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'Not long ago, we thought you didn't need to eat much on the bike, now we are talking about nutrition': Training for a breakaway

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The hard-working American talks us through a key winter training strategy in the middle of a very busy season



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(Image credit: Getty Images)

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The week: Facts and figures



BY **CHRIS MARSHALL-BELL**

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 09, 2023

*Want to know how the best riders in the world are running **MY WEEK IN TRAINING series** for you? Sit down with a pro rider who talks us through granular detail. This time it's the turn of Larry Warbasse.*

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Mountain domestique and a regular figure in his WorldTour career at BMC Racing back in 2011, Warbasse has since ridden for IAM Cycling, Aqua Blue, and for Ag2r-Citroën since 2019. His second Grand Tour of the year, the Vuelta a España, was the ninth Grand Tour of his career. He also rode this year's Giro d'Italia – making this his busiest season since 2014, with

close to 90 race days. We caught up with Warbasse by phone on the Vuelta's first rest day to talk through his last altitude training camp before the season's final Grand Tour.

What was the main purpose of this training week?

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Portail de Comparaison

This was my last full week of focused preparation for the Vuelta, because after it I raced the Tour of Poland, the World Championships and the Vuelta a Burgos. The idea behind the camp was to get a good amount of climbing and training volume in, and I've had some really good results in the past after altitude camps. Envalira, at the top of Andorra, is a really good place to focus.

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After the Vuelta, you'll have done 85 race days this season. How are you feeling?

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That's a lot, isn't it? It was never really the p
when guys have been sick or injured. I feel ;
because the first half of the Vuelta has been
the time away from home – being on the roa

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How do you train to get into breakaways'

Motor-pacing can be quite good for race simulation. Repeated sprint efforts in
training are also good, and you can train long breakaway efforts by riding tempo
on climbs or on the flats, while simultaneously keeping as aero as possible; it's all

trainable. But, honestly, nothing can truly imitate being in a race. Take this year's Vuelta: on some of the stages, the number of accelerations has been just unreal. The best training is racing.

RIDER PROFILE: LARRY WARBASSE

Age: 33

Height: 6ft

FTP: 400W

Raised: Dearborn, Michigan, USA

Lives: Nice, France

Rides for: Ag2r-Citroën

Best results: 1st – US national road race champs (2017); 7th GC – Tour of Poland (2016); 1st – Stage 4, Tour de Suisse (2017)

Instagram: [@warbasse](#)

X: [@larrywarbasse](#)

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(Image credit: Getty Images)

What's been the biggest training development in your career?

Not so long ago, we were under the impression that you didn't need to eat much on the bike, only when you were hungry. Now we are smashing nutrition.

Do French teams have different training habits?

In the Anglo training world, we work off FTP, aerobic power, or puissance aérobique maxim [five-minute power]. They do all of their effort definitely prioritise volume over recovery, to would view it as not getting enough recovery. French system, my team coach [Stephen B] the crossover!

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THE WEEK: FACTS AND FIGURES

When: 10-16 July, 2023

Where: Envalira, Andorra

Training for: Vuelta a España

Total riding: 23hr 55min

Z3+ effort: 1hr 50min

Monday: Cafe spin – 1hr 20min

This was my fourth day at altitude and I had just completed a three-day acclimatisation block. On these camps, I do two days hard, one day easy, and today's ride was most definitely easy. I cycled 20 minutes down the mountain for a coffee, and turned around. I gave myself a heart rate cap of 110bpm to make sure that I really was just spinning. My average power was 163 watts.

Tuesday: VO2max efforts – 4hr

I did VO2-max-focused threshold efforts all day on the Alto de la Rabassa climb. I started off with three times five minutes at 360-370 watts, with a one-minute rest in between, to open the system a bit. My next efforts were 10 times one minute on, one minute off at 12-minute power pace, averaging between 440 and 460 watts. I then did three sets of five times one minute on, one minute off at 12-minute power pace, averaging between 440 and 460 watts. I then did three sets of five times one minute on, one minute off at 12-minute power pace, averaging between 440 and 460 watts. I think it's good to do efforts c
prepare you for racing, but I definitely prefer

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Wednesday: Endurance ride – 5hr

During my two-day blocks at altitude, one day is hard, one day is easy, and one day is endurance. For these endurance rides, like today, I set a heart rate limit, and the maximum I permit is 125-130bpm. I find that on the climbs I average around 125bpm. My average watts for the day was just under 200.

Thursday: Coffee shop spin – 1hr 30min

The same as Monday: down the mountain, coffee stop, and then back up, with the same cap on my heart rate. The hotel at the top of Envalira sits at 2,409m above sea level, and during this week there were around 25 riders staying there. There was an Ineos Grenadiers training camp, but the rest of us were alone or in small team groups. They really cater for cyclists, with a relatively healthy buffet that serves lunch until 5pm.

Friday: Double threshold day – 4hr 15m

Occasionally I split the day into morning and afternoon sessions, as you can get more efforts done without fatiguing as much. There's also the metabolic benefit of having a rest in between two workouts. In the morning, I did eight times five minutes sub-threshold progressive efforts starting at 300 and topping out at 380 watts; there was a one minute rest in between. In the afternoon, I did 10 times three-minute efforts approaching threshold, starting at 370 watts and working up to 400 watts for the last one.

Saturday: Endurance ride – 6hr

For this big endurance ride, in which I went north into France, a big loop racking up 3,800m of elevation gain, I capped my maximum watts at 300 but, unlike the previous endurance ride, there was no heart rate cap. I also brought along a big bag of electrolyte and carbohydrate chews, and a few water fountains. I also can't resist popping in a croissant.

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Sunday: Easy day – 1hr 45min

For me it's important to keep riding on an easy day because I want to get as much out of being here as possible, and riding at this low intensity keeps things ticking over.

This full version of this article was published in the 14 September 2023 print edition of Cycling Weekly magazine. [Subscribe online and get the magazine delivered to your door every week.](#)

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