

RACE PLANS

What is a Race Plan?

A race plan is a clear strategy of how you want to compete in a specific race. It includes a detailed look at strategies from a technical, tactical, physical and mental perspective.

Developing a Race Plan

Race plans are often best developed in conjunction with your coach and sport psychologist. A good race plan uses naturally occurred markers in the race to divide the race into segments. A race plan looks to develop specific key areas to focus on within each of these segments.

Segments may include:

- Time markers (e.g., first 10seconds, last ten minutes)
- Distance markers (e.g., 10m, 50, 100m, 1km etc)
- Technical markers (e.g., freestyle, backstroke)
- Course markers (e.g., turns, hills, posts)

Setting focus goals

Within each of the segments in a race you need to set clear goals of what you want to focus on within this segment. A simple question to ask yourself is, "What am I trying to achieve at this point of the race?". These goals may be:

- Technical (e.g., stroke rate, shoulder technique, cadence etc)
- Tactical (e.g., be with the leaders, ride within the bunch, maintain constant boat speed)
- Mental (e.g., stay relaxed, thinking mental cues, imagery)
- Physical (e.g., work rate, pain awareness, leg strength)

Cues

To effectively execute the specific goals within each segment you may need cues to remind you what you need to do that specific time. Cues are mental or physical reminders designed to jog you memory or refocus you on the goal. Cues may include:

- Motivation words (e.g., "Go, go, go!", "Bang!", "Empty the tank!")
- Technical words (e.g., "High elbow", "Spin fast", "Long stroke")
- Images (e.g., explosion, putting on the blinkers, powerful animal)

What if's and Refocusing

Each time we race we hope everything goes to plan, however it doesn't always happen this way. We all know that things can change quickly in competition and that these things can take our focus away where we want it. This may include:

- Weather conditions (e.g., rain, heat, choppy water, wind)
- Pain (e.g., injury or lactic burn)
- Opponents
- Being ahead of the others
- Being behind others
- Crowd

You need to plan for these events and develop specific refocusing plans to overcome any distractions. Your refocusing plan may be similar to you cues, but may differ or be special in how you implement them. Refocusing cues may include:

- Motivation words (e.g., "Pain is good – It means I'm working!", "Keep going!")
- Technical words (e.g., "Maintain my stroke", "Know my cues!")
- Images (e.g., explosion, putting on the blinkers, powerful animal)

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Example.....

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

Segment	Focus	Cue
Start	Explode from the blocks	Image - Explosion
0m – 50m	Stay with competitors & Build stroke rate	“Long & strong”
50m - 100m	Hold stroke rate & Long and powerful	“High elbow”
100m - 150m	Push ahead this is my strength	“Hit the gas!” Image – Car at full throttle
150m – 200m	Fight and push home Maintain technique Enjoy the pain	“Empty the tanks!” Image – Foot to the floor

What if's and Refocusing.....

What if...	Strategy
100m – 150m – Opponents pull away	“Race my race!” Image – Race with the blinkers on
Last 50m – Pain, pain, pain!	“Pain is good – It means I'm working!”