



Power Training. Powerful Results! **PEAKS COACHING GROUP**

Article Name: Skills Training, Who Me?

Author: By Don Russell USAC Elite Coach

It's time to start using all that conditioning you've been working on. Many of us are just now escaping the confines of the basement and are venturing out into the great outdoors. If we were lucky, we had the opportunity to put in some time with a group of riders, typically once on the weekend. So how are your handling skills? Rusty?

Once of the biggest issues I hear about the early races is that cyclists are concerned about the bike handling skills of the "other" riders. They're sure that there will be a huge pile up in the last corner of the first couple of crits, and they're probably right. I regularly tell the racers I coach to stick their nose into the fray if they can control their position and if not, ride on in and avoid the carnage.

I've had more than one Cat 3 or Cat 2 tell me that they don't like club, training races because the "other" riders are dangerous, since they let Cat 4 and 5 racers compete. Well, I usually try to get them to work on their skills and do a series of skill sessions with the newer riders.

Typically, when I conduct these types of sessions, the Cat 4/5s show up and the Cat 2/3s go for yet another tempo ride. I've seen enough poor bike-handling by the supposed "experts" to know that it's not always the newbie who is causing the problems in the pack.

So what types of skills should you work on? Common workouts include wheel touching, which teaches how to handle your bike when overlapped wheels come into contact. I typically do these on grass fields. It's not true that you will fall down if you tap someone's back wheel with your front one. My favorite story is the 14 spokes, of 36, that I lost when someone came across and put his rear derailleur in my front wheel. I didn't go much further, but I also didn't fall down.

Another favorite is contact exercises. This usually starts with basic contact, including putting hands on shoulders and looking backwards. Do you trust your partner to ride around a football field without ever looking forward? Typically we start getting into shoulder and elbow contact and graduate up to two-on-one shoving. Hands stay on the bars at all times. Make sure you practice contact from both sides and don't just make left or right turns around the field.

One of my favorite low speed turning skills involves putting down five water bottles in a diamond shape with one in the middle. Use your imagination going around them following various patterns ensuring you make both right and left turns. You can turn this into a speed contest with penalty time for dabs.

I'm betting that everyone has tried picking up water bottles off the ground and setting them back down. When you do this, do it with both hands, preferably not at the same time. There's a trick to doing this easily, but you'll figure it out; no track stands. At a junior training camp, they picked chocolate chip cookies off plates.

So what about the high-speed stuff? Work on cornering skills, such as counter-steering, handling gravel at speed, pedaling into a corner and when to start again, changing line once you thought you were

committed, then start doing all this with friends. If you know someone who needs help, be inventive on getting them to participate.

All of you experts, help the club, team, and coaches out with these sessions, a couple of hours spent doing these may keep you out of the hospital and on the road.

 <p>PEAKS COACHING GROUP</p> <p>HUNTER ALLEN</p> <p>Power Training. Powerful Results!</p>	<p>Contact Us: www.peakscoaching.com info@peascoachinggroup.com Address: 414 Jackson St. Bedford, VA 24523 Phone: 540-587-9025 fax: 540-586-5715</p>
--	--