



Title:	<b>Learning to race 8.0</b> Planning for the future – identifying and setting goals and creating flow.
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Objectives:	Have riders think about planning and goal setting both short and long-term, learn about Flow/Rhythm.
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Goals:	Riders will develop skills to plan their training, their races, their days and their careers. Riders begin to develop and find their flow or rhythm.
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Subject:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning the race</li> <li>2. Owning the outcomes</li> <li>3. Short-term goal setting</li> <li>4. Long-term goal setting</li> <li>5. Flow or Rhythm</li> </ol>
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Procedures	Classroom instruction, one-on-one discussion, group discussion, on-track instruction, video demonstration.
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Technique	Serious discussions with riders, self-reflection by riders, writing down goals, creating a goal-timeline, discussions with senior riders.
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Most Common Mistakes	Not planning, not having a plan at all, not following the plan they do have, being disorganised, not developing good processes, not developing good rhythm.
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Summary	<p><b>Planning and ownership:</b> Two of the keys to success in any endeavour are the concepts of ownership and of planning. Ownership means that the athlete makes the decision and that the decisions made, the actions taken and the outcomes from those actions, good or bad, belong to the athlete alone. They own them and are not directed from down on high.</p> <p><b>Ownership:</b> It is therefore, up to the athlete to make the best decisions and take the best actions possible, if they want to succeed. Others (such as coaches) help and mentor athletes along the way by providing skills and thoughts and other tools, but the athlete is the one that needs to talk the talk and then walk the walk and make something of those tools, or not.</p> <p>In motorcycle racing that might mean that a rider wants to work on, tune and maintain their own bike, so they know and own how it goes, looks and feels, themselves. But if for example they are riding someone else's bike then perhaps they</p>
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can take ownership of cleaning it, not crashing it, winning races on it, these sorts of things.

Having gear, fitness, and a bike, none of which are up to scratch, does not go so well, does not handle so well, are in poor condition, are not fit, is a decision. Anyone can decide to have these things sub-par. They can then blame poor performance on those things, that is easy.

More difficult is to work on improving those things. Improving the bike, the riders' fitness, improving appearance, making these things the best they are able to be made with whatever time and resources are available. This is harder because then the performance comes down to the rider, and you don't want to damage the bike that you have just fixed up. But perhaps that will then make you a smoother and smarter rider??!!

**Planning:** Planning has two main aspects: long-term and short-term and tend to be led by a dream. Goals are the measurable, achievable steps attained while chasing a dream.

**Long-term planning:** Successful athletes create a long-term dream, such as "I want to be World MotoGP champion". But then they break down that goal into smaller, achievable goals such as: "I will learn to ride the racebike", then "I will start racing", then "I will be NZ 150SS champion, then "I will be NZ 300SS champion", then "I will get into Red Bull Rookies Cup" and "I will win races in Junior GP" etc, etc. They will set realistic, achievable and adjustable timelines for each of these goals and work out what the resources needed will be and how they will find those resources. The long-term plan therefore will perhaps have lofty end goals, but be broken down into more achievable step-wise goals. The long-term goal is what keeps the rider going and successful over the season and for their career.

It should also be understood, that if higher honours in motorcycle racing are the dream, the rider cannot achieve this on their own. There will be a team of people of all sorts, supporting them. The more the rider can focus on the riding part, the higher are the chances of success.

**Short-term plans** might include planning about when you will leave for the racetrack for the next race, when you will clean and fix the motorbike for the next race, when you will go to the gym. Even more short-term though, it might include how you are going to get around that rider in front of you this lap, what you are going to do if those two guys fall down in front of you in this corner, or what line you are going to take for this corner. The short-term plans are what make each race day and each race and each corner safe and successful.

No one ever made it to the front or the top without a good plan. A plan is not always highly detailed, but it at least has resources, goals and milestones and a dream (inputs, outputs and outcomes). If a rider has no plan, the outcome can really be



nothing more than happenstance and random. If a rider has a goal with no plan, it is really just dream and in all likelihood will remain only a dream, because the rider has formed no real idea about how they are going to achieve their goal. Furthermore, if the rider and their team have no knowledge or experience of the pathways forward, then they will not be able to find those pathways. This is another area where experienced mentors and coaches are vital to success.

As mentioned in the last module, situational awareness is vitally important and contributes strongly to your short-term plan. You need to be always looking for both hazards (e.g. crashes, bike failure) and opportunities (e.g. overtaking gaps, sponsorships) and plan how you will avoid or exploit them.

### **Rhythm or Flow**

Riders can listen to many top-level racers talk about how they were able or unable to find their Rhythm in video and pod-casts. Some riders may talk about this in terms of Flow.

Both of these concepts are the physical outcomes of the psychology of 'finding yourself'. Or better still, the manifestation of putting themselves into the appropriate psychological space and condition where the rider is able to do whatever it is they want to do when they are on the track in a practice or race.

This is the culmination of all their training, all of their learning and all the control over themselves, their motorcycle and their immediate environment, to achieve the goals they have set themselves, which is, after all, the reason they are here, doing this thing.

When you find your rhythm or have your flow, the rider is no longer using up concentration on riding the bike, but rather they are finding themselves using most of their concentration on doing the racing, on where to put the bike, on how to overtake the riders in front, and then on how to stay at the front of the chasing pack.

That is where the rider wants to be.

That is how the rider wants to ride.

So, how does a rider achieve that?

There is a stepwise route to finding rhythm and flow. We are human, it will not happen all of the time, even MotoGP champions have poor races. But if the following steps are followed, then it will begin to happen increasingly more often. The race results may not end up as wanted, that is racing, there are some things that can't be controlled, but if following the method will provide more chance of finding rhythm or flow and more chance of a good result.



**The steps to establishing rhythm/flow:**

1) Trust in the training.

If the riders training has been good, deep and broad, with the right lessons and practiced sufficiently so that the skills are embedded deeply and the rider believes they know what they are doing, then they can trust that they do know what they are doing. The rider then does not need to second guess themselves. They can have confidence in themselves.

2) Adopt focus training methods to train yourself to focus on the task at hand.

This mental training is just as important as the physical training. Such training methods extend to hand-eye coordination games prior to races and mental visualisation of the track and the race before it happens.

3) Ensure that home and life issues are all in order.

Of course, sometimes life just gets in the way. But if riders are able to make sure that all their home life issues are going well and in order, or at the very least, under control, then it will be much easier to establish their rhythm. The long-term plan forms an important contributor to this part of the exercise.

4) Trust in your race bike.

All riders who wish to be successful need to assemble a good team around them so that they can trust in everyone around them to do the best job they can do. Lack of confidence will deleteriously affect performance. Riders need to have the best motorcycle to ride they can possibly have. If the bike is sub-standard, the results will be sub-standard. It is that simple. Riders don't always need to have the BEST bike, but they need to be sure and comfortable that the bike they do have is the best that it is possible to be for them. Do not short change riders by deciding to have a sub-standard bike (eg poor paint job, poor parts, broken parts, incorrect or incompatible parts, uncomfortable bike, poorly tuned etc, etc). Not sorting these things is a decision and will affect the riders' rhythm and ultimately their results.

5) Prepare ahead of time.

Get everything ready, prepared, fixed, assembled well ahead of time. Prepare, do it, don't put it off. Ensure you are entered and all the paperwork is taken care of.

A good rule of thumb is that if racing is on the weekend, then everything **MUST** be ready to go on or before Wednesday night. The car/van/truck is filled with gas and ready to go, bike is ready, gear is clean and assembled and all together in an obvious place ready to be collected and put in the van. Most of the time riders and their teams have a week, a month or more to get ready. Use this time efficiently and do not put it off. The last thing a rider needs, and the first thing that will ruin their rhythm is to be stuck on Friday night, or worse still, on Saturday at the track to find something not done or left behind. **Plan ahead and your rhythm will fall into place.**



6) Establish good processes at the track for you and your team. Over time, with the team, riders can work out the best processes for arriving, setting up their pit area, arranging the bikes and equipment. It is vital for good rhythm that riders have a pit area that is free-flowing and uncluttered and allows the rider, the team and the bike to work and flow in and out efficiently. Use tables and racks/frames, do not have wheels, tools and equipment lying on the floor and bikes blocking each other. Work all of this out with the rider and team, even if it means drawing a diagram, and stick with it. Not only does this create better work-flow, but it also creates a sense of familiarity for you so that you know where everything is without having to think about it. While learning, make it a point to watch teams and riders who have good set-ups and those who do not. The difference in performance is often quite stark.

Find and use a chair and rack for the rider to sit in and to place their helmet, gloves, drink bottle, food and notebook. The worst thing in the world is to be ready to go for a race to find the rider can't find their gloves/earplugs, chest protector or whatever because have been put somewhere random and don't know where they are, or they have been moved or have fallen off somewhere. It is also really bad to put helmets somewhere random and have it fall onto the ground and get damaged. Find and use a rack for these things.

**Don't use the working table, that is for tools and parts.**

Make sure the rider and their team understand one another's jobs and trust each other to get on with those jobs. Do not start second guessing everyone else, this will destroy the riders' rhythm. This trust takes time to establish, so get on with it early!

7) Be ready early for practice and races. Make sure riders are aware of when their sessions are and be ready with plenty of time. Do not go wandering around the paddock minutes before your sessions. Riders need to have time to get dressed and to relax (or to work themselves up, whichever the rider needs) before their sessions.

8) Follow well-established pre-race processes. During the training of the rider and their learning, they need to work out their preferred set-up, pre-race and warm up lap processes, the ones that work for the rider. Repeat these over and over and stick to them. This is when the rhythm switch truly clicks on. If the rider deviates from them, their switch may not click on.

The rider must do the same thing every time on the warm up lap, as they approach the start grid, as they wait on the grid and as the GO signal is given.



Overall Comments:

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Guardian/Student Signature:

Trainer Signature:

Date:





Example of a simple, but well laid out pit-area for one rider and bike. Note clear space for the bike, table for tools and parts, chair for the rider, box for helmet and gear under the table, bicycle for getting around the paddock and track, tent for keeping weather off everything, weights to keep the tent safely anchored, cooler for drinks and food, leathers hanging up, not lying on the ground, electrical cables tidy and covered.



More advanced garage pit set-up with large toolbox, carpet, wall-boards, rider area, lights, heating, cables from above not below. A place for everything and everything in its place!