

# THE ENDURANCE COACH.COM

## Planning a schedule for adventure racing

The season has begun and it's likely that you have been training hard through the winter months to prepare for the challenges which lie ahead. To compete successfully in the sport of adventure racing you need the correct combination of fitness, technical ability and experience. When you consider that these elements may vary from event to event, it's easy to understand why success is never guaranteed!

### Planning a schedule – 'fitness'

'Sports specificity' refers to the fact that your body adapts 'specifically' to whatever you do in training sessions. If you run very hard for short periods of time during training, you will eventually become very good at running hard for short periods of time. The point to take from the law of sports specificity is that before you plan your training sessions, look at the end point you are trying to achieve (the race you are to compete in) and use that as your guide.

Questions to ask:

- Which disciplines are included, what is the time percentage for each?
- How long is each discipline?
- What kind of terrain?

If the event involves running for 6 hours with a rucksack, over rough terrain and with tricky navigation, it's fair to assume that running 8X400m intervals on a track is not sports specific. Winners of mountain marathon events will spend many hours on similar terrain, carrying packs, & navigating to replicate the same conditions. Think how you can make your training more specific in the coming months, can you add a pack to your running or constantly follow a map when you cycle? The law of sports specificity dictates that you will become good at the things you practice.

### Planning a schedule – 'personal strengths and weaknesses'

Ask an athlete which training sessions they enjoy the least and it will be their weakest discipline. If you are a strong biker and weak runner it's likely that you will be inclined to endure your running sessions rather than enjoy them.

It is a basic fact that you will improve more by focusing upon your weaknesses as opposed to focusing upon your strengths. Training in any discipline initially leads to rapid improvement followed by the inevitable plateau. To get past this plateau you are required to train harder, smarter or in a different manner. If you are a strong biker it is likely that you are on the plateau and a great deal of work is needed to make small gains, if you are a

weak runner you will not yet have reached the plateau and a small amount of consistent training will lead to significant gains.

When considering your own strengths and weaknesses it is essential that you compare these against the event requirements. If you are a strong biker and weak runner, it would make sense to focus upon an event with more biking and less running.

Questions to ask:

- What are my own strengths and weaknesses?
- How do they match up with the event disciplines?

### **Planning a schedule – ‘skills and technical requirements’**

Racing ACE Races? Irrelevant of how much running and cycling you do, if you can't read a map whilst on the move you will spend much of your time drowning your sorrows over a Wilf's brew when your scores are downloaded. Before you plan your schedule, look at the technical requirements of target events and rate their level of importance. Kayaking is something which may have minimal impact upon your ACE Race performance and to some extent you can get away with no training, but if you venture further into Raid events and similar, kayaking and canoeing plays a huge role in the race outcome. Simple skills such as running and riding off road should also be considered, if the event is in the Lakes compared to Cannock forest, which do you think would place greater emphasis upon technical riding or climbing ability?

Questions to ask:

- Which skills and technical abilities are involved in the event?
- To what extent are they involved (rank in order of importance)?
- How do your skills and technical abilities match up?

### **Putting it together**

Long term planning is important for success, start by sitting down and planning your timetable for the year ahead and rank your events as A,B or C races:

- A – Most important (1-2 each year)
- B – Very important (2-3 each year)
- C – Least important (3-4 each year)

Ideally your 'A' races should be 3 months apart to give plenty of time to prepare. Look at the demands of the event with regards to fitness and technical requirements, comparing them against your own strengths and weaknesses. Start your 12 week plan towards the event, slotting in the B & C races as you go. It is impossible to race at your best in every event, great athletes produce their best performances only 1-2 times per year but these

generally coincide with Olympic Games or World Championships. Which races did Lance win other than the tour?

Use your B & C races constructively, try something new and have a clear plan. Evaluate your performances and learn at least 1 thing from every event which will help to make your 'A' races successful.

Go forwards and be successful!

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