The plan

REVIEW YOUR SEASON IN FOUR EASY STEPS

THE BURNING QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF AT THE END OF THE SEASON, TO ENSURE THAT NEXT YEAR IS YOUR BEST EVER

Meet the expert

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AUTUMN is a transitional period and for many multisport athletes it is an opportunity to recover from a tough season. It also provides time to reflect on and systematically review the season, including your goals and motivations. This allows you to plan your winter training in order to ensure that next season is better than ever.

Why is it important to review? There is a simple saying in coaching: ‘Insanity is doing the same thing again and again and expecting change.' If you have achieved your goals, it is important to understand what has contributed to this success so you can work progressively towards new targets next year. If you have had a less successful season, it is important to reflect objectively on what may have contributed to this and how you can change things to maintain it next year.

Success isn't just down to hard work, it comes from working smart. This involves reviewing preparation and performance, learning from and trying to repeat factors that contributed to successes and learning from and trying to remove errors and performance-limiting factors. Successful individuals spend time learning from things that went well and the factors that contributed to these successes, so that they can replicate them and maintain consistency.

This feature will help you to objectively review how your season went, your strengths and weaknesses and the limiting factors that you need to remove. Once you've worked these out, you can use this information to help you improve in the upcoming months.

How to use this plan

- Analyse this year's performance
- Identify next season's race goals
- Create a plan working towards your goals while building on any areas of weakness
- Adapt your plan as 2013 develops

STEP 1: REVIEW YOUR RESULTS

BEFORE REVIEWING your goals and season in detail, it is helpful to collate all the relevant data available so that your review is objective, and so that performance changes are quantifiable. It will show how you might change your preparation and racing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Event cat</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chilly Willy 10km (entry 210/52 females)</td>
<td>Training event</td>
<td>23.2.12</td>
<td>42:24mins</td>
<td>Windy</td>
<td>Overall: 15th/2nd female Age-group: 1st vet</td>
<td>4/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

> SUMMARY OF YOUR RACE PERFORMANCES

TO DO: Briefly summarise this season's race performances, as shown in the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Other Data/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100m</td>
<td>00:01:22</td>
<td>Training TT – Pool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400m</td>
<td>00:05:05</td>
<td>Aquathlon – Pool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750m</td>
<td>1:00:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500m</td>
<td>2:30:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,900m</td>
<td>2:30:48</td>
<td>Open-water Triathlon</td>
<td>River swim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8km</td>
<td>3:30:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

> SUMMARY OF YOUR RACE PERFORMANCES

TO DO: Write down all your season's best times (in races and training), like the example below.

[Download these tables from triradar.com]
The plan

Season Review

November 2012

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Bike

Distance | Time | Event Type | Other Data/Notes

---|---|---|---
10 miles | 00:30:22 | Time trial | Average speed 20mph
25 miles |
50 miles |
20km |
40km |
90km |
180km |

Run

Distance | Time | Event Type | Other Data/Notes

---|---|---|---
1km | 00:04:15 | Training TT – track | Average heart rate 171bpm
5km |
10km |
21.1km | Half marathon |
42.2km | Marathon |

> Your Season: General Notes

To Do: Write down anything else that’s relevant to your performances in the season just gone, as per the suggestions below:

- Performance test results eg: VO2 max, metabolic profiling, power testing, T20 swim test etc
- Heart rate and power data from specific training, test sessions or races
- Age-group national and world champ qualification times
- Race preparation routines
- Race plans/strategies/pacing
- Technical data / info eg. underwater swim footage and analysis
- Training diaries (fatigue, sleep, motivation to train etc)
- Nutrition diaries, body weight, body composition data
- Coaching feedback / input
- Health / injury record

Step 2: Review Your Goals

Using some or all of the information you gathered in Step 1 (Review Your Results) you can start to objectively reflect on and evaluate your season. This is personal to you and should be done in the context of your goals. For example, if your goals were to have fun in the sport and to complete your first triathlon this may simply be a case of: “Yes, I achieved that and now I want to take on another challenge. I also aim to improve in specific areas”. If your goals were more specific and performance focused, this review may be more detailed. The processes below are designed to help you with this.

> Season Goals, Successes and Challenges

To Do: List your main goals, successes and challenges from last season and how you might go about improving on them.

Season’s Goals

| Achievement |
|---|---|---|
| On a scale of 1 – 5 (1: not achieved, 2: partially achieved, 3: mostly achieved, 4: achieved, 5: exceeded goals/expectations) mark your achievement of goals and a rationale for your score.

Example 1: Be competitive at Olympic-distance racing and achieve qualification for the ITU World Age-Group Championships 2012

Achieved top 5 age-group placings in 3 out of 4 of my A-races, but missed out on qualification by two places. Consistency of training achieved by improved conditioning and no injuries

Example 2: Complete my first Ironman 70.3 race in a time under 5hrs by the end of August

4:45 time at Bedford Middle Distance Tri. Achieved target race pace consistently in brick training sessions

Successes

List your key successes of the season, including race performances, training improvements, technical developments, avoiding or recovering from injury, reducing weight or broader successes such as achieving a better work/life balance

Factors

Identify the factors you think have made the greatest contribution to this success

Example 3: For the first time I have achieved consistency in my training

Employing a coach and monitoring training by keeping a training diary

Challenges

List any challenges or factors that you think may have impacted your training or performances

Factors

Identify things you could have done or could do in the future to minimise the impact of these factors

Example 4: Attacks on consistency in my training due to work commitments and poor time management

More detailed planning of my weekly/monthly schedules and prioritising time

Tri47.zone_plan.indd   87
10/3/12   9:54 AM
### Step 3: Your Personal Profile

**To Do:** Using the results from Steps 2 and 3 you can put everything together to assess your current strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities to move your performance to the next level. For each discipline of triathlon and other performance factors (you can simplify or add to these) objectively rate yourself on a scale of 1-5. Using traffic light colours (as in our example) highlights your scores so that you develop a visual profile of your strengths and weaknesses. You should then add any appropriate summary data and narrative which will enable you to map out future training priorities and process goals in Step 4. See the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abilities/Technique</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Supporting Notes/Data</th>
<th>Options/Opportunities</th>
<th>Process Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swim</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>Completed 3.8km in 59mins/5km in 1:20 = good comparative times</td>
<td>-- Underwater swim analysis</td>
<td>-- Maintain swim endurance base with 3 sessions per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>Dropping elbow limit application</td>
<td>-- Further coaching input</td>
<td>-- Progress stroke development through weekly one-one coached sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>Struggle with race starts and accelerating lengths / maintaining pace</td>
<td>-- Focus on shorter speed/power intervals in specific pre-phase</td>
<td>-- Swim sub 1:25 for 15x100m on 2min turnaround by March 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>Review underwater footage, correct body position, ‘dropping elbow, and finish of stroke’</td>
<td>-- Focus on developing and holding higher elbow in underwater pull / push phase of stroke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaerobic Endurance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Performance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>Fill-in areas of resistance and improved stroke efficiency/stroke count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other performance factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injuries</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hydration</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Diet</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Nutrition</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Weight/Composition</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fun/Enjoyment</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to Train</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Toughness</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lifestyle</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to Train</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Balance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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** Glossary of Terms: **

- **Endurance** = sustained aerobic/muscular effort
- **Strength** = ability to apply force to overcome resistance
- **Speed** = ability to move efficiently and at pace
- **Power** = ability to apply large force at speed
- **Anaerobic endurance** = ability to resist fatigue and lactate build up in high intensity effort

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Repeat this table for the bike and run sections.

Download these tables from triradar.com
The plan: season review

Planning is essential for success in everything you do. Use the profile you got from doing steps 1 to 3 to set and train to realistic goals for next season and maximise the return on your investment. The tips below will help you put this into practice.

To Do: Use the advice below to set out your successful road map for next season.

1. Set your goals
- Identify two to three realistic season goals for next year.
- Be specific in setting your goals.
- Identify how you are going to measure success eg a time trial performance test.
- Put a timeline to your goals. For example: run a 10km training TT under 41:20 by week 20.
- Other races should be considered as C-races and used as training events and high intensity workouts, not important races.

2. Prioritise your races
- Map out the races you want to do in 2013 (these may already be in your goals).
- Prioritise three to four key A-priority races and four to eight B-races that you want to do.
- Other races should be considered as C-races and used as training events and high intensity workouts, not important races.

3. Allocate your training time
- Review your target races and realistically consider the time you have available to train on a weekly and monthly basis. You might need to re-review your performance goals based on this.
- Using a year wall-planner, map out and allocate your time resources, highlighting stress points and places where you can allow more time.
- Allocate more training volume in your preparation and base phases and more recovery time in race preparation phases.
- Allocate time according to your training priorities, strengths and weaknesses, plus distribution across disciplines eg cycling requires more time, but has potentially the biggest return.

4. Structure your training
- Be specific about structuring your training. This may involve getting support from a coach.
- Work to maintain your strengths and prioritise your weaknesses in winter training development.
- If you are technically sound, focus on the physical development. If you are technically weak, prioritise coaching input or you will be compounding poor technique with a higher risk of injury.
- If you train well, but race poorly, look at your race and mental preparation and work on these aspects through some winter practice events.

5. Remove the barriers
- Review the “performance limiters” you have identified. Are they things that you can realistically change? If you can, you should rate your motivation to make these changes on a scale from 1-10. If you score 8-10 you will probably succeed. If you score less than eight you need to review your goals as it is less likely that you will commit to them if you do not see them as priorities.

6. Plan the detail
- Draft an overview training plan. It’s a good idea yet some help doing this from a coach or more experienced athlete.
- Working back from your key races, plan in the training you need to do to achieve your racing goals. Use appropriate tests to measure your progress and adapt your training where necessary.
- Being flexible is essential. You need to be prepared to modify your plan if you get injured or if other factors change what you can invest in your preparation and racing.

"Planning is essential for success in everything you do"