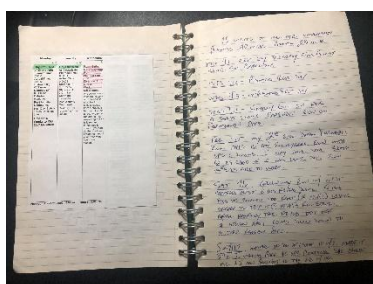




Have You Checked Your Race Season's BOB's and WOWs?



When school aged children return to school after a season away, they often are asked to write an essay of how they spent their summer. As athletes, we need to do the same at the end of our racing season. Not write an essay about it but certainly look back at what we did and assess what we needed to do for our off-season training to improve our performance for the next race season. The reflection needs to look at the “Best of the Best” and the “Worst of the Worst”.



Despite all the data that the current wearable technology can collect and the various graphic images of that data the training apps can provide, my running started back in the time when this assessment need not be a statistical analysis. It has been some time since I used a paper-based system to collect notes from each workout but that did provide an opportunity to reflect on a workout or a week's worth of workouts. Now with the computer based systems that automatically upload data from the wearable device to the app, it is much easier to review a whole season's BOB's and WOW's.

Whether you are a runner or a triathlete, you need to review your past season to determine (1) things to keep doing with your training that you are currently doing, (2) things to start doing with your training that you are not currently doing, and (3) things to stop doing with your training that you are currently doing. This will help you identify the training you should be doing over the winter season to be better prepared for improved performance when Spring arrives, and the next racing begins.

Most of us assess our achievement of the goals we had for our race season, but do you reflect on why you had the outcomes for the season? Maybe your goals were too easy (just finish the race) or too complicated (do back-to-back races with a PR in each one). How did your training impact your goals results? Often the answer to the cause of the performance is not with the item identified. You may need



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to ask, "And why did that happen?" several times to get to the root of the issue that impacted your goals achievement.

When looking at your races, there are many ways to look at the Best of the Best and the Worst of the Worst, and Best need not be just the fastest finish time or your best bike split. You can look at the season by separating the races by distance or by looking only at swim splits regardless of distance. When you are reviewing your data, don't discount an exceptionally fast time or split as a "fluke". There are ways to eliminate the variation caused by elevation changes but regardless, accept a Best of the Best not as a fluke but as something you can do.

If you do a more statistical analysis of your race data, do not just look at the average value of all the average pace for the race, or the average of T2 times, or bike splits to determine the central tendency of your data. Everyone likes average, but a basketball player cannot get a half point in a game so stating the player averages 20.5 points per game has no meaning. The mode value (the one that occurs most often) or the median value (the one with an equal number of data above and below it) are also good ways to assess the performance value that occurs most often. For triathletes, your BOB for swim, bike and run may not all be in a single race. For runners, your BOB splits may always be the 3rd mile of a race regardless of race distance.

For the WOW's, reflecting on those can be very humbling. It can be very easy to identify the cause: weather, getting stuck behind a slow line of walkers or an equipment issue with swim goggles or the bike chain. Even if that is the real cause (remember, you need to ask "and why did that happen" several times to get to the real cause), there are still things you can identify to change your training to be better prepared, even if the cause is bad weather.



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With qualitative reflection or even a statistically based analysis of your past racing season, you can better know what to change for your winter season training so you are better prepared for improved performance in the spring and throughout your 2024 racing season.

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