

I like training. I like micro and macro cycles. I like lifting heavy in the winter and being explosive in the spring. I like planning 40 weeks of erg workouts, backwards from FISA master worlds to December of the previous year

I like regattas. I like going online to see who will be there. I like those antsy two weeks before a competition and the physical and psychological tension of the taper. I like speed work and race rehearsal.

I like the fact that, during the five hour drive from Ashland, OR to Vancouver, WA, my partner and I can come up with eleven perfectly outlandish ideas that would make the world, at least our myopic view of it, a sillier place in which to exist. It takes approximately eleven perfectly outlandish ideas to drive five hours.

I like the Spartan construct that for 48 hours I can eat, sleep and breathe one purpose without distraction; without clients, without juice boxes, without reality. Only the primal life and death, fight or flight anxiety of impending competition. The day to day has become the now, and the now is brimming with palpable nervous, excited energy.

I like seeing old friends and familiar faces and new ones as well. I like watching really great rowing, and cheering the final sprint as first and second are decided by hundredths of a second. I like browsing the tents and buying the t-shirts. I like checking my rig and the ritual of donning trou, jersey and sunscreen; a modern day warrior preparing for aquatic battle. I like the pre-race solace of the green porta potty. Then, in some grand crescendo, I like racing - and hardware.

I like hardware...

Andy Baxter
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