

HUDSON VALLEY TRIATHLON CLUB

Rule #6

By Mark Wilson-Triathlon Coach

Have you ever been in the transition area pre-race where everyone seemed so serious that you almost packed-up your gear and went home? You think, “I thought this was supposed to be fun?” The “game face” has become an important aspect of some athletes’ event ritual, but let’s face it, this isn’t life or death; it’s just a race. Believing in yourself and staying focused is super critical for athletic success; but it’s not the only thing. There’s a wonderful story that illustrates this point; let’s take a listen.

Two prime ministers were relishing their time together discussing political views, etc. when all of a sudden a young man came bursting into the room completely stressed, agitated, cussing and beside himself with anguish. As he was exasperating himself the host politician calmly expressed to the intruder, “Peter, please, remember rule #6.” In an instant, the young man completely transformed, became authentically peaceful, bowed, apologized and quietly exited the room.

The two ministers continued with their conversation when again, they were rudely interrupted this time by a young woman who was outraged, distressed and volatile with emotion. Once again, the host minister quietly spoke the same phrase as before, “Janet, please, remember rule #6.” Complete calm ensued; Janet bowed, apologized and exited the room in a state of absolute peace and harmony.

By now the visiting politician was quite impressed and could not suppress his curiosity, “Pardon me for asking, but what is this Rule #6?” His minister friend responded with, “It’s a simple rule we ask everyone to apply from time to time whenever it’s needed. The meaning of Rule #6 is ‘Don’t take yourself so damn seriously!’” The visiting minister was impressed, paused, and then asked “What are the first 5?” upon which the host politician said, “Oh, there aren’t any.”

There are so many opportunities to get stressed when preparing for your triathlon. Once you’ve put in the time in the pool, and on the roads cycling and running, take in the moment before the race. Feel the excitement and use that energy to fuel your performance. Without a doubt, there’s going to be someone at every race you do this summer that needs some support because it’s their first tri, their tires need some air or they just need some words of encouragement. Regardless, take a moment to give to someone else on race-day and feel the incredible in-tangible benefits flowing your way.

Whether it’s your hometown race or you’re visiting another state or region of the country, take a chance, let go of the game face and, please, remember Rule #6; don’t take yourself so damn seriously! See ya out there.

Mark Wilson is a full-time triathlon coach. He is the Founder/President of the Hudson Valley Triathlon Club (www.hvtc.net). He is a USAT Level II Certified Coach & Pose

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Method of Running Level II Certified Coach. You may contact him by e-mail mark@hvtc.net or phone 845-679-8602.