



Power Training. Powerful Results!

PEAKS COACHING GROUP

Article Name: Start at the End: Time Management for Time Trialists

Author: By Gordon Paulson

Have you ever wondered why some riders miss their start time for a time trial? Over the years I've seen this happen time and time again. I've seen it happen at small races and large, club time trials and important races such as Master's Nationals. Perhaps the most famous missed start time occurred in 1989 when the defending champion, Pedro Delgado, arrived 2:40 minutes late for his Prolog TT start at the Tour de France. He ended up losing the Tour to Greg LeMond and finished 3rd about that same time behind the winner. How could this happen? Often times, I believe it occurs due to poor time management.

Time trials are all about time management. You want to spend the least amount of time riding a set distance. That riding part, although painful is usually managed pretty effectively by experienced racers. (Although time management during the ride will no doubt be another article in the future) I emphasize to my coached athletes that they must also learn to manage the time before the race starts to perform at their best. To do this, I tell them to start at the end. In other words, plan backwards from your start time.

The first phase of time trial time management begins long before you arrive at the race. Sit down, preferably with pen and paper, and figure out how much time you need for the necessary pre-race steps, such as a warm up (this will vary depending upon the event), getting your bike ready to go (practice it, and time yourself), taking care of the other details that are necessary before you can race. I encourage athletes to develop a set, pre-race ritual, that is specific things done, in a specific order. While I also try to help them be relatively relaxed with this so they can adjust to the inevitable interruptions, I want them to have a basic template to follow to aid them in reducing pre-race anxiety and building race ready focus. Build the timetable backwards from your start time, for example:

- [Start time minus 120 minutes] Get registered
- [Start time minus 97 minutes] Check out start (exact timer's time, where start is located, how start is managed, etc) & calculate times
- [Start time minus 92 minutes] Get kit ready, lay out everything, and pin on number
- [Start time minus 87 minutes] Get dressed to race
- [Start time minus 77 minutes] Get bike ready (air up tires, check brake clearances, etc.)
- [Start time minus 62 minutes] Begin Warm up #1
- [Start time minus 32 minutes] End warm up #1
- [Start time minus 31 minutes] Put on race wheels, shoe covers & TT helmet
- [Start time minus 26 minutes] Begin Warm up #2
- [Start time minus 11 minutes] End Warm up #2
- [Start time minus 10 minutes] Final adjustments (new water bottle, towel off)
- [Start time minus 5 minutes] Arrive at Start
- Start

****For examples of pre-race warm ups including those for time trials, please see "[The Purpose of Warm-Ups](#)"*

As you can see, in this hypothetical, you'd need to arrive two hours before the your Start in order to stay on this schedule. It pays to build in a little 'cushion' as you develop the schedule too.

It's critical to know your time trial start time exactly. My advice to beginning time trialists is that, as priority one, they need to take steps to know their start time as soon as possible. Some riders play games with their start order. They want to go early (less wind, cooler temperatures, less waiting around worrying about things, etc.) or last (in rare cases you might have a better idea of times that might win based on earlier riders, more 'rabbits' up the road to chase, less lag time between your finish and the results, etc.). Sometimes they want to start just behind a specific rider (they need that carrot/rabbit to chase), or they don't want to start in front of a specific rider (they fear getting

passed). If you're new to time trialing, I recommend not playing those games. Upon arrival at the venue, immediately get registered and get your start time. Before you leave registration, make sure you clearly understand your start time. Ask about number sequences. Are riders going out in numerical sequence (3 follows 2 and 151 follow 150)? What is the interval between starts (30 seconds, 1 minute, 15 seconds-yikes)? If the registration table doesn't give you a specific start time, figure it out and confirm it with them.

Armed with the exact start time, a rider should next confirm what time the timer has--exactly. This is another critical step. It won't help if your watch says it's 10:59 and your start time is 11:01:30 and the official timer's clock says it's 11:02. You just lost 30 seconds, and there's no way to get it back. So, carefully synchronize the clock you're using with the clock the timer's using...get your clock exactly the same as the timer's clock.

Now, sit down with the schedule you carefully laid out the night before and convert your timetable into exact times using the timer's clock time and your time requirements for each phase of your pre-race preparations. This takes some of your time, but if done, the rest of your pre-race time and preparations should flow smoothly-under your control. When you realize you're in control of the time, rather than the time controlling you, you will be calm. You will feel empowered. Exactly the mental state you need to ride your best times.

If this seems like a lot of fiddling around, think again. The 'race of truth' is all about time. Manage it well and you will succeed!

Gordon Paulson is a PCG and USAC Expert Certified Coach, National Champion and very successful masters athlete.

 <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>
---	--