Crewing with Lee "Fuzzy" Mitchell

Tracking Nutrition

by Lee Mitchell & John Hughes

Question: Lee, many riders drop out because they didn't eat and drink enough. How do you monitor rider nutrition?

Answer: I crewed for Susan Notorangelo in RAAM '89. We used a "Stop and Eat" sheet.

Q: How do you use it?

A: On each shift, one person in the pace van is responsible for feeding the rider. The feeder logs all the data. The first three columns are data on pacing:

⇒ Race Mile: where we are on the course, from the route book.

⇒ Race Time: hours and minutes, based on a 24 hour clock.

⇒ Time off the Bike: we put down estimated time; during a race, we don't have time to use a stopwatch!

Under Reason & Comments, we log why the rider stopped (had to pee, put on lights, etc.). We write down any meds the rider is given: ibuprofen, caffeine, salt tablet, etc. And then add any comments that can help reconstruct later what was happening during the race.

Q: Explain the nutrition part.

A: If a rider doesn't get enough water, calories and sodium, the rider will slow down and may eventually drop out. We track:

⇒ Water: we use a 24 oz. bottle for water. Each time a rider gets a bottle, we put down 1.

⇒ Electrolyte: we also use a 24 oz. bottle for Gatorade or whatever sports drink the rider likes. Again, we just put down 1.

If we get back a half-full bottle, we note that in the column.

Then the feeder can just count up the bottles in both columns, multiply by 24 ounces and determine how much fluid a rider has consumed over X hours.

If a rider is using a CamelBak instead of water bottles, we use the same procedure and just multiply by the capacity of the CamelBak.

We also log all the food:

⇒ Liquid Food: we use 16 oz. bottles for whatever meal replacement drink the rider is using. We just write down 1 for each bottle, and then count up the number of bottles and multiply by the calories / bottle.

Q: Wait a minute. Why don't you count the water in the liquid food as part of the water the rider gets?

A: We're being conservative. Basically the water in Sustained Energy or Ensure is enough to help digest the food, but doesn't really re-hydrate the water.

As I was saying:

⇒ Solid Food: we write down what the rider ate and the approximate calories. It helps to have a cheat sheet listing calories for cookies, fruit, sandwiches, etc. The feeder then can add up all the calories.

⇒ Sodium: the feeder writes down the milligrams of sodium in each electrolyte bottle, food bottle and any solid food.

Q: That's a lot of data for after the race!

A: Afterwards? You need the data *during* the race! Every 3 or 4 hours, the feeder should calculate:

√ Total time off the bike
√ Water / hour
√ Calories / hour
√ Sodium / hour

and compare these to the rider's race plan. Give the rider the information. If the rider is missing one of the targets, use humor, bribery, nagging, whatever you can think of to increase consumption.

You gotta eat and drink to ride and
it's the crews' responsibility to make sure the rider does!

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Date												
Race Mile	Race Time	Time Off Bike	Reason & Comments	Water	Electrolyte	Liquid Food	Solid Food	Calories	Sodium			
Totals	Time		Total Ounces			Total Cal.		Total Na				
	Off Bike		Oz H2O / Hr			Cal/hr		Na / hr.				