

## **Which Race??**

Look on the web, look in 220, lots of races to choose from but which ones are best for you?

Here are a few tips to help you choose.

### **Common questions are:**

- How do I know which races to plan?
- How many should I plan on making up my season?
- How do I best USE the events to meet my goals?
- Which races do I target as "priority" events?

.....And finally,

- Knowing that so many events fill-up quickly, how do I GET IN my chosen events?

All are worthwhile questions.

*\*Remembering what's important\**

Each season should have a "focus".

- Some of you will value competition against others.
- Most simply want to compete against themselves.
- Some relish the challenge of working their way up to longer and longer events. Some of you may *USE* events as family outings and for the social.

Nothing wrong with any of them.

**Whatever race schedule YOU chose for yourself, be sure that it:**

- a) Is your race, your reason for participating, and what you want?
- b) Serves to achieve "BALANCE" in OTHER areas of your life
- c) Is an achievable target?

### ***Season Planning***

Just like each RACE should have a purpose, the SEASON should have a single primary target as well.

One question we will ask when setting goals/races will be

"At the end of the season, what single accomplishment would you like to have achieved during the course of the year?"

- Challenge in the grand prix?
- Is it to place in your age group in a single race?
- Better your time from the previous year in that race?
- Place top-5 in a SERIES of races? FINISH a half-ironman?

Once we've determined what SINGLE thing you'd like to accomplish in the season, now we've created a measuring-stick by which you can weigh all other plans.

Caution: If you choose 2 or 3 "season" objectives, you risk becoming "jack of them all" and "master of none". Many times secondary goals **are** compatible with the season-goal, but not always. It's then that you'll need to ask, "What's most important?"

### ***Individual Race Targets***

When choosing actual races you get down to the nitty-gritty of sequencing a season.

If your "season-goal" is to compete in the grand prix, you'll be looking at race-distances. Another factor is how the races are spaced among one another and which ones can you realistically do.

Just because racing 3 weekends in a row is possible...it doesn't leave much room for training. And a race or two may suffer.

Other factors in choosing races may be, **drive-time** to and from the race, **wetsuit event or not**, and one which athletes sometimes avoid 'the bigger race'.

### ***The three components to recognise in the training/racing cycle are***

1)-BUILD your strength (through good ole fashioned VOLUME training)...rest then race.

2)-MOLD that strength into race-like fitness (through higher intensity hard work sessions)...rest then race

3)-and SHARPEN that fitness (through a peak build and subsequent taper) ...culminating in a "tapered-for" & prioritized race.

Your goal and our job is to cycle you through this 1-2-3 sequence 2 to 3 times a season getting stronger, faster, and more comfortable each time. **Focusing on the one or two key race.**

The secret to choosing races is to match the possible events to this sequence.

### ***Avoiding Over-racing***

**Can I race too much?** Yes racing TOO much can hamper performances in targeted events.

The problem with "over-racing" is that racing takes more recovery.....and actual training must often be sacrificed in the equation.

BALANCE between training/racing is the key.

One "rested-for" race every 4 weeks is about right for most athletes.

If you race more than that, try not to eliminate training sessions to do so.

### ***Finishing Strong***

How many times have you gotten to the end of a season only to feel a bit burnt-out, travel-weary, and ready for winter?

It's never a bad idea to make your LAST event of the year ALSO your final "Priority race".

If done correctly, you can culminate your season into your best finish by taking advantage of the entire season's volume and race-experience.

For some, "finishing strong" means hitting a distance they've never attempted....a half or full-Ironman.

For others, it may be a personal-best performance at a given distance.

Whatever that final event will be.....see it as a way to EARN your downtime and that easy few weeks at the end of the season.....

Before it starts all over again☺

*Coaching you to achieve your potential*  
Brian Butler • Head coach • 07831•831•273  
Annie Hogan • Coach • 07759•208•309  
Richard Hughes • Coach • 07771•667•600  
[www.natural-ability.co.uk](http://www.natural-ability.co.uk)  
[swimbikerun@natural-ability.co.uk](mailto:swimbikerun@natural-ability.co.uk)