

REFINE YOUR RACE

Vital skills that apply to every adventure race team



THE FIRST DISTANCE EVENT of the year, the 'UGE Salomon 150/220km in Harrismith at the end of January, was revealing. A post-race novice team commented how *"we're not quite ready for anything longer than 100km"* and that they thought they should be sticking to sprint races.

On the contrary! With their first distance event under their belt they have the opportunity to refine their racing. I looked at their split times, which were presented in the race results - for sections, disciplines and transitions and they revealed just where this team lost time, slipping from midfield to the back and finally to not completing the race. These few points apply to every team whether *teté de la course* or *le derrière*.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Record your split times throughout the race. Include duration of each stage and duration of transition stops (time in and time out).



Ask your support crew to keep a log. They should also record splits for the first few teams and midfield teams so that you can compare your results post-race. Not all race results present split times so it's better to do it yourself.

CUT TRANSITION TIMES

Don't spend more than 10-15 minutes for a discipline change. Spending 90 minutes in transition only four hours into a race is ridiculous. Don't waste precious daylight sitting still. Limit longer main meal stops to the dark hours (or walk and eat) and don't let any non-sleep transition creep longer than 30 minutes. Practise transitions with your support crew pre-race so that they know what you need.

AND THE CULPRIT IS...

Teams lose huge chunks of time on trekking stages. I suspect there are three main reasons for this: 1. slow walking speed, 2. aimless activity and 3. poor navigation. Include high intensity walking to your training schedule and limit time wastage by packing your equipment properly and initiating race planning (see below).

Navigation is the difficult one; it is a skill that is improved through practise and experience, as the previous two

issues (Vol 11.5 and 12.1) where I covered the seven essential navigation skills will reveal. Here's one quick fix: if it is night and you're uncertain of your location (aka l.o.s.t.), stop and sleep instead of wandering around aimlessly getting frustrated, tired and irritable. The rising sun will shed light on your situation to hopefully reveal a solution. Team Cyanosis' Nicholas Mulder adds another point, *"Getting in and out of water, you're going to get wet anyway so just step right in and don't waste time unnecessarily."*

PLAN MORE TIME

"Time wasted can be prevented by making plans. At all times the team should know what they're going to do and when,"

Nicholas advises.

This applies to designating where and/or when you'll stop for dinner, go to sleep, put on warmer clothing and turn on headlamps. And if one person needs the loo, the others may as well try to go at the same time. Minimise the number of times you halt your progress; it disrupts your rhythm and four 'quick' five minute stops become 20 minutes lost at the end of the race.

Competent, top-of-the-field racers were not born knowing all the answers. Each race allows them to critically assess their weaknesses and identify errors. With this knowledge they constantly improve and refine their abilities and race plans.

□ Lisa de Speville Adventure racing author, athlete and www.ar.co.za founder