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Bike Racing: General Strategies

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Adam Mills, MSEd

- Coaching full time since 2008
- Masters in Exercise Science, University of Kansas
- USA Cycling Level 1 Coach
- Training Peaks Level 2 Coach
- Clients have earned 24 national championships in 11 disciplines
- Director/ Assistant Director Sportif: UCI CT: Elevate Pro Cycling 2016-17
- Manager: Mercy Cycling/ Think Finance/ Elevate Domestic Elite 2009-2015

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Taylor Warren, BSEd

- Bachelors in Exercise Science, Colorado State University
- USA Cycling Level 1 Coach
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- Pro racer on CS Velo

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- Based Around the Event
- Based on Personnel Available
- Team and Individual Goals

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- Event
  - Discipline- Road, Track, Criterium
    - Each has nuances that can favor different strategies
  - Know the history of the event
    - How have the last ~5 editions of the race played out
  - Know the terrain or strategic features
    - Climbs, descents, pinch points, corners
  - Weather and how it will/ could affect the race

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- Based on Personnel Available
  - Does your team have riders who can accomplish the team goal?
    - Do you need to choose a new goal?
  - What are strengths and weaknesses of your riders?

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- Team and Individual Goals
  - What is the Goal?
    - Win outright
    - Most Aggressive, Lap Leader
    - Points
    - Team classification
  - Announcer shout out
    - Primes, breakaways (regardless of success)

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- Team and Individual Goals
  - How to create scenarios to maximize odds of success.
  - Good matchups
  - Probability of success
- Breakaway
- Climbing
- Crosswinds
- Field Sprints
- Time bonuses
- Primes

All require different approaches and variations depending on riders

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- The Physics of Strategy
  - Drafting
  - Positioning

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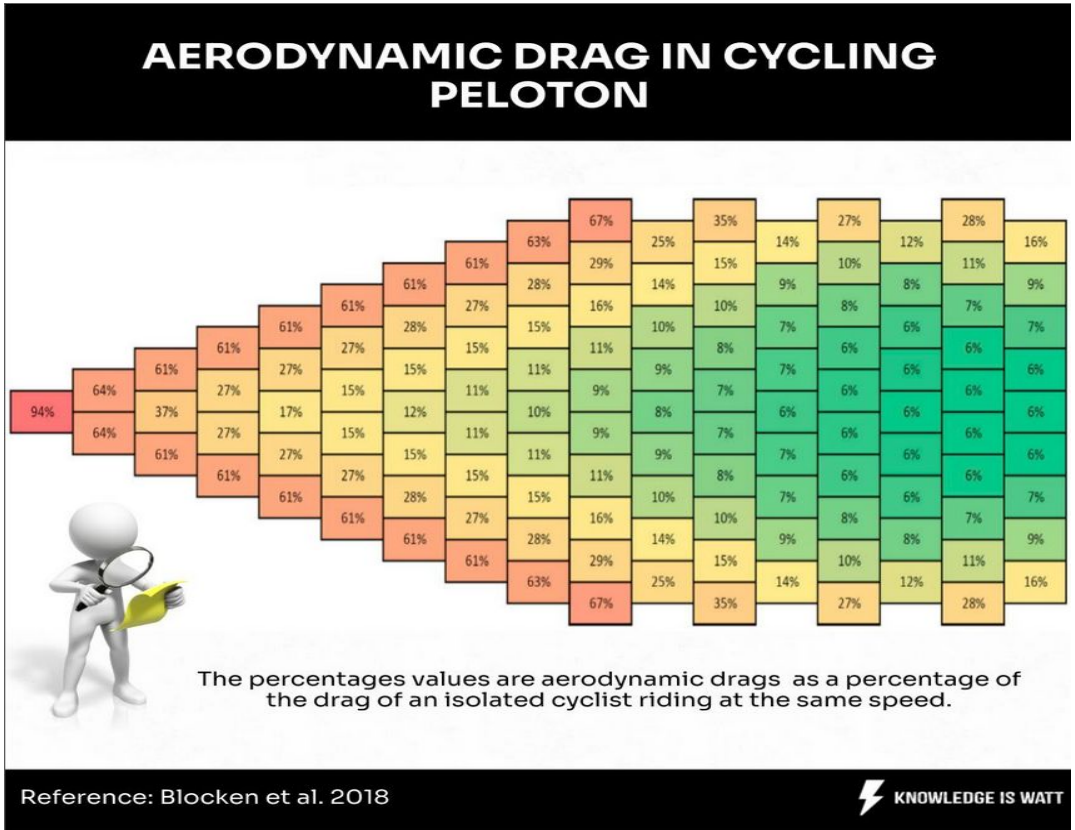
- Drafting is the basis of ALL tactics in road racing and criteriums



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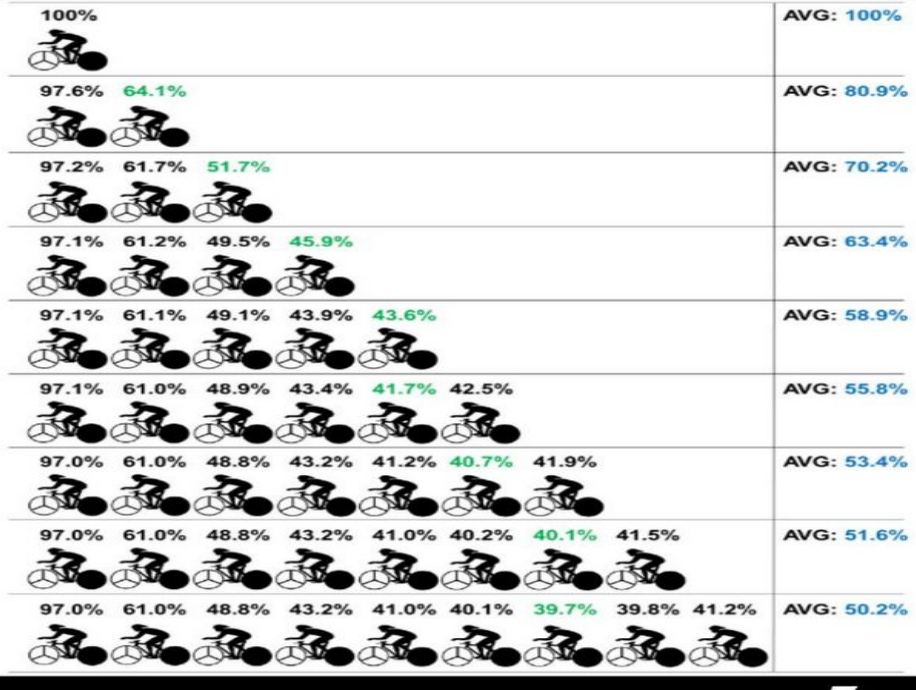
TEAM TIME TRIAL DRAG

Aerodynamic resistance (drag) in drafting cycling groups.
Percentage indicates drag compared to cyclist alone.



Reference: Blocken et al. 2018

KNOWLEDGE IS WATT

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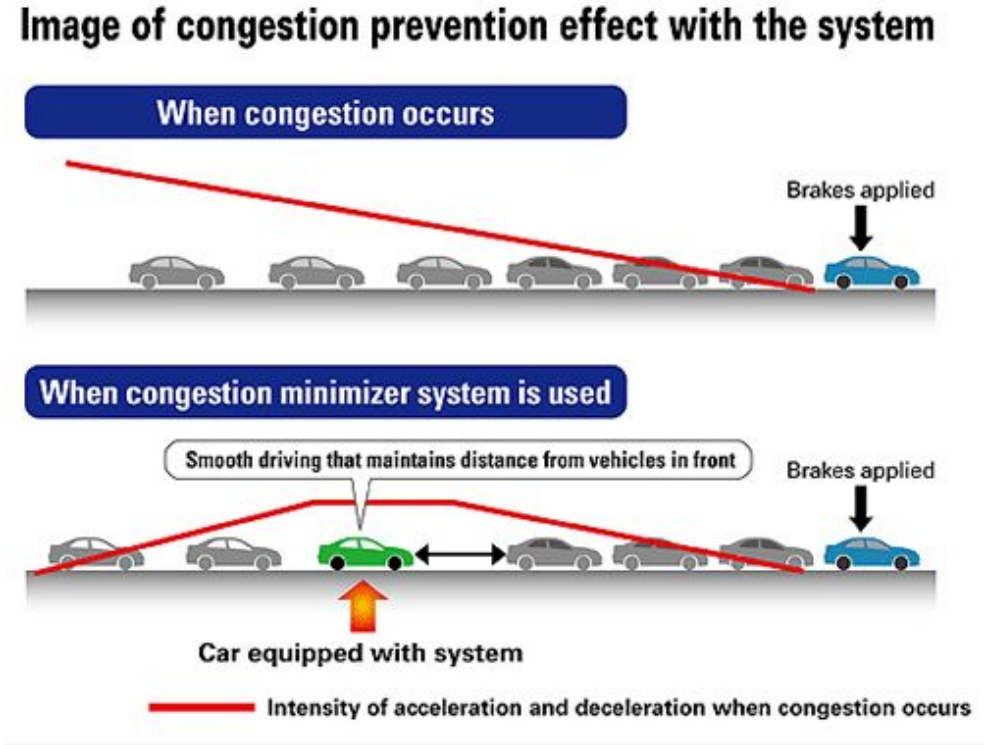
The Concertina Effect:



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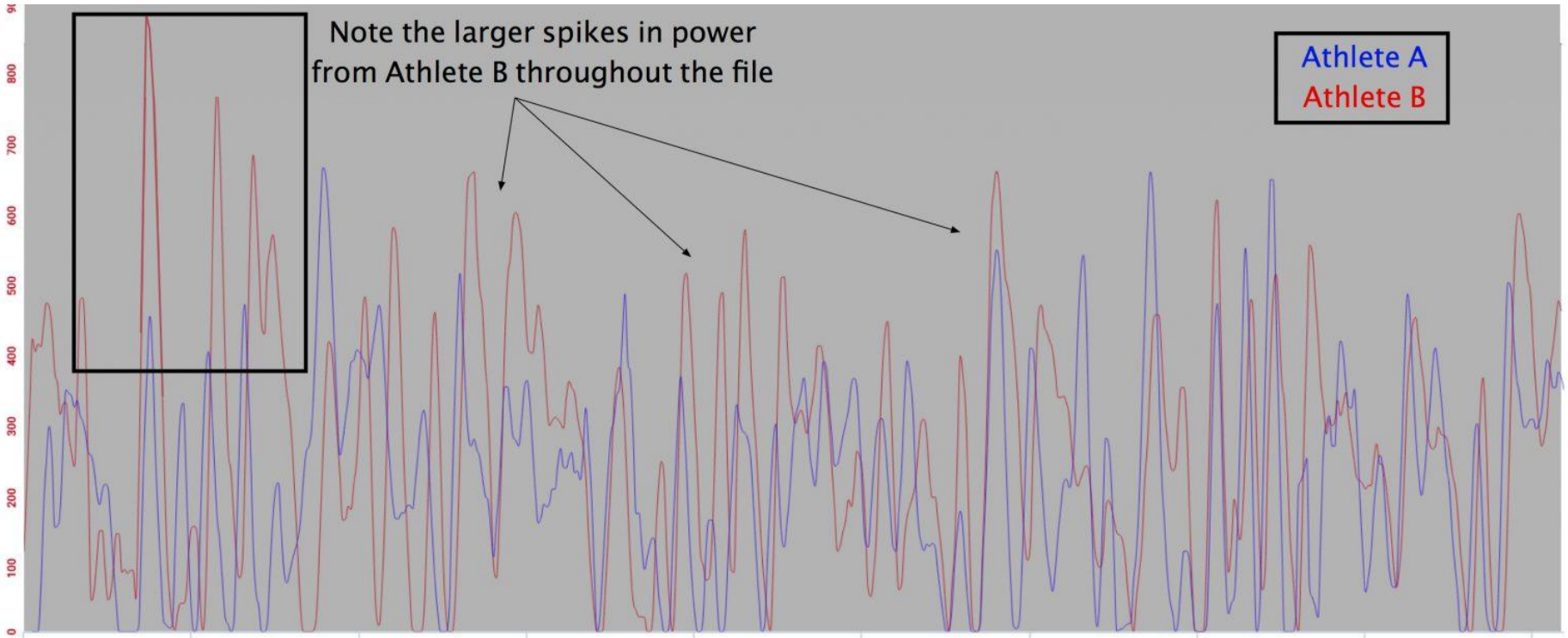

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Teammates “In Play” and
Teammates “Out of Play”

• In Play: forward enough to cover moves, typically in the first 20 spots

• Out of play: Sitting in the field, staying sheltered and conserving energy

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- Communication around tactics
  - Pre-race communication
  - Communication during the race
  - Communication after the race

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Harsh Truths of Amateur Racing

• Most plans fail because teammates act selfishly at crucial moments
• Complicated plans are just that
– Keep tactics as simple as possible
– “The plan” never works as drawn up
– Adapt your “plan” to meet the demands of the race

• Teammates must be in position to win a race before they can help each other

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Harsh Truths of Amateur Racing

• Team tactics: In essence, everyone covers everything until the strongest guys establish a break
• There is no “setting tempo”
• There are no team leaders
– Do not designate team leaders until the selection has occurred in the race

• Protected rider: “team formation” is not a reality, it is the responsibility of the protected rider to stay sheltered

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Pre-race Communication

- Establish defined and realistic goals
- Establish expectations for each rider
  – Who is riding well, who is sick etc.
- Typical plans for road and criterium races?

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Communication During the Race

- How does everyone feel?
- Upcoming strategic points to be aware of
- Revision of the “plan”
- Privacy of in-race talk

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Communication After the Race

- Immediately following the race
- Everyone talks about the race, everyone listens
- Individual and as a team
  - -What was done well, what can be improved
  - - Winners and learners
- Discuss how to improve for next time

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Questions???