



# Blackberry Farm PRO-AM Classic Training Plan



**Welcome Aboard!**

## **The Plan**

The plan itself is based in an online calendar format through [www.TrainingPeaks.com](http://www.TrainingPeaks.com). If you already have a Training Peaks account, you can apply the plan directly to your existing account. If you are new to Training Peaks, you can sign up for their free Basic accounts and be able to see the full 16-week plan. You can also make use of the calendar to record duration, distance and additional notes about your daily training as you prepare. Premium Training Peaks subscriptions are available that will give you access to a few more features, such as the ability to move future workouts around on the calendar to better suit your schedule, and enhanced analytical features if you are using downloadable training devices.

To access the plan, you will need to first have your Training Peaks login credentials (username and password) ready, and then navigate to the Blackberry Farm plans page. Click the “Buy” button (there is no separate fee for the plan), and enter your login information. In your account, click on the plans icon on the left-hand sidebar, select the tour plan and hit “Apply.” The plan will automatically be added to your calendar with the proper tour dates and all the training will fall into place.

The full duration of the plan is 16-weeks, so if you are starting before that time, you may see some blank weeks on your calendar before the training starts. If you start with less than 16 weeks before the PRO-AM Classic, you may miss the first portion of the plan, so we would recommend returning to Week 1 to collect some baseline reference points that will help make your training more focused going forward. Then resume the plan at the current time.

## **The Training**

During the 16-weeks of preparation, your training will have two distinct phases. The first eight weeks will focus on energy system development. It is important to have well-rounded fitness across the board, so workouts will emphasize aerobic endurance, threshold power, anaerobic capacity and explosive efforts. The last eight weeks leading up to the PRO-AM Classic will shift toward development of race-specific abilities. While still targeting the different energy systems noted above, these workouts will feature variations in recovery and other challenges to prepare you for the demands of high-intensity racing efforts.

Training will be most effective when based on objective metrics. The first and eighth week of the plan feature energy system testing. This can be completed in your local environment, on the road



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or an indoor trainer. These tests will establish reference points that help to guide your efforts in training, and when you retest, the values you achieve will provide a gauge of your improvement.

A power meter is the most valuable tool you can add to your training arsenal if it is not already a part of it. There is nothing in cycling more objective than power produced over a given duration. Tracking changes in power over time will provide a clear indication of changes in fitness, and will also help to make sure you're using your energy appropriately during your workouts.

Many of the workouts you will see in this plan are very structured. Focused intensity is the most effective way to develop your energy systems because the stress is applied exactly where you want it. Depending on where you live and what roads you have access to, it may be difficult to balance the demands of a structured workout with the challenges of different terrain, traffic and stops. In these cases, the indoor trainer may be your best option. Since your training will be completed during the warm summer months, this may not seem like the most appealing option. However, only two of the weekly workouts will require such rigorous structure, and others can be done outside, enjoying the nice summer weather.

During training, you want to prepare yourself not only physically but also mentally for the demands of racing. Nutrition on the bike will be important during long days, so experiment with the food products that work best for you. Aim for 200-300 calories per hour on rides longer than 2 hrs. Since you'll be training in the heat many days, make sure your hydration is also spot on. A bottle an hour is a good starting point, but you may need more. Supplement this with 500mg of sodium each hour to maintain your electrolyte balances. Plan your routes accordingly so that you have access to refueling and refilling stops.

Practice your pacing and learn what is sustainable over longer durations. Within that practice, also pay attention to the effect of efforts above threshold power. It's easy to make big surges early in a ride when you're fresh, but that power can become a precious commodity later in the ride. If you find yourself struggling later in rides, it may not be because of a lack of fitness, but instead because you're not pacing effectively.

## **The Workouts**

As noted above, workouts in the first phase of the training plan will emphasize different energy systems. Those workouts are all referenced off threshold power, which is the highest effort you can sustain over roughly a 1-hour duration. In the second phase of the plan, workouts will feature mixes of energy systems and variations based on the relationships you established in the first phase. This information is spelled out in the plan itself, but here are some examples of the different types of workouts you'll see:



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- ❖ 20-minute Test: this is the primary reference point for threshold power. If you're using a power meter, take 95% of your average 20-minute power to determine Functional Threshold Power (FTP). If you are relying on heart rate or perceived exertion your 20-minute effort should be similar to your target for threshold intervals.
- ❖ 1-minute and 3-minute Tests: these short-duration tests are reference points for your VO2 power. FTP will still be the reference point for VO2 workouts, but these will allow you to test improvement in this system over the course of training.
- ❖ Endurance Rides: long, relatively low intensity training will help to build endurance and aerobic fitness. Power should be 60-70% of FTP, or about an 3-4 out of 10 when it comes to perceived exertion (RPE). Regular conversation should be possible during endurance riding.
- ❖ Tempo Rides: tempo can be a dangerous place. While it is still aerobic, the effort is a little too high to allow you to recover effectively from harder sessions, and at the same time not hard enough to really make you a stronger rider. However, this is often an important range to be familiar with, as this is where you might find yourself during a fast group ride or longer race. Power is typically 75-85% of FTP, or RPE 5-6 out of 10. Conversation is possible, but long sentences will likely leave you short of breath.
- ❖ Threshold Intervals: longer, steady state intervals in 10-20 minute range. These should be targeted at 92-100% of FTP, or about RPE 8 out of 10. It should be difficult to speak more than a couple words at a time during threshold intensity.
- ❖ VO2 Intervals: short, maximal efforts of 30 seconds to 2 minutes with recovery usually equal to or longer than the intervals themselves. It is important to work as hard as possible during VO2 efforts, but not so hard that you cannot repeat that effort for all of the intervals in the workouts.
- ❖ Sprints: very short, ALL OUT explosive efforts of 10-20 seconds. Different from VO2 intervals, you want to start a sprint by going as hard as you possibly can, without regard for the rest of the workout. Power will typically start to decay after 8-12 seconds, but keep pushing hard. Sprints are very draining because of the high intensity, so recovery periods are much longer than between other types of workouts.
- ❖ Group Rides: Group rides are where you get to employ the fitness you've been developing. The ideal group ride will feature a fairly fast pace and some race-type efforts. These may vary depending on your local terrain. Examples might include townline sprints, breakaways, rotating pacelines and maybe even a hilltop finish. Try to find a group with lots of variety to sharpen your racing skills, or just jump into some local races.



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## The PRO-AM Classic

The PRO-AM Classic itself is a very different event than the typical cycling tour or camp. While you'll certainly have the chance to put in lots of miles, you'll also encounter varied race efforts along the way. The many disciplines of racing, time trialing, climbing and sprinting will condense some of the situations the Pros you're riding with experience in major races around the world down into a single day.

Make sure your equipment is ready to go with big gears suitable for steep climbs. Some of the daily routes will include 15-16% grades, so a compact crankset and 28t cog should be considered the minimum gearing requirement. If you really like to spin, you may want to consider an easier gear. Try to get some practice on steep grades if you can. Climbs like this aren't always readily available, so make due with whatever you have access to. Using a bigger gear than you normally would on less steep terrain can mimic some of the demands of steep terrain.

If you've done the training, you'll be prepared for the challenge. But once you're here, it is crucial to keep the odds in your favor. You'll have great mechanical and nutritional support along the way. Be sure to take advantage of the recovery options post-ride as well, through muscle treatments as well as nutrition.

This is a unique event where you will not only get to rub shoulders with the Pro's and challenge your own physical limits, but also have the opportunity to raise money for a great cause. Enjoy the experience as you prepare for this event. The training certainly won't be easy, but it will help bring your fitness to new heights.

If you have questions about the plan or are interested in a more detailed and personalized training plan for the tour, please reach out to Vision Quest through [plans@visionquestcoaching.com](mailto:plans@visionquestcoaching.com). We have several different options available to best suit your training needs.

Enjoy the journey!

Vision Quest Coaching