karanas. Jim, welcome. How are you today?

Jim Karanas: John, I really have to speak with you as always.

John Macgowan: Oh. Well, I enjoy having you on. There are just so many things happening and actually what prompted this, and we're going to get to this just a little while longer, but what conversation that you and I had around bicycle safety and the need for it. Some events that's happened in your life that you felt that would be valuable communicating. So... but before we get to that, couple of things; first of all, you have an announcement regarding someone who is familiar to the Indoor Cycle Instructor Podcast listeners and visitors at indoorcycleinstructor.com. Tell us what you're doing with Chuck Cali?



Jim Karanas: I met Chuck through ICI/PRO, through your website and he was just a real frequent... frequently post on replies and comments to my articles and was always giving very good comments and engaged conversation. And I just got to know his name through, just through his posts, and we... we got in some discussion off the website just like I learned more about him I realized he lives in the area. He lives in Sandy, Sandler's area, so it made it very easy for us to get together and start talking, because he seemed to believe very strongly in some of the things that ICG, the Team ICG is doing in North America, are pushed behind the free continuing education online or use of video, the advent of our virtual cycling products not like plus, things like that, he was just always really talking about.

Now this is graced up, he's writing about the use of video and how we can enhance the cycling experience and he also was very interested in a lot of the philosophical points that I was bringing up, so we met. And as we talked more he came and took my class at ICG Academy in San Francisco and we kind of talk a lot more and sort of real, things got really... of Team ICG. He is bright, he looks great on the bike; he rides the bike beautifully. It's just, he knows so much about Harvey-based training from his work with Sally Edwards, and as we started talking more and more and we taught few classes together. I just said, "Look, we'd really like to have you on our Master Training Team.

Now we've had, since... even before I mentioned that to him, he had gone through our website and he basically had read all on my modules so he went through our online certification getting all, whatever it is, normally eight hours if I do the training live and then he read and he passed all the exams for 14 continuing online modules. This is all before I even posted him that, aye,

you know maybe you want to join our Master Training Team. So, you know the guys, the guy is pretty passionate about the practice of...

John Macgowan: Oh, completely passionate is a good word to use for Chuck. So, absolutely.

Jim Karanas: We worked up and so, we just hit it off in our meeting when... he was talking to me about zonings and some of his philosophy around Harvey training and I just realize I would like this guy getting on our team.

John Macgowan: So he is now a master trainer with Team ICG?

Jim Karanas: As to with ICG, he's coming down to the idea convention, he will be part of my training team at the IDEA Convention. I'm going to have him do a lot of on the floor on demos using a my ride plus system on the trade show floor at IDEA, but he's starting out his first ride when it comes to Indoor Cycling.

John Macgowan: Well, that's awesome. I love seeing people that are active in what I'm doing elevated and that kind of leads me to the second thing that you are part of and that is, we just completed receiving our entries for the Ultimate Instructor Class Profile Competition Contest.

Jim Karanas: Right.

John Macgowan: And now we are in the process of reviewing all those and one of the, what I saw was major prizes that the top five, were all going to win are the opportunity for them to do as instructed, go online and receive a \$200 certification from the Indoor Cycling Group. Now, can you explain to everybody what that certification is?

Jim Karanas: It's a basic indoor cycling certification. Why we feel so strongly about it is that, we've invested a tremendous amount in its ease and its attractiveness of actually doing something that's online. In many cases, and you know actually in all cases, if a person is new to indoor cycling, there is no doubt that they must go through a live training to begin with to learn the basic skills, okay.

But what we've done with the online certification is that, we have, I think developed the ultimate recertifying platform where through the use of video and through the use of online games and practice, we can actually make enhancing your abilities at indoor cycling instructor fun and actually very effectively done online. Suppose you're just reading copy, there's a lot of interactive games and videos to watch that will give people a lot of great ideas as well as reinforcing their basic foundation in indoor cycling. So, a lot of people in North America at the indoor cycling instructors already have some form of certification.

We have a slightly different bend on this a lot that is similar to what a lot of people have already learned, but I think that our take on certain things, the use of our specific use of hand positions and different movements and go like hand-in-hand with our practice overall and the fact that we'd like to encourage people to use indoor cycling practices from all cycling, not just road riding, but from mountain biking and commuting as well, that's all part of our practice.

And I think it lenses of very easily to any indoor cycling instructor to bring in and to change it or augment and to improve their class.

John Macgowan: Because what I saw in this Jim, and forgive me if I'm not explaining this correctly. Is that, when I talked to them literally, hundreds of instructors every month or so and there are a lot of them that are frustrated with the cost that they have to incur to maintain their existing certification.

John Macgowan: Yes.

Jim Karanas: And yet they still feel committed to maintain something and that the studio where they work or teach has a requirement, you need an active certification, but typically not always, it's specific.

John Macgowan: Right.

Jim Karanas: And so what you're offering is a chance to get a... I think you and I talked before like a secondary certification to go along with what was an original primary from whoever they got it. But then to go forward though, you offer the ability to maintain that certification with no additional cost.

John Macgowan: Correct. All our education is free and it's free for life. All you got to do is you have to just create an online account and then, you can access all the continuing education. We are always adding new modules, we invest a lot in adding new modules, you can go to our three new modules we added this year about how to teach with forward motion video and you've gone through those modules. You know that they were, there was great expense put into creating those modules.

Jim Karanas: And they are beautiful to watch. They'd make a class all by themselves if I could find a way to project them on our screens set in my club.

John Macgowan: But, the idea is that we feel that the Indoor Cycling Group is all about lifting the level of the industry of the New York cycling, and that's all that we do. All we do is indoor cycling. We don't have any other aspects to our company, we are just a very passionate group of cyclists all from around the world. We're a global company that believe in making, providing assets that make it easy and affordable for people to enhance their skills as Indoor Cycling Instructors. So that's what our identification platform is all about. This gives you a...

John Macgowan: Awesome.

Jim Karanas: This gives you tremendous opportunity to learn from our practice and our all our employees and all our education specialists bring that to your class, we shouldn't charge anything for that, that's all free.

John Macgowan: That's awesome. Now, if somebody is interested in starting or trading their free profile, where do they go online to do that?

Jim Karanas: www.indoorcycling.com. If the page opens up and you can see right away where you can... I mean the opening page right now says, it features one of our new educational modules, "learn to teach the forward motion video", you can just say, follow the, click on the button and then it'll say, "do you want to open start a freebee account," start your free account, put your password and you have access to all the modules.

John Macgowan: Awesome. Awesome. Yeah. I'd be interested to the listeners if they do that to hear some feedback to ... If they find them of value as I did and obviously, Chuck did...

Jim Karanas: Yeah.

John Macgowan: Okay.

Jim Karanas: Well, thanks for doing that, and thanks for introducing me to Chuck. Chuck's going to work a little while for us I think.

John Macgowan: Oh, no, it's awesome. Again, it brings me no charge of pleasure to see others benefit from the things that I am doing. So that's, yeah, just awesome. We've had other contributors that have been snatched up by other organizations and I just thing that's just really cool. That's all. Yeah, I just, it just warms my heart. I feel like I'm right my kids, I'm just trying finding ways to help them advance their careers and to again it is just a really cool thing.

Now, what I kind of teach there by about at the beginning in this though was bicycle safety, and I realize this is a show about indoor cycling, but there is a large number of us that do ride outdoors and there were some thoughts that you had and experience that you had that you well, you could relay in a way that hopefully would help others to be safer out on the road. So, I'll let you take it from there.

Jim Karanas: Okay, John. And yeah we did have a little bit of a pre-meeting about this as somebody would ask us, this is rather a difficult subject for me to talk about. It really... it's not easy. I've been in a... personally, I've been in a number of bike crashes and I've broken bones and I have, been in surgery and I mean all that is acceptable to me as a cyclist, because if you're going to ride aggressively and do things on a bicycle you somewhat have to be prepared for the fact that you may crash and sometimes you may crash at high speed and you might get hurt in some cases severely.

As long as it was me that was actually crashing, it never really bothered me that much. I kind of just accepted it. But August 21st of last year, my wife was involved in a rather severe and really, probably the most horrendous bicycle crash I ever saw. It was during a, we've been having a really great season, number of great tours and had some great bicycle trips that we do, and we'd love to do some adventurous cycling together and camp and pack on the road and things like that, it's one of, certain my favorite thing to do.

This is really nothing more than a low key centering that we were doing, a local centric that we were doing with a lot of friends, people that I trained for the bicycle and things like that, so I wanted to reroute and we were in a peloton and I was in the front working with a few other riders and then, probably about 15, 20 people in the peloton. And then all of a sudden I hear this, I just heard that really horrible crash of metal that you hear when there is a huge bicycle

crash, and I looked behind me and there were just bikes down everywhere. We were going at a decent clip, because it was a flat stretch, we had a bit of a tail wind, so the speed I think it was probably 20 to 25 miles an hour.

But it was when I got back I saw that my wife, Angela was on the ground and I can't really get into describing the scene very much, because it was one of the worst that I have ever seen. But she was unconscious, she had sustained a severe head injury, and her blood was on the road, she wasn't responding. So of course, there was help, and it started to arrive right away to a couple of doctors that pulled up, one of from a car, one from the side, one from the ... one that was on a bicycle and a number of people that could administer CPR, and she did have to receive some chest compressions and the ambulance took a while to show up, about 20 minutes or so, by the time the paramedics got there.

Fortunately, she was able to be revived, but it was one of those situations that just you never really expect to see. We got, we then got to the, when we got to the ER, where she was, I saw how bad that she was broken off as things went on just a kind of like and end this part of the story and kind of talk more about bike safety is that she had a severe concussion and what was known as, cerebral arachnoid hemorrhage, which means she had bleeding from the brain.

And she was in ICU for four days, and during those four days, they had to take constant brain scans to see whether or not the bleeding had stopped, because when the blood begins to pool on that area of the brain, she was very, very susceptible to a stroke and if we put too much pressure on the brain, they had to go in surgically and relieve it or you die. It's one of those two things and very often people that have severe cerebral arachnoid hemorrhages do not make it, they definitely die.

So fortunately, after the initial impact and within 24 hours, it was to do said there was no more bleeding in her brain, but it was that at that time, as I stayed in the hospital with her for the next four days, I realized just how severe this injury was and just what it was going to take in terms of getting her to feel comfortable again and to be okay. So it began a process and I'll be happy to share right now, but she's actually done quite well.

John Macgowan: That's awesome.

Jim Karanas: And so, she is back on the bike and there was a lot of discussion on, not letting her ride in a pack yet, the only riding we're doing right now is just her and me. I actually won't let anybody else either ride with us, unless I know that they are very, very careful. She has regained almost all of her cognitive faculties. There is still a lot of treatment that goes on, there's a lot of stimulation of the brain, a lot of flashing of lights in the eyes, a lot of brain tests that you actually do brain exercises that you do on online and things like that, but she is continuing to re-establish herself. She's actually doing quite well and if you talk, you'd never even realize that she was in that kind of an accident that she was... that the accident was that severe.

But it happened just basically by a rider that she actually knew very well and the rider just was not holding his line and what happened as a result of the, results of the crash is that it's fully hard that what it enabled to do since that, the rider either was a little bit relaxed within the peloton and either just broke his line unconsciously because he wasn't really that skilled in

riding in peloton, or the fact that he was trying to avoid something on the road, we don't really know exactly how it happened and things like this do happen in pelotons and do happen in groups.

But you know the practice of riding safely in a group is, I think if I look at all the group rides that I've been on, not the races, I mean the races you have a lot of people that are very skilled in riding in pelotons and makes out a lot of it, so that their ability to ride handle bar to handle bars is quite enhanced and people know how to ride safely in that kind of situation.

But when pelotons form in some of the more casual rides, the centries, a lot of those people don't really have or haven't really practiced group riding skills. And I think it's important that everybody does. I mean, some of the basic practices of how to ride in a pace line correctly. If a novice gets into a peloton without ever having practiced holding their line, which is what you have to do any sort of base line training, it's a liability, it's quite dangerous. I never really obviously knew how dangerous until this situation and obviously if my wife had not been wearing a helmet as a result of the impact that she received, there is no doubt that she would be dead.

John Macgowan: Exactly. Well, why Jim, why I was kind of encouraged you to have this discussion is that, it is not uncommon for groups to form Indoor Cycling Groups, to form or train for some large charity event. We have groups that, or people that we've trained with for years and developed friendships with around the MS 150 that we do here locally. And those type of rides are famous for an established group for going down the road and then having others try to jump in, because they'd recognize the value of a quick group and it is in those circumstances that what you described happen, my experience and having ridden competitively for years and done dozens and dozens of these group rides is that, you start with a group that you know and you stay with the group that you know. But you politely exclude others, does that sound like wise advice?

Jim Karanas: Totally. I think... and it's hard because you want to be friendly and there is such a thrill to riding in a peloton, but it really is, I mean... this is also, if you are and this is something that I mean, I recognize dramatically, I recognize dramatically last year as a result of this accident they said, you know actually I trained a lot of people to ride for that particular ride, I was you know I've done a lot of peloton riding, that was a charity ride that we actually trained a number of indoor cycling students. For some of them this is their first entry. The individual that caused the crash was now one of those individuals, but even then I realized that I did not do enough skill training on the people that I was training.

I was training metabolically, we were doing group rides, but there really was ... there really need to far more skill training. I mean, I won't do anything like that again not this year, I mean I won't train anybody back and sort of I'm a little hesitant to do that right now. But if I ever do get back preparing people for a charity ride like or a group ride, I think they've got... a major focus that I think all should have a lot more experience really have to impart is that there has to be just a lot of skill training, not just taking people out on rides and making sure they get through 50, 60, 80 miles, but they actually do some very, very dedicated parking lots skills type training, so that people really know how they react on, react on bicycles when something unpredicted happens.

But I'd tell you it, and it was a really scary thing, but skill training on the bicycle if you're going to ride a bicycle outside, if anybody makes a transition from indoor cycling to riding a bicycle whatever skill clinics they can get into it's a very strong recommendation from me right now.

John Macgowan: Right. I had the privilege and I didn't realize it at the time, but I was introduced to group riding in a very disciplined, almost pro level group and they were relentlessly harsh, and those that exhibited anything other than very disciplined practiced riding. And I'm going to guess just by based on experience level, they recognize that they are vulnerable to a mistake from someone inexperienced. Typically it's not the person that caused the problem; it's those behind them that suffer from it.

Without being too melodramatic here, it is crucial that especially if you're listening to this and you may be encouraging others to write outdoors that if you're not the person to really communicate those skills, proper riding techniques and also to be the big dog in a group, I have led group rides, I'll tell the story for a new bike shop that opened up here I know it's like 10 or 12 years ago and they asked me to lead the group rides. I said, "Oh, absolutely, I'll do it". The first group we took out, people are running up from the back passing just completely out of control and I actually got so frustrate that I stopped them and explained that either a) they are going to follow my direction or b) they can find their way home alone, because it was just chaos.

And you know a lot of the peoples egos get involved and they want to show off how tough they are, or how strong they are and but it was after that I was riding next to another rider and he says, "you know, I'm glad you did that John". I said, "Well, why is that" he says, "well, we were all on such and such ride here not too long ago and three people landed up on their head, because they were doing the exact same thing" and so, yeah, as we transitioned to the outdoor riding its... I think I'm speaking for both of us that it's very important that especially again, if you're taking a leadership position then you either provide the training that your cyclists need and if you can't find someone who can, so has the experience and has the leadership capabilities to keep order and discipline and then work, it looks like a lot of fun, but can ultimately be a dangerous place.

Jim Karanas: Yeah, now you're actually right, John. I mean, I appreciate what you did there. At this point really when it comes to I mean, I guess I don't think I'll ever lead group rides again and its going to take me a while personally to kind of get over the fact that you just take on too much responsibility that and once you say sometimes peoples aren't going to listen effectively and then I mean I just seen this happen to my wife and the last thing I want to do is see anything like this happen again.

John Macgowan: Yeah, and again, we're not trying to put a damper on outdoor riding.

Jim Karanas: Yeah, not. I love it, it's an experience for life time, but it is no doubt that it is dangerous. I started many group rides especially when we're kind of working with climbing and things like that and I'm saying there is two ways you can get killed on a bike, you know by motorist or going too fast on a descent, two major ways. So, don't think by the fact that just because there is nobody on the road that, if you start to go too fast and lose control you can easily lose your life.

Most accidents on bikes are not so traumatic, but it maybe just takes a second for somebody to go down the wrong way and be hurt more severely than you'd like. So, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this, this is the first time I've talked about it, really since the crash, but I'm really happy that she is still here and doing well and back on the bike and feeling quite confident.

John Macgowan: Oh, exactly. Yes. And I know you and I were talking back and forth while you were going through this, you were very distracted by, so I am very happy that things have improved and allow you to focus on other things because you were totally focused on your wife, which was a good thing. Well, hooray, well, Jim again for those listening, it wasn't our intent to get too dramatic, but at the same time we do want to be able to encourage all of you to go out and ride have fun and return so that you can hear the next episode of the Indoor Cycle Instructor Podcast. Have you got anything else to add Jim?

Jim Karanas: Oh no thanks, John. I appreciate the talk.

John Macgowan: All right, well, and again, for those of you listening I again appreciative of that you are here and if you have comments or suggestions, I'd love to hear them. John@indoorcyclinginstructor.com.