

2008 Bermuda Cycling Camp



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Welcome Campers!

In the past two years that Vision Quest has come to Bermuda, we have been nothing short of impressed by the technical skill, discipline and great attitudes we've seen from all participants. This year we are looking forward to more of the same and trying to introduce some new things to keep things exciting and challenging. There will definitely be elements that should be familiar to those who were at past camps as well, so we'll be able to see where you've improved since 2007.

The big change this year is that we are going to shift the camp format from 4 days of training to 5, but we will keep all of the work to the morning when it is not quite as hot out. Doing this will make the sessions we have a little more focused, but hopefully everyone will be able to go home at the end of the day without being so exhausted. Each day will focus on a little different skill and build a little on the days before. At the end of camp, we are planning to set up a small stage race so everyone can put everything they've learned during the week into practice. It should be a great time and a lot of fun, we're looking forward to seeing you soon.

Jason, Brian and Francine

Hello campers and Welcome to "VQ does Bermuda 3!"

We have had a bunch of fun these past few years and we want to keep it rolling this year with our third camp. The goal for any camp experience like this is to enjoy the process of effective training outside your normal routines. I get excited each year when the coaches come back and tell me how much fun it has been working with all of you. That is a credit not only to you but also to the coaches and the support system you already have on the island. One of the greatest things I hear is how eager everyone is to learn new things and try different approaches. I am a firm believer in experimenting with your training and racing. It is so important to create a toolbox of experience and knowledge that you draw from on a regular basis. I have been training and racing for a long time and I am still learning new things and ideals and adding to my toolbox. Too many times, people find one thing that works and that is all they do. But eventually, you will find yourself in situations where that one technique or idea is no longer effective. If your toolbox is full of other options you will still have plenty of ways to find success for yourselves.

One other thing I want to mention is documentation. I believe that when you are experimenting it is important to document your experiments and how they are affecting your performance, what works and what doesn't. It is never too early to start! Figuring out what does not work is only worthwhile if you do not repeat it. The way to avoid this mistake is by writing down what you are doing. Record your training and racing and overtime and you can compare workouts, dial in your training, and understand how this is affecting you by simply looking back over your training notes.

I am excited for all you can learn from Brian, Jason and Francine this week. Make sure to ask lots of questions and pick their brains. They have lots of knowledge and experience that they can't wait to share to help you all become better endurance athletes. Set your goals high and remember to enjoy the process of achieving them.

Ciao
Robbie

Staff Bios

Jason Schisler

Jason graduated from Wheaton College with a degree in Kinesiology. He now manages the Vision Quest Lake Bluff office as well as coaching 15 athletes, evaluating performance tests, and helping to oversee the VQ Mentoring Program. On the road, he is a Category 3 cyclist, having earned the 2006 Illinois Criterium championship, 8th place overall at the Edgar Soto Stage Race and 1st place at the Glencoe Grand Prix. Jason is a USCF certified coach as well as being CPR/First Aid certified.

Brian Haas

A former Track and Field All-American at the University of Illinois and Boston Marathon qualifier, Brian now focuses his competitive energy on cycling. A USCF Club Level Coach and Category 2 Road, Track and Cyclocross racer, Brian brings knowledge gained from training and racing across a variety of cycling disciplines to the athletes of Vision Quest. Whether giving pointers on group ride technique or talking through specific training questions, Brian's always ready to help. Brian lives in Chicago with his wife and fellow VQ coach, Francine Haas.

Francine Haas

Francine Haas is an accomplished athlete in both triathlon and cycling disciplines. She began her cycling career in 1983 as a triathlete and turned her focus to cycling in 1999. She has earned numerous accolades, including state championships on the road and track, cyclocross series championships, and is the record holder in the Great Floridian Ironman Athena category. Francine holds a Club level coaching certification from USA Cycling and is also certified in First Aid and CPR. In addition to these certifications, she has also led the Alberto's women's cycling clinic for the past several seasons.

Camp Schedule

Overview- 5 days, 9 to 2:30 daily

- 7/7 Monday - Day One - Group Selection & Time Trials
8:30 AM Campers Arrive: set up bike stands, put bikes on racks, bike check & fit by coaches
9:00 AM Camp Introductions and Outline
Opening Time Trials
Pacing and Aerodynamics Practice
12:00 PM Lunch & Swimming
1:00 PM Small Team Time Trials
2:30 PM End of day 1!
- 7/8 Tuesday - Bike Handling Skills & Certification
8:30 AM Campers Arrive: set up bike stands, quick maintenance check
9:00 AM Functional Training & Stretching
9:30 AM Demonstration and Practice of Basic to Advanced Riding Skills
12:00 PM Lunch & Swimming
1:00 PM Skills Certification & Group Etiquette/Paceline Riding
2:30 PM End of Day 2!
- 7/9 Wednesday - Day Three - Criteriums & Sprinting
8:30 AM Campers Arrive: set up bike stands, quick maintenance check
9:00 AM Functional Training & Stretching
9:30 AM Sprinting Mechanics and Sprint Strategies
12:00 PM Lunch & Swimming
1:00 PM Short Races & Racing Games
2:30 PM End of Day 3!
- 7/10 Thursday - Day Four - Road Races & Race Strategy
8:30 AM Campers Arrive: set up bike stands, quick maintenance check
9:00 AM Functional Training & Stretching
9:30 AM Individual & Team Racing Strategies
12:00 PM Lunch & Swimming
1:00 PM Longer Races & Group Rides
2:30 PM End of Day 4! (One to go!)
- 7/11 Friday - Day Five - Stage Race (Putting it All Together)
8:30 AM Campers Arrive: set up bike stands, quick maintenance check
9:00 AM Functional Training & Stretching
9:30 AM Time Trial
Handicap Road Race
Criterium
12:00 PM End of Camp Pizza Party
1:00 PM End of Camp - Great work this week!

General Rules of Camp

Be On Time

Remember this: early is **on time** and on time is **late!** There are a lot of things we want to do during camp and it will be important to make the most of the short time we have. Do your best to get all of the small things done before the scheduled start time, including pumping tires, making repairs, and going to the rest room.

Be Prepared

Preparation includes both the body and the bike. Make sure you wear appropriate clothing for the weather and sunscreen if it is necessary. **Always wear a helmet!** On the first day of camp, we will do a basic check of bikes to make sure they are all in working order, and we will teach everyone how to do a quick check on their own. Each day, get to camp early enough to go through this quick check and make sure your bike will be safe to ride. If you have problems with either your body or bike let a coach, adult or another rider know as soon as possible to get help.

UCI Gear Restrictions for Junior Riders

UCI and USCF Regulations for juniors require 52 (largest front chain ring) X 14 (smallest rear cassette cog) as the overall largest gear set up. 45 X 12 also works.

The junior gear restriction for road events is 26 feet (7.93 meters). Additional junior track gear restrictions apply and you should refer to the UCI for those guidelines. The gear restriction is determined by the distance the bicycle travels in one complete pedal revolution when the bicycle is in its largest gear.

The Race official will usually provide a courtesy gear check prior to the start of the junior race but ultimately it is the gear check immediately after the junior race that determines whether a bicycle was legal or not. The race official will check a bike not by counting the number of gear teeth on the largest ring and cog but by rolling the bicycle straight backward in its biggest gear for 26 feet. If the bicycle rolls past 26 feet before 1 full pedal revolution has completed the rider is disqualified for not complying with junior gear restriction regulations.

Ultimately it is the athlete's responsibility to make sure his or her bicycle is compliant. The purpose of the courtesy check is to offer the junior the opportunity to block their gears prior to competing in their event. Please note that blocked gearing is not permitted in the USCF National Championships and UCI events. You must have proper gearing for these.

Also note that different tire widths can change a rollout distance, and therefore need to do a rollout on their own prior to the race to ensure that they are compliant.

Group Ride Rules and Etiquette

Be predictable

This may be the most important rule and involves every aspect of riding from changing positions in the group to following the traffic rules. You might say that all the other rules support this one. Smooth predictable riding isn't just a matter of style...its survival!

Don't Overlap Wheels

This habit will get you in real trouble. Some do it from lack of concentration, others may not know any better, but sooner or later you'll crash.

Be Steady

Riding steady includes both speed and line. When riding in a group, keep speed constant as you pull through to the front of the group and keep a straight line. When you are following, try to avoid using your brakes to slow down, sit up straight to catch more wind and slow down. If you use your brakes it will cause reactions all the way down the pace line and make it harder for everyone. When going uphill, don't try to maintain the same speed, as this will be very hard for most riders. Instead, keep steady pedal pressure. On downhill, the rider in front needs to be sure to keep pedaling with the same pressure as going uphill because the riders behind him will have a much easier time in the draft.

Announce Hazards

When you are in the lead, you are responsible for the safety of everyone behind you. You also need to be very vocal when approaching intersections, slowing, stopping, or turning. Vocally warning the group that you are slowing for a turn will keep them safely behind and upright to ride another day. Riders in the pack should relay these warnings to the rear. When you are following, announce oncoming traffic from the rear...in this case others should relay this toward the front.

Signal

Signaling lets everyone (vehicles and riders) know your intentions. Remember #1? This makes you predictable. Also, it's a good idea to make eye contact with oncoming traffic at intersections. One note here, use your right arm straight out to signal a right turn. It's not cool to stick out your left arm; more importantly, it's ineffective. In a big group, combine this with a loud vocal warning of your intentions.

Don't fixate

If you are staring at something (i.e. the wheel in front of you), you will hit it! When you walk in a crowd, you don't stare at the back of the person in front of you so you shouldn't ride like that either. Learn to be comfortable looking around or through the other riders in front of you. This will allow you to see things that are developing in front of the group. With a little practice you will be able to sense how far you are off the wheel in front of you.

Stay off aerobars

Aerobars are much more difficult to steer than normal bars and your hands are also further away from your brakes if you need to react suddenly. The entire pack will be safer if everyone remembers to keep their hands safely on the hoods.

Don't leave stragglers

If you get separated at intersections, as a matter of courtesy, the lead group should soft pedal until the rest have rejoined. Also as a courtesy to those who may not be able to stay with the group, the pack should wait at certain points and regroup, especially, at turning points and if the stragglers don't know the route. No one should be left alone. Remember this is a group ride!

Know your limitations

If you're not strong enough or too tired to do a turn at the front stay near the back and let the strongest cyclists pull in front of you instead of making them go to the back of the line. This will keep them from having to pass you when you create a gap. Also, don't pull at the front faster and longer than you have the energy to get back in at the rear, you'll soon end up dropped.

Change Positions Correctly

A common beginner faux pas is to stop pedaling just before pulling off the front. This creates an accordion effect toward the rear. Keep a steady pressure on the pedals until you have cleared the front. After pulling off, soft pedal and let the group pull through. As the last couple of riders pass through begin to apply more pressure, smoothly take your position at the rear. If you don't time it correctly, you'll create a gap and have to sprint to get back on, and then hit your brakes to slow abruptly – both disrupt a smooth flow in the pack.

Climbing

Ever been behind someone when they stood up going up hill and all of the sudden you're right behind him or her? If you need to stand, shift up a gear to compensate for the slower cadence and stand up smoothly keeping a steady pressure on the pedals. This will keep you from moving backward relative to the rider behind you. Apply the opposite technique when changing to a sitting position. Downshift and keep a steady pressure on the pedals to avoid abrupt changes in speed.

Descending

The leader must overcome a much greater wind resistance as the speed increases. If you are leading, keep pedaling. If you don't everyone behind you will eat your lunch. Riders to the rear will accelerate faster downhill as drafting becomes more effective. If you are following, back off a couple of bike lengths to compensate for the greater effects of drafting. If you are closing on the rider in front of you, sit up and let the wind slow you, using light braking to maintain spacing, but in both cases you should keep pedaling against the resistance. Keeping your legs moving makes it easier to keep the spacing, but also helps the legs get rid of the acids build up from the previous climb.

Relax

This one is really important. It will allow you to be smooth and responsive. If you have tense arms and get bumped from the side, the shock will go directly to the front wheel and you will swerve and possibly crash. Plus if you are tense, you are using energy you need to pedal your bike and keep up with the group

Closing a gap/Slowing down

Don't make erratic movements. No sudden speed changes- close gaps gradually. No sharp braking, if you are getting close to the rider ahead, soft pedal, sit up higher to catch more

wind, move over slightly to catch more wind, feather your brakes a bit and avoid coasting to keep the accordion effect to a minimum.

Leading the Pack

It is important that when you are pulling that you know where you are going. Make decisions with the safety of the entire group in mind. Do not accelerate or decelerate unless appropriate.

Notes

- Move completely off the roadway when waiting for groups, fixing flats, or stopping. Do not congregate on roads.
- Let someone know if you are getting dropped – if you are keeping tabs on yourself you will know it before it happens. Communicate! Drop off with another rider if you know you are going to blow soon.
- Leave no trace – do not throw wrappers on the road or trail!
- Do not half wheel when riding side by side. Settle on a pressure and maintain it with your partner.
- No more than 2 riders abreast – Anytime!
- Stay to the left and be courteous to traffic.

Pre-Race Routine

What:

All of the habits and tasks you go through to make sure you're completely ready on race day.

Why:

You don't just want to go to a race and jump straight out of the car to start racing, your body won't respond very well to this rapid change. The best athletes in the world have very set routines they use in the final hours and even final days leading up to their big events. It's not necessary that you be as focused as the pros, but having a good pre-race routine will give you the best chance for success.

How:

It's very important to have a pre-race routine that works for you. Use the following suggestions as a starting point from which you can develop a routine that works best for your personal needs.

When:

Your pre-race routine should start the day or night before your race with getting everything you need ready for the race. This includes packing up your race clothes, shoes, helmet, sunglasses, etc. You should also check over your bike to make sure everything is working properly. The other important thing is to make sure you eat plenty of good food, drink plenty of water and get a good night's sleep.

The Pre Race Ride

This final ride is your warmup for the race itself. After you get to the race and have all of your equipment set up the way you want it, this helps your body to get used working before you start racing. Different people like different types of warmup. At the very least you should roll around a little bit, long enough to start sweating just a little. For longer events like road races and triathlon, this short easy warmup should be fine. For shorter, harder races like criteriums and time trials, it is sometimes helpful to have some hard efforts like some short sprints or hill climbs included in the warmup to help prepare you for those efforts in the race. Be sure to stay hydrated during the warmup and have a little more fluid after. Also, be careful to leave a little extra time so you can make any last minute repairs if necessary and get to the start with plenty of time.

Race Pack Checklist

The items below are many of the things you will want to make sure you have packed in your race bag. Use this list as part of your pre-race routine to make sure you have all the items you will need. To be certain you're prepared, you might want to pack some or all of this list a day or two ahead of time. You may also want to add in a few extra items, so you can use the additional spaces for those things.

Cycling Clothing

- Helmet
- Sunglasses
- Undershirt
- Jersey or Skinsuit
- Bib Shorts
- Gloves
- Socks
- Bike Shoes
- Arm Warmers
- Knee Warmers
- Warm-up Jacket or Wind Vest
- _____
- _____

Casual Clothing

- Towel
- T-shirt
- Casual Shorts
- Tennis Shoes/Sandals
- _____
- _____

Supplies

- Water Bottles w/ water and sports drink
- Energy bars or gels
- Racing License
- Identification
- Entry Fee
- Contact Information
- Bike Tools & Tire Pump
- Spare Wheels
- Stationary Trainer
- Sunscreen

Time Trial Tips

Time trialing is pretty simple - you want to go faster than everybody else. Even though the race itself is simple, it is one of the hardest things you can do as an athlete. To do well consistently, you have to know how hard you can push yourself, how to maintain concentration, and how to stay nice and small to cut through the wind. Below are some tips that will help you to have your best race.

Be prepared

As soon as you get to the race, take care of all the non-warmup things you have to do right away so you can start getting focused on warming up and being ready for your race. This includes registration, checking the start time, getting dressed, pinning on the number, putting the bike together and pumping up the tires.

Warmup

Time trials are often won and lost by a few seconds so it is important to be able to go hard right off the bat. Getting a good warmup in before you start the TT will help your body be ready to go hard when you get to the start line because you will already be used to the effort. For shorter TT's it is really important to have a good warmup because there is less time to make up for mistakes if you don't have a good start. The warmup should bring you to within 5-10 minutes of your start time.

Know the course

Be aware of the terrain for the course, hilly or flat, and wind direction, as well as the number of turns. Is it straight out-and-back, a loop, or are there many turns? Knowing these things will help you prepare for the challenge. If it is practical, try to take a look at the course, preferably by riding it, before your race so you can see the best places to ride and be aware of any obstacles.

The start

Get to the start line warm but with plenty of extra time. Relax, take a drink from your bottle, and double check that your skewers are tight. You should be in the gear you want to start in. When your turn comes, start hard but not all out so you get up to rolling speed quickly and can settle into your rhythm.

Focus

You should settle into a pace that is hard but something that you are able to keep up for the entire race. Once you are there, you will need to concentrate to maintain this effort. Relax your body but focus on keeping still in your aero position and keeping your cadence fast and relaxed.

Finish

As you start to get close to the finish, start to gradually increase your effort if you can and try to build all the way to the line. If you do it right, you shouldn't have enough energy left to sprint all out, but try to just get in the biggest gear you can push and stay nice and low in your aero position.

criterium & Road Racing Tips

While time trials are pretty simple, massed start events are the complete opposite. A time trial will usually be won by the strongest rider with the best position, but criteriums and road races are often won by clever riders who use their energy at the most appropriate times. A few strategies for each are listed below.

Conservation

In either case, one of the most important things to do in a race is conserve as much energy as possible until the time you choose to make your move. This means you are doing everything you can to keep yourself out of the wind. You don't want to be too far back in the pack though because the pace is not as steady there and you have lots of little surges that can sap your strength. The ideal position is usually about 10-15 riders back, where you can stay in the draft but still maintain a good pace and respond to other peoples attacks if necessary.

Bike handling

Although good bike handling skills are important for everything you do on a bike, these are especially important for criteriums, which normally have many tight corners that you have to negotiate each lap. You should practice your bike handling both on your own and with other people to learn the best ways to carve through corners and how to maintain your momentum with the minimum waste of energy. Being able to corner effectively not only helps you to race faster, but it can help you to control the race better by forcing other racers to go where you want them to be.

Breakaways

Getting away from the field on your own is never an easy task because if they work together, a few slower riders can overcome the strength of one faster rider. But sometimes if the course is tricky, it can be a little easier to get away and maintain speed alone than with the group. Sometimes you will be the one attacking and other times you will be the one being attacked. If another rider or group of riders attacks, you need to try to decide quickly if you should try to bridge up to them or if you should be patient and hope that they tire out and get caught by the field.

Sprinting

If there are no breakaways and everyone is coming to the finish line together, then the smartest, fastest sprinter will probably win the race. If you are going to have to sprint, try to conserve as much energy as possible. It is important to know the course. If you will have to sprint uphill or into the wind, wait longer to start your sprint. But if the speed is fast because of a downhill or tailwind, the sprint people can sprint longer so be ready to go!

General Tips on Racing

Be prepared

Good preparation includes not only having everything you need for the race, but also doing the work to make sure you are fit enough to race well when you get there. If you train well before the event, you will have confidence that you are in good enough shape to race well.

Have a routine

Before a race there are probably lots of things going through your head. Sometimes you are excited, sometimes you are nervous, sometimes you are even scared. A little of these things is good to have, but too much can sabotage your race by making you overconfident or forcing you to worry too much about the details. To avoid these mistakes, try to stick as closely as possible to your pre-race routine and let it be something consistent to keep you on track. Out of habit, it is good to have a post race ritual you go through as well, including cooling down, getting some food and fluid, and changing out of your race clothes.

Always have a plan or specific goals before each race

Winning is usually the ultimate goal but it is not the only goal, or even the best one. Along the way there will be several other things you may try to accomplish, such as always staying near the front of the pack, following around a specific racer who always does well, trying to conserve as much energy as possible or working to help a teammate into position for the victory.

Be ready to change your plan during the race

It's very important that you go into a race with a specific plan and goals, but there are a lot of different things that can happen that make it so your plan either isn't possible or won't work. When that happens, you should be ready to adapt to the situation, come up with an alternative and set new goals for yourself. This could even happen more than once in each race, don't be discouraged, just keep rolling and figure out the best course of action.

Go over the race immediately after the finish

Immediately after the race you are probably dealing with a lot of emotions, either positive or negative. As soon as those feelings subside, spend some time thinking critically about your race. Think about the things you did well and where you have room to improve next time. Try to think about what other riders did and how you could have anticipated their actions better and responded to them.

Enjoy the race!

Remember to have fun and enjoy yourself.

Bike Handling Skills Competency List

Good bike handling skills is of utmost important not only for individual safety but also for the safety of any groups you may be riding with. Being able to efficiently negotiate obstacles and ride competently in a group will help prevent accidents from happening in the first place, but also increase your chances of avoiding them if they do happen. Beyond safety, good bike handling skills will help you to race better because you will be more aware of your machine and its ability to do what you require of it at the right times. The items below are ranked from very basic riding tasks up to advanced skills that will help you to assess just how strong your bike handling is.

Beginner Skills – white belt

- Remove and reinstall front & rear wheels
- Clip in & out of pedals
- Shift gears & know gearing terminology
- Ride one-handed
- Stop in a box
- Drink from a bottle

Intermediate Skills – yellow belt

- Fix a flat tire
- Look over both shoulders without swerving
- Remove food from pockets without swerving
- Ride in a small circle, both directions – 12' diameter
- Pylon drill
- Figure 8 drill, both directions
- Paceline & echelon competency, group ride etiquette

Advanced Skills – blue belt

- Leaning on or bumping another rider
- Skidding
- Riding with no hands
- Rolling mounts & dismounts
- Bottle pick up
- Taking & protecting a wheel
- Stretching on the bike – quads, hamstrings, IT bands & calves

Master – black belt

- 180 degree turns
- Tire tapping
- Track stand
- Bunny hops
- Tactical bike games: slow race, easy gear race, obstacle course, King of the Ring

Vision Quest Coaching Options

Vision Quest offers coaching options to fit just about any goal. Our membership includes recreation riders motivated to improve their fitness and keep up with local group rides all the way up to Category 1/2 riders hoping to peak for major events. Our triathletes have also recorded many fine performances, with several athletes qualifying for the Kona Ironman World Championships each season.

The introduction of Training Peaks online training software last season has further increased our ability to connect with the athletes, which helps us to develop training plans very specific to the goals of the individual athlete, whether they are local to the Chicago and North Shore VQ locations or sporting the blue and yellow of VQ in other distant corners of the world.

Coaching Packages

Basic Group: this option gives members access to all VQ sponsored events, rides, runs, swims and indoor workouts, but the athlete will be responsible for maintaining their own training plan. Sessions are led by VQ coaches and usually specific to upcoming events and races.

Remote Coaching: for the athlete needing more direction in their training but unable to attend VQ workouts, we offer a distance coaching package conducted via phone and email correspondence. Training plans will be available to the athlete through the Training Peaks platform and the athlete will receive a weekly call from their personal coach.

Blue Level Coaching: our premium package, blue level coaching is a combination of group membership and remote coaching. The athlete has full access to all VQ events and activities as well as a personal coach that will write a training plan based on their goals and follow up with a weekly call.

Athletes of all levels are welcome and encouraged to sport VQ clothing and join us as able at the VQ events, which are fully supported road and triathlon events around the Midwest. Before and after your race, relax at the VQ tent and stock up on the food and water you will need to get you through it, not to mention working out and rehashing race strategy.