



## **Perseverance**

There are companies out there that are making too much money off of words that were born from cycling. I don't know who gave them rights to use these words, but cycling should have gotten more credit for them. You see them in the in-flight mall magazines on the airlines. These companies took our words, words like 'Success', 'Patience', and 'Winning', and made posters and framed prints out of them. Then they marketed them toward the corporate world. I think a couple of the words they use were around before cycling, but they were still conceived because the creator knew that an invention like the bicycle was coming. One word they use has so many applications in cycling that our sport was almost named after it, I'm told. The word is 'Perseverance'.

Perseverance is required in too many forms in cycling to cover in one article. That would take a book or two. Since it's now Summer, we'll cover one. That is, the need to persevere out of Summer, through the Fall, to the end of the racing season. Here is why: Summer is longer than the actual days that a calendar shows. To a racer, it can feel like double time. The days are long and hot. Cyclists increase their mileage and racing. The body finally sheds any and all excess weight and reserves start to get tapped. Mentally, racers that have been hard after it for six or eight months have gotten dull. Bodies that used to respond instantly on-demand are starting to feel like mac trucks mashing through rough gear boxes.

For some racers, health becomes an issue. Immune systems, strained from months of hard work, finally give out. Instead of spending August out on the road, they end up riding the couch and the bed. Two or three weeks can go by before they're feeling good enough to throw a leg over a bike. Others find themselves drained in other ways. They've done everything by the book. They've trained and raced so hard all year, but that next level never came. Sometimes many of these riders, facing issues like this, throw in the towel on their season by the end of August. They miss the springboard that lies just around the corner.

I'm here to tell you, no matter how good or bad it's gone, this year, don't end it, yet. Perseverance, let it be thy close friend. It can take some really hard years to learn how to squeeze all the juice out of a cycling season. I've been laid out so bad in July and August it's hard to express the mental torture that I put myself through. I know some of you are going through things like that, this year. If not this year, it could happen any year, so read on. Mark my words: By the time Halloween comes, if you follow these steps and stay with it, you'll have had your laughs. You see, only in hindsight was I able to learn that I didn't need to worry so much. That, simply through rest and perseverance, the long season ends strong.

### Persevering Through Summer and Fall: 10 Steps

1. Riding great? Been healthy all year? Take a rest.
2. Been sick this Summer, not totally recovered? Keep resting, then take a rest.
3. Been resting all year? Go to every race you can.
4. Riding good but feeling slightly unmotivated? Take a little vacation and leave your bike at home.
5. Ridden hard all year? Motivated but not improving much? Take a rest.
6. Not sure how to categorize your season so far? Take a rest and get a clue.
7. When August is over and September comes, feel the invigoration in your mind and body.
8. When your great rest is over, do some really intense training. Don't do huge mileage.
9. Know that you will now be getting stronger when others are weakening. Capitalize on that.
10. You have perseverance. You will be rewarded.

Seem too simple? It is simple, but there are lessons in there that take years to learn. These steps are easier said than done. Some people actually believe that you're only as good as your last race. Blow them away in September and October and that's what they'll remember all Winter long. No matter how bad your season has been, the best opportunities for success are still to come. This is not voodoo. There are rules in effect, here. In the Spring, everyone is fresh and on their way up. In the Summer, most riders are as good as they are going to get, this year. The ones that have had challenges might have had blessings in disguise. In the Fall, many riders that were good in Summer are slowing down. That means, by getting better through the Fall, you get the double whammy of other riders going in reverse. It can be a huge swing. That wasn't possible in the Spring.

Not to mention, you get the added boost of riding well into Fall, which I believe can translate into next Spring. Taking a good rest at the end of Summer, even when you think you don't need it, is what allows this to happen. Summer is the great deceiver. It will take more from you than you realize. I saw a poster, recently. It showed a cowboy on a bucking bronco. It read, "It's not how many times you fall off. It's how many times you get back on." Cycling is still not getting royalties from this, yet it's our message. Just make sure that when you get back on at the end of Summer, you're rested up and fired up.