



Coach-Athlete Q&A

A look at some coach-replies to common questions by topic.

Hey Sonni: Today's race went ok in Charleston.

>My time improved by 31 seconds, but my swim was 35 seconds faster. That
>means my bike and run were slower. That's discouraging. I really would like
>to be able to blow out the last Chas. race in two weeks. Time to manage
>priorities. Any thoughts on drills for flat time trial speed or is two weeks
>too little to impact my ability.

>

>If I haven't heard from you this is what I have planned for this week.

>

>Mon. AM- Long swim(3500)

> PM- Long Bike(50 miles)

>Tues. AM- Long Run(8miles)

> PM- Either off or short easy bike ride(20)

>Wed. AM- swim hard 500, 200's, 100's

> PM- interval bike or track workout

>Thurs. PM- interval bike or track workout

>Fri. PM- swim 500 sets (3500)

>Sat. AM- Long Bike(75)

>Sun. AM- Long Run(12.5)

>Sun. PM easy open water swim or off

>

>Tell me what you think.....TD

Hey TD!! Congrats on your finish placing. I think (based on looking at your own week's schedule) I can spot where you are in your "macro" type recovery cycles. I'm still in the midst of your program, I apologize about the delay

OK, you said "Tell me what you think."and you pay for my honesty and objectivity, right? "uh oh" I hear you thinking.

here goes:

I think that in the week that you wrote out (and have been similarly doing) that there is ZERO recovery factored into the weekly "recovery-sequence". Given that this is a similar schedule that you've been following (and your run and bike splits dropped), I'm, now, almost certain that you need a "RE-BASE" phase.

Think about it, your final 2 targeted events of the season are a 1/2-iron and a FULL-IM. How much more of a benefit do Wed and Thurs bike intervals and track sessions give you in light of their enormous COST in terms of recovery (.....not to mention your metabolic 'burn-ratio', but I'll get into that in a second.)

It's time to stress your physiology in a new way.....metabolic stress (for metabolic efficiency) rather than the continuation of HR-intensive stress.....or intervals.

You are making your 'Quality Interval sessions the "cake".....They are not. **They are the "icing" that merely fine-tunes a "cake" of a solid and efficient AEROBIC base.** Realize that high HR intensive sessions (like Track work and TT intervals on the bike), **DE-TRAIN** your metabolic efficiency by altering, what i call, your 'burn-ratio'.

The easiest way to describe it is like this: everyone uses carbs and fat as fuel in endurance (longer than 90min) events, right?

Fat is metabolized (burned, used,..... whatever) in a process that is only kept going by usage of glycogen (blood-sugar.....yep, carbs). Training at hr's that are above aerobic (by virtue of the need of ALOT of energy.....calories.....in a very short period of time) train your body to deliver those calories very quickly. you need 'em, you get 'em. Here's the catch: because blood-sugar is so easily burned (metabolized/used)....IT IS THE FUEL OF CHOICE WHEN DEMAND IS "RIGHT-NOW" MODE.....ie: high hr.

So let's say that tri-guy "a" and "b" have exactly the same ability.....yet guy A intervals weekly throughout the summer. His "burn-ratio" may be something like 65% carb-based, 35% fat based.



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Whereas tri-guy B, stays aerobic (EA and Maf zones that I'll outline for you) and intervals ONLY when the intervals serve to fine-tune and sharpen the enormous metabolic efficiency that he's developed. His "burn-ratio" may resemble something like 40% carb-based, 60% fat-based.

Now, who's the better triathlete? Well, this is conditional. It depends on the distance of the race. Tri-guy A would likely be better in the events that last 90minutes or less. After all, he's spent more time working on his CV efficiency at A.T.

But what about in a half-iron or IM distance? Look at the %'s above and realize that Tri-guy A (after he's gone through his initial 65% of glycogen.....which will happen at about the 2-hour mark un-fed) must take in 25% more calories to be able to tap into his fat stores.....while guy B uses less blood-sugar to tap into more fat-calories.

Again, fat is burned in a 'flame' that's kept alive by sugar. When you ingest carbs on the bike.....it's NOT so that you'll have enough carbs to burn for energy. It IS so that you'll have enough carbs to convert the enormous amount of fat calories we all carry with us (enough for weeks of not eating) to energy.

It's also why when you 'bonk' (zero blood-sugar).....when you slow down and drop the hr.....you'll feel a little better. Fat metabolism (by itself) can occur at very low hr's because fat must have ALOT of oxygen to be converted to energy because it is so complex. It is what AEROBIC means.....it's latin for "with oxygen".

Tri-guy B was more metabolically "fit" than guy A.....despite not being more efficient at higher hr's.

And here lies the rub of ALL of your training. Our goal is to balance your hr-intensive training (by looking at what it gives us vs. what it COST us recovery-wise) with your "metabolic fitness" in light of the goal-events you have coming up. The half-and Full iron demand this. And that's what you've got coming up.

Trust me here, i think your race this weekend (and conversations on your sequences) confirms your need for a "RE-Base" phase.

So for this week: I'd opt

mon--swim-"50's-D" (see attached swim workout sheet)

tues--am: run 1hr at Maf hr (see hr's below).....pm:B-ike 2:30 EA-zone

wed--am: swim Z1.....pm: ez recovery spin for 1hr @ EA

thurs--pm: Wattage Brick Interval (attached) ALL at maf hr's or below!!

fri--swim P1.....then, off the legs!

sat--Bike-oriented brick.....B-4hrs @ EA then R-20min @ Maf zone

sun-Run-oriented Brick.....B-1:30 @ EA then R-1:30 @ maf zone

You'll note that there are 3 days in the sequence of this 1st week where you're off the legs (or have a recovery spin...wed). This sequence is a 1-off, 1-on, 1-off, 1-on, 1-off, 2-on recovery sequence. It sticks to the principle of hard days harder (or longer).....ez days ez'r. Our goal is too AVOID the "middle-ground", where the sessions are TOO hard to promote recovery.....yet TOO short to extend metabolic endurance efficiency.

Sonni