



# Maximizing Your Return on Training

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# Some Potential Limitations

- Limited time available
  - Practice time
  - Individual attention with each student-athlete
- Scheduling of workouts
  - Number of available workout days
  - Sometimes 1-3 races per week
- Limited training capacity of athletes
  - Work capacity of each athlete is different
- Limited level of focus from athletes
- Any others?



# How Do We Combat These?

- We work smarter, not harder.
  - Can't always have the team do everything "by the book"
    - My background is Jack Daniels training, but I don't strictly follow *Daniels' Running Formula*.
  - Focus on what each runner is getting out of the workout, not what the actual workout is
    - Every runner is different, especially distance vs. mid-distance runners
    - Different runners get more out of different types of workouts, so stick to ones that they can be successful at
  - Improve their weaknesses, but cater to their strengths.
    - Examples: improving aerobic capabilities of a middle-distance runner or speed capabilities of a true distance runner
  - Develop the mental side of running as much as the physical side.
    - Possibly the most underutilized aspect of distance/mid-distance training.



# Some Ways to Manipulate Workouts

- Pace
  - Obviously increase or decrease, but also paces within each repetition (gear changes)
    - Gear change work isn't as important until they can keep up for the first 90% of the race though
- Repetition distance
- Recovery
  - Jog
  - Walking/Standing
  - Mixed
- Total Workout Volume (5 x 800m = 4000m of volume)
- Running Environment
  - Footing (track, grass, asphalt, dirt, etc.)
  - Incline/Decline (Hills - repeats or undulating)
  - Weather (temperature, wind, precipitation)
  - Playing music or running in silence
    - Upbeat music usually increases focus throughout the workout
    - Silence can make it harder for them to find their own energy



# Basic Training Intensities

- Mileage
  - Continuous pace with minimal (preferably zero) breaks/stops
  - Best to start off slower and progress rather than start fast and slow down; they'll get more out of it
  - Important to develop strong base of mileage early (summer and winter training in particular)
- Absolute speed
  - Many distance runners (high school or college) don't actually practice truly sprinting
  - What is absolute speed?
    - Can only be held for 10-40m
    - So including acceleration, go no longer than 60-80m when attempting to improve absolute speed; after that point, you decelerate and are working on speed endurance
    - Full recovery
- Develop both ends of the spectrum (endurance via mileage and absolute speed via short sprints)
  - Then progress to more race specific training to sharpen



# Workout Training Intensities

- **Threshold training:**
  - Effort: Relatively easy. Should feel controlled, especially in beginning. More of a grinding pain.
  - Longer bouts: tempos, longer fartleks, split tempos, cruise intervals
  - Recovery of 1:3 for cruise intervals down to 1:5 or 1:6 on split tempos
- **Interval (VO2) training:**
  - Effort: Intermediate. Between 3k-5k race effort.
  - Intermediate bouts: up to 5 minutes in duration. Ranging from 0.5:1 up to over 1:1 recovery
- **Economy repetition training:**
  - Effort: Relatively high. Mile race effort.
  - Shorter bouts: up to about 2 minutes in duration. Ranging from 1.5:1 up to over 2.5:1 recovery
- **Fast repetition training:**
  - Effort: High. 800m race effort.
  - Very short bouts: Up to 600m with very experienced athletes. Usually less than 400m.
  - Recovery: 3:1 or even above 5:1 or 6:1. When in doubt, give more recovery to ensure good quality.



# Energy System Training

- Notice how all of those mentioned “effort”
  - Effort on your given workout day will likely be different than on race day
    - Wearing spikes, adrenaline for race, competition, backing off (pre-meet) vs. training through
- Assign paces based on current fitness and what they could actually do if they raced *that day*
- When writing workouts for a 5:00 miler, I don’t usually have them do all of their repetition work at 75 second/400 pace.
  - Some things I adjust for:
    - ~240m track (sharper turns)
    - They likely had a double (two-a-day) the day before, so not fresh for it
    - Wearing trainers/flats instead of spikes
    - Running alone vs. competition/running in a group
  - This helps ensure that they don’t go too hard, but also allows them to walk away from the workout feeling good about it and being able to hit paces.
- Don’t train at race pace before they have actually raced at that pace. Race pace in a workout is harder than that pace will feel in a race.



# What They Actually Get From The Workout

- Focus not on each rep's total time, but *how they run it*, and the trend during the workout.
  - The way we practice is the way we race
  - In general, when freshmen or mid-distance runners do long tempos, how does the pace usually look throughout?
    - So what are they getting out of it? (Both physically and mentally)
    - They get the most out of it when they're mentally engaged and **not** "running backward"
    - If they are struggling through the entire second half of the tempo, they're practicing grinding through pain and running slowly.
      - In my opinion, it's better to manipulate the workout, so that they can maintain a *relatively even* pace throughout, or even close harder
    - So did they practice running fast, or did they practice running slow when tired?
- What do they walk away from the workout thinking?





# Feeling Good on Race Day (At Least the Important Races)

- Stepping up on race day
  - Confident
  - Healthy
  - Relatively fit
- “Headcases” vs. “Gamers”
  - We strive to have a team of those who always step up to the plate for races, so we need to do what we can to help them do that
  - Many runners have issues being confident about fitness since you never “race before your race”
    - So it’s important to have them walk away from workouts feeling confident
- I typically have the team “train through” the first part of the competition season, meaning that we don’t significantly back off for races during that period.
  - They may not feel as good during those, but allows me to back off more later in the year when races are more important (championship season or when they’ve reached peak fitness.)
    - Resulted in 21 lifetime PR’s (from 9 student-athletes) over the final 3 weeks of the season
    - Everyone equaled or improved on their conference ranking at conference championship.



Questions?



# Contact Information

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