

**John Macgowan:** Hi welcome to another Indoor Cycle Instructor Pro Podcast, I'm John Macgowan your host and I've got Master Instructor Tom Scotto on and I've got a question for you Tom. First of all, how are you?

**Tom Scotto:** I'm very good, very good. Thanks John, how are you?

**John Macgowan:** I'm well.

**Tom Scotto:** Good.

**John Macgowan:** I have a question that actually came up I was taking Amy's class here last Saturday and the next day was to be a – there is a big outdoor fundraiser ride called the Ironman that we have here in Minnesota. It's not like the Ironman in Hawaii, but it's just a ride that's historically they are in the rain or sleet or snow. And the question was posed to me, "Well if it's raining John, will you have a rain day class on Sunday for those of us that decided we're going to go down there and ride in the snow?"

And it got me thinking about you know, that would be an interesting thing to have in your pocket, especially if you are one that's transitioning outdoors, maybe have a group of riders, but you end up with a rain day. And rather than just send everybody home or not give them an option, you know, with the technology that we have to communicate with people, I thought it would just be awesome to throw together an impromptu class. And I'm curious as to your thoughts as to you know, what you would do on that class?

**Tom Scotto:** Sure, well of course you know, my first comment, which probably won't make too many friends is that, "Hey; if you are doing an Ironman and it's raining out, get out there."

**John Macgowan:** Right, that's the whole point of it.

**Tom Scotto:** So, it's just me, you know, it just me you know, no, I think it's a great question and you know, obviously you are dealing with outdoor riders. So, you know, you have to look at you know, who is your target audience that is coming inside you know, it's not your, you know, maybe spinning or indoor cycling enthusiast. They are definitely looking for something a little different. So, you probably have to – I would approach it that way.

**John Macgowan:** Agreed. And it would be a class so typically, maybe it is not scheduled, you know, so you are just going to show up and use the room.

**Tom Scotto:** Right, exactly. You know, so my initial thought would be to lean towards a 90-minute ride you know, longer would be good, but you know, I think the other thing to consider is, if it's later in the season, most people will be you know, not in the base training



mindset you know, they are going to want to do something that's a little hotter, you know, hotter intensity wise.

**John Macgowan:** Agreed.

**Tom Scotto:** A little more challenging so you know, a 90-minute. I have been doing a lot of the 90-minute rides with our spring training with cycling fusion and what I wound up doing for those, which is probably the format that I would use is for the first 30 minutes we start out pretty much really easy as if it was an outdoor ride and you know, we'll chat a bit, talk, I'll have people kind of warm up slowly. And then, towards the – let's say the last 10 minutes of the warm up, I'll probably start hitting with some harder efforts so to just open them up and you know, anyone who --

**John Macgowan:** What you call openers?

**Tom Scotto:** Openers, exactly. So you know, very high intense, very short, but just enough to mentally and physically wake up the body and get some of the you know, the energy systems firing and all that good stuff.

**John Macgowan:** How do you structure those, I know some – there was a – we had a comment or a question on that I actually created a post out of – but for everybody listening, how do you structure what you would call an opener?

**Tom Scotto:** Well, I structure them a couple ways based on what they are opening up to and usually it's kind of three basic approaches. The warm up is key, so you know, I like to warm you know, I think, when I think openers, I think more you know, outdoors that just where my mind goes. So, I'm looking for a minimum of 15 to 20-minute warm up where I'm moving between you know, an easy effort to probably about 75%, 80% using zones like from zones one to zone three.

And then, there will be three different types of openers based on what the effort is. If it's a climbing event or we are doing a lot of climbing during that class, the openers will consist of probably short or one-minute steep climbs. So you know, slower cadences, lots of force, lots of stress on the legs. The heart rate is going to go up there, but probably not as high as it would go up if it was a more aggressive aerobic faster leg speed type effort and I would probably do two of those.

So, you know after the warm up we basically set up this pretty steep climb and I'd really want them to rail themselves for a minute. And it scares not out of lot of people, because they think to themselves, "Man if I push really hard now, how am I going to have the energy to ride the class?" And it's just one of those things that I just tell them, you have to trust me. I know the first time you know, 20 years ago, when I was racing someone told me that I'm like you are nuts, I'm going to blow myself up before the race you know, but there is a method behind the madness.

So, after the one-minute steep climb, I'd probably give them a couple of minutes, maybe two or three not a whole lot of time and then, we'll do it again. And I'm really looking for you know, an all out effort, I need all systems go. And then, after the second opener, will chill for you know, three to four to five minutes depending on you know, what you want to do as an instructor and then, we get into the ride.

And you know, the thought behind that is that you know, besides opening up all the systems, you are also mentally preparing yourself, because once an event starts and this is the thing that helped me get more into this. You go into pain pretty quickly, the pace picks up, people get excited and if you have not experienced the pain before the event starts, it's a major mind game, it's a mind trip.

**John Macgowan:** You are off the back.

**Tom Scotto:** Yeah, you are off the back.

**John Macgowan:** And I know exactly what you are speaking of, right.

**Tom Scotto:** And using of the back mentally first, then it physically follows.

**John Macgowan:** Yeah.

**Tom Scotto:** So you know, if you can get there and go yeah, done that, been there, felt this, bring it you know, that's a better place to be then. Holy crap here we go. So, I build that into my first 30 minute sort of opener, a group ride thing. And then, really for the rest of the hour you know, I pick some kind of focus you know, whether it's a ride that's got some really challenging climbs in it, you know, we're going to do some steady state work you know, basically fast paced line stuff you know, accelerations, changes in tempo you know, obviously if you trying to make it like an outdoor ride, you can throw some sprints in there and I use town markers, we talk about town line sprints a lot.

So, I'll say you know, we got 15 minutes to the next town and that way it gives me a counter, so you know, I'm going to count down okay, we got five minutes you know, we're coming at the town you know and then you can use these to pick up the phase of the group and of course if you are going to do a sprint a town line sprint you know, you can wind that up however you want to wind it up in the last minute 30 seconds.

**John Macgowan:** Exactly, so without reservation in your instructing just pound on them.

**Tom Scotto:** Yeah, just go for it, because you know, they are coming into – they are supposed to be doing an event I mean and these are the things I'm sensitive to it and it really --

**John Macgowan:** Or just a reasonably quick group ride.

**Tom Scotto:** Yeah. Well, I'm assuming again maybe I should assume this. I have been a coach a long time and I've been proved wrong many times, but I'm assuming people prepared for this day that they were supposed to do and they got rained out and what I mean by that is they hopefully came interested and they were fuelled properly, so if they don't do something they will implode.

**John Macgowan:** Right.

**Tom Scotto:** So, you know, I have races get cancelled for all kinds of stuff and you basically you know shutting your chair for a day, because you have all this extra energy, you are mentally wound up and you have rested, so you just want to chew on something. So, that would kind of use that as my way of designing the class, that those are the people I

have coming in here to going to basically chew the handlebars of the bikes, but I don't you know, get them going.

**John Macgowan:** Excellent, okay. All right, and then, but – yeah, I like the 90 minute idea at that point, yeah, because they are probably looking at a couple hours at least they are going to be outside.

**Tom Scotto:** I tend to not give them that much of a cool down and what I mean by that I encourage them to cool down, but I'll probably use just the last five minutes of the class. And often time in a format like that again, you always have to consider who is coming in your class, because these are outdoor riders who are expected to be riding outdoors, so I'm very, very sensitive to that, because I am one of them.

I will actually tell them that they can stretch on their own, because usually at the end of any ride I'm you know we sort of shut it down after whatever the designated finish line or piece was and then we ride for a while and we chat and we talk about will make all the excuses you know, so why would you do as well, you know, you meet that time you know, to you know the decompress, so the deep breath you know.

**John Macgowan:** And you are heading off in different directions depending on where you live.

**Tom Scotto:** Yeah, you know, you are going back with your car or you know, you are riding home or you know, for me it's you know, people heard me and mostly say at the coffee shop, depending on the time of the day, it might be a beer, but I tend to be more sensitive at the end and say hey, I'm going to take this five minutes I'm going to cool down you know, feel free to chat and talk and whatever and then what happens is you just a natural buzz going on there and some people get off their bike, some people stretch some people continue riding, and it just really good energy as opposed to trying to shut everybody down you know, got used to this other community, with this other environment.

**John Macgowan:** Got it.

**Tom Scotto:** And so, that was in my thoughts you know, sort of off the top of my head.

**John Macgowan:** No. Well, you are good at those that's why I threw that at you this morning.

**Tom Scotto:** I appreciate that. Just throw stuff at me, it's okay, I can handle it, yeah.

**John Macgowan:** Yeah, because I just think again it's part of my motivation was to you know potentially give instructors the freedom to you know offer this if they have taken a group outdoors and or if they are starting they are like me, you know, my indoor interest is minimal now, that we can be outside you know, it's our six weeks of summer here in Minnesota.

And yet, I think you can really do some community building with your group by you know, offering them their alternative. The other reason that it came to this is that the member who ask the question last week in Amy's class was a woman and new to outdoor riding and express some concern about riding in the rain. So, it wasn't a question of you know, do they have the intestinal fortitude to get out there and do it.

**Tom Scotto:** Right.

**John Macgowan:** But it was more concern of you know, crashing you know, not having confidence in their biking handling skills and those type of things and so, you know to offer that as an option to goes in climate whether days I was in a class actually here, I took another instructors class and the guy behind me was telling the story about how he crash his bike and you know had his collarbone brace on and I'm thinking, yikes.

So, be careful out there, so anyways great, I think hopefully people will be able to take this and at some point make use of it.

**Tom Scotto:** Excellent, I hope so.

**John Macgowan:** Tom Scotto again, cycling fusion, appreciates your time.

**Tom Scotto:** Thanks John.