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Intermediate Bike Training News

Create a Sustainable Healthy Lifestyle

October 4, 2007

Dear Rick,

Welcome to the first newsletter of the 2008 training season. Let me clarify a few things about the program. While this program will help any cyclists, from beginner to competitor, improve their cycling the main goal is to help casual 30-40 mile club riders extend their range out to 130 miles (200K). With that conditioning century rides (100 mile) should be relatively comfortable, you can easily do just about any cycling tour on the planet, and you are set up to do long-distance riding events like the RMCC Brevet series. Rocky Mountain Cycling Club only organizes the group ride schedule. They do not provide training. Midlife Cycling is the official training resource for the club.

So where do you start? If you have not assessed your riding strengths and weaknesses take the time to do that now. Do you want to ride faster? Ride farther? Climb better? Of course, we would like to improve everything but it is better to focus on one thing at a time during a season with maybe a secondary goal. For some of us, we also have to prepare for ski season by eliminating the muscle imbalances that developed over the summer.

The Midlife Cycling program is not "warmed over" competitive training. The conditioning and motivation of the recreational cyclist is considerably different than that of a racer. We are doing this for better health and fitness with very limited time available for working out. Injury prevention is paramount which precludes training at maximal, competitive efforts. Our training timeframe is decades and not a racing season.

I'm going to ask that you take in faith that the key to great recreational cycling is to stop hammering yourself into the ground every time you ride, go on longer rides less frequently, and focus on off-bike exercises. Now I'm not relegating you to slow social rides. Many of us can turn a 4 1/2 to 5 hour century. The key is to build endurance first then increase your intensity. Even racers in many sports are finding that they have to focus more on endurance training than they have in the past.

Your task for this month is to just enjoy riding and get in the mindset for the coming colder weather. We need to peak in June/July so now is not the time to work on intensity. We ride all year and settle into 30- 40 mile flat rides in Oct/Nov. I also switch to my cyclocross bike as the weather deteriorates and they start sanding the roads when it snows. Consider 700x30c knobby tires for your existing bike if you have only one bike.

Another task is to build a HABIT of doing core exercises on a daily basis. You only need crunches, back raises, and step-ups to start with. Add push-ups if you're so inclined. Break the mindset that you must do all of these exercises in a single workout session. Lack of time is the primary reason most fitness programs fail. You can do crunches while watching TV. You can do step ups anywhere and at any time. Try them while you're on the phone during work. Or pause at the stairs you are about to go up and crank out 10 step-ups a leg. That takes less than 20 seconds. Do that throughout the day and you will be surprised at the volume of exercise you can do each day.

If you want specific help in putting together your training season please email or call me. A good place to start is by picking up my "Getting Started" CD at "<http://secure.midlifesports.com/product.php?productid=16202&cat=274&page=1>" (cut and paste this into your browser). I'm going to rename this CD soon. It is actually an Intro to Long-Distance cycling rather than a beginner cyclist CD. It is amazing to me that we still have experienced riders

flattening out or bonking due to poor nutrition/hydration. This CD addresses the issues that experienced long-distance riders already know.

Finally, now that I have bashed competitive training I want to mention that Midlife Cycling is sponsoring an elite athlete - Amy Kay Smith. Amy is a part-time triathlete who has consistently placed high in local events. She won the Colorado Wild Women Du Wop Duathlon and is qualified for both the Triathlon Nationals and Duathlon Nationals next year. We have worked together on both her biking and running (I am a former runner). She has even managed to get me into the pool. Triathletes need to train differently on the bike than those who ride just a pure cycling event. You need to set your legs up for the run with proper cycling technique. This program will help multi-sport athletes also.

Have a great week!



Rick Russon

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