

Rider Tips

Discomfort (a.k.a. Pain) Management

We all know that pain or discomfort rises with our level of exertion during any athletic endeavor. The harder we push, the more uncomfortable things get. Tolerating or managing that pain more effectively can help improve performance and make your time trial experience more rewarding. And the best way to manage discomfort is to shift one's focus away from the pain.

Here are a few time trialing tips that might help you shift your focus on course:

- 1) COUNT PEDAL STROKES - Count 10 strokes of your right pedal, then 10 stroke with you left. Try different numbers of strokes to see what works best for you!
- 2) SEGMENT THE COURSE - Mentally divide the race into smaller segments to tackle. Find landmarks that define these sections. For example, I first focus on making it to the Marina, then to Windy Point, then to Fawnskin, then to the top of Serrano, etc. Focusing on shorter term "goals" in succession makes conquering the whole distance more tolerable.
- 3) COUNTDOWN TO LANDMARKS - This one is somewhat of a mix of the first two tips. Find a landmark on your visual horizon, overestimate how long it will take to get there, and start counting back from that number. A great example for this is on Serrano Hill. There is a road sign at the top of the hill. When I see it, I start counting down slowly from 30 with the goal of making it to that sign by the time I hit zero. If I am not going to make it by my designated time, no worries, I simply reset my number higher at the point of realizing I am not going to make it. (It is not unusual to find myself counting backwards - 10...9...8...7...15...14...13...)

Play around with these three suggestions... or better yet... find your very own way to distract from discomfort. There no right or wrong way to do it. It's whatever works for you!

Cresting Concept:

As riders, too often we see the top of any climb, be it a small hill or a mountain top, as the end of an effort. It can be if the finish line is placed right at the crest.

But if the race or course continues past a top of a climb it is very important for keeping up speed and output to crest the climb and continue the hard work and effort on to any flat, false flat, or downhill section immediately after the crest. This is the “Cresting Concept” of not stopping effort at the top but cresting over with as much effort for the next 10 to 20 seconds to get up to speed quicker, to gap any rivals, and to see way past the crest as the possible end of effort before you begin climb recovery or coasting at speed downhill. On our TT course, use the cresting concept over the small Grout Bay hill, past the top of the Fawnskin twisties, and especially on Serrano Hill due to the long false flat that continues almost to the east end of North Shore Lane. Simply put, continue to ride hard past the crests.

Remember – ride safe, have fun, get faster, and ride with us!

Pacing Review:

Perhaps the most important aspect affecting one's performance in a time trial event is pacing! Almost without exception, riders will be overcome with the adrenaline rush that hits us all at the start of a race, thus beginning their time trial harder than they should. This adrenaline rush also masks the pain one would normally feel under this effort (a.k.a. perceived exertion). This is a natural occurrence but not a good one in terms of achieving peak performance.

Many studies have been done on time trial pacing and there is significant and legitimate proof that starting the first part of your race at an easier perceived exertion level actually increases your overall average speed. What is often recommended by coaches is to mentally divide the race into quarters. The first quarter should be very controlled and ridden at a level of a more mild perceived exertion than seems natural. After a controlled first quarter, you simply ride the next two quarters at a pace that is most suited to your desired level of paced pain tolerance. Of course the last quarter is when you want to slowly ramp up the effort as the end is near!

By the time you come down the hill at Juniper Point and are less than a half mile from the finish, you want to go all out doing your best to carry your speed to the finish!

Warm-up:

The rider tip presented at the start focused on proper warm-up of an hour or so with the first 20 to 30 minutes at easy spin pace before three to four full throttle

attempts being made during warm-up time. Also discussed, proper hydration and nutrition levels in the start with a recommended 6 to 7/8ths fluid level as opposed to being fully topped off and feeling bloated going out on the course. The goal is to have an empty tank of effort as you pass through the finish. Pace yourself early on and give it your all at the end.

Remember, ride safe, have fun, get faster, and ride with us!