

Race Day

Race Day Preparation: Begins 2 days earlier – with good sleep and good fuel (nutrition). Don't wait until the night before to get your sleep – two day rule!

Visualization: By visualizing you train your mind to expect a great race.

The night (or 2) before your race as you lay down to go to bed, close your eyes and visualize your race. Visualize how you will get a fast start, see yourself running the course, working the hills with great form, cresting the hill while others slow, moving fast on the down hills, throwing in a couple of short surges during the race that mentally and physically defeat your opponent, responding to someone else's surge, surging on a "blind turn" and then a long acceleration to the finish where you catch and out-lean your opponent at the finish – running through the finish and beating a runner who let up 1 step from the finish.

Also, take a moment to visualize temporary disaster – getting elbowed (and letting it go), falling down at the start (and getting up and slowly catching up), falling off the pace (but committing yourself with running with the next runner who comes up for as long as you can). Getting your second wind and finishing well.

We are done and prepared just in case for negative. Don't think of it again. Now, go back and re-visualize a GREAT race. One you have "Earned" due to your great training.

Race Day Breakfast: When you begin a run, you should feel neither starved nor stuffed. You don't want to eat immediately before running because it may lead to cramping or [side stitches](#). But [running on an empty stomach](#) may cause you to run out of energy and leave you feeling fatigued and lethargic during your runs. Your best bet is to eat a snack or light meal about 1 1/2 to 2 hours before you start running. Some examples of good pre-workout fuel include: a bagel with peanut butter; turkey and cheese on whole wheat bread; a banana and an energy bar; or a bowl of cold cereal with a cup of milk (better yet – apple juice instead of milk). Stay away from rich, very fatty, or high-fiber foods. If your race is not for several hours after your last meal – bring enough snacks to properly fuel you.

Uniform, Sweats, Hot days, Hydration and Knowing the Course: Wear your uniform under your sweats. Wear sweats as long as possible to keep you warm. No sweats if hot. Stay in shade and relax on hot days prior to your race. Hydrate by drinking water in the morning and sipping water during the time leading up to your race. If you do not know the course – walk/jog as much as possible when you first arrive, then go relax.

Warm up: monitor race times – be sure your race is projected to start on time. Adjust your warm up starting time if necessary. Start warming up with your teammates about 30 minutes prior to your race. Start with 10-15 minutes of light to medium paced running. Next Dynamic Warm up and static stretching, then a little more dynamic – trying to stay loose. Be sure to do at least 4 strides as close to the start of the race as possible. Keep your sweats on as long as you are not getting too warm – if so, take them off. Mini hydrate (sip some water if you wish)

Clerk of the Course: You will have to check in for your race 5 -10 minutes prior to your race – don't let this interfere with your warm – up – so start this 30 minutes before race time. At the clerk area keep your sweats on as long as possible, DON'T SIT DOWN – unless you have to. Stretch, stand on top of the bench, walk around a little, stay loose.

Last Dominant Thought: Make sure the last thing you say to yourself before you start the race is positive – like – “Beast Mode,” “It’s not the size of the dog in the fight, it’s the size of the fight in the dog – every dog has his / her day and this is MY day.”

Going to the Starting Line and Starting: The 2 fastest (sprinters) runners are in the front. Do 2-4 strides prior to the start of the race if you can. When you start - get out fast for 100-400 yards to establish your position and to for any constricting turns. Protect yourself with elbows out a bit and keep an eye out and be careful not to trip in the first 100 yards.

Race Strategies: After your fast start, settle into a good pace, run with someone (hopefully a teammate – but if not someone) either next to them or right behind them focusing on their shoulder blades and telling yourself they are a magnet pulling you forward. Trail them as long as they are useful – keeping you at the pace you want to be at. If they are too slow – go by them and find someone else to pace off of. If they are too fast, pick up the next runner who comes up – this is your courageous moment – time to “man up” or “woman up.” Try to never run alone unless you are leading!

During the race keep an even pace for 80% of the race. This uses the least energy. Hills should be run (stay tall and pull the rope or beat the drum) with the same energy as the race – but they will be a little slower due to the hill, down hills and gravity should be used to your advantage – run as fast as you can down them – leaning forward. Starts and finishes will be faster. Be sure to “crest the hills” – about 10 faster steps at the top. Use this for momentum to go as fast as you can down the hills. Arms should have good swing, keep them low and going forward – not across your body. Try to run fast, but relaxed. Loose/Tall/Relaxed

Throw in about 3 surges – this is where you move quicker for 10-20 steps – to break your opponent, or catch up to the next group. When possible you want others to have to react to your race plan, not the other way around – though at times you will have to react to a move your opponent makes – this is the “man up” / “woman up” moment of the race – that will determine your level of success and feelings about your race effort after the race and for the next week! Look for a blind turn or two to put a surge in to demoralize an opponent.

Mile Times: Know the average time you want to run per mile BEFORE the race. Figure your 1st mile will be 15-30 seconds fast and your second will be about 15 seconds slower than average pace time. Listen for mile times – this will help you determine how you are running – too fast – slow down, too slow – speed up.

The Finish: Try to start accelerating as far out as you can – ¼ mile to ½ mile if possible. Remember, as you pass runners – put a 10 second surge in to break them. Don’t let up until you have crossed the finish

Recap: fast starts, run with someone, crest the hills, fast down, throw in 2-3 surges, long slowly accelerating finish – though the finish.

Post Race: Find, encourage, help your teammates. Everyone together gets water or Gatorade and a post race snack. Sweats back on unless it is hot and warm down – 10-20 minutes of running and lots of static stretching. Next go encourage your teammates who are racing next.