



## **Topeak and CLIF Ambassador Tom Mazzone offers up some useful tips in his guide to completing the Panaracer Dirty Reiver**

Dirty Reiver isn't just your typical gravel event; it's a challenge that requires endurance, preparation, and strategy. With its rugged terrain, relentless climbs, and unpredictable weather, it's not for the faint-hearted. Whether you're taking on the epic 200km route, the challenging 130km distance, or the rewarding 65km ride, preparation is key to ensuring you enjoy the experience and perform your best.

Here's why you should start training now and what to focus on in the weeks ahead:

### **The Demands of Dirty Reiver**

The 200km route alone includes over 3,000m of climbing across varied gravel surfaces. You'll need a mix of endurance, strength, bike-handling skills, and mental resilience to complete the course.

Having completed Dirty Reiver in just over 7 hours last year, I know firsthand what it takes to perform well at this iconic gravel event.

Dirty Reiver stands out for its unique challenges and the skills it requires – but also for the incredible sense of achievement it delivers.



### Key Areas to Focus On:

- **Endurance:** You'll be in the saddle for quite a few hours, so building a strong aerobic base is essential. Make sure your preparation includes some longer rides on similar terrain if possible and keep the pace steady. Spending some time in the saddle will also help your body get used to your riding position.
- **Strength:** Gravel climbs require power, especially as fatigue sets in. Include hill repeats and lower cadence efforts in your training. You can do some of these on the indoor trainer if the weather is unpredictable.
- **Bike Handling:** The descents and technical sections will test your confidence and control. Practice riding on loose surfaces to build your skills. Local forests, bridleways and parks are all great places to hone the techniques that you will need.
- **Nutrition:** The right fuelling strategy can make or break your ride. Practice your nutrition plan during training to avoid surprises on the day. Check out the recent 'Dirty Reiver Diaries Podcast' - available on the website. And do not forget to stay hydrated, this is often overlooked especially in the cooler weather.



## Top Tips for Event Preparation:

### 1. **Break Your Training into Phases**

Start with building endurance in the early weeks, then progress to more event-specific efforts. Mimic Dirty Reiver's demands with long rides on gravel, including climbs and technical terrain where possible.

### 2. **Plan Your Nutrition**

Consistent fuelling is essential. Experiment during training to find what works best – whether it's energy bars, gels, or drinks. CLIF products are a great choice, and they'll also be available at the event's feed stations.

### 3. **Dial in Your Equipment**

Gravel racing is tough on both bike and body. Choose tyres suited to mixed terrain, ensure your gearing can handle steep climbs, and fine-tune your setup for long-distance comfort.

### 4. **Prioritise Recovery**

Training for an event like this can be physically demanding. Incorporate active recovery sessions into your plan, and focus on getting enough sleep, stretching, and keep hydrated.

### 5. **Stay Motivated**

Training for Dirty Reiver can feel daunting, but breaking your goal into smaller milestones can make it more manageable. Celebrate progress, every ride brings you closer to achieving your goals, consistency is key.





## Make Training an Enjoyable Journey

Preparing for an event like this is about more than the end goal. Training rides give you the chance to explore new routes, embrace the outdoors, and push your limits. Break up long rides with coffee stops or join group rides to make the process more social.

Celebrate the small victories along the way!

## Need a Helping Hand?

Looking for a more structured approach? At **RIDE Coaching**, we specialise in helping cyclists prepare for challenging events such as the Dirty Reiver.

With over a decade of experience as a professional cyclist and a 2024 finisher in just over seven hours, I have personal insights and knowledge into the demands of the event.

Our *12-week personalised training plan* is designed to help you reach your potential.

## What's included:

- Tailored training plans built around your schedule, fitness level, and goals.
- Daily feedback and frequent communication with your coach.
- Expert recovery and nutrition guidance, including a **free CLIF Nutrition Bundle** to fuel your training.



- Event-specific strategies, from pacing to fuelling tips.
- Equipment advice to maximise comfort and performance.

With just 20 spots available, this exclusive package offers the support and knowledge you need to make this your best Dirty Reiver yet.

**Let's make it happen!** Drop us a message at [ride.im@hotmail.com](mailto:ride.im@hotmail.com) to secure your spot.