

Summer Cycle

Weeks 1-3 – Cycle 1

Identify strengths for everyone – talk about and identify goals, both common and different – push the idea of using the goal sheets to accomplish this

Some starts and turns work – minor

Wind Sprints – Turn at flags/Turn at midpool/Turn at far flags/Turn at wall

Every set is started from the blocks

High vo2 work/some lactate

Some loose intervals thrown in - Done in the middle of workout - 3 x 100 on 3:00 from blocks

On lactate sets – 50's/100's on short rest

Done in the middle of the workout

6 x 50 on :45 race

Longer kick sets

Repeat 100 and 200 kicks

Sprint kick from flags to midpool

At least 400 kick a day

IM work – should be drill focused – not so much variation on strokes and/or drills...one day focus on a specific fly drill – the next day focus on a specific back drill and so on...do LOTS of the drill until everyone gets it right.

Use WU/WD for drill sets

Typical week in first cycle looks like

Monday/Tuesday – 3200-4200 Meters – Long warmup – 1000 yard work set – 1200-1600 yard lactate or vo2 set – WD drill set (can be IM or free)

Wednesday/Thursday – 3400-4400 Meters – Medium warmup – Long drill and technique set – short lactate set – WD drill set focusing on one specific technique/drill

Friday – same as Monday

Saturday – 3500-4500 meters - Long warmup – LD set with kick rest intervals (4 x 400 on base +:10 followed by 2 x 100 kick on ez rest)

Taper folks

By this point, Nats swimmers should be peaked/peaking. Taper could start on or about the 3rd with a rapid decrease in yardage, but NOT intensity, during week of the 8th. Technique focus, lungs and understanding their races should be KEY. Have the swimmers do their races in a set alternating medium speed/sprint/slow mo/medium speed on rest, not interval. Pre or post workout visualization could also occur. Have the swimmer just lay down in a deck chair or on a towel and swim the race in their mind a few times. Also must remember to encourage good diets, TONS of water every day, immediate glycogen replacement post workouts and rest. The rest and water need to start at least one week out from first race.

Triathletes need to be reminded that this program WILL help them achieve their midsummer and endsummer race goals. The biggest two problems triathletes face right now is 1) struggling in the water and 2) going anaerobic in the transition from swim to bike...mid distance and v02 training will cure the second...the next cycle will cure the first. They tend to listen to their tri-coaches who go on and on about tapering for big races and whatnot. They need to work very hard at every set whether distance or not, and they especially should be working their butts off on lungs.

Weeks 4-7 – Cycle 2

Strong middle distance emphasis

Overall general emphasis is starting to drop the rest on everything

Short sprint set once a day

Repeat sets get tighter – little or no rest between some repeats

Drop intervals slightly – preferably :05 - no more than :10

i.e. in Cycle 1 – 12 x 100 may have been done on 1:40

now drop that down to 12 x 100 on 1:35

Longer sets of medium stuff – repeat 150/200 sets – some 400's

More bracket work

Start preparing the triathletes for the next cycle. Give **them** repeat 500's and 600's on little rest.

Kicking becomes more specific – focus on stroke kicking for different people

i.e. Butterflyers should be doing a LOT of back fly kick or side fly kick repeats

Test sets are now introduced

Each Friday in Cycle 2, do 10 x 100 on 2:00 or something similar

They should be able to hold a good interval – coaches need to remember what people did for future comparison's sake – ie if someone holds 1:25's for the 10 x 100 then when the next test set comes around the coach should say “ok, last week you went 1:25's...lets shoot for :23's today”.

Race pace sets once a week

Short fast fin work should be included in that – need more fins this summer!!!

Pulling and paddling is also now introduced this cycle

Wednesday of second and fourth week – do a 400 for time

Typical week in second cycle looks like

Monday/Tuesday – 4000-5000 Meters – Medium warmup – 1200 Bracket set with sprint pieces – 2000 middle distance set with kicking as rest

Wednesday/Thursday – 4600-5200 Meters – Long warmup – 1200-1800 Pull set with paddles – Big kick set

Friday – 4400-5000 Meters – Long warmup – emphasis on middle distance – 800-1000 short sprint set – 1000

Meter Test set – Long kick/drill WD

Saturdays – Work on lungs/legs – Medium warmup and then right into lung set. Something like 6 x 200 with BP of 3/7/5/9 by 50 on base +:20 – finish with feel good set (cheat the intervals – maybe no intervals – use coach's choice or get out swim)

Weeks 8-11 – Cycle 3

Max yardage for first three weeks

Reintroduce starts and turns work

Lots of sprint and race sets from blocks – should start at least one practice every two weeks FROM blocks – have swimmers do a group stretch on deck then have them get up on blocks to start warmup.

They won't know what's coming and it will be a fun exercise. Also do midpool sets so they can do 2-turn 50's and 5-turn 100's to get that extra turn work – focus on the red zone breathing.

Regular sprinting overall

At least one long sprint set each day – this should not be something simple like 10 x 25. It should be a bracket set incorporating 25's through 100's. Remember it's a sprint set so as you move through it, give at least one rest period. Throw in some stroke too.

Now it's time to bring up the heavy long distance training for those who have opted to swim in Ironman qualifiers or other LD swimming events.

Repeat 800/1200's – good set may be 3 x 800 with the middle 400 being sprint and the opposite end 200's being BP of 3/5 on :30 r

Visualization and Mental time

Consider splitting up lanes by stroke/distance at this point

Training on how to know your interval – people should NOT be looking around during a set wondering when to go. They should KNOW how to read the clock. Emphasize that and incorporate it into the set. For instance: Go 5 x 100 on 1:35 but put the fastest swimmer (who is typically the lane leader) at the end with a :15 break between them and the second to last swimmer. That way the new leader is forced to learn the clock.

Some vo₂/lactate work – not much

Technique time

Lots of tight interval stroke-specific drill work – focus on people who typically fart around during drills – get ALL OVER them to get the correct technique down

Continue test sets but at reduced interval – 10x100 on 1:50

Typical week in third cycle looks like

Monday/Tuesday – 4600-5200 Meters – Medium warmup – 1000 sprint set – 3000 LD Set – focus on 800 – WD

Wednesday/Thursday – 4800-5500 Meters – Long warmup – 2000 Bracket set with 400's and pulling included – some short sprint on almost impossible intervals – 1000 – set from blocks – Drill WD

Friday – Medium warmup – 2000 LD set – 600/1200 – possible NS – 1000 Test Set – 400 Sprint set – WD

Saturday – event specific training

This cycle brings us right to the doorstep of Bay State Games. Very light taper is suggested. Remember, TOTAL FUN FOCUS. People will want AND need a place to see progress in action.

Also, triathletes will be doing big races now and/or about to embark on some of the bigger summer races. KNOW what they are doing, ask them about it...find out how they feel. Maybe they are worried about breathing or maybe they want to know a good strategy for swimming 1.2 miles. Help them out!

Rest Week 1

Technique fixing – lots of on deck demos

Starts and Turns

Begin to slowly bring down yardage to low 4K.

Mid distance work – kicking

Weak stroke work on loose intervals

Coaches should really use this week as an opportunity to be creative, fun and throw in some very random stuff – you could do things like matchbox car races, innertube races, etc.

Triathletes will still need work. Make it fun though. Things like Indian Swims at long distances (1,800 Indian Swim with 4 swimmers in the lane...something like that...want to really challenge them? Make the odd sprints an off stroke)

Typical week in rest cycle looks like

Monday/Tuesday – 4400 Meters

Wednesday/Thursday – 4200 Meters

Friday – 4000 Meters

Saturday – 4000 Meters

Coaches NEED to exercise their brains...come up with some shit that's about as far from SKPS as you can get...33's, shoes, stretch cords, tubes, country style kicking, I still remember when I had everyone get up on the blocks one by one and sing a song...between every song everyone had to sprint a 100 IM. So the longer the song the longer people got rest. That was a GOOD day. Similarly, I had them do cross pool sprints width-wise...had them play water polo, etc....BUT I let everyone know that it was 1 week of rest and then it was back to work...and when they went back to work they were refreshed.

Weeks 13-15 – Cycle 4

Lots of triathletes will be in full gear by this point in time and will be wanting ridiculous distance sets. It's a good idea to have the hard working triathletes separated for just that purpose. Its ok to let them less stroke work but do not let them be exempt from technique or kick. Ironman qualifiers, especially Lake Placid which is the biggie, occur during this cycle. Make sure you know who those people are and force them to concentrate on breathing and technique during their freestyle sets as well as sighting and drafting. Also make sure to take it somewhat easy on them in the week prior but do not make it a taper. Their triathlete coaches all tell them to taper but you need to debunk that myth. No one tapers for swimming in a triathlon. It's silly to think that you could taper for a one hour swim unless you have been doing 6 months worth of 1 hour swims. Interval training does NOT translate into swimming a one hour straight swim. We have had many triathletes who have tapered the swim on their own only to show up on race day feeling "weak". Last thing you want is to feel weak on race day. Keeping steady with swim yardage will not hurt a triathlete as they come down from their last 20 mile run and rest from biking. Those who have kept swimming have been able to feel strong and in-control during their run/bike taper.

Heavy stroke work for non triathletes – you may even want to declare “this week is fly week, next week is back week and so on.) There should be one big set completely dedicated to a stroke during each workout. Coaches should make sure swimmers understand the focus of that set: for instance, we are going to do 8 x 100 Breast pull and then 8 x 50 breast – focus on arms, recovery and body position, etc.

Bring back some sprint sets – its been a while and you need to remind the swimmers that you are the BOSS.

Same as cycle 1 – bring back longer kick sets

- Repeat 100 and 200 kicks

- Sprint kick from flags to midpool

- At least 300 kick a day

- It is important to remind people that you DON'T use arms in kicking – they can use their hands for balance during kicking but this fly kick with the breaststroke pull is NOT kick – its drill. They should be able to kick 35 yards in the time it takes them to swim a 50. That is the goal.

Use drill sets in your warm down set. Don't just say – warm down with an easy 200. Actually make it a set between 500 and 1000 meters.

Typical week in fourth cycle looks like

Monday/Tuesday – 4000-5000 Meters – Long warmup – 1500 yard stroke set – 1500 yard vo2 set - 500 yard kick set – WD drill set

Wednesday/Thursday – 4400-5400 Meters – Quick warmup – Right into stroke technique set – short lactate set followed immediately by a mid distance sprint (lactate set to 600 race) – WD drill set focusing on one specific technique/drill learned during the workout

Friday – same as Monday

Saturday – 4000-5000 meters - Long warmup – LD set with kick rest intervals (4 x 400 on base +:10 followed by 2 x 100 kick on ez rest)

Weeks 16-18 – Cycle 5

Your focus during the last three weeks is to retain swimmers and start focusing on Fall goals. Coaches should keep the peak yardage in mind as we are going to peak at end of week 1 around 5000 or so and then ride it out for last two weeks. Have fun with the swimmers, talk to them about Fall meets and talk to them about SCM Champs. Let them know that SCM Champs training starts now and SCY Champs training starts in October. It does!

Similar to the rest week...coaches should have a good idea of what needs to be done...this cycle would more or less be identical to the third cycle if I were to write workouts for it...work but fun. Coaches need to understand that its at this point of the season when people start not showing up, practices lighten up a lot as people go on vacation and end up their summers...the coaches can get bummed out pretty hard when 6 people are in the water for 6 workouts straight...if they don't keep it fun then they will go crazy. If we want to duplicate cycle 3 here we could but I would rather speak with each coach about the end of the road and prepping for cycle 1 of the fall season which is NOT the same as the cycle 1 for summer. In fact, fall cycle 1 will be more like summer cycle 2 with that middle distance emphasis...people need to peak by early November and then hold that through SCM Champs. That gives the coaches about 8 weeks to prep for peak...it's a race against time...because then you only have about 14 weeks to prep for SCY Champs peak and with holidays and shit, it disappears quickly. So, my thoughts are that when it comes to the last cycle, the lines of communication should be wide open and coaches should be communicating nice and loud on a regular basis how well people have been doing. They should have fun but work...they should start whispering about SCM Champs...goals should be coming back to the surface for discussion. Every summer, when I got to this point, I usually threw my program right out the window and just made it up based on who was in the water and how tired they looked...they still worked but we listened to crappy music, told jokes,...etc...it kept both me and them going.

Your effort should also be to tie up loose ends with swimmers. Have you been struggling with a particular swimmer all summer on a particular stroke? Then send the whole pool into a set and pull that person aside for some one on one time. They WILL appreciate it. Got a lane that's been working their asses off all summer? Then have each person in the lane write one workout for that lane to do. Again...fun fun – get them to sign up for fall session – make sure they have realized their goals or are at least in the process of realizing their goals.

Most of all, congratulate them regularly on any accomplishment done during the summer whether big or small. Find the little things and give them a hi five: “did you know you dropped 7 seconds this summer off of your 100 free!!! Awesome job!”. It makes them feel like the whole process has been worth it and it makes you feel good too.

That's it. You guys are great coaches and you know what you need to do. This is an outline to help make your life easier. We want all the coaches to be on the same page every week during the season. Use the outline to write your workouts, to think about how you are going to be a great coach every time you step on deck. The rest is in your hands.

-Nate