

Coach-Athlete Q&A

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

Q: Sonni, I've been going over my training plan for Lake Placid, and I have some concerns. First, the workouts for this weekend (1:45 run on sat./ 3:30 bike on sunday) seem to be very long, and not very race specific. The emphasis seems more metabolic than speed oriented. Wouldn't it be better to concentrate on something more like a race specific time trial or speed work? And next weekend, the saturday workout is an easy pace 4:15 brick. I feel like I'd be better off skipping that and just doing the sunday track workout, and then doing an easy recovery swim or spin on Sunday.....L.H.

A: Well.....here is the line of thinking w/ your program sequencing.

First, realize that the goal has always been Lake Placid on 6/15.....& though I'd have to closely examine your relative splits (for Lake Murray & Cheraw).....I DO know for certainty that BOTH races raced "longer" than last year's versions of each. Lake Murray because of the weather/chop/wind.....and Cheraw because of a longer swim. Believe me, I've compared splits for SEVERAL people on these 2.

There are 2 forms of training stress from which to Taper from.....**intensity** and sheer **volume**. A taper from one is good.....a taper from BOTH is even better. Now, seeing the "big picture", here's what you've done: In the last 6 weeks you've raced 4 times!!! (St.Anthony's, Clemson, Lake Murray, & Cheraw).

Now that's **not a bad thing as long as we USE these races as part of a larger goal**. And THAT is exactly what we've done.....USED each event for it's intensity while RESTING but not Tapering for each. In fact.....racing a bit tired was the goal. It always is when there is a bigger "fish to fry" (target-race) later.

What does this provide us?.....INTENSITY TO TAPER **FROM**. [At this point, there is no question that you have adapted to sprint-race type intensity.....that will, of course, be lower than Olympic distance intensity.)

So now that we have race-specific intensity to taper **FROM**.....what else would we need? You got it.....**Volume to taper FROM**. Does this help to explain the duration of the sessions of the 6th and 7th weeks of your current calendar? If you're **EXTREMELY** tired (complete dead legs).....then let's reduce Sat's brick to 2 sets rather than 3.....and take completely OFF (or do an ez 45minute spin) on tuesday, 6/11.

But, above all @ this point, we should **trust the taper**. MANY an athlete has gone through the tough weeks.....gotten tired towards the end (by design).....questioned it's value.....then altered, cheated-on, or shortened the taper @ the end because of it.....and went into the big day under-rested. Unfortunately, this is the norm for 99% of all out there.

Have confidence in the work/races you've done. You've built big intensity "blocks" of weeks strung together. You're still in the midst of big, aerobic volume from which to "fall" from. In my mind, if you completely back-off, as intended, from monday 6/10 to friday 6/14.....you'll come in right on target. Again, if you feel that you're overly tired.....then let's begin that taper on Sunday rather than monday.

Do NO MORE "true-intervals" @ this point. Wed is simply 4 x 1mile tempo runs, not intervals (cut it to 3 if needed). Sunday is "reps" of 200m, NOT intervals. (cut the sets to 2 if needed). Intervals are "taper-thieves" this close to the target. Volume is your ally @ this point.....because it's very ez to rest/recover from.....unlike races & intervals.

Trust the taper. It's all in the bank.....you just need to rest to make the 'withdrawl' @ Lake Placid. I can't stress enough the 'minimalist' approach you should have from 6/10 to raceday.

Too, I've been increasingly frustrated by the results of the last few races. Instead of progressing forward, I'm actually racing slower than I was two years ago. My swim is decent, but my bike and run performances are very poor. I've been following all the workouts to the letter, and something is just not working.....L.H., talk to me on 6/17 when we've gone from "Base to taper" & have a priority race to measure our efforts/plans with. "Base to taper" is one **cycle**.....we each get 2 to 3 each year. We're 12 days from your 1st cycle-completion w/ me. Talk to me then.

Sonni