

Training Log 04: Goals and Milestones

For the newer cyclists who have not been used to training on the bike or the demands of the sport, the first thing I would suggest is to go back to my first Training Log article outlining the general demands of the sport and the ride to Austin. That will give you the basic goals that we will need to shoot for in our training, along with some of the specific skills that we need to work on.

In addition, the next aspect of smart training is to break down that epic goal into smaller milestones to make it a reality. One purpose of this exercise is to make something so big and daunting look more reasonable and achievable. Another purpose is that we will be able to set specific timelines for each of the major objectives. This is critical to a successful training plan. I will lay out this general template assuming that you are new or relatively new to cycling, and also that you live in the Halifax region. I will also assume an average pace of 28 km/h while riding in a group during the trip. Take these as very general targets that you should adapt to your own experience and situation!

Goal: ~100 km (3-4 h) of riding daily for 10 days.

Milestones:

- July 31 - Be able to comfortably ride solo for 4 h at a pace of 25-26 km/h on rolling terrain (e.g. riding out to Eastern Shore, Fall River, Hubbards).
- August 31 – Be able to comfortably ride solo ON CONSECUTIVE DAYS for 4 h at a pace of 25 km/h on rolling terrain. You should be feeling comfortable and strong on both days.
- September 30 – Be able to comfortably ride solo for 4 consecutive days for 4 h at a pace of 25 km/h on rolling terrain. You should be feeling comfortable, recovered, and strong on all 4 days.
- September 30 – Be able to do a group ride of 4 h at 30 km/h on rolling terrain.
- As a very general breakdown, by the end of August, you should be aiming to have at least one week where you ride for at least 12 hours total over the course of that week.

Goal: Ride comfortably in a peloton or pack. For the ride, ideally we will be riding in a “double” paceline, where the group rides two abreast. Unfortunately, there are very few roads in the Halifax area where this can be done safely, so we will have to be creative and probably do much of the actual road practice outside of Halifax.

Milestones:

- May – Begin training with other riders at least once per week. Learn the general rules about how to ride in a pack safely (More to come!).
- May – Learn how to safely handle your bike so that you can do simple things such as riding with one hand while eating/drinking, stretching, etc.
- June – Learn how to safely trade efforts in a pack by riding in a smoothly rotating single paceline (where everyone rides one behind the other and take turns at the front to break the wind for the rest of the group).
- July and August – the Halifax group should arrange to have some group rides outside of the Halifax area where pack and double paceline skills can be practiced. A good area is

the ride around Hubbards and the Aspotogan Penninsula, or else regions out around Wolfville.

- August – Learn how to ride with no hands! This is a critical skill so that you can take vests and some clothing on or off. In most cases during the actual ride, I would advise against this and just have the group stop every so often or as needed. But the more confidence on the bike the better! It goes without saying that you should be very careful how and where you practice!

Other Milestones:

- June and July – Learn the basics of sports nutrition. What and how to eat/drink on the bike.
- August and September – Practice your hydration and fuel replacement strategies during your longer rides. It is critical that you eat and drink properly so that you maintain energy throughout the day's ride, and also to ensure adequate recovery so that you can ride strongly again the next day!
- It is also critical that you experiment with what foods and drinks work best for you. Nothing is worse than beginning the actual ride and finding that the main drink or food that is being used does not agree with your stomach! While we are hoping to have a sponsorship for on-bike food and drinks, it might be the case that you need to bring your own if your body does not react well with the sponsored stuff.
- May – You **MUST** have a bike by the end of May! Nothing but nothing trumps time on the bike for building endurance. Cross-training works but only goes so far in providing on-bike fitness.
- May 31 – Your shopping for bikes and clothing should be complete by now.

Keep active and keep the faith!
Stephen