

Bike Race / Event Preparation Guide

Week before

- Check bike for mechanicals: cables, chain, tires. Replace as needed and do 2+ rides on new stuff before use in the event. If you run tubulars, begin (re)gluing process now if needed.
- Check other equipment: cleats, boa dials or laces, hr monitor battery, powermeter battery, cyclometer.
- Check car if you will drive to the event
- Begin to hydrate if race day will be super-hot, eat clean food.
- Ensure you are registered for the event
- Ensure your race license is active

Two days before

- Get an especially good night sleep if your event is very early or you tend to get too nervous to sleep the night before.

Day before

- Re-check the above
- Clean and lube chain; Triflow on jockey wheels
- Do openers if you like to
- Gas up the car
- Shave legs if you are into that
- Set two alarms if it's an early event
- Eat normally the day before (don't skimp), including a lean dinner composed of foods you normally eat.
- Wash your kit
- If your event is early: Pack the car, prep bottles, prep breakfast, lay out clothes.
- Pack your race bag

In your race bag

- Shoes
- Socks
- Toe covers or shoe covers; chemical toe warmers if super cold.
- Short, bibs, or skinsuit
- Leg warmers, knee warmers
- HR strap
- Base layer(s)
- Jersey
- Vest, jacket
- Skull cap
- Helmet
- Gloves
- Wheel cards

- Pen
- Safety pins
- Towel
- Bandana or washcloth – nice to wipe you and/or the bike down after the race
- Chain lube and Triflow for last minute squeaks
- Tools, including scissors
- Rags
- Extra tubes and tires; Vittoria Pit Stop or the like if on tubies
- Street clothes and shoes; flip flops are nice to have as well
- Regular hat or podium for after
- Sunblock
- TP in case the portapotties are out.
- Hand sanitizer
- Plastic bag for sweaty race clothes
- Race food: drink mix, gels, gummies, bars – cut the tops off all that goes in your jersey pocket except gels.
- Recovery food: drink, protein, maybe caffeine. I like Core Power and then maybe a Mexican Coke and then a sandwich and salty chips.
- A note on clothes: plan every possible weather-related change that might occur (heat, cold, sun, rain, wind).
- Cyclometer
- USAC license or phone app
- AAA card if you have one
- Health insurance card

In the car

- Bike
- Wheels for the pit, possibly another set of wheels just in case. For instance, I race on 50mm carbon tubies, but I often bring a set of decent alu clinchers in case it's raining or the tubies flat during warmup. I have older more beat-up wheels I prefer to put in the pit.
- Pump
- Trainer and trainer-skewer if you warmup that way. Or rollers if you are tough.
- A pillow for pinning your number
- Cell phone and car charger. I set the home screen to show my emergency contact.
- Directions to the event and to a coffee stop along the way if desired

Day of

- Eat a normal breakfast that includes lean protein if finished 2.5 hours or more before your event. If less time, diminish protein and increase carbs. If you get hungry before the event, eat a bar rather than ignore it.
- Take any meds you normally would – allergy etc but avoid antioxidants, vitamin C, magnesium and calcium supplements (which are all good to take afterward).

- Plan to arrive 1.5 hours before your start time or more. No sense in rushing or adding extra stress.
- Hydrate and caffeinate on the drive
- Use the bathroom at a station/store along the way to avoid long lines.

When you arrive

- Get your race number first
- Use the bathroom
- Fill out and attach wheel cards
- Pin your number, kit up, apply sunscreen.
 - Kit selection: Better to be cold at the start than hot later on, but when in doubt, “overdress” hands, feet, and ears. Numb hands can be dangerous and numb feet and ears can be a real distraction. Given that we race these days in aero kit, consider investing in a short sleeve wind blocker base layer for especially cold starts.
 - Pinning: Use 7 pins on each number, excluding the center bottom. Wrinkle/wad up and then unfold numbers for better airflow. Apply with jersey spread over curved surface of a pillow to mimic back shape. For left or right number, follow the jersey seam. Do not cover the pockets. Bad pinning can invalidate the aero benefit of that expensive wheelset.
- Eat a bar if you are hungry
- Ensure you have bottles on the bike and nothing else you don’t need (like saddle bag)
- Bring wheels to the pit
- Team meeting now or after warmup
- Do your warmup, ending close to start time (unless you have a team meeting after). I like to ride in z1-2 for 20’ and then either do 5x1’ spin ups at 110+ rpm topping at ftp with 1’ rest in between or 5’ at ftp. The more tired or sore I am, the longer warmup I need. So I typically add 20’ more if I raced the day before.
- Return to bathroom if needed and/or car to drop off extra clothes. When in doubt, line up with fewer rather than more clothes.
- Arrive at the start line 10 minutes ahead of time.
- Make sure your cleats are free of mud (ask me about this one).
- Know the wind direction and start on the protected side of the road.
- Line up early enough to start in a good position. It just adds effort, danger, and some stress to try and move up early in the race.