



Questions in BLUE. Coach replies in RED.

So, coach, just wondering...with that great performance, do you follow what you preach?

EVERYTHING. If I have learned **anything** over all these years of racing (& now coaching), it's these key points:

1-it's not about doing **ONE** thing (like track workouts, for example) 40% better.....it's about doing **40 things 1% better**.

2-If you want to consistently win races.....a solid triathlete **MUST address the concept of BALANCE in his game**. I used to be a stronger cyclist than i am now. I used to be a stronger runner than i am now. But in neither of those seasons was i **BALANCED**.....so I'd win a race or two [if it played out to my favor, often depending on factors like the course, or what other Elite showed up, or how the race unfolded, etc.....)].....& I'd get several 2nd's, 3rd's, & 4th's.

It was only in the last few years.....when I realized that I can longer go (& this was a hard pill to swallow) up the Bridge-2-bridge & Assault on Mt. Mitchell climbs with the top 3 as i consistently did in my 20's. Nor can I do track sessions where I hit 400's in 67 to 69sec each on 100 recovery jog.....as i did in my teens. It's just not happening anymore.

So one has to find new ways to get faster.....so I began on focusing on my 'limiters'.

Mine were (& I was KNOWN for how bad i sucked @ some of these):

-swim weakness

-lack of strength.....plenty of speed, but no raw power.

-lack of true endurance. I became a very average triathlete after 2:30 of racing

-horrendous race-day nutrition.....never a plan.

-training consistency wasn't there because I'd always try to be "on".....& I'd go through severe periods of over-training and/or sickness.

When I began to **address those limiters**.....**with the same FOCUS that I used to give my running in college and my cycling in Belgium**.....I became balanced. Now.....when someone ask me (& this always happens), "what's your strength?", I say....."Ask me after the next race.....it depends on the day."

Again.....I don't run as fast as I used to in an open 5k. Yet I can run faster off the bike over that same 5k. I don't ride as fast as i used to.....yet I'm *beginning* that ride off of a swim that has me in t-1 a full minute sooner than years past.

All of this,**this BALANCE**, has come as a result of addressing limiters even when they weren't my favorite thing to train.

3-I understand training cycles much better than I used to. I realize (as Arthur Lydiard preached for years...often in vain) that intensity is over-used (it's "icing") and over-rated and **NOTHING can take the place of sheer volume, miles and duration**. [I crack a huge smile whenever one of my athletes training for an Ironman will 'pr' in a sprint race ...on very little speed work but alot of hours.....and it blows them away, when they thought that training for an IM meant "slowing down" or losing speed.



Intensity is good.....ONLY when there is something to stack it on top of. As John Parker says in "Once a Runner": when it comes to endurance sports, "The secret is.....that there is no secret."

[The 19-year-old kid that I coach that lives in my basement, has come to realize in just 5 months.....that, although we DO phase in and out of periods of higher intensity and periods of rest and even tapers,.....but that when we work, the **MEAT of that work is communicated in HOURS.....and nothing can 'replace' this.** "How many hours" is an indicator of one's state of future readiness.

If Kenyan milers train 100+ mile weeks to run 1500m (a 3:40 race).....how much more should we utilize proper intensity VOLUME for "sprints" (haha) that last 1hour+??

Same thing w/ 100m free sprinters (a 1minute race) in the pool (80k per week swum).

Same thing w/ kilo cyclist who ride 350miles a week for a race that last 2minutes.

4-I've done this long enough to know **MY own best taper**.....so i do it over and over and over again. So many people never stick w/ one that works.

5-Value rest.....keeping your ez days ez'r means being ABLE to get more out of those long or hard days.

So there you have it.....my top 5.

1-attention to detail

2-address your balance

3-understand the cycles.....& realize that volume is the driving theme behind all endurance training

4-find YOUR taper

5-use REST to allow you to train harder/longer on alternating days (& over the "middle-ground" training)

what i mean by following what you preach, do you do the same stuff that you tell me and others to do, or do you save some secrets for yourself?same stuff.

is your training volume higher? yes....probably. I hit between 18 and 22 hour weeks on my "build weeks" and 14-16 when i come 'down'.

do you add more intensity for your running?Nope.....as a matter of fact, while I may run 16:30 off the bike, you may be surprized to know that I'll only go 15:50 to 16-flat in an open 5k. Why so narrow a difference??? VOLUME BRICKS. Long hilly runs that follow long hilly bike rides. That's where the run-strength comes from.

And then I do a fair amount of threshold/tempo running in the hills (like @ a very ez/steady 5:50 to 6-flat-per-mile pace).....and I do one 'rep-session' each week (Like RIS-3.1 for 2-4 miles.....like 8 x 100 to 150m strides for economy).....

.....**BUT VERY, VERY FEW intervals sessions during the season.** Why? This is what the racing gives you!!! Intervals are what you do BEFORE the racing season.....but then must back away from them because of their high "cost" on your recovery. THEY WILL leave you dead-legged & destroy you if you over-use them. I guarantee it!!



do you think that cycling in the NC mountains helps your cycling strength?**yes.**

i know that you are a great athlete, but performances like a 55 min time on that course, even if it is a fast course, is way fast and way awesome..way faster than when Tom Mather was in peak shape and was the national amateur champion....balance..... i don't think I could run quite as fast as he used to when he made that race his own, but I don't know that he ever put together all 3 like he may've been able to. Who know's?

Sonni

ps: I didn't mean to go on TOO long on any of the replies..... but I want to convey this: Don't simply try to do something, here, **better** in your training. Do something **DIFFERENT**.
take care, S.C.

Sonni.