

ELITE -- TACTICAL TRIATHLETE

Go Faster by Racing Smarter



Different Races Require Different Tactics

Tactic	How Are You Making the Tactic Happen?	When & Why to Implement:	Stocking the Tactic Tool Kit
Overall Race Day Tactics			
Steady-surge-reset	Setting variable pace targets including specific location or conditions for surges.	Use at start of the race and/or the start of any leg. Know your plan. Execute to it on race day.	Start at steady pace, then surge midway in race and settle back to your fastest sustainable pace. Requires strength, quick physical recovery, and self-awareness of pacing.
Surge on demand	Increasing pace for a short time period to open up a gap on others without blowing up.	When your competitors are hurting as bad as you. Make him hurt worse. A well-timed surge can deflate your competitors' mental determination and neutralize their ability to hang with you.	Train for your surges with fartlek. Learn to recognize when your competitors are using this tactics against you. Either go with them and out last them or let go, then surge on them when no one can answer.
Fast-settle-sustain	Setting variable pace targets. Setting splits for each leg or even shorter markers on the course.	Use at start of the race and/or the start of any leg. Can eliminate your competitors right at the start of any leg.	Go out fast, then settle in to your quickest sustainable pace. Requires strength, quick physical recovery, and self-awareness of pacing.
Hid and surge	Stalking other competitors at a distance to not be easily detected. Wearing race kits that blend in with other competitors.	Use at start of the race or at any point of the race before the final stretch.	Helps to blend in with other racers without losing contact with the competitor your tracking.
Swim			
Buoy turns	Holding your swim line and using a 90° cork screw turn if crowded.	At the entry point of turn start around the buoy. Provides the shortest swim distance.	Beware of swimmer back-up at turns. Avoid being at the outside edge of a turn which requires excessive additional swim yardage which impairs your time.
Ride open waves with confidence	Staying relaxed while maintaining desired stroking and breathing patterns.	At any point during the swim. Swimming relaxed with confidence prevents creating or worse, overstating possible fears brought on by anything beside smooth as glass swim conditions.	Learn to handle rolling, rushing, and turbulent waters. The sensations can mess with your mind and be stronger on the body than you think. Be comfortable breathing exclusively on either side while swimming. Sometimes shorter, choppy strokes are more effective than long glides with strong kicks.

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Bouncing butterfly stroke near swim start	Cautiously do butterfly stroking with leg push off instead of a dolphin kick.	Launches you forward in the water quicker than swimming or running when too shallow to swim and too deep to run. Perform only when no one is in front of you. It's an efficient tactic at the start of the swim when starting on shore.	Push out more forward than deeper or higher. Use if water is above your knee cap and below your waist line. Can be intimidating to competition if they never included in their skills.
Bouncing butterfly stroke at swim exit	Cautiously do butterfly stroking with leg push off instead of a dolphin kick.	Launches you forward in the water quicker than swimming or running when too shallow to swim and too deep to run. Perform only when no one is in front of you. It's an efficient tactic at the end of swim to be strong for the bike leg.	Push out more forward than deeper or higher. Use if water is above your knee cap and below your waist line. Can be intimidating to competition if they never included in their skills.
Bike			
Sling shot legal drafting	In a continuous movement pedal up directly behind the person you're passing. While accelerating take advantage of his wind block, then proceed with your pass.	Every time possible when traffic is clear and you're in a passing zone. It's a legal draft if the pass does not take longer than stated in the rules to complete. The draft can provide a temporary boost in bike speed to gap the person and continue pulling away from him.	Ensure compliance within the time constraints of passing once you entered the draft zone. Staying in the zone beyond the limits violates the drafting rules. You may be assessed a penalty, or even DQ, if multiple penalties are assessed. Even if not observed by an official, someone competing out of compliance, violates the ethics of the sport.
Pogoing	Leap frog each other with one leading beyond the drafting box and the other trailing. Then the trailer can surge, slipstreaming the front rider until overtaking him with a pass within the 15-second time limit. The trailer slows out of the draft box.	When cycling near competitors of similar pacing. The pogoing can be repeated through-out the race. This conserves physical and mental energy though requires tenacity to follow the rules. To consistency stay with others nearby without drafting. Different riders may be faster on the hills while others faster on the flats.	I struggle with this tactic's concept as it weakens the intent of the anti-drafting rules. However, in longer races many of the competitors implement this tactic instead of blatant drafting like others in longer races. Practice with other riders to judge spacing, speeds, and timing.

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Hill climb surge	Increasing speed relative to nearby racers on a hill or mountain road climb.	When your competitors least expect your move. Could be first climb on the bike leg, its last, at multiple climbs in-between. By out-climbing competitors, you put space between you and them. Displays confidence in your abilities. Strike with speed with the intent to intimidate your competitors.	Gravity gives natural advantage to lighter riders with powerful muscles. Take advantage of your strong power to weight ratio. Gaps can be accomplished with quickened cadence or power pedaling with your quads or gluts.
Downhill gap	Tucking in aero position then spinning up to max wattage with top gearing.	Can be implemented on any or all descents in the race. Start acceleration just a few meters away from the crest of the mountain when your competitors least expect your move.	Gravity gives natural advantage to heavier riders with powerful muscles. Gaps can be accomplished with quickened cadence or powering in higher gearing. Coasting is more efficient if you spin out. You may want to select custom gearing for your strengths.
Aid Station Drop	Increasing speed relative to nearby racers when exiting aid station areas.	At aid stations when your competitor least expect an acceleration from you. Other competitors may not spin up to desired pace timely after restocking of fluids and foods which allows you to gap some distance on them.	Use common sense to reload with nutrition when going through aid station areas. Respect the volunteers who are standing and handing out re-supplies to you. Don't over ride the volunteers' hand-offs. Move away from the volunteers once you get your goodies while watching for faster moving buckaroos coming up behind you. Don't ride over anyone!
Turn pass	Look well ahead to turn point and determine your line. Feather your breaking going in. Accelerate your pedals while exiting the turn. Adjust your line based on traffic, road conditions, and speed. Keep body weight close to your bike. Think low center of gravity. Hold handle bars firmly but relaxed. Lean your body to turn instead of turning handle bars.	Pass in the turn when there is room and when pace is conservative. When your competitor least expects your move. Speed coming out of a turn is more important in dropping others than speed going into a turn.	Being safe going thru a turn is more important than taking a risk to gap others.
Dismount	Standing with one foot on a pedal with your full body to one side of the bike coasting to dismount 2 meters from the line.	With 25 meters from the dismount line, lift opposite side leg from the opposite pedal and swing trailing leg over the bike seat balancing on one pedal starting. Saves a few seconds to dismount and keeps your body's momentum going forward towards your transition spot.	Ensure your path is clear of competitors and volunteers. Ensure you do not mistime the dismount and go beyond the line to be assessed a penalty. Balance and smoothness is critical. Practice and be prepared to execute.

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Run			
Surge on up-hills	Increasing pace slightly comparative to competition for 30-60 seconds.	Surge when running up hills. Create a gap of a few strides on the others, then ease into your targeted pace. The surge may break your competitors' mental confidence to hang with you on the run. At that point, one stride may as well be 1 mile! Your deliberate move will demonstrate your mental toughness and underscore your confidence.	Hills facilitate best opportunities to drop your competitors and win races on the run. Ensure your workouts include hill surges. Women tend to run more in packs and may benefit more using this tactic for their advantage on the course to earn a step up on the podium.
Surge on downhills	Lengthening stride and using gravity to pull away from others.	When competitors least expect it. Pick up speed just before the apex of the hill then surge with speed and extended stride to the bottom before settling into a your targeted race pace. Downhill gains can be earned more efficiently than an uphill surge. Others may over stride trying to stay with you and ineffectively slow their stride and put an excessive burden on their quad muscles.	Ensure you train for downhill running. Your strides should feel more like an extended float than a pounding burden. Experiment with lifting elbows slightly up and out to exaggerate the float. Settle in to what becomes comfortable and effective for you.
Redlining	Running race pace as fast as possible without going into oxygen debt.	From start to finish on the run leg. Provides your quickest run split at your maximum tolerable pain threshold.	Train for proper distances. Requires your ability to sustain long runs at max tempo in Level IV.
Competitors surge, your reaction	<p>How to respond to competitor surges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reel her in by gradually increasing your pace. This is the conservative response. 2) Surge in sync without allowing a gap. This aggressive response neutralizes any mental gains your competitor wanted. 3) Let her go. Either she'll come back to you if the gap is not sustainable or you know what you need to train for to minimize future drops. 	At the time of the surge. You need to know in advance your immediate response to competitors. You can respond differently to different competitors at different locations in races. Counter surges can backfire on aggressive runners. Learn when to use them to your advantage.	Surges for any runner may be tiring. Fartlek training is more effective to implement and respond to surges. Be ready to respond quickly to surges. At a minimum expect them to occur anytime. Skilled runners seem to prefer turns, hills, and when leading packs to drop weaker physical and mental runners.
Skip last Aid Station	Running with confidence through the last aid station.	At the last Aid Station. Keeps your momentum and signals to competitors you're strong to make it to the finish line.	Usually the last aid station is within a mile or kilometer from the finish line. Your body cannot absorb much fluid or calories over the last bit of race real estate to boost your physical performance. No detriment to skip.