

CONFIDENCE - TAD ELLIOTT

It is a fine line between cockiness and confidence. To race fast, you need both. Before big races, I am confident in my plan and its execution. I am arrogant enough to think that no one is working this hard. No one has the same plan as I do. No one has my training. No one knows my secrets. The polite way to say it is, I do not question my training plan. I do not worry what other athletes are doing. I have my goal set for that day, and I go out to accomplish it.

Confidence can be gained from anywhere. Whatever works for you, go with it. I get a lot of confidence from my equipment. I truly believe my skis are the best in the field, always. I love having a different pair of Oakleys every day, with the mirror lenses so the gypsies can't steal my soul. My Beats headphones play loud, so there are zero distractions.

I love being from a small town in Colorado. The weather is amazing 95 percent of the time, the sun always smiles on me. The support system I have here is ridiculous, in the best way. The other day I was finishing my intervals when the Sunday road bike group caught me. I had two minutes left. They blocked the wind for me and cheered me on the whole time. When I got back to my car after the cool-down, there was fresh baked goods from our local Bread Bakery waiting for me.

I have been so spoiled my whole life by the weather, my hometown, my family, and my sponsors that they have robbed me of my toughness. Zach Caldwell constantly makes fun of me for this and I can't argue. He always adds that at least I have the attitude to make up for it. I stand at 5'11", weigh in at 137 pounds. I am not an impressive figure in spandex. When I see my shadow, I think Peter Pan and Neverland are playing a cruel joke on me. But during the entire ski to the start line, the only thing I am thinking is, "King Kong ain't got \$%& on me."

This is where you need that cockiness to be fast, on the way to the start line. There is no room in your brain for worry, for questions, for fear. You need to be so overwhelmingly confident that nothing is going to throw you off your game. To go for the win, you have to be the first person to believe and the more people you can convince on the way to the start line, the better. I know I already have one man beat. Eat your heart out Kong.



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