

Best Workouts



from the
Cross Country
Journal

**Best Workouts
from the
Cross Country Journal**

**Compiled from
the first twelve volumes
of the Journal**

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Cross Country Journal**

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Progressive Training in Cross Country

by Bob Hoisington, Cross Country Coach
Southwest H.S., Minneapolis

We believe that an average runner who is healthy and dedicated, can become a superior runner through progressive training. At Southwest we have a set of basic work-outs that are repeated weekly or every two weeks. The variable in each basic work-out is the number of repeats, or the distances, which increase each time until the Conference Meet. We train progressively through most of our meets but start to taper after the Conference Meet through the Regional Meet to the State Meet. During the taper period we run fewer repetitions or lesser distances but at greater speeds.

We have learned that cross country runners appreciate formally-organized work-outs. They like work-outs with numbers that can show their improvement or change in performance quality. Through the careful monitoring of this measurement, we can "peak" the runners at the right time.

Since we have hard days followed by easy ones, we have developed quite a few distinctly different work-outs of both types. Each work-out has been given a name. In the remainder of this article, I will describe in detail three of our hard work-outs which lend themselves well to our purposes of progressive training. I have put them here in the order the runners rank them: starting with the one they think does them the most good.

The Five Minute Run Work-out

Objectives. To simulate the physical demands of a racing situation. To combine aerobic and anaerobic running. To increase runners' self-knowledge of readiness for stress. To study individual running styles when fatigued and to correct some inefficiencies. To maintain a consistency of performance. To develop the cardiovascular system and a good wholesome feeling about hard work, competition, improvement and individual differences.

Needs. A circular course (approximately 1600 meters in length) on grass with hills, turns, flats, etc. Also course markers, stop watch, whistle, ten numbered markers (to be placed at intervals on the loop at the end of the course), chart (clipboard and pencils), water, cups, tarps and blankets for stretching.

Procedure. Athletes warm up with an easy two-mile run followed by careful stretching. A motivational meeting takes place during the latter. Athletes line up on a line and start on a whistle. Course is run for five minutes when the whistle is blown again. Runners note the closest number marker and write this number on the chart during the two-and-a-half-minute rest period. The run and rest period are repeated four to eight times depending on the developmental

stage of the athletes. After a short break, they run a triangular course 15 times with 15 push-ups after each of the last ten. The triangular course is 110 meters up a hill, 110 meters down and 110 meters on the flat for recovery and push-ups. After a cool-down for five minutes and body building (100 sit-ups and 100 leg raises), they take the two miles back to school at an easy, relaxed pace. Finally, after 20 to 30 minutes of weight training, they stretch and take showers.

The Hill Work-out

Objectives. To prepare for meets that have hilly courses. To train the mental and physical body to be tough and ready. To develop cardio-vascular conditioning. To develop hill climbing and descending skills. To give more aerobic and anaerobic training experience. To help teach the word "effort."

Needs. A circular 800 meter grass course with two good hills, course marker flags, watch, whistle, chart, water, cups, tarps and blankets.

Procedure. After the athletes arrive at the course, warm up and stretch, they run a hard, steady two miles to bring on a sweat with low-level fatigue. They check in with the coach, their names are charted and they check out on the watch after a two-minute rest interval. Only two to four runners check out at a time. Now they go to it. How many laps can each one do in thirty minutes? They work hard on the hills and float the flats. Fifteen push-ups are done after each lap. When the thirty minutes are completed, and the number of laps is noted, they take a short break and a cool down run. Then back to team headquarters for sit-ups and leg-raises.

The "Good Morning 12" Work-out.

Objectives. To give much attention to the runners who are not in the top five. To run over-distance (about five or six miles). To provide aerobic training so the athletes always feel comfortable breathing. To show improvement each time the work-out is run.

Needs. A map of the course, ten numbered markers (placed at intervals starting at Highway 12), watch, chart, water, cups, tarps and blankets.

Procedure. Athletes meet and stretch out on the tarps and blankets at Lake Calhoun. All runners start together and run along the west side of Calhoun to Cedar Lake and out to Highway 12. The first five turn around and run back along the same route. When each remaining runner meets the fifth returning runner, he turns back at that point, noting near which marker he turned. All runners finish the last 800

Distance Runners's Decathlon

by Teri Anderson-Jordan, Coach
University of Texas

Equipment: Running shoes and a "fun" frame of mind

Purpose: To add variety and fun to workouts

When: Early season

Description: The following is an example of ten events that can be used.

1 x 800 — fastest wins.

1 minute of pushups — most push ups wins.

1 x 600 — fastest wins.

1 minute of sit ups — most wins.

1 x 400 — fastest wins.

1 minute of the 4-count Burpee - most wins.

1 x 300 — fastest wins.

1 minute of jumping jacks — most wins.

1 x 200 — fastest wins.

1 minute of squats — most wins.

Scoring: Give points in each event for the place of finish for each person (1 for 1st, 2 for 2nd, 3 for 3rd, etc.) Add each person's points together. Lowest score wins.

Editorial Note: With the permission of the publisher, this workout is reprinted from a booklet written in 1983 by Anderson-Jordan entitled "Track and Field Drills for Women - Volume II: Distance Running." It is available through the publisher: Championship Books, P.O. Box 1166, ISU Station, Ames, IA 50010.

Creative Easy-Day Workouts

by Len Long & Dean Ricken, Cross Country Coaches, North Central H.S., Spokane, WA

The importance of easy days in a training program is well-known. Stanford University Coach Brooks Johnson has said that the quality of a program may be judged by its easy-day workouts. Since runners can train hard only so many days per season before breaking down, regenerative easy days can help keep them fresh and less injury-prone.

Here is a compilation of a variety of easy-day sessions we have enjoyed over the years in our program.

- A road race for fun, not competition. The runner may accompany Mom or siblings, but must promise not to go any faster than a pre-set time.
- A whole day's practice consisting of a "Philadelphia football" game, i.e. Jr.-Sr. vs Fr.-So., followed by presentation of nicknames to rookies. (This is a spin-off from our daily pre-practice games).
- An aerobics workout with a local instructor, complete with rock music and all the moves. Usually, this is a good chance for the girls to outshine the boys.
- Unique relays. There can be anything from bean-bag relays to hill-top shuttles. One variety employs teams of pairs of runners, each pair using a vaulting pole as a baton.
- A "School Records Day." The premise is that every runner can be part of a school-record-setting relay team. Four-person groups from all four class levels, both boys and girls, can combine for an attempt on a listed record or create a new one (e.g., the two freshman girls and two senior boys distance medley). Variations are endless and a certificate awaits all record holders.
- A day of working on building a good calisthenic and stretching routine for pre-race use. Includes lots of hoopla and school pride such as roaring cheers during calisthenic moves; and songs and chants for the jog lap.
- War games day! This is complete with colored and/or perfumed water-balloons: five competing squads each with a treasure, and "country" with boundaries. When you are "hit", you're out. Game time limit is one hour.
- Running in a wide variety of scenic and unique locations: the spiraling downtown parking garage, nature



trails, three-rivers run (run-swim, run-swim, run-swim), hoity-toity runs through very wealthy neighborhoods, or a "schools-run" to show the colors and large numbers of runners to our opponents in the league.

- A come-back fresh fartlek workout, usually with about 15 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes hard change-of-pace, and 15 minutes warm-down, all done in groups.
- On the morning of a school football game, a sunrise run and group breakfast. This enables everyone to attend the game after school.
- A video "technique study" day. Pays big dividends.

Videotape your runners individually with immediate playback to observe running form. Then have them practice adjustments on the spot. Keep the tape for a later repeat viewing as needed.

- The "Evens Contest": Groups run a two or three mile loop twice, trying to hit the exact same time for each loop in order to post even split times. The groups closest to "evens" is treated to free bagels by the group farthest away. (You may have to frisk them for hidden watches - use discretion!)
- A social run followed by a picnic. This gives a good chance for boys and girls teams to get to know each other better. We aim for a picnic spot 4-6 miles away and groups of runners are co-ed. (Girls bring the food one day and the boys provide it another, later in the season)
- A clue-to-clue scavenger hunt. Done in groups, this can provide fun.

"Workouts" like these make a cross-country season both fun and interesting. Runners profit mentally and physically from breaks in the stress of intense competition and goal-oriented hard work. We hope you can use some of these ideas to make our great sport of cross country even more fun. ←€→

Editorial Note: Long-time subscribers (or astute back issue buyers!) will recall Long & Ricken's excellent article on rewarding non-varsity runners which appeared in ←€→ Vol. I, No. 3. Needless to say, North Central has a cross country program long on both quantity and quality. We hope eventually to publish their article on creative hard days.

of surging, and 15 minutes of warmdown. "Zippers" is a coach-run version of fartlek. The coach runs at the head of two lines of runners. When the whistle blows, one runner from each line peels off running the opposite direction at an accelerated speed until the coach blows the whistle again for the runner to catch up to the group.

Stairs and Hills - During track season we run stair sets (on one leg, bounding up, etc.) However, in cross-country we don't even believe in lots of hill repeats, but run many hilly runs instead. We try to build to the point in the latter part of the season when every run is a hilly one. Some of our routes are downright mountainous. Strong hill running is one of the keys to success in cross-country meets.

Peel-offs - This is an attempt to work on the "racer's half", the second half of a race. The group runs strong "groove" pace to the halfway point in a run and then blasts back all-out trying to accomplish a negative split time.

Combinations - There are all kinds of combination workouts. One we use for strength and "home-course" work is the 2-2-2-2-2-2. Two miles warm-up to the park is followed by two quarter-mile starts, two hill sets, two three-quarter-mile intervals, two quarter-mile finish drills, and a two-mile warmdown.

The real staples of our program include the less creative three-quarter mile repeats that we do 3 or 4 times during the year and some 4-6 mile blasters over the same courses for constructive comparisons. These two workouts mixed with some of the creative hard days listed above build great confidence, strength, and fierce courage. ~~CCJ~~

Editorial Note: We are pleased to report that all this creativity is beginning to pay off in a big way for North Central. A perennial power in the Spokane area, NCHS is now performing well at the state level. The North Central boys' team won a fourth place trophy this year in the Washington State AAA Championships. The NCHS number one girl was the 2nd place individual finisher in the State Meet.

Rambo Run

by Gary Weston — Cross Country Coach
Liberty H.S., Colorado Springs, CO

I want to share a particular workout we use 1-2 times a week that we feel contributed greatly to the teams' enjoyment and to the success of our 1987 season. I hope it helps other coaches as well as it worked for us at Liberty. We call it the "Rambo Run."

The team is divided into ability groups of 4-7 runners each. Each group is given a specific amount of time to run. We've used 25, 35, and 45 min. intervals. The time period is divided evenly among the members of each group so that every person is in charge of the pace and route that the group runs for an equal amount of time. Hence with a group of 5 runners running for 45 min., each person assumes the leadership position for 9 min.

The end result is that each leader tries to out-do the others by choosing the muddiest, hilliest or most challenging course that he or she can find. Each group tries to out-do the other groups by the difficulty or unusualness of its run.

Because the pace often varies, the terrain chosen is difficult and the time period increases their endurance, it is an excellent workout for everyone yet something they enjoy. It is also very good for developing group running and camaraderie which we all know is the key to a good cross-country team.

—CCJ—

Editorial Note: Remembering that it was the enjoyment of cross country which kept him running, Coach Weston has always felt a cross country team should learn to enjoy the sport. Since Liberty's cross country team was theoretically outclassed, being a new small school running voluntarily in the large school division, this was an even greater priority. The "Rambo Run," with its variety and constant challenges, meets this test well, and it may not be a coincidence that Steve Bonifers' 2nd place finish (Midwest Kinney Regional, Fr/Soph Race) was over a very hilly, muddy, rainsoaked course in Kenosa, WI. His girls team produced a freshman, Sarah Schwald, who ran to a fourth place finish in the Kinney prep national cross country championship.



Robert "Bob" Jenkins, Northwestern H.S., Rock Hill, SC

First of all, we encourage our runners to run varied courses and distances during the summer. We are fortunate to have two very different, very beautiful areas to run in, thus helping cut the boredom. Many of our kids also travel to both the area beaches and mountains. This also gives them a change.

We also encourage as much bike riding and swimming as possible. Both are great cardiovascular sports and help with the distance runner's problem of becoming bored.

Jeff Lockwood, Sahuaro H.S., Tucson, AZ

Make sure you (as "the coach") never show up! Without you there, believe me, 15-18 year old males or females know how to vary their schedule. I've been told of nighttime "orange-tag", "olive wars", or hopping in cars to run in the mountains, etc. Summer is for athletes to train themselves — coaches keep out!

Bob Mesina, U.C.L.A., Los Angeles, CA

1. Finish workouts with a game (ultimate frisbee, water-polo, etc.)
2. Use relays/tag games
3. Plan occasional days off
4. Have team trips and get-togethers following workouts
5. Go on explore-type runs

Tim O'Rourke, Arroyo H.S., El Monte, CA

All summer work-outs are voluntary and each individual decides how far he will run each day. We provide an opportunity to run with the group, but we do not demand attendance. We meet Monday through Friday evening to run at 6:00 p.m. However, most runners will show up at about 5:00 p.m. to play volleyball before we run. We also play after we run. Once a week we go some place to run such as in the hills or to a course we will run during the season.

Jimmy Sanders, Sun Valley H.S., Monroe, NC

We try to only meet 2 or 3 times a week. The other days they run on their own at any level they desire. They only race once each two weeks.

We have found that many of our kids like running Jr. Olympics without training for them. We tell them to pick any event they want but they must choose one event to help their distance running.

Another thing that has really helped us are our outings. We go to the mountains for a week and to the beach for a week. We plan our season and our goals at this time. We train hard but have many things planned for recreation, like trout fishing. We do everything together!

Mike Smith, Marlboro H.S., Hudson Valley, NY

If possible incorporate the swimming pool into your program. We use shallow water running, lap swimming, and underwater distance races. Sometimes we allow the athletes to play water polo or basketball in the deep end of the pool. We do not let the students use the diving board.

George Young, Central Arizona Comm. Coll., Coolidge, AZ

Boredom comes from a lack of motivation, not the training. Kids must have a reason to train. I encourage them to run 5-10K road races. I try to keep in contact so they know I'm "watching." I let them know what the other team runners are doing and who the new members will be so they know it's not going to be easy to make the team, win State, etc.

Since I feel quite strongly that injuries to distance runners occur because we have drastic changes in training (i.e.: "We have a good base, now let's do a track session"), I encourage my runners to have at least one track session every week in addition to long runs, hill workouts and fartlek sessions. Since the track season is easily compared with previous sessions, it will let the runner know how hard they are or are not training.

—€€J—>

Coaches' Favorite Hard-Day Workouts

by the  Panel of Experienced Coaches

There was a time when almost all cross country workouts were physically strenuous. Only the day or two before a big meet was there a break. Nowadays, most coaches are convinced that strenuous workouts must be alternated with less strenuous ones — thus allowing the body to recover and actually re-double its strength.

Hence, we now hear about hard-day and easy-day workouts. But, in order to be truly effective, a hard-day workout can't just be strenuous. It has to be focused on an essential element of one's training program and it ought to be seen by the athletes as very worthwhile.

So, for this issue, we asked our panel the following series of questions. **What is your favorite hard-day workout? (Describe it.) What do you think it accomplishes? Why do you like it? What are the typical athlete reactions?**

We want to thank Greg DeNike of Arroyo Grande H.S., Arroyo Grande, CA, for bringing this question to our attention.

Once again, this year's panel is composed of a group of outstanding coaches from around the country. On the average, they have 17 years of cross country coaching experience. Most all of them have won state and/or national championships. The majority coach both males and females.

Everett Berg, Owatonna H.S., Owatonna, MN

- Warm-up an easy 2 mile run
- Calisthenics/stretching
- 10x400's with 1 minute in between
- 8x100 m (:15 to :22)
- Cool down 2 miles at a very easy pace

I feel the 400 is an excellent distance and you can vary the rest between each depending on the conditions of your athletes.

The boys and girls seem to develop a bit more confidence when they complete this.

Mike Bundy, North Idaho Coll., Couer d'Alene, ID

We run sets of interval 800's on grass with the interval and times remaining constant throughout the first half of the season and only the number of repetitions increasing.

In the second half of the season we reduce the number again, increasing the tempo, but leaving the interval constant. The runners react favorably. They like the predictability, and they like to be able to measure their progress. We never run on the track in cross country. Most of the time we train on grass.

Pan Fanaritis, Georgetown, Univ., Washington, D.C.

One hour run — 15 min. warmup, 30 min. fartlek, 15 min. warm-down done in groups of 3 or 4 (by ability) taking turns leading.

I like it because the athletes work hard without being measured (time and distance). Also, they develop group spirit by pushing each other.

The athletes like it because it gives them responsibility and freedom of expression.

Richard Garcia, Shadow Mountain H.S., Phoenix, AZ

Quarters at race pace — no faster than race pace. I believe if you run at least twice the distance you are going to race, all in quarters, then your body will know exactly how to run it. For example, with a 5:00 mile goal, you need to run at least 8 quarters at 75 sec pace with no more than 3 minute rest. No faster than 75 sec, no slower. Athletes never have liked quarters. Nobody really does, but they need to do it.

Jack Hazen, Malone Coll., Canton, OH

Hard 10 mile runs. Improves one's ability to run through pain and push beyond the norm.

This workout is a good all-around test of the athlete's endurance and strength.

After finishing this workout, the athletes should feel not only tired but very good about the accomplishment. Even if time is slightly off, the athlete will have a very good training session.

Mike House, Clewiston H.S., Clewiston, FL

Our favorite hard-day workout is mile catch-ups. We handicap our runners according to their average mile times, starting the slower runners first and then each



Taking the Edge off Hard Workouts

by the  Panel of Experienced Coaches

For the truly motivated distance runner, a good, hard workout is enough. However, most coaches are not blessed with a team of truly motivated runners. For those coaches, it may help if the hardest workouts and the hardest weeks of training are laced with some diversion.

Two of our former panelists suggested the following question for this year's panel. What types of games do you use to accomplish the work but still take the edge off a practice? We want to thank Bill Stearns of Wayne Valley H.S., Wayne NJ, and Marbry Gansle of Shaker H.S., Latham, NY, for suggesting this question.

Once again, this year's panel is composed of a group of outstanding coaches from around the country. On the average, they have 17 years of cross-country coaching experience. Most of them have won state and/or national championships. The majority coach both males and females.

Mike Bundy, North Idaho College, Coeur d' Alene, ID

One of our favorites is called "bike-on-the-dike." I ride a bike and the runners are to stay with the bike at all times whether I go fast or slow. I change tempo through several speeds. It is a good fartlek workout, and it conditions runners to respond to changes in tempo by other runners.

Richard Garcia, Shadow Mountain H.S., Phoenix, AZ

Sometimes we'll play alphabet games. One example is where I start by looking on street signs for the letter "A". After I find it, the next person will look for "B", etc.. For another game, I'll start by saying "My mother went to the store and bought apples ("A")." The next person will say, "My mother went to the store and bought apples ("A") and bananas ("B")." The next person continues with "C," and so on through the alphabet.

Jack Hazen, Malone College, Canton, OH

We play blind fartlek in which each runner is given a slip of paper with a certain distance and effort. No one else knows what the other runners have to do until someone breaks away from the group.

Mike House, Clewiston H.S., Clewiston, FL

One of the games we play is road rally on foot. We divide into teams of equal ability. We then give each team a clue card which should take them to their first location. At each location they have to find their next clue card which will lead them to yet another location. Each team follows a different route, but all eventually end up at one predetermined location. The first team to have all runners reach the final location is the winner. We make each route five to seven miles long. This is a fun day for the runners, and when all the teams get in, we have a little party for them.

Mike Ipsen, Menlo Coll.ge, Atherton, CA

We use relay and chase type workouts. One workout requires splitting the team in two. The teams start on the track 220 yards apart from each other. Each runner is given a number and the number of a runner from the other team. The object is to catch the runner whose number you have been given.

Robert Jenkins, Northwestern H.S., Rock Hill, SC

We have watermelon, milkshake, and popsicle runs. We play team tag, also. In addition, we have fund raisers which allow us to have weekly pizza parties after practice.

J. F. Lockwood, Sahuaro H.S., Tucson, AZ

We tend not to play games during hard workouts, since we only have them once a week. For a hard, long distance run, we'll head for the mountains to relieve the boredom. Sometimes I'll take them by van about eight miles from school, drop them off, and have them run back to school. I make sure there is a water stop along the way.

Tim O'Rourke, Arroyo H.S., El Monte, CA

We will sometimes run entire practices playing games. We often get a tremendous amount of work out of our runners during these games—especially from those who will not usually put out great effort. The games also serve as a great "bonding" tool for the entire team. One game we play is Capture the Flag. We divide into two teams, each one guarding a flag. The field is divided in half.



Weight Training

by Bob Symons, Cross Country Coach, Univ. Of North Florida, Jacksonville.

Cross country running is a very demanding sport. Unlike track, the athlete must be prepared to adapt to a wide range of terrain while competing in a race: steep uphill, sharp downhill, uneven footing, hurdling various barriers and adjusting to speed changes such as tight turns or long straightways. Those are just a few examples of terrain faced in cross country running.

These types of conditions warrant a well-rounded training program in the areas of aerobic, anaerobic and muscular strength endurance. Muscular strength endurance is a vital part of the training for a cross country athlete but is often overlooked or de-emphasized. Our athletes spend at least three days a week working on this area as part of their program to improve weaknesses and enhance strengths.

Cross country/distance runners are known for not liking, or possibly not believing in, weight training as a means of improving their performance. In order to overcome these attitudes, a coach needs to design a program which will enable the athlete to get the most benefit in a short period of time, and incorporate it into his daily workout schedule. Once an athlete sees the positive results (in his other training and his races), then he will be more willing to put forth the effort.

Our weight training program goes through three phases. **Phase one** is strength development which runs July-August (pre-season). The athletes will be given a program to follow, in which they will spend two days a week on the upper body and two days a week on the lower body. This will include three sets of eight reps for each exercise, starting with a weight he/she can handle eight times. Then the athletes will progress in weight once they are able to complete three sets of eight reps at that weight.

Phase two begins the first week in September and runs through October. In this phase the athlete will decrease the weight and number of sets and increase the reps (2 x 15). The

weight should be 60-80% of the ending weight for each exercise in the strength development phase, depending on the exercise and the athlete's ability. The number of reps (15) is more important in this phase than the amount of weight. This will be done two days a week with the third day being a circuit training day.

The circuit training routine will consist of twelve stations with each station concentrating on either the upper body, stomach, lower body or the overall body. Ten reps will be completed at each station with each station being twenty yards apart. The athlete will utilize one of the following drills to advance to the next station; run, retro run, heel kicks, high knees, bounding or cross steps.

Once an athlete completes a circuit, he/she will run 800 meters and, upon completion of the run, will then proceed directly to station number one and start the circuit again. The purpose of the circuit training is to enable the athletes to handle their own bodies in a continued state of minimum fatigue; thus allowing them to work through the muscular lactic-acid build-up.

The **final phase**, in November, takes the athletes through to the National Championship meet. They will decrease to one day a week of weight training (2 x 15) and one day of circuit training (2 x the circuit—10 reps). This will help them to fine tune and progress into their peak.

Editorial Note: Coach Symons started both the men's and women's programs at UNF in 1983. Since 1984, both teams have qualified for the NAIA Nationals annually, placing as high as 3rd and 6th respectively. Bob will send the complete specifics of his year-round weight & circuit training program to any reader sending a SASE to him at UNF, 4567 St. Johns Bluff Rd. S., 32216.



Scavenger Hunt

by Garry Weston, Liberty High School, Colorado Springs, CO

Materials:

- 3" x 5" notecards
- 6 to 10 colored markers

Instructions:

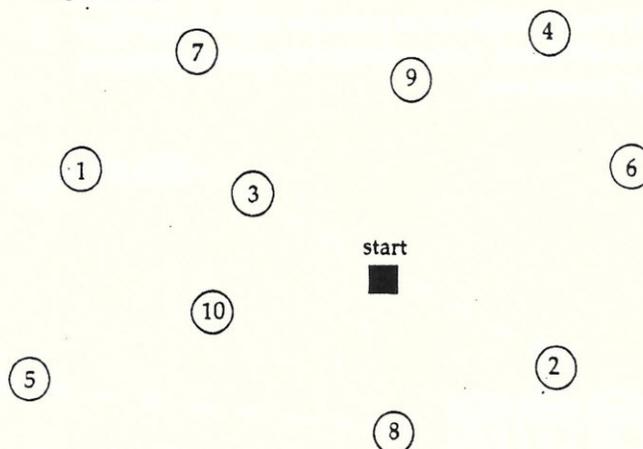
Colored markers (6 to 10) are hidden at various locations around the workout area. Each at different distances from the start. Clues as to their locations are given in the form of riddles written on 3" x 5" notecards. Teams of two are chosen.

Each person selects a card at random with a starting clue written on it. If both team members pick the same clue, one person may draw a new clue.

The game begins by having the teams use the clue cards to find the hidden markers. Each person carries with them a blank 3" x 5" card on which to mark with the colored marker they locate. At each marker location they will find a set of 3" x 5" cards with a new clue about the next location. They all contain the same clue and only one per team can be taken. When both team members have all possible colors marked on their cards and they have returned to the start the game is over, and the team with the fastest time wins.

I like to locate markers so that they have to run the longest distance possible to get to the next clue. Don't tell them that! Example: clue number one tells them how to find the location of position number two. The clue at position number three directs them to number four, etc..

Example Location:



Runners may buy another clue or additional hints for a certain time penalty such as one or two minutes. It is a game where many strategies develop. Also, the fastest runners don't always win.

Editorial Note: About a year ago, we ran an account of Weston's "Rambo Run" workout. He had many requests that asked him to share them with our readers. There will be more to come.



The Nordhoff Orienteering Run

by Ken Reeves, Head Cross Country Coach, Nordhoff H.S., Ojai, CA

The Nordhoff orienteering run is one of the biggest physical and mental challenges our cross country runners face each season. The run is physically challenging because it is one of our fastest long runs of the season. It is mentally challenging because each runner has to plot out the shortest course to reach all of the checkpoints. Still, it is one of our most enjoyable workouts because it is a game.

Maps and sign in sheets must be prepared prior to the event. Usually, we set up a beginners' course and an advanced course. The beginners' course has 5 checkpoints and if run in the shortest possible manner is somewhere between 3 and 5 miles. The advanced course usually has 10 checkpoints and the shortest route is usually above 6 miles. Each runner is given a map with the checkpoints marked on the map. They must then find the checkpoints and sign in at those checkpoints. After they have found and signed in at all of the checkpoints, the runners are then to return to the starting area as soon as possible.

All first year runners do the beginners' course. Boys and girls compete against each other, with the boys getting a one minute handicap per mile for the minimum distance of the course. Runners are sent off at staggered intervals, thus preventing runners from teaming up to gain an advantage.

On the longer course, there is also a handicap system. Sophomores are automatically given a 3 minute bonus and juniors are given a 2 minute bonus. Junior varsity boys are given an additional 30 seconds bonus for each supposed mile of the course. Varsity girls are given a minute bonus per mile

while junior varsity girls are given a minute and half bonus per supposed mile.

Experience is certainly an advantage in this activity. So is intelligence. Usually, this activity is won by the smartest runner on the team as he/she is able to plan the shortest course. Even with the great reasoning skills, most runners on the short course end up running more than 6 miles and most of the runners on the long course run up to 10 miles. Since this is a competitive activity, most of the runners push hard to do the course as quickly as possible. Therefore, a fast, lengthy workout is usually achieved and a fun awards assembly concludes the activity. In order to get all runners completed prior to the awards assembly, a time limit is put on each course and significant prizes are given to the top runners. Each year's winner is put on a perpetual trophy and therefore the activity continues to be a yearly tradition. While many of the names on the trophy are not the top competitive runners in our program, they are certainly a very valuable portion of our program.

Editorial Note: Ken Reeves has coached for over 15 years at every amateur level from youth athletics to NCAA Division I colleges. Currently, he is the Head Cross Country Coach at Nordhoff High School, Ojai, CA. Their team has placed in the top ten of CIF for eight of the last nine years. This year the boys' team finished 4th in CIF with a #8 rating the final State poll while the girls were CIF and Californial State Champions.



Rambo Run, Ohio Style

by Larry Eleo, Cross Country Coach Hudson (OH) High School

I read "Rambo Run," by Gary Weston (CO), in the May-June '88 issue of this Journal. Coach Weston uses this activity to break up traditional cross country practices and let the athletes have a break from the normal practice schedule. The more I thought about it the more interested I became in trying it with my team. Rambo run, Ohio style worked great! It accomplished several purposes:

- it broke up what started out to be a dull, bad weather practice
- it worked well with all levels of ability, and
- most important of all, it was fun!

We were stretching one day when a severe thunderstorm came in. We decided to lift weights until the storm blew over. However, since there was a tornado warning in the area, we decided to stay on campus. That's when we introduced Rambo Run.

Both teams (boys and girls) were asked to break into groups of fours and fives. Each person in each group had to be the leader for five minutes. The leaders could go anywhere they wanted: in mud puddles, up, down, and around. Anything they did, the other squad members had to follow. They slid in the mud face first, did the baseball slide and puddle jumped. You name it; they found a way to utilize water, mud and terrain.

The only rules were that there had to be continuous movement and no one would be forced to do anything against his or her better judgement.

In the end, there were fifty-three boys and girls their own parents would not recognize. They had a ball. I have never seen so much mud on runners in all my coaching days.

At the end of the workout, each squad nominated its toughest leader and then each team voted for the one boy and one girl that would be crowned Rambo and Ramoette for the day.

The team had a great deal of fun. They got a work out and, most importantly, they developed outstanding camaraderie. They are looking forward to the next bad weather day or an excuse to say "Rambo Run."

A word of warning to coaches. Don't wear white. Several of the runners could not resist hugging the coaches.

Editorial note: During the five years he has been coaching high school boys and girls, Larry Eleo has had the satisfaction of transforming a dying cross country program into one of the largest in northern Ohio. In addition, his boys and girls teams qualified for Regionals for five consecutive years and have placed high or won thier division in the McQuaid Invitational the last two years.



training, this lady performed at a level I thought unattainable when the cross country season started.

Obviously, this regimen takes an immense amount of time and dedication by the athlete and coach. Energy expenditure calculations, conversions, biking, pooling, etc. are all very time-consuming and frustrating at times. But there was nothing more rewarding than to see this young lady accept her All-State award. As a coach you have to give your young people the best opportunity to succeed.

Editorial Note: In the last five years, Jim Helton's boys and girls teams have worked hard to compete on the state level. Both teams have qualified for State two out of the last five years and the girls were in the top 10 the last two years. The boys were State Champions in 1989. He has also coached 7 Class A All-State runners.



Cross Country Flickerball

by Dale Thompson, Northwestern College, Orange City, IA

This fun workout is best described as a non-stop passing game with a football. We use the game for pre-meet practices or when we need a break in the schedule. It is just a fun way to build team unity, do a lot of running, and introduce some speed work into the cross-country routine. It is best to stretch and warm-up a few miles before you play. The emphasis is on run and fun!

The basic objectives of the game are to run around a lot and to pass the ball into your end zone. All you need is a timer, a football (intermediate size), and eight cones or boundary markers.

We usually play 3 or 4 five minute periods with a reduced field of about 40 x 80 yards with two, 10-yard end-zones. Adjust the size of the field to the number of players. Six to twelve players per team works fine with 8-10 being the optimum for involving everyone in the game.

Keep the rules simple and emphasize the fun and the running. Here are the basic rules we use:

1. Except for rule number 2, the ball may only be advanced by passing it to a teammate.

2. The player with the ball may only take one or two steps with the ball in the direction of their goal line. However, players with the ball may scramble from side to side or backwards to pass the ball, so long as they do not advance the ball past the point where they caught it.

Two players may effectively advance the ball towards their goal line by running together down the field and "flicking" the ball quickly back and forth making sure neither takes more than two steps while in possession of the ball.

3. The ball carrier must get rid of the ball quickly. Use a count of 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, when a player is closely guarded, to hustle the play along. Keep the game moving.

4. There is no contact! Roughing the passer, tackling, slapping the ball from the hands of the player, pass interference, etc. are not allowed. The players need to understand the purpose of the game is to have fun.

5. This is continuous play for the five minute period. If the team in possession drops a pass or has a pass knocked down or a pass intercepted, play starts immediately in the other direction. The faster the other team picks up the ball and starts the other way the better... for them!

6. A ball caught in the end zone scores a point. Afterwards the other team takes the ball from that goal line and begins to advance the ball down field toward their goal line as soon as possible.

7. Boundaries are only critical in the end zone. If play drifts out past a sideline, just direct the player with the ball to run sideways back into the playing area and keep the game rolling.

Co-Rec Rules:

A. On every possession, a female player must play the ball before a score can be counted, assuming each team has at least one female.

B. When a female catches the ball in the end zone, it counts as two points. -CCJ→

Editorial Note: Astute readers will remember Dale Thompson's other featured workout *Sharks and Guppies*, March/April, 1991. During his 10 years as coach his teams have won six NAIA District 15 Championships which has qualified many athletes to participate in the NAIA National Cross Country Championships held in Kenosha, WI. Coach Thompson believes running needs to be considered as a life-long endeavor.



Creative Workout

by Rich Weitzel, Los Angeles Baptist High, Los Angeles, CA

Here's a variation on the world's most popular game that will generate some fun in a fartlek-style workout. We call it aerobic soccer and here's how we do it (you can adjust to taste).

We use a large field (in one of the local parks) and four cones for goals. After two miles of running and some stretching, the teams are chosen. Both men and women play. We use two balls and play 8-10 minute halves (again, adjustable). With two balls there's always one coming your way, no one dominates, and the women get into the action. There are no goalies and play doesn't stop even after goals are made. So there is a lot of running involved, even when the ball gets away from the middle of the field.

At half-time we switch from playing north to south, which is relatively level, to playing east to west, which is on an incline. The losing team kicks downhill; the team ahead must go uphill.

We adjust the length of the field depending on the number of players and will switch players if one team is too strong. Sometimes we'll make one ball worth two points and the other only one. If there are too many players, or if the action is bypassing some people, we throw in a third ball.

Twenty minutes of aerobic soccer will net a reasonably active participant about a mile and a half of running including some good speedwork! After the game, we run as many miles as seems right for each athlete.

There are some nice advantages to this workout. Everyone gets tired without feeling that they're working (thus an ideal summer conditioner). The women can be aggressive and make an impact because of all the balls available. The regular season distance stars are not necessarily the most effective here. And it's fun—this summer a number of graduates made every Monday evening workout just to play with us and our games have always included any parents who wanted to join.

—CCJ—

Editorial Note: We want to thank Coach Weitzel once again for sharing his ideas. He and Greg Hart coach at Los Angeles Baptist High. Their girls team was third at the Calif. State Meet, Div. III, in 1989. Weitzel writes that "Hart is picked early when choosing sides for aerobic soccer, Weitzel somewhat later!"



Jim Kilbreth, Spartanburg H. S., Spartanburg, SC

I wish I were more creative with my workouts. We just do not do very many "fun workouts or games!"

Randy Marks, Verona High School, Verona, WI

Whether designed as a fun workout or a serious workout, each one should have a specific purpose. It is the coach's job to see that the runners do not stray from the designated purpose of the workout. Coach control is imperative. Purposeful, fun workouts can be seeded throughout the season when the coach feels that the athletes need a mental break.

Jim Marshall, Jefferson City H.S., Jefferson City, MO

Ninety percent of what we do is "serious work." I try to maintain their interest by using a variety of workout sites. We have access to a bus after school and rarely run at one site more than once or twice a month. I schedule the sites based on the type of course we will be racing that week. So our workouts simulate the course to be run that week. But at the same time, we keep in mind our need to prepare for our very hilly course at State.

Variety really helps in regard to interest. Once every three weeks we use a mid-week fun workout when the kids need a break. But even if the workout is minimal, we still get in some good speed work.

Cary Nerelli, Moro Bay High School, Moro Bay, CA

To be honest, we don't spend many days doing fun workouts or games. We do try to convince the kids that the meets are the "games" and we try to instill the attitude that all the workouts are fun: some are just harder than others. We keep a pretty good sense of humor on tap at all times, but when it comes time to get to work, we focus on what needs to be done.

Denny Ranta, Plainview High School, Plainview, MN

We try to have a "lighter side" in every workout. It varies with the weather, and our schedule, and the attitude of our athletes. We listen closely to them. If there is an indication that they are sore or stagnant, we put an

element of fun into the practice. However, we include "games" also to keep their level of intensity. We use soccer (modified), kickball, relays, and sand volleyball.

We change the scenery often, and this seems to help maintain the element of interest. We like to run in parks, on cross country ski trails, and alongside rivers. When we see natural intruders such as deer, we stop momentarily and enjoy them. Our hill runs are always in wooded areas, and we vary them in many ways to make them not feel like work, even though it really is.

Dale Shepard, Parkway West H. S., Ellisville, MO

The serious work begins with day one. However, we try to do different things to help the kids maintain an interest.

- We vary the workouts throughout the season, very seldom repeating a workout, exactly.
- We do have games that are, in actuality, workouts; the kids work hard without realizing it until the practice is completed. They really look forward to them each year.
- We try to have a joke every day.
- We will occasionally go to the pool and workout in the water.

Rod White, Centralia High School, Centralia, IL

We try to have fun work-outs and games, maintaining serious work at the same time. For example, one of our hardest work-outs, is "Kit Kat Relays" in which each member of the winning team receives a Kit Kat. This 12-mile relay is one of our most fun and competitive work-outs, done just before we start peaking toward the Regional, Sectional and State Meets. Each of 4 varsity members run three 1-mile segments, 6 junior varsity members each run 2 miles, and twelve girls run 1 mile each with some handicaps. This is just an example of hard, serious, competitive work mixed with great enthusiasm and fun.

—CCJ—

Peaking in the Water? You Bet!

by Ken Reeves, Head Cross Country Coach, Nordhoff H.S., Ojai, CA

All coaches want their athletes to peak at the end of the season. Whether it be at league finals, sectionals, state or nationals, the goal is to finish the season at the highest possible point. For years, all of us have been searching for that extra special edge to allow for maximum performance. Last year, our end-of-the-season edge was provided by water tapering.

Throughout the season, we used the hard-easy principle of training. Occasionally, we used water training as one of the hard or easy workouts. Water running is a learned skill and takes practice to do it effectively. The first few times we attempted it, the results would have been great on America's Funniest Home Videos. However, by the end of the season, we had pretty well mastered the skill and had the feeling we could achieve a great workout in the pool. During the last three weeks of the season, we used water training to reach the ultimate peak.

Our purposes for using water training at the end were many. First of all, it added more variety to our training. Secondly, during an usually hot November, it kept our bodies extremely cool and provided a short, refreshing workout in an well-controlled environment, thus preventing the "runoholics" from overdoing it. And finally, it was just plain fun!

The method was simple. The first week (our prelims) we did one of our fast days in the pool. Instead of running 6 x 400 meters on the track or grass, we did 6 x 95 seconds surges in the pool. The warm up (in the pool) was the same as our normal running warm up, as was the warm down. The only minor change was to increase the amount of time spent stretching (especially the calf muscles) after our workout. The time period between each repeat was the same as if we were running the repeats.

The second week (our sectional finals), we did our recovery days in the pool. In the past, we did a 40 to 50 minute run on our easy days. Instead, we hopped

in the pool and ran for 40 minutes in the water. The runners put on old shoes, water ski vests and ran for 40 minutes in the deep end of the pool. Having both the boys and the girls on the pool at the same time occasionally lead to a few dunkings during these recovery days, but the brief trips under water were enjoyed by everyone.

The last week prior to our state finals, all of our land and water workouts were cut even more. On Tuesday and Thursday we spent 30 minutes running in the water. Occasional one-minute surges were thrown in the middle of the workout to allow for a quicker leg turnover. The coach could easily observe the workout and prevent those mileage freaks from trying to "catch up" during the last week of the season.

Because it was different and refreshing, the runners looked forward to the pool workouts and appreciated the change of scenery (we used two different pools for our workouts because the water temperature dropped a little too low in one of the pools).

The greatest benefit was that all of the runners felt like their legs were fresher. As a result of feeling fresher, they certainly ran faster. Thirteen of our fourteen runners at the State meet ran their fastest times of the season. Water peaking certainly helped take our team to the top.

CCJ

Editorial Note: Most subscribers will remember Coach Reeves' previous CCJ articles, on special workouts: "Orienteering Run" in the March/April '91 issue and "Halloween Run" in Sept/Oct '91. His success with coaching continues also. Last fall, both his boys and his girls teams at Nordhoff won their races at the California State Meet. That meet is held in four divisions. Nordhoff competes in Division IV, containing the smallest schools.



stage consist of a series of 100-meter dashes where each runner must hit his goal on each one. As soon as a runner fails to make his goal, he is finished for the day.

Each stage of the PAAVO program must be mastered before a runner can proceed to the next stage. Because of this, the PAAVO system involves an individualized training program for each runner. The coach must be well organized to operate this system effectively. I require that all runners purchase a watch to time themselves during the workouts. I divide runners into ability groups. The only time I use a stop watch is when I am helping with the pulse check.

The PAAVO system has worked well for me. I feel that it has elevated me in knowledge, coaching ability, and general understanding of cross country. This program allows me to determine the daily workouts for the whole season before the first practice. Also, the PAAVO system teaches the runners why they are doing each workout and what it is doing to their bodies. When the runners know why they are doing a certain workout, they work harder and are more enthusiastic.

Our success with the PAAVO system has led to an improvement in the attitude and motivation of the runners. Now they say, "What do we get to do today in practice?" Also, these kids have adopted a philosophy that states, "If it is too HOT (COLD, WET, HUMID, SNOWY, whatever) for them, then it's just right for us!"

—CCJ—

Editorial Note: We want to thank Coach David Juhlin, Winfield, KS, for calling and urging us to publish an article on the PAAVO program. It had worked well for Juhlin and his friend Bob Karr at Emporia, KS, but he thought Coach Geniec would be better qualified to write this article. For more information on the PAAVO Distance Running Clinics, contact Marshall Sellers, 801 Trout Creek Rd., Bristol, IN 46507 or (219) 848-7141.



they are extreme), but it requires its own down time every day. The amount varies from one person to another, but most athletes need at least eight to ten hours of sleep each night.

Generally speaking, the younger the athlete, the more rest is needed. An athlete must learn to be "tuned in" to his or her body; it tells when it needs more rest and when it has had enough. The body runs on rest, just as it runs on fuel. If it has too little rest, it begins to run poorly.

These three cornerstones are critical to any training plan. If athletes train consistently at a moderate level while getting enough rest, their performances should continue to improve for years. The principles of training are built around these cornerstones.

Editorial Note: William Freeman has appeared frequently on these pages as well as in numerous other periodicals and books, including the one he co-authored with Coach Bowerman, from which this article was excerpted (*High Performance Training for Track and Field*, Second Edition, Leisure Press). Bill Bowerman will be recognized as the famous former coach at the Univ. of Oregon. We wish to thank Editor George Dales (of Western Michigan Univ.) for his permission to reprint this article from the Summer 1992 issue of his *Track & Field Quarterly Review*: 1705 Evanston Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

Coaches Most Useful Hard-Day Workouts

by the Cross Country Journal Panel of Experienced Coaches

Anyone who has been associated with the sport of cross country very long realizes that most successful programs involve many activities that most athletes would find very enjoyable.

One reason for this is the fact that much of the preparation for the sport involves very hard work. In fact, since the current wisdom recommends a pattern of alternate hard and easy days, approximately half the days involve either a hard workout or a race.

So, in more than one sense, the hard-day workouts are the guts of a good program. With this in mind, we gave our panel of experienced coaches the following task. Describe the hard-day workout you and your athletes find most useful.

Again this year our panel is outstanding. On the average, they have over 16 years of experience coaching cross country and approximately two state or national championships a piece. The majority coach both males and females and most coach presently at the high school level. Herewith, we have selected the best and most representative responses.

David Anderson, Ruston H.S., Ruston LA

We run a "Ladder" on the cross country course consisting of 400's, 800's, and 1200's. All parts of the course are covered and the portions are covered at paces slower than race pace, at race pace, and faster than race pace. The athletes then have a sense of racing the course and confidence that they can carry a certain pace over the terrain.

Jeff Arbogast, Bingham H.S., South Jordan UT

Our intensive days combine speed and resistance much like that found in many racing situations. Our best workout requires travel to a nearby canyon where we run 0.86-mile repeats around an alpine loop at altitude. The number of repeats is flex-



ible, but we attempt to provide enough rest to keep intensity levels from dropping. The loop has uphill and downhill sections, so we select certain portions of each repeat to accent. This workout is used as a strength-builder, but may be altered to stress (a) speed on a gradual downhill or (b) hill-attacking on the more difficult section. A warm-up and cool-down are done through the surrounding forested area.

Graeme Badger, Air Force Acad., Green Mtn. Falls CO

We do 6 x 1500 m. (or 6 x 1 mile) on 8 minute intervals: i.e., a run and a rest in 8 minutes.

Orville Hess, Campbell County H.S., Gillette WY

Probably our most useful hard-day workout is 20 x 400 m. in the park at below race pace. It makes the kids mentally tough and is a great conditioner.

Mike Holloway, Buchholz H.S., Gainesville FL

Our most useful workout is probably the one we call "race-pace runs." It consists of quarter-to-half-mile runs with short rests in between (usually 60 seconds). The total distance covered by these runs is 3 miles. The speed of the runs is individualized at 20 seconds per mile faster than race pace. For example, if an athlete expects to race 3 miles in 15:00, he would run this workout's quarter-miles in 70 seconds (or half-miles in 2:20). The object is to make the 15:00 pace a comfort zone.

Jim Kilbreth, Spartanburg H.S., Spartanburg SC

For some reason, a really simple hard-day workout has helped our team. Running six to eight 800's, with three minute rests, really helps our squad. The pace of the workout is gradually increased as the end of the season

approaches. I have no scientific reason for using it, other than our runners responding so well to it.

Randy Marks, Verona H. S., Verona WI

Warm up with a run of 4000 meters. Run 8 min. at 15-20 seconds per

The Principles of Training

by William K. Bowerman, former coach, Univ. of Oregon, and William H. Freeman, writer

Training is based on a set of principles: fact-based beliefs that are followed in deciding how the athlete's training should be carried out. These basic principles set the tone for the whole program. Developed over a period of years, each principle plays an important part in helping to plan an effective program. No set of principles is sacred, but the following discussion covers the principles adhered to in the Oregon System.

Principle 1: Each Person Is an Individual

The entire training program is built on this principle. Even though all people have common structural and physiological characteristics, each has his or her own particular talents, strengths, and weaknesses. In planning the program, take advantage of and develop the strengths, even as you strive to strengthen the weak areas.

The program should meet the athlete's specific, personal needs. For this reason, never simply copy another person's training. The strengths and needs may not be the same. What is good for one person may not be appropriate for others. Therefore, find what makes that person's program successful, then decide whether such factors might work well within your own program.

Principle 2: Set Reasonable (but Challenging) Goals

To get anywhere, you must know where you are going. Goals should be a challenge, for life is a process of rising to meet challenges. At the same time, goals need to be reasonably attainable. An athlete's goals should be based on what the athlete can do now or has done recently.

If an athlete's best mile was run in five minutes, a goal of 4:00 or even 4:30 is not reasonable. A goal of 4:50 is still a challenge, but it is one that a good training program may deliver. A person moves by steps, not by leaps. The purpose of setting reasonable goals is to help lead the athlete in a gradual progression toward larger goals. We need goals that challenge the athlete but are not discouraging because they are too extreme.

Principle 3: Have a Master Plan

Every athlete needs a master plan. The plan sets goals and shows how the athlete will progress toward them. A master plan looks at the total picture and takes the long view. For a young or beginning athlete, the plan may simply be for a season or a year. For a

more experienced athlete, the plan should set broad goals for several years. Where does the athlete want to be next year and the year after that? A master plan is the competitive road map; it shows where the athlete is going and how to get there.

Principle 4: Base the Plan on Specific Abilities

For an athlete to be better in any sport, the physical traits that are specific to that sport must be developed. One of the components of a good, periodized training program is the development of a model of the sport. Coaches and scientists try to determine what measurable physiological and psychological traits are found in elite performances in that sport.

"No set of principles is sacred, but this discussion covers the principles adhered to in the Oregon System."

Training is planned to develop those traits. The model is improved each year, and the training plan is modified to conform to the performance model. For example, if the anaerobic component is extremely important to success in a sport, the plan should emphasize training of that type. The athlete should be trained very specifically for the sport.

Principle 5: Be Flexible in the Plan

We cannot control nature, nor can a training plan result in a perfect progression mapped across a sheet of graph paper. The master plan must be flexible enough that it can be adapted to changing conditions or needs. Unusual weather may affect training or force a temporary change in the training site. The master plan must be able to meet changing circumstances, just as the athlete must prepare for changing situations in competition.

Principle 6: Develop Good Mechanics

Good performance mechanics should be developed early in an athlete's career. For an athlete, good mechanics means easier, more effective training and competing. The time spent in perfecting the performance mechanics will be repaid again and again in competition. A noticeable characteristic of the world-class athlete is a high level of technical skill.

Principle 7: Variety is the Spice of Life

The good training plan uses a variety of methods. The more predictable the training program is, the duller it will be. This trait leads to staleness in the athlete because it lessens the challenge of training. The development of the Oregon System was eclectic, taking its methods from several different systems. The more variety a training program has, the more chal-

Pre-Meet Workout

by Forrest ("4e") Flaagan, Head Coach, Rapid City (SD) Stevens H.S.

The warm-up should start upon getting off the bus: walk around, stretch gently, jog a very easy 800 meters, stretch a bit more, walk around, jog another 800 meters, and finish off with another gentle stretching session. The purpose of this part of the routine is to work out any stiffness from being cramped up in the bus during the trip and to wake up to the competition.

Another important aspect of a pre-meet workout is mental preparation for the race. Runners should go through their tactics and strategy; plan ahead for any shift in what could happen; consider the weather, competition, their own feelings. Thoughtful, yet flexible, scripts of the race will give them greater confidence.

Now, what I consider the most important (yet most ignored) part of any preparation for racing: HYDRATION! The key is to keep fluid levels at peak capacity without over-doing it. In the hours prior to the race, be sure they drink one to one-and-a-half cups of water per hour, even on cool days. This may require bringing a water bottle. Many commercial products are good to use, but water is still nature's #1. (And fluids should be replenished within 20 min. after the race.)

The real warm-up should begin approximately one hour prior to the race. The routine we use is quite similar to the one we use for our track workouts. Be sure the stretching is of a static (gentle, single motion) nature, no ballistics (jerky, bouncy motions). Since it is designed to warm and stretch the muscles, take plenty

of time with the EARLY PHASE of the warm-up: (1) 800-meter jog, (2) static stretch for five to ten minutes, (3) 800 meters with four 100-meter pickups, (4) 60-meter strides (high knee, straight knee, kick-a-butt, cross-step right, cross-step left, high knee), (5) another static stretch for five minutes.

The QUICKENING PHASE of the warm-up is designed to prepare the body for the sudden shock when the rigors of fast-paced racing is introduced. This part of the warm-up should begin about a half hour prior to the race. It consists of pick-ups done at a competitive pace: necessary to provide the oxygen to the bloodstream for the dispensation of lactic acid from the muscles. Also, it is necessary to bring the physical system into an anaerobic mode. In other words, it will get the body ready to race!

The system we follow consists of a series of pick-up sets with walk-back recoveries: (1) 2 x 40, 1 x 100, 1 x 200 at race pace, (2) 7 minutes of stretching and light jogging, (3) 2 x 40, 1 x 100 at race pace, (4) 7 minutes of stretch and light jogging, (5) 1 x 40, 1 x 60 at kick pace, (6) 5 minutes of stretching and light jogging, (7) 3 x 20 at race pace at the starting line, (8) RACE TIME.

Editorial Note: Forry (hence the "4e") Flaagan is currently having great fun being the coach of Greg Jimmerson, last fall's runner-up at the Kinney Nationals. During 8 years at Spearfish (SD) H.S., his girl's team took two state titles while his boy's teams were always in the hunt. Now, for the last 6 years, he's had similar luck at Stevens. This article first appeared in North Dakota's Cross Country Trails.



Spice Up Practice with Wacky Relays

by John Gerenscer, Cross Country Coach, Penn Manor High School, Millersville, PA

Since I first began working as a youth leader, I have realized the genuine fun and excitement of a relay race. By using imagination, coaches can incorporate this energy by fashioning workouts that not only make practice fun but also increase their runners' levels of fitness.

I have found that there are several important keys to making a relay successful.

- Create small, equal teams. This will reduce the amount of recovery time needed and will give each team a good chance to win. Note: see "Dividing Your Team", CCJ Sept./Oct. 1992.
- Create relays that combine fitness with a second activity that neutralizes fast runners and gives slower runners an important role.
- Reward the winning team with a fun prize. This can range from cheap carnival trinket toys to race T-shirts donated by local running clubs.
- Make the race a real workout. Have the kids run up a hill or around the track. However, the duration of the relay should be no longer than 15 or 20 minutes.
- Keep the relay fun and something the entire team looks forward to.

Below are some of my favorite relays.

Puzzle Relay

Object: Four teams retrieve puzzle pieces one by one; the first team to complete its puzzle wins.

Soda Cracker Relay

Object: Each team member must run a pre-determined distance, eat a 4-square soda cracker, and whistle before the next team member takes off.

Shoe Relay

Object: Each runner must find his or her shoes, put them on, tie them, and run back to the team. Find a nice soft surface and mix everyone's shoes together.

Fire Brigade Relay

Object: Each relay team tries to fill its one-gallon jug using 8-ounce mugs. In this relay, each member runs to a 5-gallon bucket, scoops out water and returns with the water to fill its jug. It is more fun to have each runner wear a fireman's hat.

Rope Relay

Object: Each relay team member brings back a length of colored yarn while the others tie the lengths together. The team, with the longest string after 15 minutes, wins.

In order for these (or any other relay race) to work, coaches must monitor them closely and use assistant coaches whenever possible. However, by using a little creativity, any coach can make practices something the runner will really talk about!

—CCJ—>

Editorial Note: John Gerenscer has coached both boys and girls cross country for four years. When he began coaching cross country at Penn Manor High School there were as few as a dozen runners, total. That has grown to over fifty. Maybe these wacky relays have had something to do with it. We're looking forward to seeing his "Summer Running Guide," currently in process.



5. What is the "cash" price of regular gas at the Gulf station at the corner of Mountain & West End Aves?
6. What is the price, including tax, for two Boston creme doughnuts and "a big one" at Dunkin Donuts?
7. How many large red triangles are there on the high school track?
8. What is the parking space number of the girl's cross country coach?
9. What is the name of the realtor at 320 East Main ?
10. Name two people working today at the Sporting Life: on the corner of Division & Main Streets?

Of all the different workouts we have done over the years, the runners seem to enjoy these the most. But then again, they seem to enjoy just about anything that ends with FOOD!

-CCJ→

Editorial Note: Ty Klock has been enjoying his 14th season at Somerville. His total of dual meet victories is now past 100, losing only to the much larger (and perennially highly ranked) Hunterdon teams. In the championship series this year, Somerville won their division of their conference meet, and their state Group II sectional. At State, they are hoping to better last year's 2nd place finish.

