

On Cycling Faster

A tip or two when the race is soon to come

This is the time of the year when many of the major events & your personal target events are happening. This is also the time of the year when the regular end of the racing season is in sight. This is even the time of the year when the lofty goals of the Spring are having to be readjusted to reality. Either your roaring success or modest improvements can stand a review. That familiar bromide **!The Devil is in the details!** is really worth a look at this time of the year.

Here are a few of the question that you might ask yourself. Is my bike ready for action? Is my bike set up for this event? Have I made a clothing choice? Did I set up my event or race bag with the right stuff? Do I have spares? Have I chosen proper race/event food? Have I decided on the proper liquid & quantity? Did I check my shoes? How far is it to the event? Is pre-registration necessary? How long will check-in take? Have I rehearsed?

Well now where we goin with all them obvious questions- Tip time! Clean & check your bike regularly. I have seen chains break in races, a bike come apart in World Championships & derailleur hangers ruined because of worn out jockey wheels. Quality check the stem tightness, brake wear & alignment, wheel trueness & tire wear as well as the wheel cone adjustment. Always check aluminum & titanium stressed areas for cracks. Look at the seat rails for cracks. Check all the gearshifting. Make sure the chain is clean & lubricated.

Now lets tip-toe through the clothing. This is a real case like **!what if it us!** What if it-- rains, is hot, is cold, is humid? Plan a bit ahead. If you have a computer-- check the site weather a number of times. I have seen pro-racers be surprised by a snow storm in July. How about finding out about washing clothes when on an overnight event. Do not take the unnecessary but do take spare clothing for injury. If you are flying to an event--carry your helmet, shoes, shorts & jersey or skinsuit. Those special running or cycling shoes can fail to arrive on time if checked. Carry a large water bottle of water to drink while on long flights. How about massage or warming creams or powder? Gold Bond Medicated Powder is a handy massage aid to assist recovery or loosen muscles. Is the sun screen & minor first aid in my race kit?

Its in the bag---at least I hope it is! Put in a small tool kit of wrenches that fit your bike plus spare tire and tube. If you are tripping a lot, add a seat post binder bolt, derailleur wire, tire tools, a tube of grease & rag. Seat posts, stems & time trial bar bolts must be lubricated or you can twist them off on installation.

Eat right--after heavy training or an event The Carbohydrate replacement window is about 50 minutes for fastest recovery. Food is good! Don't confuse merchandising for science. An excellent replacement liquid is Apple Juice.

If the shoe fits--or how to have the miseries if it doesn't. Check your old shoes regularly for wear. Worn out cleats can come out of the pedals and even cause some surprise pains.

Be prepared---for the unexpected at check-in. Go early. The warm-up period for a bike race is about 45 minutes. This subject alone is worth a whole tips column.

The Rehearsal--Everything is a rehearsal! Even The Ironman can be a rehearsal for the next one. Probably those who can examine what they see in the mirror best can be most of what they wish to be. Effective rehearsal is a must for multi-discipline events. Muscles are not going to be very happy with the athlete who does not put together serious practice going from swimming to cycling to running for a triathlon. Mountain bike & Cyclocross preparation & racing do the cycling to running over & over. How about going from the pool to the bike? Rehearse that transition by using a stationary trainer. Even rollers can be effective. If a major event is hilly, include in your training calendar hilly time trial and/or race training to simulate the coming event.

Finally do a little test & task so that you can say I'm ready. Pick out a short training sequence to repeat & then test. And this can be the subject for a whole new article.

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