

Have you given this season some thought? Have you earmarked a few key races? Maybe you have designated them your “A” priorities? So, how are you going to prepare for these races?

Productive Training, by definition, is the successful duplication of “event” needs. This is the best way to look at training if you are a competitor. Most people can complete any given race course but it is the “competitors” that make the course a competitive event. Being involved in the race means being able to handle most if not all of the physical, technical, tactical and mental demands of the event. I am not talking about the winners. Obviously, the winners will handle these demands. In fact, in some way they have handled them the best. The other competitors (everyone but the winner) still “compete” if they are involved enough to even just “stick” with the group. They “Affect” the outcome.

So, knowing the specific demands needed to compete in your “race” should be the first priority in constructing and structuring your plan. You need to know the course and know it well. Are there hills? Are they steep hills or just long? How many hills? How long is the race? You will need to know the competition. How fast has this course and event been in the past? What are the expected weather conditions? Will you need help from teammates? How has this race been won in the past, breakaways, sprints? Knowing the above mentioned details and any other details will help you structure your plan for the big Race.

How does knowing things like this change your training? First of all, knowing the course dictates the type of training. If the course is flat and fast then train on the flats and you better have good speed. So, if you don’t have a pack to draft at 25 mph in training you better get help, for example, get your friend to motor pace you. If the course has steep short power hills practice them. If the course is a circuit with one, 2 minute hill of 6% grade that you will need to do 8 times then practice on a similar hill and be sure you are able to do it at race pace at least 8 times. If it is a 70 mile race you better be able to go relatively hard for 70 miles. The more you are able to break down the race into its components the more specific your training can be and the more successful it will be.

This is only one of the major advantages of training with a power meter. Training with a power meter can dissect a race like no other device. If you know how fast this race was completed and use a power meter to ride at a similar pace on similar terrain you can calculate the work capacity needed to stay with the group. If you know how fast the leaders climbed certain hills on the course you can calculate the power to weight needed to stay with those leaders. In a Time Trial, you can calculate the wattage needed to maintain certain speeds. All this information gives you answers to how your training should be structured and how hard you need to be able to go. In his book, *“It’s not about the bike”*, Lance Armstrong mentions he knew he was going to win the 1999 Tour in the weeks before the event started. How can this be? Well obviously he didn’t know for sure, flu, crashes; and bad days are always the possibility. But, he knew his training had produced the adaptation needed to succeed. He knew this because he knew the numbers needed. He knew that no one else had produced the power to weight he was now capable of producing. The simple physics of it all proved to him he had what it took to win.

If you think for a second about this concept you will realize the power behind it. Not only are you capable of reproducing the specific physiological demands of the event but prior to the event you can “Prove” to yourself (Mental confidence) that you have what it takes to _____ (fill in the blank). This is powerful. For it is true that, “The body can only achieve what the mind can perceive”. To believe, and to bare witness to your accomplishment prior to the event will give you the belief that what you are about to attempt is not only completely possible but highly probable. How powerful do you think that is?

Today the technology available to athletes is amazing. If you know what you are doing with this technology it is almost scary. You can now go online, outline the EXACT course you are going to race on a typographic or satellite program, download the details (length, hills, grade etc) into your computer and dissect the course. You can also upload that course to your Computrainer and race it prior to ever seeing it. That’s right, how about riding the course laid out for the 2006 Nationals in Pittsburgh this year before ever going to Pittsburgh. This is powerful stuff.

Many have said that Lance’s accomplishments weren’t as great as Eddy’s. Lance was a specialist that chose one race and did well where Eddy did them all and did them well. So, the question is, are you the most dominating rider in your racing category? One that can dominate any race he enters or chooses to win? Or do you think you are someone that if you prepare properly, train smart and earmark a single of a few events for yourself can do very well? If you are an “Eddy” just ignore the above article. If you think you are someone that with proper training and time to specifically prepare for an event or two can do well, start preparing. You can never be too prepared.



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