

**John Macgowan:** Hi and welcome to another indoor cycle instructor pro podcast, podcast that we developed specific for our ICI pro members. And I added a category to sort through the thousands of pages of information and hundreds of podcasts that we have to what I and others are describing as best practices, with an understanding that there's a lot of peripheral information out there, but there are certain things that as an instructor are crucial for the success of you delivering this awesome class that I believe that you're really interested in.

And to that end, I don't if there's anything more important or more appropriately defined as a best practice than the process of actually creating a profile from scratch. And so Tom Scotto from Cycling Fusion joins me and we're going to talk about the anatomy of a profile.



**Tom Scotto:** Excellent.

**John Macgowan:** How was that, did I get that off okay?

**Tom Scotto:** I think you did a great job on that.

**John Macgowan:** Okay, awesome. Oh, it's fun to have you back.

**Tom Scotto:** Yes, it's good to be here. Hopefully it won't sound like one of those interviews they do on TV with the person out in the field in a middle of a storm reporting as to what the conditions are – we can get through this before our – a big storm in Boston hits.

**John Macgowan:** Exactly. Yeah, yeah, yeah we're recording this, what's the name of this hurricane?

**Tom Scotto:** Is it Suzy or Susan or something?

**John Macgowan:** I don't know, I – maybe here in the, you know, I am sheltered here in the center of the States, so I – or the center of the country, so we don't – we're not affected by these things but – so let's get added here before your power goes out.

**Tom Scotto:** Yeah, yeah let's do that.

**John Macgowan:** Okay, so the anatomy of a profile obviously what would be considered a best practice, do you agree?

**Tom Scotto:** I think so I – but I strongly believe it. I mean I've been seeing, you know, we'll talk about during this time we'll pretty much put an emphasis on the value of it.

**John Macgowan:** All right, well so where do we begin?

**Tom Scotto:** It's really helpful to begin with what is it that you want deliver to your classes and there's a number of ways to figure that out, of course that's the – what is it, the \$10,000 question. What is it that you're going to do that day. And I think it comes about in answering a number of questions and I think these questions are very good when you're building your profile because they do a number of things that if one gives you a profile of focus which is an excellent thing to do for you riders. And the focus doesn't necessarily mean that you're doing one specific thing, it just means that there is a plan attached to what it is you're going to deliver. But it also helps keep the quality and consistency of your rides which I think is very, very important in both – your rider is enjoying the ride and getting something out of it but also for us as instructors being confident.

And I'm always more confident when I have gone that extra mile to really plan out in detail what I'm going to do and it goes beyond just okay, here's my ride for today or for this week. I'm assuming like many instructors I – I'll create a ride and I'll use it a number of times throughout the year and the preparation I've done just for that one sort of initial ride carries itself through for every time I want to be using that ride in future, all I have to do is review my notes and it all comes back to me and so I think there's just many, many benefits to having a really good solid way of building a profile.

**John Macgowan:** Exactly, well and I - just the whole concept of the audio profile was to help a professional Indoor Cycling instructor have the confidence that they are prepared quickly. And for many of us that don't have the time, family work, whatever, and yeah, we still want to deliver, you know, our audio profiles were great, but for many of our instructors I'm finding out that they want to create their own. And so, we really have kind of a step by step approach that you are going to offer that will guide them as we go forward. All right, so step one?

**Tom Scotto:** Well, I would say step one is describe the experience, describe the ride whatever that's going to be and this could be anything from we're going to – we're going to have a fun ride that's going to simulate sort of riding outdoors through the park and whatever that might be too, we're going to do interval-based training that is going to help us with better aerobic fitness. So it doesn't have to be something very strict, it could be very open ended but you're just – you're putting a description for the ride down and it's really good to actually write the description down so that you have something to refer to.

And it is sort of your objective, these are things that become part of your cues. And I'm not going to get so much into the cueing aspect of the profile, but you'll see how this really becomes a sort of a skeleton tandem where you drop your cues in and it helps you to figure out a lot of what you're going to say in topics that you want to cover and stories that you might want to tell and things like that depending on your approach.

So again when you want to write that description down, write the objective down, what is that you want – what is that you're going to do during class, what's going to be the sort of the approach and what are they – your riders going to get out of it. And that's an important thing to put out there, as anyone who teaches or educates knows as to you know, you want to let people know at the beginning of the class what it is that you're doing and what they're going to get out of it. During the actual ride, you want to emphasize that they are doing it and they are getting it and at the end of the ride you want to let them know what they accomplished. So it just really helps keep that consistency and people walk out of your class feeling successful that they've achieved the objective.

And then what I am looking at is three sort of further defining elements of what it is that you're going to do. One is, what is the ride level and with Cycling Fusion we really encourage level-based classes I know probably, sadly it's maybe 75% of the classes that are delivered at least across the country are not level based, meaning they're not specifically targeting a beginner or targeting an intermediate rider or an advanced rider, it's just – I am in the same boat. All the classes I teach are not broken down by level, so it's not like I'm standing up on a soapbox saying everyone should do this. I'm in that – I'm in that category. But it's – it is helpful that think through who this class is designed for because it helps you create options, you know, maybe the class is not as difficult or it's a little harder or I should say it's a little easier rather.

In general, you might want to come up with some other options if you have advanced riders in your class and the opposite is true as well. If you have a class that you feel is well, this is a – could be a very difficult class for whatever reason from muscular strength to aerobic just the demands of the class, the intensity levels, you want to know knowing that say, okay what are going to be some of the options for those that feel they can't handle it and without making them feel like they are failing or they are weak or - So it – it throws a couple flags out there that you're going to have to deal with later when you're coming up with your actual drills and your cues.

The next thing we – I look at is the category, I'll say what – what category does this ride fall into – does this profile fall into? Is it a climbing – classes focus on climbing? Is it a race day? Is it for some type of aerobic development? Is it terrain based where we're going to kind of focus on terrain? So there's different categories that your rides can fall into and you can make up your own categories. Categories are sort of a bigger topic and then within those topics you might have us focus, so you – I tend to and most people know this I usually use a more specific singular focus to my rides. Being a coach, I try to get them to accomplish a specific task but you're going to have multiple focus or focuses in your profile. And the focus could be, for example if you're working

on climbing it is the climbing category, it could be anything from, hey we're going to do a Tour De France climb to we're going to focus solely on climbing strength and here's how it's going to happen or we're going to do some multi – muscular endurance work and here's how that's going to come about. So the focus could be - usually it's small but it's – it therefore can have a lot of variety to it.

**John Macgowan:** And you're Tom, forgive me for interrupting and you're communicating this, once your profile is done you're going to communicate this as part of your introduction to the class?

**Tom Scotto:** Absolutely, and it's one of those steps and I've done a lot of - and this is probably where my approach comes from. I've done a lot of time management, project management, business process in my previous lives and sometimes you think about these things and you go, okay, well this is – I know I have to do these things so – and I don't write them down and then you start getting into – with the meter what you're doing, in our case here writing the actual profile. But there is such a value to going and writing the specific – the answers to these specific questions down. That's where all of us, the instructors listening to this right now is we can think, okay yeah I'm going to keep those things in mind but I'm going to really encourage you to write them down and go back and refer to them later. I mean our Q-Sheet with Cycling Fusion you know has places that you're supposed to fill these things out. And to your point John, yes this becomes part of your intro, this is where you develop your queues and your language from and it really helps people stay on target.

So then we have all that sort of planning and the preparation and everything set forward, now we can get into a little bit more of, okay what is that we're going to focus on for the ride. What I like to look at first, it's something like when you're - building a profile to me is like putting a puzzle together. If you just start with random pieces it gets really difficult and you can get overwhelmed whereas, hey let's find the corners right in the puzzle. Let's build the outside and then we'll fill the middle in – when we – as the pieces comes to us, so that's my approach to building a profile. And how that translates to me is, one what is the warm up and cool down needed to be for this ride. It's good to put that in there and if you're dealing with a forty-five or sixty-minute class, you – once you drop those in there you do some simple math and let's say your warm up is eight to ten minutes and your cool down is whatever seven or so. You look and say, where does that lead me.

And my typical warm up which includes my safety speech and all that other good stuff that we have to say at the beginning of every class plus their preparation time to get them ready for the first real effort of the class is usually somewhere between eight and twenty minutes. I know that's a pretty big range and my classes usually panic when they know it's going to be a long warm up. They know – they're about to get there with something pretty major, pretty epic, so yes but that was just conditioning and I've been in classes before when you say we're going to this really long warm up and you can almost feel the roll of the eyes but that's not my – it's my not mode. And the same thing with the cool down, where are you going to bring them towards the end of this profile

and what is it going to take for them to recover. Now – and recovery can be different things, I think I've talked about this on numerous audio profiles.

There are times when you can – whatever, get appalled by me saying this but I don't cool people down at the end of the ride. And I remember the first time I said that, someone freaked but what I really – in that particular case I had to lead them through an event like a Tour De France stage with such a cool energy in the room that to bring everybody back down to a cool down would have sort of stifled everything you've built. Now, of course I didn't encourage people to jump off their bikes and do unhealthy things I told them, hey we're having a lot of fun here, we just ended the ride and cool down, I need you guys to cool down, spin down but whatever you guys are talking about and having fun with, keep it going, so that would be my rare exception.

But if you're bringing someone to a very, very hard effort towards the end of the ride you need to give them time to bring that intensity level back down. And you might have specific stretches that you might want to do based on what parts of their body you thoroughly tortured during that event and you're going to want to figure out how much time you need to do that. Now, my general standard is I like to cool people down for about three minutes which will get their heart rate down to somewhat of a conversational level. And then my stretching routine usually takes me between five and six minutes depending on what – which stretches I leave in or which stretches I pull out for the sake of time. So I'm generally looking at an eight to nine minute cool down, which is to – right after the last drill lowering the heart rate, moving into the stretch. So if you take those two pieces away, if you take the warm up away and the cool down away you can oftentimes knock out close to twenty minutes of your ride right there. And that leaves you about forty minutes to pretty much have some fun with what your drills are going to be, so we kind of put our bookends in.

The second thing I look at after I put the bookends of the warm up and cool down in is how much recovery is going to be required for what I am doing. If we are doing climbs, a lot of times we use the sense of the down hills as our recovery times. If we're doing interval training there's two types of recovery we need to look at, one is what is the recovery in between each of the intervals and then usually we do interval training in sets. So if you did a set of four to six intervals they all have their small bits of recovery in there and then there's a larger bit of recovery before you throw them into another set of work. So I'm going to look at how much recovery is required for this ride and for early season ride maybe we're doing some temper work or some aerobic endurance where the efforts are long and the intensities are low, I might not put a lot of recovery in there at all. So I know, okay I've got a lot of room here for my drills, I know what my drills are going to be, however if I'm later in the season and I'm really hitting him hard made with some high intensity interval training, I'm going to need to plan some three to four minute recovery blocks in there to make sure that they can do whatever I'm asking them to do next. So again you're still – you're stripping out more and more time away from what it is that you're about to do.

Then you get down into the front part which is really selecting the efforts, if it's climbing you're going to look and say, hey am I – I am doing a sort of building aerobic endurance – I'm sorry muscular endurance I'm going to choose some longer climbs and they might be anywhere from seven to – there have been climbs as long as 21, 35 minutes. Obviously you drop one of those babies in there and that - it's almost pretty much call it a day, you've got the whole ride squared away.

If you're doing a profile for a tour or a gero or a gualta, that profile is going to help you figure out how long you're going to make your climbs in your flats, in your lead-ups to the sprints and however you're going to do that. But it really helps you figure out what is it, what kind of time am I playing with here and then when you're done with the profile, you're done dropping your major pieces in. I don't think – different people get weighed down as they try to find exactly the right amount of time for every single piece and you can start really getting stressed by doing that. I would drop everything in right away and say, okay I'm doing intervals I'm going to do with, so let's try for three sets. I try three sets, six reps or whatever terminology you want to use, six efforts per that interval and I drop them in and I go, oh wow I'm four minutes over my time.

So you have a couple of – now you can start making some decisions. I could knock an effort off each set, maybe I'll plan for four minutes recovery, can I get away with three minutes recovery. I mean only you're – you're going to know this based on the ride and you can easily regain that four minutes and then you've got it done. If you're working with climbs it's the same thing, hey I put three big climbs in there I'm two minutes under. Well you're going to extend the descent, you can make one of the climbs a little bit bigger depending on how you want to do it. And then you have your framework and what I call that is that's really the first pass and even though it sounds a little laborious as to maybe how I described it or maybe that sounds pretty simple, you can really accomplish this in a matter of really 10 to 15 minutes. Just put these pieces together and of course the next pieces, okay now I have to put the music in there and I'm not going to get into the music aspect of how to select music but what I will say is this is another place where you need to be flexible.

If you have a climb and it's looking like it's going to be – you wanted a seven-minute climb and you find an eight and a half minute piece of some kind of a nice trance music. Again it – you got a framework to play with you know you can adjust, so you just make that one climb a little bigger to accommodate that piece of music which you really like and you make an adjustment somewhere else. And at the end of the time you wind up with a profile that's right in the ballpark of which you want and you really did not have to start from, okay here's my warmup, what's that going to be and you build your way across and I just find that to be a very tedious way to and a frustrating way to try to put up a profile together.

**John Macgowan:** Tom, what resources can you provide everybody that will help kind of lead them through this process?

**Tom Scotto:** The two resources that we can provide would want to be just an outline of what we had just spoken about. So they have that plan in mind that they could use it for the first couple of times if they are not familiar with building a profile in this fashion, it will remind them as to what they're doing as well as a sample cue sheet or profile sheet so they can see how this looks when it's all put together. The piece that we didn't cover, well the two pieces we didn't cover is, one yeah, specifics on music which is a category in and of itself and cueing which is also a pretty extensive category.

But I think the piece after you get your profile solidified, you've got the times of everything, the way you want it, you know it's focused, you know it's on target, the music is all set, you're ready to go then you go back through everything that you've just looked and say, okay what am I going to be talking about today?

And if you are a more of a storyteller kind of instructor which I tend to like pull stories out from things I've done and my riders have done and things I've seen. That's when you say, okay would – if there are any stories I'm going to tell during this ride and you could drop those in as you're building your cues out. So that becomes very helpful and of course if – depending on what you're using for tools, if you use just a piece of paper or you're reading out of iTunes. And as you all know and everybody knows we use Class Builder – we just drop all that stuff in there and as you're teaching your class you've got all the background knowledge and everything that it took you to put this together in your head. And I just find that your confidence level is very high, you very rarely find yourself not having something to say or help someone with plus you're able to really guide your riders along to what's coming up next, what kind of intensities are they're dealing with, letting them know even the next two or three drills that are coming up and how they tie into what it is that you're trying to deliver them. So there's just so many benefits of going through a process like this.

The one challenge I've had in doing this even out of a – out of the context of indoor cycling is, when you follow a process you, sometimes you get focused on the process and hey, I want to get the process done and you look at the product of it and you go, okay well I got a profile out of it, okay, great. Really come up with something that you like – like don't – the process is great and it's just sort of a means to an end, but always be excited about the profile that you're going to deliver and let the process help you with that excitement. Because I've been there, I've created a profile and it was an exciting profile but when I got to class it just didn't – it was missing stuff. So in a lot of ways putting – using this sort of anatomy of a profile, we can uphold all the fun that we like to have because we were prepared – it was consistent, we didn't miss any pieces and we get to class and we deliver it. I don't know if anyone has ever experienced this but I experience it, I love it, I pull up that profile look at and go, alright I can't wait to deliver this class.

So I think there's a lot of enjoyment that comes out of it maybe – no, what may appear to be a tedious process to some. I think it pays off and as I've said numerous times during this time here it just pays off in spades when you get in front of your class.

**John Macgowan:** One question I did have time is that can you do a profile too many times?

**Tom Scotto:** I think so. I mean I've had profiles I have used for the last 10 years which might make one say, okay Tom time to take that tattered – and hey tattered thing and tatter or whatever it is and throw it in the garbage. But I think if you – you're going to tell me how many profiles you have, I tend to cycle through mine. So I might give them the same profile 10 years where they're only getting it once or twice per year.

So I'm not sure if that answers your question or not but I'm sensitive to that and I know I've talked to people that take into classes and there's some instructors that are not sensitive to that. But I'll say I think riders are sensitive to it, if they're getting the same ride over and over again, even if it's a great ride it somehow reflects on the lack of preparation for the instructor for the time that they're investing on it. And that's different for all of us, I mean some of us do this, it's more of a typical part of our full-time job, for others this is just fun. We're working ridiculous hours during a week and this our fun time, so yeah, I mean I would say it's just build a library and try to get as good rotation of profiles in there and avoid repeating things over and over and over again.

**John Macgowan:** Got it, because it is very easy to get stuck in a rut I think.

**Tom Scotto:** Yeah, it could be anything, it could be a profile rut or it could be a music rut and I know that you kind of sense it, you could feel it. It's like well okay, it's time for a music upgrade and just wherever you get your music from it's time to drop a little bit of investment in there and get yourself inspired. And you see it in your riders too when a new piece of music comes across and you're excited about it and they're excited about it, so.

**John Macgowan:** Exactly, exactly. Hence the incredible value of well Spotify and I apologize to those that are hearing this and it's not available where you are but it – having access to all these other instructors' music tell definitely is awesome. Now we just to need to find a way to integrate it with Class builder.

**Tom Scotto:** That would be, yeah. I'm sure we'll put that on the docket there for – so let the developers and see what they come up with but I'm sure it'll – I can't imagine it will not be something we'll consider at some point.

**John Macgowan:** Right, oh yeah because that would be the Holy Grail I think.

**Tom Scotto:** Yes.

**John Macgowan:** To bringing it altogether, yes exactly. Alright, well Tom Scotto, Cycling Fusion, thank you for this. And if someone has questions, where's the best place for them to get in contact with you?

**Tom Scotto:** Just hit me up directly at [tom@cyclingsfusion.com](mailto:tom@cyclingsfusion.com).

**John Macgowan:** Perfect, well now bend down the hatches and hopefully you get through the storm and come out dry on the other odd side.

**Tom Scotto:** Yeah, this might be the first time I'm taking an indoor class where there's actually wind and rain coming into the room, so it could be the most realistic indoor cycling class ever.

**John Macgowan:** Okay, well be careful.

**Tom Scotto:** Alright. Take care, John.

**John Macgowan:** Thanks Tom. Bye, bye.