



Coach-Athlete Q&A

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

Q: Hey Coaches.....here is my Ironman nutrition plan. Can you check it out for me?

First, my nutritional plan is basically to use Gu throughout the day. I've been training with taking 1 Gu per half-hour starting 30 minutes into the bike while consuming approximately 1 20oz bottle of Gatorade per hr. Is that enough? I feel pretty good when I stick to that plan. My question is I was thinking about drinking a Red Bull (I used it at Gulf Coast but honestly didn't really notice any big difference) at the half-way point on the bike. If I do this, do I need to adjust my feeding schedule because of the extra calories in the Red Bull.

Secondly, I was also planning on using Gu throughout the run. I've heard that I shouldn't eat or drink anything during the last 5 miles of the bike and the 1st mile or so of the run. Should I adhere to that philosophy?
C.W.

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A: CW.....A couple of things to consider:

Based on your info below you will be consuming 2 Gels and 20 oz of Gatorade per hour. That works out to about 350 cals per hour w/ 20 oz of fluid. The liver can only return (or convert) on average, about 240-280 cals of carbs per hour. Based on your weight (165), your magic number is about 288. Anything more than that will tend to sit in your stomach or just get filter out of the energy delivery process.

Bottom line is that you won't get those extra calories. Now to complicate the issue, Gatorade is primarily Sucrose (simple sugars or short chain carbs). Simple sugars can only be absorbed through the stomach at 6-8% solution...(osmolity) which is how it is premixed , so when you add the GU then you have changed the %-solution/osmolity of the Gatorade & Gu mixture.

What happens, until you get the "mixture" to a lower solution, it sits in your stomach depriving your body of much needed fuel.....and can actually pull water (to get the mixture right) **OUT OF YOUR WORKING MUSCLES** (a "self-dehydration") to get it all right.

The best choice of fuel is complex carbs (long chain) like maltodextrin (which GU does have) and **avoid as much as you can the simple sugars!!**



The other thing to consider is after 70-90 minutes your body will start using protein (5-15%) for fuel. Guess where it get the protein if you don't provide it? Lean muscle tissue!! All that time that you spent to build muscle is being scavenged by your own body, not good! GU, Powergel, Gatorade doesn't do anything to address this issue.

I personally would recommend Sustained Energy from HammerGel / E-caps (check out the link from our site). They use maltodextrin (which can be mixed at an 18-24% solution...much more calorically dense than the 6-8% that Gatorade/simple sugars can offer) and also include protein.

Red Bull (makes Mello Yellow look like Kool Aid), Taurine and Glucuronolactone no real value for the endurance athlete, Caffeine has very little ergogenic effect during exercise, some athletes have noticed some improvement when taken in large dosages, after fasting (wouldn't recommend it).....&, because it's a diuretic, could expedite dehydration. It also has it's Carbs in the form of Sucrose (same as Gatorade), which is simple sugar. I would steer (pardon the pun) away from it.

I would continue fueling from the beginning of the bike until the last mile of the run. 5 miles on the bike and the first mile of the run could represent 30+ minutes at that stage. I wouldn't neglect the fueling process at **any** time during the event. Even though the last couple of miles on the run won't deliver much energy (due to digestion time), it will start the much needed recovery process when you stop.

Chris, I have also attached a document from our partners at HammerGel/E-Caps that goes into more detail. I am not trying to completely change your routine, but I have personally seen what happens (med-tent) when you don't have the mixture right, let's just say it wasn't a pretty sight.