

The Coaches Training Tips

R&R – Rest and Reflection (and Planning)

We are finally there – the days are getting warmer, longer and, recently, wetter. We have come to the end of the road season. This is the time to have a rest, reflect of the season just gone and plan for the next one.

An often neglected part of training is rest. You have been training hard all season so now is the time to recuperate, both physically and mentally. Spend a couple of weeks off the bike. Spend some time with your partner and family. Catch up on some of the things you neglected so you could train and race. You will be surprised the difference this will make when you start training again.

This is also a good time to reflect on your training and performance during the season. What worked? What didn't? What were your strengths and weaknesses? This is not the time to beat yourself up. Rather, it is the first step in preparing for the next season.

The next step is to review your goals and plan for the next season and beyond. Goal setting is an essential part of your training and motivation. Setting *positive goals* leads to *regular success* which leads to *good feelings about yourself* which provides *raised motivation*.

The major principles of goal setting are built around the mnemonic SMARTER¹

Specific – should be as specific as possible. For example, reduce my 40km time trial by 2 minutes.

Measurable – if you can't measure it you won't know if you have achieved it.

Agreed – you must personally agree with the goal. Achievement of the goal must be under your control, not your coach or a competitor.

Realistic – if the goal is not achievable you will fail regularly and eventually give up.

Time Phased – long term goals need to be broken up into short term and medium term goals.

Exciting – if it is too easy there is no challenge and consequently no satisfaction on achieving the goal.

Recorded – you need to write them down. This increases commitment and forms a type of contract. It also makes review easier.

Goals are generally classified as either *outcome* or *process*. Setting a personal best in the Challenge 25 is an example of an outcome goal. This type of goal is also known as a *performance* goal. An important feature of a performance goal is that it should not depend on someone else's performance. Setting a goal of coming first in a race is *known as a product* goal. The difficulty with this type of goal is that it depends on the performance of someone else and is therefore to a great extent out of your control.

Process goals are useful for short and medium term as they focus on what you need to do to achieve your performance goals. An example of a process goal is 'to cover every break in a road race'. It is a common philosophy of top coaches and athletes is you focus on the process; the results will take care of themselves.

Now that you have written down your goals it is time to prioritise them. Your priorities are your street signs to success. Without them you can wander about aimlessly.

- You now are ready to plan your route. This is determined by:
- Where you want to go – ie the specific goal
- How long it will take to get there
- Where you are now
- Landmarks or measures so you know you are on track

You are now in a great position to start preparing for the next racing season.

Next time we will talk about the Base/Preparation phase of your training plan.

If anyone has any suggestions for this column or wants to discuss their training just send me an email or give me a call on 0402 446 947.

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¹I. Drake et al, 'Creating the training plan', in *Training*, ed. A. Simpkin, Coachwise, Armley, 2000