RIDING: SECOND LEVEL
OF AWARENESS

LET'S HIT IT. WIND, ROLLERS, CORNERS. All opportunities to gain time, and save energy, relative to competition. Unfortunately, typically low on the points of focus. Use this quick set of bullets in each area to draw your focus to 'doing it right'.

RIDING IN THE WIND

Save energy, gain confidence, maximize speed. Know that in a headwind, you will need to be able to push a bigger gear, with a muscle tension type feeling to the effort. Luckily, we do plenty of muscle tension training. With a tail wind, you will need to be able to produce high power, while combined with high RPM. If you haven’t practiced this in training, it can ruin your run performance. Luckily, we train with this element, so you should be prepared. But what about the fear inducing cross wind?

› GIVE YOURSELF ROOM: the bike may move around in the wind

› ADD A GEAR OR TWO: more linear force, and a platform to hold tension on the chain.

› REMAIN SUPPLE IN UPPER BODY: It prevents you from being a sail!

› LEAN YOUR BIKE AWAY FROM THE WIND: Seriously. It is counterintuitive, but critical. If the wind is from the left, lean the bike right.

› ADD A COUNTER-STEER: This is pressure on the bar furthest from the wind, turning the wheel slightly into the wind. It causes the bike to remain straight.
SLIDE YOUR BUTT: Slightly toward the seat, to the side of the saddle, so maintaining weight on the centerline (remember, your bike is leaning away from the wind)

MAINTAIN TENSION ON THE CHAIN AND KEEP PEDALING.

If you maintain this focus, you will get more and more comfortable, and while the bike will move, it will never cease those big jumps and swerves that induce fear and danger. Empowering, energy saving and faster. What’s not to love?

ROLLING TERRAIN

Not all roads are flat, and any piece of road with positive and negative terrain can be managed to maximize wheel speed and resource management. Let’s break it down:

1. Slight energy increase at the base of the roller (climbing piece).
2. Slight energy increase as you crest a roller.
3. Managed effort in the middle of the climbing and descending piece of the rollers.

Read the three above, you notice that output should NOT be even through rolling terrain!

4. Roll the biggest gear that is comfortable into the bottom piece of the roller.
5. Plan your gear changes to drop as the grade increases, or your speed drops as you settle into the roller
6. Soft or long crests: Pick up gears and speed as you go over the top, hitting race cadence as you go over the top.
7. Steep or short cresting rollers: Measured use of standing pedaling to regain momentum is particularly useful. Just be
patient and aim to time it to hit the acceleration ‘over the top’ with a maximum off 10 to 12 pedal strokes.

**CORNERING**

Remember, positive experiences in cornering will provide learning. Negative scares of crashes will never provide helpful lessons. With this, remain in your comfort and control as you practice your cornering skills. While I cannot go into the dirty details here (please read the cornering section of the Well Built Triathlete [http://purplepatchfitness.com/well-built-triathlete](http://purplepatchfitness.com/well-built-triathlete)), there are some universal points that are critical to effective cornering:

- Remain supple and relaxed throughout.
- Maintain your eyes/vision at where you want to go.
- Aim to have the majority of your braking complete by the time you hit the turn.
- Your outside foot, on the curve, is always at the bottom of the pedal stroke. This is where your weight distribution is. Of course, this means your inside foot is up and void of downward force.
- Your weight and pressure is on the inside handlebar. This is your counter-steer, and can be used to feather and refine your line during the corner.
- Plan your line of the corner: entrance, corner, exit. Have this vision before you begin to corner.

These magic bullets make up the key points in terrain, wind and cornering management.
Spend a moment reflecting on each, then get outside and play on your bike. Remember, kids that play on their bikes are naturals at this, so use this as a license to revisit or recreate your childhood. It will make you a better athlete.

Cheers,

Matt