

# 800 and 4x800 Racing and Tactics

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The 800

*What is the best way to run it?*

# *It Depends* - A Few Questions To Ask

- Internal Variables
  - What are you trying to accomplish in this race?
    - Win or place as highly as possible
    - Run a certain time/new PR
    - Try a new racing tactic and see how well you can execute
  - Where are you at in training?
    - Is it early in the season?
    - Did you do your offseason training?
    - Did you run a race earlier in the day?
  - What type of runner are you?
    - Speed-oriented (likely in 4x4 and may struggle running the 1600)
    - Endurance-oriented (more likely to run 1600 than open 400)
    - Balanced (can run both a decent 400 and a decent 1600)
    - Highly inexperienced (First timer)

# *It Depends* - A Few Questions To Ask

- External Variables
  - Who else is in the race?
    - The better you know your competition, the better prepared you are for what is to come in the race.
    - Are they fresh today, or did they have a race recently?
  - Are there any other variables?
    - Weather

# Which type of 800m runner are you?

- Speed-oriented

- Fast time - go out quick, utilize your speed
- Win/place high - go out quickly, create a gap that can't be closed
  - If the race goes out REALLY SLOW, utilize your speed in the kick

- Endurance-oriented

- Fast time - go out more conservatively, focus on second half
- Win/place high - make a move in the middle or hold pace that others can't

- Balanced

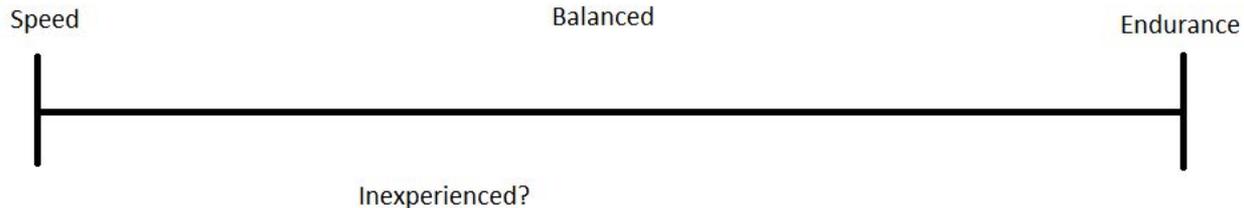
- Fast time - go out moderately quick
- Win/place high - Be close enough to leaders first half, and close well the second half

- Inexperienced

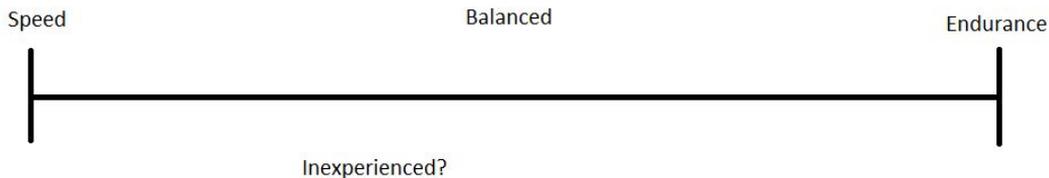
- Fast time - experiment and run a race that best plays to what you/your coach think your strengths are.
- Win/place high - estimate your strengths and have a plan based on those

# Which type of 800m runner are you?

- This is a spectrum, and you can move along the spectrum based on training.
  - To an extent. Improve your weaknesses, but play to your strengths.
- When racing to win, it's important to know where your competitors fall
  - The further to the right they are, the better the chance you can out-kick them, or create a big gap early that they can't close
  - The further to the left they are, the more likely they are to go out fast and hold on
    - If the race goes out really slow though, they may have a good kick
  - The more balanced you are, the further you can extend to either type of race and still be successful.



# Splits for a PR Race



- Ideal difference between your 400 splits is *about 2 seconds*.
  - Example: if goal is 2:00, go through in about 59 and close in about a 61.
  - However, the further to the left you are, the faster you can handle going through.
  - The further to the right you are, the better you should be at the second half
    - Speed-oriented may be closer to 3 seconds
    - Endurance oriented may be less than 2 seconds
  - General rule of thumb is about 90-93% of your 400 PR pace
    - Endurance-oriented should be closer to 90%; speed-oriented closer to 93%
    - This should be used as a guideline, there are exceptions to the rule

# Splits for a PR Race

- Ideal 200 splits *for a PR race*
  - When going for a fast time, your first 200 should be your fastest.
    - Your first 5-7 seconds are “free energy.” Going out hard in this part will not produce any additional fatigue or acidity. (Why? Creatine Phosphate)
  - 2nd 200 should be 1-2 seconds slower.
  - 3rd 200 should be about the same as 2nd, or a little slower
  - Most of the time, your 4th 200 will be your slowest, even if it feels the hardest/fastest
    - This doesn't mean you shouldn't kick. It should still feel like you picked up the pace
    - If it isn't your slowest, you can definitely go faster than what you just ran
  - It's very hard to pick the pace back up after you've settled the pace, so if you're going for the fastest time possible, don't let up. Just focus on running smoothly and efficiently.

A website that outlines much of this well is: <http://trackstarusa.com/how-to-run-the-800m/>

# Moves in Races

- The more you race, the more comfortable you will get in executing moves and listening to your body
  - Everyone is different and responds to moves in races differently
- Is it better to continue at your current pace and pass someone on the curve, or slow down and wait until the straightaway to pass?
- Is it better to make an all out move from a long distance out (300m+), or make gradual accelerations and keep building momentum?
- At the end of a race is it better to pass someone slowly, or blow by them?
- Don't save anything for the final 200 or final 100, but KNOW that you will begin moving up/kicking at some point. For me, it was 200m.

# Three Very Different D2 All-American 800m Runners

- Drew Windle, 1:46.52 800, all-time D2 record holder indoors
  - 3:44 1500 (4:02 mile equivalent), 47.83 open 400m runner.
  - 6x NCAA Champ in the 800m, 15x All-American (6x in 800, 3x in DMR, 6x in 4x4)
- Dillon Webster, 1:49.17 800
  - 4:30 1500 (4:50 mile equivalent), 48.05 open 400
  - NCAA Runner-up in 2014, 8x All-American (3x in 800, 1x in DMR, 4x in 4x4)
- Jeremy Wilk, 1:49.36 800
  - 3:50 1500 (4:08 mile equivalent), 49.85 4x4 split one time, 50.x open 400
  - 2x All-American (1x in 800, 1x in DMR)

2:40



0:30



Recap

The 4x800

# 4x800 Tactics

- Beat as many people as you can
- Similar tactics apply to open 800
- One difference is that you can take more chances, but be reasonable
  - People frequently run big PR's in relays because they don't overthink it and just go catch people
  - However, if you went out too fast, you have to live with it. Think of it as you being ahead of where you would normally be at that point in the race. DO NOT feel sorry for yourself and give up before you finish/hand off the baton.
    - Focus on running efficiently and don't fight it when you tighten up. Run smooth and don't grit every muscle in your face to show that you're trying your hardest.
- Do your research and know who you're racing against.
  - If you're a 2:00 guy who gets the baton 30m behind a 1:53 guy who always goes out fast, don't catch him in the first 100m.

# Important Things to Remember

- Running is one of the most mental sports there is
  - Believe in your training and be confident in your racing abilities
  - If you don't believe you can beat people or win, you won't
    - Don't just believe, KNOW.
- Train the way that you want to race
  - If you want to have a good kick, train your body to have a good kick
    - Don't go out way too hard in repetitions and die the second half of the rep
    - Focus on closing the rep well and accelerating through the line
- Just go out and compete.
  - Your best races will be the ones where you focus your attention on beating the person in front of you. If you win every race you run, the times will come and you will be successful.

# Shameless Promotion

- If you are looking to run in college and are interested in finding out more about Division II Northwood University in Michigan, please check out our booth or email me at [wilkj@northwood.edu](mailto:wilkj@northwood.edu) or call me at 989.837.4380.

Questions?