

LCHS Race Week Guide

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Week Leading Into Race (Mon-Thurs/Fri)

Nutrition/Hydration

- Hydration – you need to hydrate days before your event, doing it in the event is TOO LATE! The daily general rule for all people is $\frac{1}{2}$ your body weight in ounces (i.e. 100 lbs * .5 = 50 ounces). You are active, so you should be drinking an amount greater than this. Hydrating the night before your event is better than nothing, but it is even better to start a few days before. Drink a combination of straight water and sports drinks (Gatorade, Nuun, etc.).
- Energy Gels/Re-Fuel – these provide energy when you race (you may eat shortly before your race as well). Test out what you will use on race day beforehand (during practice) so that you know how your body will react/perform when/if using during the race.
- Diet – balanced meals with carbs, proteins and fat (naturally occurring if possible, avoid man-made and saturated fats/deep-fried foods).

Physical/Training

- Daily Stretching/Yoga – you want your body loose and relaxed to perform its best (do the stretches we do after our gym sessions). This should be a practice in general as cyclists get body imbalances and tightness from repetitive motion, but put more emphasis on it this week.
- Training - DON'T overtrain....you can't cram for a race....you won't make yourself any better, only worse. Performance is a function of the aggregate of your training. Resting more is better than riding more, i.e. choose to be over-rested vs overtrained.
- Create a Routine – do the same thing at the same time every day, i.e. dinner at 6, meditate at 8:30, asleep by 9. If possible, try to ride at the time (or close to) your race will occur. This has physical and mental benefits.
- Sleep – sleep is very important for both the body and the brain. Your brain can only clear the “waste product” of daily life through REM sleep. Your body repairs itself from training during sleep. Get as much sleep as possible during the calm time before the race nears. Have a routine where you have a period of relaxation before sleep and a set bedtime.
- Intensity High, Volume Low – you want to keep your body performing at a high level while not overly stressing it in training. Rides will have race pace, but be shorter in duration than normal training.

- Contingency Practice – practice what might occur on race day (can be done mentally and/or physically)...what will you do if there is a malfunction on your bike? What if there is a crash or bottleneck in front of you? By practicing these scenarios before an event, you will be better prepared should they occur at the event.

Mental

- Minimize Stress - you only have so much emotional energy to burn, if it is spent leading up to the event, your performance will lag. Try to stay balanced/integrated in your daily life.
- Meditate/Relax - calm the mind and body, lower your heart rate, control your breathing (meditation has long-term benefits of re-wiring how your brain functions as well). This goes hand-in-hand with stretching/yoga.
- Visualization/Envision Success – imprint your brain with what you want to occur on race day. Go over the course in your mind. Think about where you will put in hard efforts and the technical requirements of the course. You are preparing/training your brain/body for what will occur on the day of the race.

Equipment

- Bike Prep – get your bike in working order. This may require taking into a shop for a tune-up (Incycle are comping one tune-up for team members). Getting this done ahead of time allows you to test everything before the race and creates less stress in the build-up to the race.
- Packing Checklist – make a checklist of what you will need on race day (we have a list on the team website from NICA
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/0cf68c_02c2ef4405664cfc9e94dae60f23b55a.pdf)

Night Before Race (Fri or Sat)

Nutrition/Hydration

- Hydration – continue with the hydration plan you've used during the week
- Nutrition – continue balanced eating plan you've used during the week

Training/Physical

- Riding – if you ride, easy spin on the bike with a couple of sprints just to keep the body loose and fresh
- Stretch/Yoga – continue what you have been doing during the week. DO NOT add new stretches as this can stress the body.
- Sleep - your sleep may not be great (you may be anxious, see mental below), that is fine. Studies have shown it is much more important to sleep in the days leading up to an event rather than the night before. Stay in your routine about relaxation before sleep and bedtime.

Mental

- Nervousness/Anxiety - you might be nervous, this is normal. You are about to embark on something you've probably never done before (and even if you have you are apt to feel this way). Acknowledge the feeling rather than suppressing. Ask yourself why do I feel this way? Is this anxiety rational or irrational (if you are in doubt, the answer is it is irrational). You've trained, you're bike and body are ready...you've done what is needed!

Equipment

- Pack up - pack your gear the night before. The less you worry about on race day, the more relaxed you will feel, causing you stress and thus creating a better performance. Use your checklist you previously created.

Race Day (Sat or Sun)

Nutrition/Hydration

- Hydration – hydrate, but don't saturate. You should only need moderate hydration if you have been hydrating throughout the week.

- Nutrition - breakfast will be your largest meal of the day (for Middle Schoolers), lunch is moderate with small doses of energy 2 hours and 1 hour before your race (simple carbs/energy bars). Breakfast is a balanced meal of protein, fats and carbohydrates. Don't feed your body what it is not used to, don't eat things you haven't previously!!! High Schoolers will have a light breakfast that is primarily carbohydrates. You should have enough stored energy to race (and you will re-fuel during the race).

Racing/Physical

- Body Sensations – racing is uncomfortable physically (might even hurt, think about how you feel during intervals/race lap practice), but your body will adapt. Your body produces natural pain masking chemicals, called endorphins, which will allow you to push your physical limits. Your body will feel most uncomfortable early in the race, but the endorphins will kick in and you will be able to maintain your physical effort, maybe even increase it, without experiencing increased discomfort. Mentally you will realize you can maintain the effort and it will become second nature over time (i.e. as the season progresses). You have trained for this!
- Problems – if you encounter a problem stay calm, don't rush...."be quick, but don't hurry". Remember your contingency plan. Someone may crash in front of you, or the group may clog at a point on the course. Slowly make way back up to speed. You can't win a race in an instant, but if you push your body too hard into the "red zone", you can lose it!

Mental

- Venturing Into the Unknown – you have never done this before, but that's ok! Try to do with sense of excitement. Embrace the challenge that is to come!
- Nerves - you will be nervous. No matter what the outward appearance of your competitors, know they feel it inside too. Even the greatest athletes of all-time, like Tiger Woods, experience them. The best channel these feelings into greater performance. Acknowledge these feelings. Trying to suppress them creates undo stress which will hinder your performance. Name the feeling (i.e. nervous, anxious, insecure) and understand that it is normal. Any doubts/fears/concerns you have can be shared with the coaches as well, we are here to help you!
- Slow Down - the tendency is to rush, even if it doesn't feel like you are doing things quicker than normal, you are...breathe, relax.
- Only Control Yourself – in a bike race, you only have control over yourself (your effort and thoughts). You can't control what other racers do, what the weather is like, what obstacles are on the course, if you get a flat, etc. The ability to grasp this concept will

allow for mental relaxation leading into and during the race.

- Don't Quit – doing something hard is as much mental as it is physical. You are all physically capable of doing this, you have trained. If at all possible, finish the race. Obviously circumstances may prevent that (bikes do fail, accidents can occur), but if you are mechanically capable, you should finish. Quitting is the emptiest feeling you can have as an athlete. Once you have quit once, much easier to quit the next time. How you finish, i.e. what place, does not define who you are. How you act and react to circumstances is what matters.
- Mistakes - you will make mistakes, and that's ok. As my 8th grade English teacher said, "Pobody's Nerfect"! There is a "3R" concept used in sports where you "Review" what happened, "Rehearse" what you wanted to happen and "Refocus" on the next task. Mountain bike racing does not allow the opportunity to do this during the competition, but you can post-race to make yourself a better rider/racer going forward.

Equipment

- Problems – your equipment should be dialed-in from your previous tune-up so that you have no worries/stress, BUT if you have a problem, don't stress. We will get it fixed before you race!