

Ramblin' Rose 2009

By Sage Rountree and Monette Williams

Ladies, here's our plan to get you ready to rumble at the Ramblin' Rose Winston-Salem on August 23, Charlotte on September 27, or Chapel Hill on October 11. This year, we've come up with an eight-week plan that will work for both first-timers and experienced triathletes. New this year is the introduction of a combination workout each weekend, which means you'll be running three days a week. Feel free to include walking in each of your runs. You might come up with a ratio for your run/walk, such as 3:2, or 4:1, or 10:1. Start with something that feels doable at your present fitness, and in time you can decrease the length of the walk breaks.

To complement the aerobic work you're doing, add 20 minutes of strength and flexibility work at the end of your workouts. Include at least three short sessions per week focusing on core strength, and maintain your flexibility with some gentle stretching. Yoga gets both of these at once. You can find some routines at Sage's site, <http://www.sagerountree.com>, or in her books *The Athlete's Guide to Yoga* and *The Athlete's Pocket Guide to Yoga*.

For your physical and mental health, take at least one day a week completely off. Every fourth week, you'll have reduced volume to let your work sink in. Be sure to begin every bike and run workout with at least 10 minutes of warm-up, gradually increasing the intensity, and always finish with an easy 10-minute cool-down.

To stay safe, make sure your shoes are new, your tires are pumped, and your helmet fits tightly!

Every year there is needless stress on race morning when folks realize they submitted an inaccurate swim time. You must have your final, accurate swim time submitted via the Setup Events website no later than two weeks before the event. We have included some self-testing in this year's plan for you. Be sure you are testing in a pool that is measured in yards, not meters, or correct for the difference by subtracting :05 or :10 from your meter-timed 100 to average your yardage time for 100. Setup provides some useful information at <http://www.setupevents.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=page&filename=SwimTime.html>.

Weeks 1-4

Note your 100-yard time in week 1, and compare it to the time you swim in week 6. Ideally, you'll have shaved off a few seconds.

As you ride, pay attention to your gearing and your cadence (how fast your feet are turning). You'll be aiming to turn 90 revolutions per minute, so that each foot turns 90 circles in 60 seconds (count on one side for 20 seconds, aiming for 30). This improves your efficiency and sets you up for a strong run. Choose a gear that allows for a quick turnover while still moving you forward! After a 10-minute warm-up, your Tuesday rides should include short intervals of fast–faster–fastest cadence with a 2-minute rest interval. These are listed in seconds on the plan.

On Fridays, you'll do a bike/run combination workout. Begin with an easy effort and build so the last three to five minutes before you transition are near or at race effort. Have your gear set up beforehand, and practice moving smoothly and efficiently, including putting on shoes and running or walking with your bike. Take these opportunities to think about how smoothly things will go on race day!

Your midweek runs include four-minute intervals, which you will run at a pace that is comfortably hard (if running itself is tough for you, run the intervals and walk the recoveries). In your weekend runs, include the specified number of pickups. These pickups should last for 20 to 30 seconds, and be run around 90% of full-on speed with pretty form. Run easy in between.

Weeks 5–8

If you get a chance to visit the race venue and ride the course, you'll feel more prepared on race day. We suggest doing this in week 5, so you'll have time to repeat it or to simulate the course's hills in the next few weeks.

Tuesday rides will have you alternate between 80% and 90% of full-out effort, with rest decreasing as the block progresses. The second ride is either a combo workout or, in week 10, will last as long as your projected full race finish time. (It's nice to confirm you have that endurance.) Your Wednesday run will include a tempo segment with a slightly faster finish. Visualize crossing the finish line! Weekend runs are easy. Look for a soft surface for these.

In week 6, take your average swim time for the 3 x 100s, and resubmit your swim time to Setup Events if needed.

In week 7, do a dress rehearsal, practicing nutrition, clothing, and, for a few minutes in both the ride and run, pacing.

Swim workouts

Whether you're new to swimming or an old pro, these swim workouts are specific to the short Ramblin' Rose distance. For more, add yardage during the warm-up and cool-down or increase the number of repeats for each set. We've included a Word file with the swim workouts, so you can edit them yourself.

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