**TRIATHLON PREPARATION**

**Check Your Equipment Prior To Race Day**

1. Check your goggles. Check that the strap and nose bridge are not going to break on the start line or during the swim. Check that the seals have not perished. If the lens is scratched or fogs easily, consider a new pair for racing and keep the old pair for training.
2. Check your wetsuit for potential tears. Check that the seams are not frayed and likely to split, if so get it fixed in enough time. Also look for holes and cuts, these can be glued and stitched to prevent water from entering the suit and to make the suit streamlined. Make sure the suit still fits!
3. Check your bike. There is a lot to check here so if you don’t know what to do, get down to your local bike store. Nothing is worse than mechanical problems before or during the race. At a minimum your brakes should work properly and there should be plugs in your handlebar ends.
4. Check your helmet. The shell needs to be firmly affixed to the foam and the strap should not be frayed and needs to fit firmly. Check that there are no cracks or dents. The helmet should have a CPSC sticker in it to be USA Triathlon legal.

**Race Day Advice**

1. Arrive Early! A half hour won’t be enough time to get everything done. Give yourself an hour, even more if you can so that you won’t be rushed.
2. Make sure you have your race number(s) and safety pins or a race belt. Make sure you have your swim cap, bike number and helmet number (if provided).
3. Check the air in your tires. There will normally be bike mechanics on site to assist you.
4. You need to get body marked. Marking allows officials, photographers, and event staff to identify you. You will need to have your race number (race bib) in hand at body marking.
5. You need to rack your bike in transition (the fenced area with racks). Rack your bike by hooking your seat over the rack bar or by hooking your handlebars/brake levers over the bar. There should be enough room for 6 bikes per rack. Be considerate towards your fellow participants and do not hog too much space around your bike. Only registered athletes are allowed in the transition area.
6. Don’t forget to put your timing chip on your left ankle! The chip must be worn throughout the entire race.
7. Use safety pins to attach your race bib to your shirt or use a race belt. The race number does not need to be worn during the swim but is usually required to be worn during the bike and ALWAYS must be worn during the run.
8. Organize your gear next to your bike. Your bike shoes should be laid out so they are easy to get into. Have your helmet either on the ground near your shoes or on your handlebars with the strap undone so it’s easy to put on. A good idea is to have your helmet sitting upside-down with your sunglasses in your helmet. That way it’s hard to forget either. Make sure your water bottles are full. You running shoes and hat/visor should also be laid out so they are easy to get into. Keep your swim goggles and cap handy and ready to take to the water at race start.
9. Now that you are organized, familiarize yourself with the flow of traffic through transition. Figure out where the swim finishes and where you’ll have to run to get your bike. Know where you will bike out, mount your bike (at the Mount Line), bike in, and run out. Bike In and Out are usually at the same location as is the Swim In and Run out.
10. The best advice for any new triathlete is to get to the swim start early and scope out the swim course. Take some time to figure out how you are going to sight the buoys and maybe pick out some land marks for sighting. The swim is often the most daunting part of a triathlon and open water swimming is different than pool swimming. Take some time to get comfortable in the water and with the fact that you can’t see like you can in a pool. Practice sighting the buoys. The more time you spend getting comfortable, the less time you’ll spend panicking. If you are a week swimmer or a beginner, stay at the back of the pack. This keeps you from getting run over and helps stronger swimmers get out faster. You don’t have to use a wetsuit if you don’t have one. An announcement will be made if the water temperature is “wetsuit legal”.

**COMMONLY VIOLATED USAT RULES**

1. **Helmets**: Only helmets approved by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) may be used in USAT sanctioned events. Helmets must be worn at all times while on your bike. This means before, during, and after the event. Penalty: Disqualification
2. **Chin Strap:** Chin straps must be buckled at all times when on a bicycle. DO NOT unbuckle your chin strap unless you are off the bicycle. Penalty: Disqualification on the course; Variable time penalty in transition area only.
3. **Outside Assistance:** No assistance other than offered by race and medical officials may be used. Triathlons and Duathlons are individual tests of fitness. Penalty: Variable time penalty.
4. **Transition Area:** All equipment must be placed in properly designated assigned bike area. The wheel of the bicycle must be down on the side of your assigned space. All participants must return their bicycle to an upright position in their designated bicycle location. No person shall interfere with another participant’s equipment or impede the progress of another participant. All handlebar ends must be solidly plugged. No participant shall bring ANY glass containers into the transition area. Penalty: Variable time penalty.
5. **Drafting:** Keep at least three bike lengths of clear space between you and the cyclist in front. If you move into the zone, you must complete the pass within 15 seconds. Position – keep to the right hand side of the lane of travel unless passing. Blocking – riding of the left side of the lane without passing anyone and interfering with other cyclists trying to pass. Overtaken – once passed, you must immediately exit the draft zone from the rear; before attempting to pass again. Penalty: Variable time penalty
6. **Course:** All competitors are required to follow the prescribed course and to stay within all coned lanes. Cutting the course is an obvious violation and going outside the course is a safety issue. Cyclists shall not cross a solid yellow center line for ANY reason. Cyclists must obey all applicable traffic laws at all times. Penalty: Referee’s distraction.
7. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Foul, harsh, argumentative or abusive language or other unsportsmanlike conduct directed at race officials, USA Triathlon Officials, volunteers, spectators, or fellow athletes is forbidden. Penalty: Disqualification
8. **Headphones:** Headphones, headsets, iPods, mp3 players, or personal audio devices, etc. are not to be carried or worn at any time during the race. Penalty: Variable time penalty
9. **Abandonment:** All personal equipment and belongings taken out onto the course must stay on the athlete the entire time. No garbage, clothing, personal water bottles, etc. shall be thrown on the course. Penalty: Variable time penalty
10. **Race Number:** All athletes are required to wear race numbers at all time during the bike and run. Numbers may not be cut or folded or altered in any way. DO NOT transfer your number to any other athlete or take a number from an athlete that is not competing. Penalty: Variable time penalty for a missing or altered number. Disqualification and one year suspension from USAT membership for transferring a number without race director permission.
11. **Wetsuits:** Each age group participant shall be permitted to wear a wetsuit without penalty in any event sanctioned by USA Triathlon up to and including a water temperature of 78 degrees Fahrenheit. When the water temperature is greater than 78 degrees but less than 84 degrees Fahrenheit, age group participants may wear a wetsuit at their own discretion, provided, however that participants who wear a wetsuit with such temperature range shall not be eligible for prizes or awards. Above 84 degrees, wetsuits are prohibited.

For a complete list of USAT rules, please refer to the most up to date version at: usatriathlon.org/events/rules.aspx