



Overdraft and the Allure of Shiny Training Babbles

o-ver-draft noun " a deficit in a bank account caused by drawing more money than the account holds."

What does this have to do with training? Let me explain. In the two years I have been using Firstbeat's HRV - EPOC training monitoring system, I have come to think of EPOC workload like a bank account.

Let's assume that I have decided that my weekly cumulative training load should not exceed 500 ml/kg of EPOC. In other words I have 500 EPOC in the Galanes EPOC Bank. Now, let's assume I have a moderately easy 1:00 run scheduled for Monday. My run should be well below 78% of my maximum heart rate and it should not cost me more than 40 EPOC.

I am out on my run and I feel great. I am running 10 seconds per mile faster than I was two weeks ago at a similar HR! Hey if 10 seconds per mile faster feels good why not make it 15? I push the pace a little. My heart rate bounces over the upper boundaries of the prescribed 78% limit on some of the uphill and it doesn't drop as low on the downhill. It doesn't feel too much harder. After all, I am feeling good! But, then the bad news. Because of my little dalliance with extra speed, my run cost me 100 EPOC rather than 40.

How does this relate to overdraft? Well I just blew a 60 EPOC hole in my weekly budget. Something is going to have to give now. I am going to have to either modify my training or go into EPOC debt. I know I am going to need somewhere around 200 EPOC for my MaxVO₂ training (now I am up to 300 for the week with only two training sessions) and I will need 40 for my long easy run on Sunday (340). I have four other training days left in the week but only 160 EPOC left to spend. That pretty much rules out any additional quality training unless I take the three remaining days off.

For what gain? None! I blew an extra 60 EPOC in a training that produced no more physiological gain than if I had run it at 40 EPOC. Did pushing the pace on Monday make any sense? Not a bit. But we all know it happens with athletes all the time.

Maybe looking at training as a objectively measurable EPOC bank account can help your athletes avoid overdraft. Get your athletes to focus on spending their EPOC where they get the most bang for their buck rather than wasting it on shiny training babbles that produce nothing.

