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o Spring

o 2005

# Tri Gulf Coast

TRI GULF COAST: A NON-PROFIT TRIATHLON CLUB, SUPPORTING TRIATHLETES ACROSS THE GULF COAST.

We are people who win races, and people who haven't done one yet. We're training for yet another Ironman, and we're thinking about trying a sprint race. We've got \$4000 Bikes, and we've got \$50 bikes. Some of us can swim across Pensacola Bay, and some of us are working on swimming 400 yards non-stop. Some of us can run a 10k in less time than others can run a 5k. In other words, if you're fast, slow, new, or experienced, you'll fit in just fine here

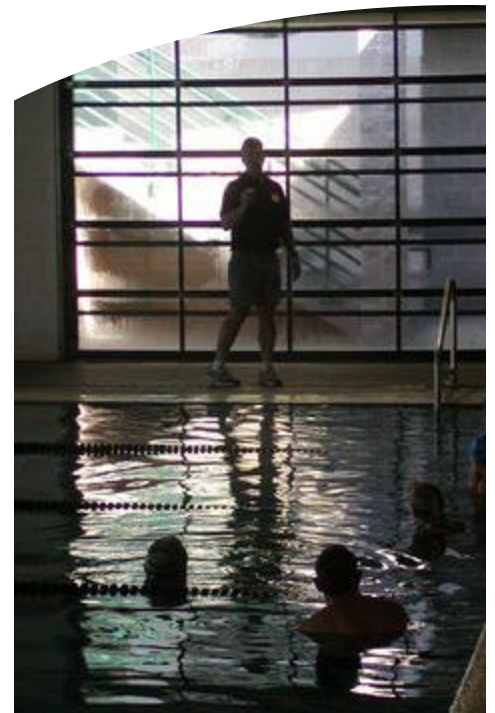
## This is your club. Help make it better.

This is a sign that is posted outside the room of Tri Gulf Coast Board Meetings. Just like our bodies need fuel during a sporting event, our club needs fuel. That fuel is you. Without your help, our club would run out of steam and not succeed in our goals.

Tri Gulf Cost is a volunteer run organization. That's right, no huge salary to go along with the title. We enjoy the sport enough to volunteer our time to help promote and enhance triathlons in our community. But, like you, we have families and jobs that prevent us from single handedly taking on our goals.

The Tri Gulf Coast Board recently went through several key position changes. When I say that we went through some changes, we basically changed hats with one another. We were already on the board under some capacity but now have different titles. While it is great to see the dedication of returning board members, we do not want these people to burn out by trying to do everything alone.

We recently held our first triathlon clinic. This event was a huge success. John Harrison did excellent in heading up the efforts to conduct this clinic. The clinic was a success not only because of a quality program, but because there was a tremendous effort from volunteers. It takes a special person to get up on a Sunday morning to help run a clinic for the benefit of others. Thank you very much to those people.



The next general membership meeting is on Sunday April 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm, at Cancun's on Romano Street.

Check it Out!



## VO<sub>2</sub> Max

VO<sub>2</sub> max is like a fuel burn rate. In this case the fuel is oxygen. It is the maximum rate of oxygen consumption that your body can sustain. It is measured in ml of oxygen, per kilogram of bodyweight, per minute (ml/kg/min). VO<sub>2</sub> max values can improve approximately 25% with training (average). Elite athletes can have a VO<sub>2</sub> value of over 70 ml/kg/min.



# Charlie Knight Athlete and Volunteer Award

*Without him and many other folks like him, we would not be able to have these events.*

One of the ideas bought up at the last meeting was for TGC to present a recognition award for not only a top athlete for our area but also for a top volunteer. As the majority of you know, Pensacola lost a tremendous member of our community this year. Charlie Knight was not only deeply involved in the Santa Rosa Triathlon, but numerous other events throughout the year. Although I never saw him run in an event, he could be seen helping run the show. Without him and many other folks like him, we would not be able to have these events. Their time is invaluable. In his honor, we

will be presenting The Charlie Knight Athlete and Volunteer awards at the Sri Tri.

So, come out and be a part of the action by volunteering some of your time. If you can only volunteer to help out at a single event or if you can commit to assisting with the monthly board meetings; your help is wanted. We look forward to seeing you at the open membership meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

It was also real pleasure to see three fairly new TCG members attend our last board meeting. Charlie, Christy Baughn and Jackie Brown were Mere Mortals last year and they must have enjoyed their experiences with our club. Robbie Matt was also new to our meetings. These new participants brought some great new ideas to the table while assisting us with additional views on topics already in progress. These efforts show us that people are willing to help make TGC a fun and valuable club to be member of.

**COME OUT AND BE A PART OF THE ACTION. YOUR HELP IS WANTED!**

ROB ZIMMERMAN

**CONSISTENCY  
AND QUALITY:  
The key to  
success!**



Coach Gordo Byrn likes to say that there are many ways to get fast. The primary ingredients for success are consistency and quality, no matter which training methods you use. There is no easy way!

## DANCING WITH THE ONE WHO BROUGHT YOU

If you are like me, the local bike and running shops were instrumental in getting me into the sport and continue to be instrumental in helping me improve. They sponsor weekly runs, weekly rides, provide advise on injuries, make sure I have the right equipment, help me out with adjustments before races, sponsor races, encourage beginners, provide small but valuable fixes to my bike, serve on the Tri Gulf Coast Board, serve on the West Florida Wheelmen Board, serve on the Pensacola Runner Association board, etc, etc, etc. They are the foundation of our triathlon community. Without them, it would be harder to train, harder to get the right equipment and we would have fewer races.

Thus, we need to support our local shops. The next time you are considering purchasing from a catalog or internet site, think about who really supports you and buy locally. With the discount the local shops give to Tri Gulf Coast members, the costs are normally about the same and you are supporting our local triathlon community. Do the right thing.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Doug Jones** for being ranked the #1 triathlete in the Southeast in his age group. Now you don't have to feel so bad about being dropped by him on every group ride!

# Triathlon Training Groups

## SWIMMING

- ?? Coached work outs with Grace at Cecil Hunter Pool on Blount Street under the Interstate. Coached work outs are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 5:30AM to 7:00AM and open to lap swimmers 7:00 AM to 9:00AM. All levels welcome. \$2.00 per session fee.
- ?? Coached work outs at The Club on Highway 98 in Gulf Breeze on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 5:00AM to 6:00AM. Membership to The Club required. Call 916-SWIM for more information.
- ?? Coached workouts at Pensacola Junior College at 5:30AM weekdays. Quarterly membership required. Call 484-1311 for more information and confirm time. Due to Hurricane Ivan these workouts are currently at The Club at 6:00AM.

## RUNNING

- ?? Seville Milers meet on Monday nights at 5:30 PM at Seville Quarter for a 4.2 mile run. All paces and levels welcome.
- ?? Emerald Coast Racing Team has coached track workouts Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:00 PM at Pensacola Junior College and on Saturday at 7:00AM Saturday. Work outs generally cancelled if conflicts with a major road race. Contact [www.emeraldcoastracingteam@yahoo.com](mailto:www.emeraldcoastracingteam@yahoo.com) for more information.
- ?? "6 at 6" at Running Wild on Palafox Street downtown at 6:00 AM on Tuesday and Thursday. Generally a pretty fast group with paces generally ranging from 6:20 to 7:30 for the 5.6 mile route. Contact Paul at the Running Wild shop at 435-9222 for more information.
- ?? Captain Fun Runners meet at 6:00 PM on Wednesdays at the Quiet Water shell on Pensacola Beach for either a 4.25 or 6-mile route.

## BIKING

- ?? Group ride from Dragon Sports on Navy Boulevard on Wednesdays at 6:30 AM and Saturdays at 7:00AM. Generally round 30 to 40 miles at various paces. Contact Don at Dragon Sports
- ?? Group ride from Truly Spokin in Milton on Saturdays at 8:00AM or 9:00AM. Various routes and paces groups. Call Shelly or Victor at 850-983-2488..
- ?? Group ride with West Florida Wheelmen every Sunday morning. Check [www.wfw-pensacola.com](http://www.wfw-pensacola.com) for time, location and route.
- ?? Group ride with Emerald Coast Cyclist on Ranger Camp Road in Fort Walton on Tuesday nights during day light savings time at 5:00 PM sharp. Route 32 miles with the roadies' lead pack averaging 24 to 26 mph. Check [www.eccyclists.com](http://www.eccyclists.com) for details and other rides in the Fort Walton area.

## TRIATHLON TRAINING

- ?? Mere Mortals Training Group starting around June 19 (Check web site to confirm date). Meet at Casino Beach Stage on Pensacola Beach at 6:30 AM. See [www.trigulfcoast.org](http://www.trigulfcoast.org) for updates and details



# Ride Routes: West Side Beach Rides (36, 50 and 90 mile options)



Start at the Food World parking lot on Sorrento (red star on the left). Head south on Sorrento (becomes Perdido Key Drive or hwy 292 on the map). The road curves to the right and follows the beach. For the first 8 miles you will have 4-foot shoulders and pretty good roads. You will reach the Alabama border at about the 7.5-mile point and the shoulder widens to about 15 feet. You will have nice wide shoulders for the next 11 or so miles until Gulf Shores Alabama. Continue until you reach the red light at the Gulf Shores public beach (highway 59). If you continue through the light at highway 59 (straight), you can continue for another 7 miles until the road ends at a gated neighborhood. There are 4-foot shoulders most of the way and very little traffic on this section of road. Round trip is 36ish miles if you turn at hwy 59 and 50ish miles if you continue to the end. If you want a much longer ride, instead of turning around at hwy 59, go north on the 59 for about 1 mile and

turn left on Fort Morgan road towards the Fort Morgan ferry. Fort Morgan Road will end at the Fort Morgan Ferry about 20 miles from the 59. Round trip for this ride is about 90 miles. Fort Morgan road has a 3-foot shoulder most of the way and light traffic. There are a couple of convenience stores along the way to refill if you need to.

Note: Tri Gulf Coast does not “endorse” or “certify” any ride routes. Always wear a helmet and use caution when cycling in traffic.

# Improving Your Swim Technique

by Rich Strauss ([www.cruciblefitness.com](http://www.cruciblefitness.com))

I've got news for you. The former swimmers in the triathlon community are sandbagging. We have formed a conspiracy to keep swim splits ridiculously slow, compared to what we could do "back in the day." We can do this because we have a stroke and you don't. If you guys spent as much money improving your swimming technique as you do on a set of wheels, then we might have to get wet more than once a week. But you keep playing wall-tag with other former swimmers at the local Masters workout, instead of doing drills and working on your technique. So you keep letting us sleep in. Thanks!

By the way, those Masters folks are in on it too. They make you think that the secret to swimming fast is swimming lots of yardage. But our other little secret is that we have been doing this stuff our whole lives, so of course yardage helps us. I had your stroke when I was seven, but guess what? I had a pretty good stroke by the time I was 13, and then I had 9 years of 30k-100k a week. Yes, 100k, back in the training dark ages of the 1980's. Ask Sue why I can't put my arm over her shoulder at the movie theatre.

So until you can beat 13 year-old Rich Strauss, braces, coke bottle glasses, sailor suit and all, your time in the pool is much better spent learning how to freakin' swim. The bench mark I'll give you is about 24:00 for a 1500. That is about what a below average USS 13 year-old boy with a decent stroke can do. Until you beat that skinny little kid, a large portion of your pool time should be spent in stroke improvement. This speed is probably 80% technique and 20% fitness.

I think of this focus as something of a philosophy. A philosophy that is focused on swimming ONLY quality yards for much of the training season, often at the expense of training volume. The problem that most triathletes have is that this de-emphasis on training volume is counter-intuitive to how we train for the bike and run. It requires focused mental attention to every lap, instead of mindless wall tag. In short, its hard. You have to think.

Start by getting qualified help with your stroke technique.

1. Find a coach, whether Masters, USS, or high school and work with them to improve your stroke, not on writing workouts to get you more yardage. Money always greases the wheels.
2. Purchase a swim instruction video, such as Swim Power by Tarpinian, or Total Immersion by Terry Laughlin. These are excellent tools to either augment the instruction of a physical coach, or to give you ideas, if a coach is not available to you.

Next, establish your starting baselines for swimming velocity and swimming efficiency:

1. **Swimming Velocity:** perform a 1000m, maximum effort time trial. This should be performed as if it were a race, pacing your effort so that you do not blow up in the middle somewhere. This test should be repeated once per month.
2. **Swimming Efficiency:** The tool that I use is called **Swim Golf**. Swim 50 meters or yards at a decent pace, concentrating on your technique, as it is right now. Count your strokes (each time a hand goes in the water counts as a stroke), and record your time. Add your stroke count to your time for 50m/yds in seconds. For example, you swim 50m in 40 seconds and take 40 strokes. Your Swim Golf is 80. Do 4 x 50m Swim Golf with plenty of recovery between each. Take the average score. This is your Swim Golf, a measure of your efficiency as determined by velocity and distance per stroke.

So what is a good Swim Golf score?

1. Think of it as golf: low score is good, high score is bad. I like to give folks a goal of sub 80 for a 25yd pool, sub 85 or so for a 50m pool.
2. Focus first on reducing the stroke count component, then the speed component. As for stroke count, a good goal would be less than 20 strokes per 25yd or less than 42 strokes per 50m. This is based on my personal experience with stroke counts. Once you get under 20, then 19 is good, 18 is better, 17 is very good, 16 is excellent. Now for fun, bust out those videos of Ian Thorpe at Sidney and check out his Swim Golf in the 200m or 400m. Gives me goose bumps. Freakish.

Of these two baselines above, the Golf Score is the most important for the triathlete. I use this particular baseline in two ways:

1. To establish your baseline before a set of drills or session of concentrated stroke work. This is how I typically structure a workout during early base training periods:
  - A. Short warm-up, 300-500, followed by 4 x 25 sprint.
  - B. 4 x 50yd Swim Golf. 1 and 2 are at 1500m race pace, 3 and 4 are sprint. I am trying to get the athlete to pay attention to what happens to their stroke when they go from a comfortable pace to hard effort. My rule is that stroke count should not vary more than 10% when going from race pace to sprint. A higher variation is an indication that endurance, force or muscular endurance are limiters.
  - C. Sets of 50ís or 100ís of a particular drill. We then apply this drill to a swim, then perform 2 more Swim Golf: 4 x 50 drill, 1 x 50 swim, 2 x 50 Swim Golf. Practice a drill, apply it to a full stroke, then use the Swim Golf to measure any changes in efficiency. Repeat this sequence, either with the same drill or different drills.
  - D. Repeat the set of Swim Golf from B above.
  - E. Short sprints followed by a cool down.
  
2. To establish a limiter for how quickly we begin to integrate fitness swimming into swim workouts. I use a combination of Swim Golf and stroke count. In short, swimming more yards with a bad stroke only reinforces a bad stroke. An athlete should increase the length or number of repetitions only after he has demonstrated the ability to maintain a consistent stroke count. Get in the habit of counting your strokes at the start, middle and finish of every interval, trying to keep your stroke count the same throughout. If your stroke count goes up more than 10% in the course of an interval, slow down and take more rest. An increase in your stroke count is an indication of a slip in concentration, fatigue, or that you are just pushing yourself too much. Do not sacrifice technique in an effort to go longer, harder or faster. Again, you will only be reinforcing a bad stroke. A progression of interval workouts using this tool might look like this:
  - A. 5 x 100 w/20î rest. Increase number of reps after athlete has demonstrated the ability to maintain a consistent stroke count. After 2-3 weeks, we might end up at 10 x 100. Then:
  - B. 10 x 100, make each 100 a little faster (descend) 1-5, then 6-10. If stroke count is consistent, then move to descend 1-3, 4-6, and 7-9. Still good? Then:
  - C. 6 x 200, descend 1-6. Consistent stroke count? Then do 6 x 200, descend 1-3, and 4-6. Still good? Then move to 300ís, 400ís, etc.
  - D. It might be good to push the endurance envelope a bit with a weekly long swim, building toward race distance. While a consistent stroke count on these swims is desirable, it is also necessary to do the best you can and bump up your endurance.

As a side note, an often overlooked benefit of counting your strokes is in open water swimming. I have found that the act of simply counting my strokes takes me out of the washing machine/WWF cage match and puts me back into the little 8 x 3 foot box that I can control. It focuses me on the task at hand and brings me back into my stroke.

In summary, resist the temptation to pile on yardage. Chances are that you will only reinforce a poor stroke. Rather, try to swim every lap as well as you can, and only swim quality laps. Always remember that for the triathlete, faster swimming is far more about swimming technique than about swimming fitness. As you improve your technique over time, you will naturally increase your total yardage and create the muscle memory of good, efficient swimming. Use the tools of Swim Golf and stroke count to decide when you are ready to incorporate more “fitness swimming” into your pool sessions.

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**About the author:** Rich Strauss is a full time triathlon coach who coaches age groupers of all abilities. He offers a variety of coaching plans, local training groups, training camps and has just developed a swimming e-book. Surf over to [www.cruciblefitness.com](http://www.cruciblefitness.com) for more information.

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