

## THE SEASON PART I

And AAWAY we go! literally diving into the race season. Many of you have already done some of the early season events. Lets start with some easy questions for those who have a race or two under their belts: Was it fun? Did you learn anything? Did you meet or exceed your performance expectations?

Lets have a go at answering the above three questions and perhaps expose some of the Anots@. Be it resolved that most athletes will have the most fun during the event if nothing in the organizational plan came loose. If you are winging it most of the time then you can have more fun if you will use a Agimmick@The best gimmick I know of is to put the parts list on the outside of the container. Put the contents of the bag on a tag & empty & fill the bag. Put the gear chart on a card & seal in plastic & attach to tool kit. Make list of tool kit contents & put the list in plastic & attach to bag. Just who could fail to have fun if they had such good habits that the shoes or tools or helmet were never forgotten. Last but probably most important is to make sure that your AGood Attitude@cap is on from the night before until well after arriving home. With your AGood Attitude@cap firmly in place it is easy to stay dry in the storm of distractions.

All of life is probably a learning experience and as one sage said Aits very hard to learn anything if one is talking@. If the question of learning during a race experience draws a blank then its probably time for some self sensitivity sessions. Some examples might include typical & atypical weather, the nature of the locale, the typical wind patterns, how the race organizer handles registration & prizes & whatever is special about the area. I believe that many participants miss out on what is of interest in the surroundings. A highlight of one Junior Racers trip to Nationals in San Antonio wasn't the National Championships but a side trip to The Alamo. Besides growing pears in the Rogue Valley, you can buy a delicious Blue Cheese at the creamery in Central Point is an example.

**If you read** the Portland Oregonian sports pages you can find all sorts of comments on performance expectations. The sports pages may even be part of the comic section & we readers don't recognize it! On the expectations issue, set attainable goals based on you current mental & physical state. This is where the cliché Aprior planning prevents poor performance@comes in. This is management of self & a top level self manager is likely to be a top level performer. A standard of performance is largely set by the athlete and should not be only goal oriented--there is not room on the podium for everyone--but there is in your own mind.

**A major key** to managing the season is the simple task of picking out your top events and being your best for those events. Peaking is a great subject to examine & the too much & too little of peaking can fill volumes. I have seen young cyclists come to a peak in a six day event, perform wonderfully, & become largely ineffective for the next sixty days and even the rest of the season. Final preparation for your top events means upping the intensity while lowering the volume of training. There are some generalizations which go with this process. Many authorities believe that an athlete can only be in top form for about three weeks. If an event is too intense or preparation is poorly timed, then that time span can be dramatically shortened. It is unlikely that an athlete can be at their fastest or

have their best endurance for the length of a race season.

**Your first grade** addition and subtraction are important here. Deduct your race volume from your training volume. Racing is high intensity stuff and each race experience can take a little horsepower away. The athlete can be easily fooled by the exhilaration of success. From a motor standpoint the athlete becomes more efficient from intense training but the effect may not be lasting. Look out for the **Non Sequitur** such as Chris Boardman set the World Hour Record in cycling 11 days after completing the Tour of France. Eddy Merckx set his record after serious races & with intense extra training therefore **He** will be a winner at the event ten days after the Ironman. **Non Sequitur** means **It does not follow** & your performance may **not follow**. Dust off that old Logic Text & examine what you do against a little syllogistic logic, you may find some errors in those long lists of training recipes.

**Thank you for reading this far!** These insights were never intended to be specific recipes for training. It is hoped however that you will find some beneficial ways to improve your performance and self satisfaction about your athletic activities.

Questions welcome!

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