

The SML Triathlon plans for a “Peak” experience.

After the obligatory hiatus of 2020, **Virginia Amateur Sports the Smith Mountain Lake Triathlon** returns for 2021.

The date, Saturday, May 1, is serendipitous for Hunter Allen and the Peaks Coaching Group.

A coach of endurance athletes since 1995, Allen founded Peaks Coaching Group (PCG), a Bedford-based firm focusing on coaching and training endurance athletes, decided to have its first camp for triathlon competitors and scheduled it for the last week of April. This was before VAS scheduled the SML Mountain Lake Triathlon for May 1, but when the schedule was worked out, the timing was perfect.

Allen saw an opportunity. He decided that entry into the SML Triathlon would be part of the camp. The value of the cross promotion was excellent for PCG and VAS.

Allen, 51, is a Bedford native who has been all over the world coaching elite level cyclists. He co-authored two books on improved performance in cycling: “Cutting Edge Cycling” and “Training and Racing with a Power Meter.”

While specializing in cycling, Allen decided to diversify PCG by adding a triathlon coach to its impressive list of coaches who live across the US and in Japan, Germany, Brazil and Iceland. Sarah Wangerin of Chicago will be coaching the triathletes at the PCG camp in April. She and other PCG coaches will be able to coach the athletes during the race. An open water swim at the race site and a ride of the course are also part of the run-up to the SML Triathlon.

Allen’s goal is 25 campers; about half that number have already registered.

The camp is for triathletes who have experience and are looking for methods to improve performance.

“This is not a beginners camp,” Allen said. “We will have people looking to go to the next level. This is not a camp for people who aren’t sure how to clip into their pedals.”

PCG uses power meters to record every aspect of a cyclist’s ride. The meter tracks force on the pedals, cadence (turn rate), heart rate, GPS location and air temperature to give a detailed view of a ride that can be analyzed to find and correct inefficiencies in the effort. Run the data through a few physics equations and the athletes can determine the wattage being generated by their muscles. The world’s most elite generate up to 450 watts while those who enjoy endurance sports at a more casual level generate between 150-250 watts of power.

PCG has used power meters to coach cyclists for nearly 20 years. New ones are now being used to plot the data of runners and swimmers, allowing the technology to help triathletes.

Most triathletes are aiming to compete in full-length events, but the SML Triathlon is a half-distance, Olympic sprint triathlon (750 meter swim, 20k bike ride and 5k run) so it’s a ideal event at the end of the camp.

Allen hopes to get more people from his long list of contacts to participate.

“We put out to our 22,000 email list that this is a great event. Let’s jump on it,” Allen said.

To join the PCG tri camp, check out all the details on their webpage, <https://www.peakscoachinggroup.com/2021-triathlon-training-camp>