

# HUDSON VALLEY TRIATHLON CLUB

## **The Spirit of Triathlon**

By Mark Wilson-Triathlon Coach

Wouldn't it be great to participate in a triathlon where no one shared their latest triathlon results? Or their last "key" workout and how fast they ran? What if everyone just supported one another by wishing them the best and to enjoy the race? It'd be remarkable if everyone actually cared about their competitors' well-being and cheered them on regardless of their swim times, etc.? There's got to be a way to keep the Spirit of Triathlon alive. Let's find a way.

Let's make a pledge to introduce yourself to at least one athlete at your next race. You never know what you're gonna learn; they may live/work in the same town, building or floor as you! Then introduce your new friend to someone you already know who's competing. Connect everyone and share the joy of athletic accomplishment together.

Another wonderful way to "break the ice" with unknown racers is to express some of the fears you're having about the event; everyone has fears! That's one of the most interesting bonds that triathlon offers athletes. Each person has the jitters about something; the swim, getting a flat, bonking, etc. Speaking about this with other athletes can lead both to a common place which feels better once shared, in addition to the bonding aspect.

Friendships can be made with a simple smile or nod that states your acknowledgement of others. There are times before a race that individuals are VERY nervous and a chatty, overzealous but well-meaning athlete can sometimes ruin thoughtful moments before an Ironman, for instance. It's a tricky thing, but most people can sense who really cares and who's just tryin' to drum-up small talk, just for the sake of small talk. So be aware that others have their plan and focus, so sensing when to communicate is usually best when felt in the moment and un-forced.

Offering another athlete a gel, spare tube, floor pump, electrolytes, and such creates instant friendship with those in dyer need! Have you ever been in a race, or just before the gun goes off, and you discover you're missing something? It's the worst!! Then an angel calmly appears and says "Here, use this, I've got an extra." It's one of those melting moments. You don't know what to say and then "Thank you!" pops into your head; go figure. The thing is it feels just as cool on both ends.

So, the next time you're at a race and you have an urge to tell someone how you did at your last race or workout, interrupt the moment by giving a compliment or simply saying "Hello, I'm so-an-so." They may just surprise you and do the same! See ya out there.

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