FACE OFF! ONLINE TRAINING LOGS

Today's powerful online data crunchers can do just about everything except make your body move. We threw popular options into a four-way, winner-take-all cage match. **BY CHRIS FOSTER**

Whether you're training for your first tri or trying to blaze your trail to Kona, a training log is essential to race-day success. "Logging your workouts allows you (or your coach) to track your progress and tailor your training and recovery plan for future weeks," says Alison Kreideweis, a USAT Level 1 coach and the co-founder of the Empire Tri Club in New York City. She suggests athletes log robust information like weather, what you wore, and how you felt, in addition to training metrics like splits, pace, time, and heart rate. Here's an inside look at four popular logs with those features, plus many more.

FINALSURGE
For athletes: Free | For coaches: $190/yr. for up to five athletes
Finalsurge.com

WHAT: This free service offers a training log and analysis tools and relies on paid coach memberships to operate—and paid training plans that start at $55 for a 12-week sprint plan.

PROS: Free! It's also one of the easiest logs to set up and learn. Easy migration from other services including Training Peaks, WorkoutLog, and MySwimBikeRun is a nice bonus.

CONS: Though the training plans are a bit more expensive than those on TrainingPeaks, where you can find an 8-week sprint plan for as little as $10, the lack of monthly cost offsets one-time fees.

THIS IS FOR: New triathletes or anyone who wants a straightforward, well-designed platform without spending anything.

NOT FOR: People who want to create an advanced plan with only a little guidance.

TRAININGPEAKS
Basic: Free | Premium: $120/yr.
Trainingpeaks.com

WHAT: The basic version allows data uploads and integrates with your coach. The premium version gives you enough tools to coach yourself with workout libraries and builders, training plan tools, and data analysis.

PROS: Premium has super-powerful data analysis (metrics for days), a gigantic training-plan library to purchase from, and an easy-to-use workout/ training plan builder.

CONS: Power can come at a cost: New users might feel overwhelmed at first, but it's easy to stick to the basic features, then use the more advanced ones when you're ready.

THIS IS FOR: People who want boundless self-coaching power in the premium package.

NOT FOR: People who can become overwhelmed with too many options.

SPORTTRACKS
$60/yr. after 45-day free trial
Sporttracks.mobi

WHAT: Super-clean web-programming allows for one of the best user experiences of the bunch. Using simple graphic representation, SportTracks is a log-and-analyze-only platform with very little guidance. (Read: Coaches can input plans, but SportTracks does not sell plans or coaching services.).

PROS: Incredibly easy to set up from the get-go, excellent, simple navigation, and slick graphics (we love the route pace heat map) with a streamlined web app.

CONS: While the features are very good, the paid platform does not currently include training programs. Also, workout creation lags slightly behind other services in terms of features and ease-of-use.

THIS IS FOR: People who want an easy-to-use training log with a lightning-quick interface.

NOT FOR: Athletes looking for training plans or an in-depth self-coaching aid.

BEGINNER TRIATHLETE
Basic: Free | Bronze: $50/yr. | Silver: $90/yr. | Gold: $130/yr.
Beginnertriathlete.com

WHAT: The most basic plan is simple workout logging, bronze adds training plans and some personal interaction, silver has more detailed plans, while gold offers super expansive training tools including technique drill videos.

PROS: Lots of training plan options at the higher levels of service and probably the best self-coaching features at the gold level of any platform— very remote athletes take note.

CONS: A slightly outdated interface is tougher to navigate than others, and data analysis at the lower levels is not very robust.

THIS IS FOR: Someone who needs tons of guidance (at the higher-level package).

NOT FOR: Power users who want to analyze their data in detail or athletes who don't need much direction.

WINNER! *FinalSurge. For a free platform, it comes dangerously close to the paid services' features and finds the sweet spot between beginner-friendly and geeked-out power users.*