

MOTIVATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL METHODS USED BY  
HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY COACHES

by

John Day Harshbarger

B.S., Northwestern State College, 1957

42-6074

---

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Physical Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1972

Approved:

  
Major Professor

LD  
2668  
RH  
1972  
H368  
c.2  
Docu-  
ment.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WISH TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO DELOSS DODDS, TRACK COACH, KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, FOR HIS IDEAS AND OPINIONS AND TO MY WIFE, GWEN, FOR THE MANY HOURS OF TYPING SHE DID TOWARD THE COMPLETION OF THIS PAPER.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Why Motivate For Cross Country? .....	1
Two Seasons To Motivate .....	2
II. PURPOSE OF PAPER .....	2
III. METHODS OF STUDY.....	2
Practical Application .....	2
Sources of Methods and Procedures .....	3
IV. DISCUSSION .....	3
Motivational Procedures .....	3
Motivation During the Season .....	3
Coaches Must Dedicate Themselves .....	4
Training System .....	4
Stress .....	4
Overdistance .....	5
Interval Training .....	5
Repetition .....	6
Sprint .....	6
Types of Motivation Used In-Season .....	6
Flag Race .....	6
Indian File Race .....	6
Handicap Race .....	7
Cross Country Golf .....	7
Town to Town Races .....	8
Distance Running Monopoly .....	8

	PAGE
English Day Workout .....	9
Wash Day .....	9
Colored Shirts .....	10
Orange Run .....	10
Video-Tape Meets .....	10
Family Gathering .....	11
Publicity .....	11
School Assemblies .....	12
Newsletters .....	12
Cross Country Record Board .....	12
Record Book .....	13
Victory Run .....	13
Audio-Visual Aids .....	13
A Belt For Training Runners .....	14
Football Race .....	14
Win Cards .....	15
Picnic Workouts .....	15
Advertise .....	16
Pacemaker .....	16
Choosing Captains .....	16
Lettering System .....	17
Running The Hills .....	18
Speaker Before Race .....	19
Motivation Out of Season .....	19
1000 Mile Club .....	19
Photograph Display .....	21

	PAGE
Letter to Parents .....	22
Goodwill Ambassador .....	22
Map of Mileage .....	23
Circuit Training .....	23
Randon Thoughts on Distance Running .....	25
Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner .....	25
Why Men Run .....	26
V. SUMMARY .....	26
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	29

## INTRODUCTION

Successful distance running requires a great deal of hard work and sacrifice on the part of the athlete. Running mile after mile, day after day can become very monotonous.

Distance coaches know that a great deal of variety must be incorporated into the runner's workouts. Only then will monotony and boredom be curtailed.

Just what can a coach do to bring about this variety that is so necessary for successful distance running? The answer may be found through the use of various gimmicks and drills.

The most successful cross country coaches know that to get high school and college boys to run from 2.0 to 6.0 miles consistently faster than their opposition they must avail themselves of all the thought and ingenuity they can muster. This means using gimmicks and gadgets of a motivational nature.<sup>(1)</sup>

The high school cross country coach is continually confronted with the task of motivating boys to participate. The coach must also be concerned with ways of building additional interest in boys who are already participating

The motivation of cross country runners is not an easy task. It requires endless hours of organization and ingenuity. The coaching of distance runners can be one of the most rewarding of coaching assignments. If from the endless hours of motivating young men to participate, a coach can develop a few great ones along the way and many more who will testify to the help received from these programs, then the task has been well worth the effort.

---

(1) Scholastic Coach, "Cross Country Gadgets and Gimmicks", Bruce L. Waha and Robert A. Briner, Detroit, Michigan: Vol. 33 - No. 7, 1964, p. 38.

Over the years, coaches have developed some motivational devices which have proved beneficial. Most of these will prove valuable regardless of the size of the school. These will be dealt with under two headings: 1) Motivation during the season, and 2) Motivation in the off season. It should be noted that in some cases certain of these devices are used both during the season and out of season.

#### PURPOSE OF PAPER

This paper was written to discover different methods of motivating cross country runners in their training procedures in order to promote and develop a program of dedication in distance running. Enthusiasm is essential in any sport and tradition must be established in order for it to maintain a level of competition that will continue to draw the support of the competitors.

#### METHODS OF STUDY

To promote and convey new ideas one should first see what your colleagues are experiencing in the same field of endeavor. This report was written after several years of using different types of motivational devices. The research as well as the practical application of methods learned, took place at Wamego High School, Wamego, Kansas (Unified School District #320).

Wamego High School hosts the largest cross country invitational in the state of Kansas for all five classes of high schools and for the past eight years has been host to the state cross country meet. During the past five years many of these methods were suggested by coaches attending the meets.

A few of the methods used were suggested through conversation with DeLoss Dodds, Track and Cross Country Coach, Kansas State University, in Manhattan, Kansas.



Many articles in Scholastic Coach, Athletic Journal, and other informative magazines are available to coaches searching for answers to their particular problems. Books from the "Coaches' Book Club" furnished many ideas that the dedicated coach may use.

Notes taken at coaching clinics have been of great assistance in preparing this paper. Many methods were rejected because of either a lack of time or facilities.

### DISCUSSION

Are work and fun compatible in cross country and distance running? The layman who reads about the 100 miles of running performed each week by the outstanding distance runners may wonder if these miles are not torturous and just plain boring.

It has been said that variety is the spice of life. Perhaps variety in the practice session is a necessary ingredient for the young runner who is attempting to make progress in cross country. Variety is also necessary for the seasoned and satisfied runner.

This paper is written primarily for the high school coach who desires to develop and maintain interest and enthusiasm in distance and cross country running. It should be kept in mind that the motivational procedures should be worked into the regular workout schedule at different intervals.

### MOTIVATION DURING THE SEASON

#### Training

What type of training is best? You must remember that these are young boys and not just bodies you are working with. High school coaches for the most part can not attempt to work high school boys the same as those in college. There are two main reasons for this. First, not as much time is

available, and second, the boys are not as mature.

In this day of coaching one must be prepared to give runners reasons for their hard work. When cross country was in its beginning, boys never questioned the coaches methods or ideas, but it is entirely different today. Only too often athletes left the program in fear of what was to come next, fear of the unknown, fear of being hurt, and fear of failure.

These fears should be attacked immediately by the coach. The coach must communicate with the athlete and provide an understanding of what training is all about, what should be done, and why it is being done. The coach must be able to explain logically and in layman's terms the physiological principles of training.<sup>(2)</sup> The coach must dedicate himself to the program and have the knowledge to be able to explain to his boys why they are doing what they are doing.

It is felt that if the boys know more about training and training procedures they will have more motivation for their regular training routine in practice.

All coaches must have a training system. The system of taking all types of workouts, (speed, strength, volume, interval, repetition, running, over-distance) and working them into a program determining what type of workout you do is essential. The workout that the coach selects should emphasize what is needed for that particular time of the season or of the year.

The stress factor in a training program is the exercise in which the runner engages during his training routines. It is a physiological law that

---

(2) Athletic Journal, "The American Techniques of Distance Running", Thomas P. Rosandich, University of Wisconsin, Lakeside, Wisconsin, February, 1969.

the body attempts to adapt to the specific stress placed upon it by changing itself in order that it might be better able to cope with this specific type of stress the next time it is imposed. But if the work load is too great, the athlete will not adapt and will go into the failing adaptation condition. The statement, "Hard work improves the organism's ability to do harder work", is usually true unless too much stress is placed on it. (3)

With the above in mind, one might assume that all high school coaches can readily adapt to their training program the four types of workouts. By acquiring more information on these basic workouts one may discover the effects on the body. The four types of workouts are:

1. Overdistance - This type of running is the basis of all running. The high school runner must strive to get this part of the program in the summer before the season starts. The runner should cover between 60 and 90 miles a week at least eight weeks before the season starts. During this period, mileage is the key factor. It is necessary to start slow and increase the number of miles progressively.

2. Interval Training - Length of the run - the distance of the run may vary between 220 and 440. Probably the best distance is a 330. Number of repetitions, of course, will depend on the shape of the individual. This period of training can readily be used if the boy reports to the coach at the beginning of the season in good physical shape. This period of time involves both interval training and maintaining mileage by overdistance running. Each interval workout would involve running 220's, 330's, and 440's at a slow pace with short intervals between each one.

---

(3) DeLoss Dodds, Coach, Kansas State University, "Conference with DeLoss Dodds, December, 1970.

3. Repetition Running - The length of the run during a repetition workout will vary between one mile and a 330. This involves both repetition and overdistance running. The number of miles run during repetition workouts would vary depending on the individual and schedule involved.

4. Sprint - The quality of the run is the most important item. The total distance run in a sprint workout not including intervals, would be around a 3/4 mile. These workouts must be of short duration and of good quality.

#### Flag Races

Flag races may be performed on a track or a golf course by individuals or groups of runners. The runner is instructed to run as far as he can in a certain time period. Sometimes 20-second flag races are effective while under other conditions a 2-minute flag race is more appropriate. The athlete runs as far as possible from a designated starting point. When the time has expired, the coach blows a whistle and a flag is placed to indicate how far the runner progressed in the time period. This can be a race of repetition to see how many times each individual can reach his flag at or below his first time. (4)

#### Indian File Race

The runners progress in a single file manner, around a predetermined course. Upon a signal the last runner must sprint to the front and set a pace that the coach has predetermined. This procedure continues until the course or time limit has been completed. It is important to have boys in groups of equal ability if possible. The plodder can spoil the effectiveness of the drill but you will find also that many of the slower runners will

---

(4) Athletic Journal, "Work and Fun in Cross Country and Distance Running", Thomas M. Woodall, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota: Vol. XLV - No. 10, 1965, p. 38.

improve if placed in the middle and slowly moved to the front. They seem to take greater pride in not slowing the other boys down and in the process they find that their performances are much better than was thought.

### Handicap Races

It has been discovered that boys, particularly the younger ones, really enjoy handicap races. The pressure is off and every boy seems to feel he has a chance to win because of gaining such a large handicap advantage. This is really great for increased morale and often it inspires them to new heights. The distance of the Wamego golf course is a mile and a quarter around the outside edge. Time charts are kept on our runners from every practice session so that each boys' time is for this distance. The slowest runner on the team may be two minutes or more behind the first runner at this distance. To create more interest the coach may reverse the order in which they finished the last time by starting the slowest runner first. Then following in sequence each one in order of the time clocked on the last race. The fastest boy will start last and if each boy runs up to his potential, don't be surprised if the whole team hits the finish line very close to each other. The runners like this type of practice and some of the slower ones will surprise one with their increase in times.<sup>(5)</sup>

### Cross Country Golf

An interesting and taxing workout may be a game of cross country golf. Score cards can be made showing the hole number, yardage, and strokes -- assigned on a time basis depending upon terrain. Runners may race against each other or individually from the tee to the edge of the green. Times

---

<sup>(5)</sup> The Long Green Line, Joe Newton and Karl Schindl, Oak Brook, Illinois: All American Publishing Co., 1969, p. 57.

are recorded and a rest interval of one to three minutes depending on the coach is observed. Referring to the score card, 62 to 64 seconds would be four strokes so if the runner reaches the green in 63 seconds he would be given four strokes for a distance of 490 yards. The strokes are totaled after nine holes and compared with par, which is usually 36 for the average nine hole golf course.

Cross country golf provided interval work at a variety of distances with a little speed and pace work.<sup>(6)</sup>

#### Town to Town Races

Many times at the conclusion of a season the boys are in good physical condition and the coach is looking for an event to complete competition for the year. This type of an event, usually followed by a squad meeting, refreshments, films, etc., adds a great deal to squad morale and enthusiasm. Running from one town to another is probable the most interesting way to conclude a cross country or distance running program. The smaller towns, with less highway and city traffic, provide ideal start and finish lines. Races are usually run along highways - facing traffic - and are from 6 to 20 miles in length depending on the development level of the runners. Small tokens or certificates can be purchased or made by the coach for all runners who complete the race.

#### Distance Running Monopoly

Various workouts are typed on 3" by 5" cards. After a good long warm-up the runners assemble and each participant is allowed to draw a card from the pack.

---

(6) Woodall, op. cit., p. 39.

All cards are held face down and each runner knows only his workout for that day. The fun really begins when the runners start their workouts, trying to keep from being the last one to finish while trying to figure out the workouts of the other runners.

#### English Day Workout

A practical drill to decrease training monotony is the English Day Workout. The name derives from the training tradition of Roger Bannister, the first man to break the 4-minute mile. Following the Bannister tradition, the distance runners are allowed to select their own workout once or twice a month. Each one is encouraged to set up his own workout for that particular day. A few of the runners may be running long distance, others may be running repetitions, and a third group may be doing interval 220's on the track. The purpose of the drill is to move away from the regimented workouts set up by the coach.<sup>(7)</sup>

#### Wash Day

Anytime that you are close to a sandy river and when the water is low large spaces of sand will be available to run on. This provides an opportunity for a very good workout for distance running in sand. As the runners reach the point of fatigue one can let them go in the water for a short cooling off period. Wamego is fortunate to have water close and in most cases the water is shallow. After a rest period, one can have them run follow-the-leader type of workout in knee deep water against the current. This is a great workout and the runners recover very quickly in their brief

---

<sup>(7)</sup> Athletic Journal, "Use Drills to Decrease Monotony and Boredom in Distance Running", Larry W. Burgess, Mattoon, Illinois Senior High School: Vol. XLIX - No. 5, 1969, p. 28.

rest periods in the shallow water. Finish by running sprints in the sand and then let the boys play around in the water. The above gimmick is helpful to aid the coach in rounding the boys into shape and also a wonderful stimulant for the runners.

### Colored Shirts

Usually a cross country team may have several outstanding runners and then the roster drops down to runners who are more even in ability. One of the best ways to motivate your runners to excel is to designate your top ten boys by performance and award them red tee-shirts. Anyone who betters the time in a meet of a boy wearing one of these red award shirts takes it away from him until the next meet. The shirts can be awarded many times to different boys and in most cases it is an honor to wear one and be considered one of the top ten runners. Coaches will discover that even in practice runners will try to excel more against the red shirts and this is for the good of the whole squad.

### Orange Run

Have your runners draw numbers at practice. If you have 20 boys there will be 20 numbers. Before practice the coach has taken 20 oranges and marked numbers from one to twenty on each one. The oranges are placed on a predetermined course or road and the runners will run until they find the orange with the number that they have drawn. Distance for all oranges can be from 1 mile to 10 miles or more depending on what the coach wants his runners to receive in their training workout at this time. Needless to say the oranges will disappear rapidly once they have been picked up.

### Video-Tape Meets

There are numerous ways to publicize and draw interest to your boys plus



keep your runners interest at a high pitch. A very good way is to use a cross country recruiting film.<sup>(8)</sup> You can use an 8mm camera, (preferably with a zoom lens) throughout the season. Coaches now are finding the Video-tape easier and quicker to use. Boys are always eager to see themselves run and when they are going to be on film their performance is usually much better.

#### Family Gathering

At the completion of the season there is no better way to motivate your boys than by having the mothers and fathers gather at a covered dish supper and afterwards show the season on video-tape or film. Recognize runners and have something to say about each one. Present awards at this time. Tell the parents about the program and your feelings about next season and how they can help. Parents really enjoy this evening and the athletes usually have the feeling of contributing to the school and themselves more than ever.

#### Publicity

Town and school newspapers are great morale boosters to runners. Effort should be made to have each boy's name listed in the paper as stories are written during the season.

After each meet, a coach can place on a bulletin board the pictures of each boy who ran, along with his time for the meet and the team results. The school intercom can be used to announce the official results and give the boys names and times to the student body.

---

(8) Scholastic Coach, "A Cross Country Recruiting Film", Harvey Greer, Kansas City, Missouri Central High School, January, 1969.

### School Assemblies

Once or twice each school year during the season, the cross country coach should present the team to the entire student body.

Here's an opportunity to introduce the sport and the team as well. The coach or the captain introduces each of the selected team members, who should be dressed in attractive track uniforms. A brief explanation can also be made by the coach pointing out the opportunities afforded a large number of boys to participate on the varsity squad no matter what their size or experience.<sup>(9)</sup>

### Newsletters

At Wamego, it has been made a point to always have a newsletter for the cross country teams. It's the athletes' paper. Usually there are four newsletters sent out during the season. Through this letter, the coach is able to send a message into the boys' homes also. These are addressed to the boys' parents. With the use of the "ditto", the newsletter is easy enough to publish.

### Cross Country Record Board

Most schools have track record boards, but seldom does one see any mention of cross country on it. It's very easy to have the shop teacher or in some cases the custodian make a board of plywood and hang the names, times, and year of the top ten runners. This creates more interest than one might think. There has been more student body interest and team interest over this board than thought possible.

---

<sup>(9)</sup> Scholastic Coach, "Stimulating Interest in Track and Field", Brother G. Luke, West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania High School, Vol. 28 - No. 7, March, 1959.

### The Record Book

At the conclusion of every meet, most coaches post a sheet of paper showing the places and times of the runners. Since the coach is typing or writing this material anyway, why not type it on a ditto or mimeograph sheet? Keep these and compile a booklet of all meets to hand out to the boys on parents night. (10)

### Victory Run

Some coaches will disagree but many have found that this is a cross country runner's delight. It's a standing offer between coach and boys that anytime they win first place the coach will jog the 2 mile course with them as they warm-down. After the medals and trophies have been awarded it's a great time to do this. The boys get a great kick out of trying to run the poor old coach until he calls it quits before finishing the two miles. It can be a great incentive to win among the team.

### Audio-Visual Aids

Movies and still pictures are two of the greatest audio-visual aids that can possibly be used. Every boy likes to see his picture on the wall or see himself actually running a race. It's a great motivator and gives the boys some well deserved publicity.

Use an 8mm camera, (preferably with zoom lens) throughout the season. When the season ends, edit the film and splice footage into a solid 15 minute movie. During the showing of the film the coach acts as the narrator

---

(10) Scholastic Coach, "Promoting Cross Country", Norman C. Lumcan, Orange Coast, California Junior College, Vol. 30 - No. 1, September, 1960, p. 42.

and has a lot of fun describing what actually happened during the season. It's a great way to establish rapport with the parents - who are mighty important to your program.<sup>(11)</sup>

### A Belt For Training Runners

Coaches are constantly looking for something new to use. One method of training that you may like is the belt method.<sup>(12)</sup> A wide four inch canvas or web belt used by gymnasts can be used. The runner secures it low around his waist. The coach takes the rope attached to each end of the belt. Attempt to over-exaggerate the body lean and the arm and leg action of the runner. The coach controls the speed of the runner and at the same time can correct faults of the runner. A run of 30 yards can be made quite strenuous. This can be used during the first several weeks of training as a motivator and is an excellent conditioner.

### Football Race

It only has to happen once during the season, but the boys won't forget it. If you have the space available around your school and football field run a dual or triangular meet before the home football crowd and time the meet to finish about 30 minutes before kick-off time. If you don't have the space, run the whole meet on the track.

---

(11) Scholastic Coach, "A Cross Country Recruiting Film", Harvey Greer, Kansas City, Missouri Central High School, January, 1969.

(12) Scholastic Coach, "A Belt For Training Runners", Otto Plum and Ron Sevier, Hawthorne, California High School, Vol. 29 - No. 8, April, 1960, p. 28.

In one article on cross country, a coach expressed his opinion that such a race was degrading to the harrier sport. I don't agree, unless it becomes a regular thing. On the positive side, it gives the runners a great deal of recognition. Have numbers on the boys backs and have a program identifying them, either printed in the football program or on a flyer that could be folded into the football brochure.<sup>(13)</sup> Be sure to let the public know what you are planning. The results will be that most of your home football crowd will be in the stands to see the boys run.

The normal time of 3:30 or 4:00 in the afternoon does not put your runners in front of parents and the home crowd very often so this type of race is a great motivator to your boys.

#### Win Cards

Prior to every meet print approximately 500 small ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  by  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ) win cards. These are cards that on meet days are distributed to the student body, who pin them on their shirts. This both publicizes the meet and stimulates the runners.

#### Picnic Work-Outs

During the early part of the season when the weather is still quite warm involve the parents by having a picnic workout. The normal work for the boys is about two hours at this time in the season. Have some of the parents meet at the city park or other ideal spot with ice cold water-melon. Nothing will pick your runners spirits up quicker than to end a hard practice session in this manner. The parents feel that they have more to do with the runners success because of their involvement.

---

(13) Lumcan, op. cit., pg. 61.

### Advertise

One easy way to advertise is through special tee-shirts bearing the name of the school and "cross country" across the front. Boys can wear these shirts in practice and in school on meet days. It's surprising how many new candidates are attracted. The shirts provide a sense of group identification and help develop that necessary team spirit and unity.

### Pacemaker

The runners will line up in single file. Put your youngest runners in the middle. They are jogging against the clock. Start with a five minute run without stopping. Everyone keeps the same pace as the leader for the full 5 minutes. The pace is reasonably slow. Give them a two minute rest period and start with a new leader and run continuous for ten minutes. Rest two minutes and go for fifteen minutes, etc. They will take great pride in keeping together. This gives younger runners confidence also.

### Choosing Captains

There is an old truism which says that on every successful team will be found good leadership. The potential squad leader must be discovered, and should be elected captain by vote sometime prior to the seasons first meet.

There are some who disagree, saying that captains should be appointed by the coach. Their most frequent argument is that they fear the boys will make a poor choice, leaving them with a poor leader. There are probably good arguments for both sides but this can be left up to the individual coaches to decide.

The captain should be the kind of boy who will set a good example to the remainder of the squad, be a hustler who is always on time, a lad with character,

one who is devoted to his team and school, and a boy they believe in.

Responsibilities of captains vary with age levels, but at all ages a chosen leader can be a decided help. The enterprising coach will utilize the captain's leadership potential at every possible opportunity. The coach will meet with the captain often to talk over problems and give suggestions for improvement. Squad meetings called by the captain (no coach present) are extremely effective in resolving such problems as training infractions, slumps in performance, jealousy among squad members, gripes about shower and locker room facilities, and treatment of coaches, to name a few. (14)

Natural leadership is important and when the boys have a leader who they can respond to it can be a healthy situation many times during the season.

#### Lettering System

Motivation can be utilized in awarding letters. Many cross country coaches set up their lettering system on a time basis in meets. It is possible to have the weather against you in at least half or maybe more of the meets. This isn't fair to the runners unless they have a chance of lettering in every meet.

One good lettering method is the 15 point system.

Varsity - 2 points for participating in each meet

1 point for running under 11 minutes

1 point for running in top half of race

1 point for team members if team wins first place

1 point if you are first individual in race

5 points for league championship

---

(14) Athletic Journal, "Choosing and Using Captains", Dr. Don Veller, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, Vol. XLV - No. 7, March, 1965, p. 10

Jr. Varsity - 1 point for participating in each meet

1 point for running under 11:30

1 point for running in top half of race

1 point for equalling time of top half of varsity race

1 point if first individual in race

5 points for league championship

Using this system the boys always know where they are pointwise and if they letter you will have had many successful meets. This is motivation at its best.

### Running the Hills

The cross country runner must expect to work harder and expend more energy when running uphill than when he is running over a flat or a downhill surface. Although he does not go into a full sprint, the runners form must have sprinting qualities.

There is always a tendency for runners to let up some after reaching the top of a hill. Therefore, it is often a good tactical move to have a runner continue to work hard, for an additional 50 to 60 yards after reaching the hills peak, in order to build up a lead over opponents who are accustomed to letting up.

Take some time to work on this in practice. When the coach knows there are meets coming up that feature hills the boys can be mentally prepared to tackle this obstacle. Motivate the boys to the point where they won't dread to run hills. In practice, run relays uphill only and relays downhill only with the boys concentrating on the running form best for this situation.

In downhill running the most important word is relaxation. Unless the slope is extremely steep, the runner will find it less tiring to go into free



wheeling and not try to hold himself back. At the bottom of the hill, the runner coasts back into his normal running style and continues at his normal pace.

It might not show but for the coach to take time to work hard on this type of running in practice it will result in better times and the frame of mind of your runners will be that you will help prepare them for any type of race.

### Speakers Before Races

Most cross country meets are run in the afternoon resulting in a situation where parents and other followers can not be present to cheer the boys on.

One good method of preparing boys mentally just before getting off the bus to begin warm-ups is to bring to them a speaker.

Using a tape recorder a few days before the meet the coach selects some person or persons who the boys know to tape a short talk. This can be in the form of a pep talk or a short inspirational speech. Its very surprising to the boys to hear someone talk to them who they felt wasn't even interested in cross country. It can be a businessman down town or the superintendent of schools. The high school cheerleaders always like to do this. Select some faculty member who the team as a whole think are dull and you will see a strange sight from the boys when they hear this person giving them a pep talk. All the coach has to do is open the bus door and let them get on with what they have been working for.

### MOTIVATION OUT OF SEASON

#### 1000 Mile Club

The hardest thing in the world to do is to motivate your boys to run during the off season. There can be no substitute for off season running.

Of all the ideas that have been tried down through the years, the one that finally caught fire and has really kept some programs going is what coaches call the 1000 Mile Club.<sup>(15)</sup>

The basic idea of the 1000 mile club is to have the boys on the team run 1000 miles or more during the three month period from June 1 to September 1.

The running involved is the Arthur Lydiard marathon type of running. This is long endurance training. It is designed to build up a good general condition and also designed to build a great amount of stamina.

The 1000 mile club is used as a device to remove the boredom and also set a goal for the boys to shoot for. The club is based on the honor system and they record the mileage run each day to send or give to the coach on a weekly basis.

At the end of the summer or the day before the first meet the 1000 mile award shirt is presented to the qualifiers in front of the student body. The shirts are all white with "1000 Mile Club" across the front in red. Below this is an outline of the United States and an Indian jogging. This is also in red. They are turtleneck long sleeve shirts of a very light material and yet help keep the boys warm on extremely cold days.

If a boy does this for two summers, he gets a 2000 mile shirt and if he does it for three consecutive summers, he receives a 3000 mile shirt.

When the summer is over and the coach finds out how many boys have made the 1000 mile club, he really makes something big of it. It takes a

---

<sup>(15)</sup> The Long Green Line, Joe Newton and Karl Schindl, Oak Brook, Illinois: All American Publishing Co., 1969, p. 87.

really dedicated boy to do this so we want to give them the recognition they deserve. They have their pictures taken for the local newspaper and a picture is framed and hung in the school hallway.

Don't get discouraged if this doesn't go over at first. The first year there may be only two or three but if it is handled correctly it will perpetuate itself with the coaches enthusiasm and help.

One word of caution at this point may be helpful. Do not let the young freshman try to qualify for this club unless you know something about their running ability and physical well being. It is best to have them in your program for the first year and then you know them and their parents much better. You will be able to encourage and coach them through these long miles if you know more about them.

### Photograph Display

Somewhere in every school there is a display case which can be utilized for cross country photographs. We also use it to display awards that the boys receive. A student is engaged to take action photographs of the meets. We keep a current display during the season and then at the conclusion of the season a display is prepared which will remain in the case through the remainder of the school year.

This permanent display should include the following photos: action, varsity and junior varsity teams, top ten men award winners, past season captain or co-captains, and graduating seniors. The season record should also be part of the display. (16)

---

(16) Athletic Journal, "Motivating Cross Country Runners", David Fultz, Vol. XLIX - No. 1, September, 1968, p. 110.

When properly presented, these displays create a great deal of interest in the entire student body and a great deal of pride in the cross country boys.

This display can also serve a very valuable service in the junior high school. This is where your future talent comes from and it creates quite a stir among the young athletes. Coaches can never be sure just how many boys this display will draw to the team in the future but if it recruits one it will be to your advantage.

#### Letter to Parents

Immediately upon the closing of the season, a personal letter is sent to the parents of every senior boy who participated in cross country. They are complimented on the fact that their son was out for athletics and the coach generally pays tribute to the performance of their son on the squad. The parents and their son are wished the best of luck.

While these letters may be considered public relations rather than motivation, they have had a tremendous effect on the status of cross country in our community and we are sure they are bringing about greater participation.

#### Goodwill Ambassador

In the last few months before school is out one of the best methods of drawing junior high boys to the program is to present a goodwill ambassador to them. Select one representative from each class on the team. Arrange a meeting with the eighth grade class of boys at the junior high school. The junior high coaches can be of great assistance to you in arranging this meeting. The boys from the cross country team appear in front of the boys with their letter jackets complete with medals won and give short informative talks to all boys not considering football the next year.

This creates enthusiasm and great pride to the team members chosen and the coach will be surprised at the responsibility they take to endorse the program to the future runners.

The members are chosen by team vote and these young men have been invited to speak at local gatherings of business men and civic clubs. The word is spreading on what is going on in the cross country program.

### Map of Mileage

During the summer regardless of the distance the cross country boys are running the public can easily be informed of what they are doing by placing road maps in various store windows. The boys name will appear above the map. They select a major highway on the map and as they run their daily mileage it will show on the map how far they have run. The mileage is turned in to the coach at the end of each week and he in turn draws a line on each individual route with a magic marker. (Example) One boy selects Highway 99 from Wamego south to I-70 and then west on I-70. The line will show on this route until he finishes. He could end up in Colorado or Wyoming. It's a great motivator to get more mileage.

### Circuit Training

Two of the main characteristics of circuit training, the development of muscular and circulo-respiratory fitness, and the applied principle of progressive loading are common to any sound program of training for track and field and for cross country. For this reason it is felt that teams can benefit from its use in off-season programs.

After the season is over, let the boys take a rest from running for 3 to 4 weeks, then begin the off-season program.

Don't forget your boys during the off-season. The biggest motivational asset is that your boys still know that you are interested in them all the time and are continually preparing them physically for their sport and for their general well being.

An example of off-season training could be as follows:

Monday - Wednesday - Friday

1. Warm up - 30 minutes of jogging and loosening up.
2. Bench step - up and down 50 times.
3. Squat thrusts - 50 times.
4. Squats with 50 lbs. of weight - 15 times.
5. Ten push-ups.
6. Trunk curls - 50.
7. Side straddle hop - 50.
8. Weight machine - 3 exercises for upper body and 3 for lower body.
9. Complete circuit with run of 2-3 miles at set pace.

Tuesday and Thursday - running program only.

Though cross country has come a long way on the high school level, many coaches are still plagued by the lack of student interest. As a result many potentially fine runners never come out for the team.

It is believed that with a modest effort, the coach can make cross country more attractive both for the runner and for the spectator.

Life can be pumped into the sport with a program that any school can adapt to by using the motivational methods described herein.

On the other hand no program will flourish just with motivational methods. One must have a sound basis of training and motivate when needed.

## LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE RUNNER

The track squad at Wakefield High School, Arlington, Virginia, got such a boot out of the following essay that Coach Julian U. Stein felt compelled to relay it to us. Entitled "Mental Attitude in Cross Country", it was written by Bill Bernard, a former Wakefield harrier. (17)

RUNNERS TAKE YOUR MARKS . . . Relax, Bernard; you have 2 miles to go.

NOW, SET . . . Just two miles; you can run it in less than 11:30.

TO . . . Two miles! I'll never make it. I shouldn't have gone to that party last night; I didn't get home til 3:00; four hours sleep. The pace is way too fast. They can't keep this up for two miles.

$\frac{1}{2}$  MILE . . . (...:88 :89 :90). . . I should have stayed home today. I should have said I was sick or something.

$\frac{1}{2}$  MILE . . . My leg hurts; Coach should have taped it. I'll have to drop out if it gets worse. I have a terrible stitch, too.

$\frac{3}{4}$  MILE . . . I have to hurdle that chain. Maybe I'll trip and be able to quit. If I limp, maybe Coach will notice and take me out.

1 MILE . . . (5:48, 5:49). Pick it up, Bill (5:50...)

$1\frac{1}{2}$  MILE . . . Baker's passing me. Why did I ever go out for cross country? I'm no good; haven't a chance of breaking 11:30 now. Why don't I quit? I'll just walk up to Coach and tell him . . . McClinton's passing me! He can't do that! Fight him off; check out.

$1\frac{1}{2}$  MILE . . . There's the finish; don't fag now, Bernard. What does McClinton think he's doing? He's running faster! So is Jerry. I can't let him pass me up now. Pick it up, Bernard. 100 yards to go -- SPRINT, damn you, SPRINT!

2 MILES . . . (11:08, 11:09, 11:10). . . Impossible!!! Jack, bring me my sweat suit, will you please? Thanks. You know, what Coach said is right -- the deciding factor in cross country is mental attitude!

---

(17) Newman and Schindl, op. cit. p. 200.

## WHY MEN RUN

I have heard many and varied reasons for the above statement but somehow, for me, Brutus Hamilton, head coach of the University of California and the 1948 Olympic team, said it best of all:<sup>(18)</sup>

People may wonder why young men like to run distance races. What fun is it? Why all that hard, exhausting work? Where does it get you? Where's the good of it? It is one of the strange ironies of this strange life that those who work the hardest, who subject themselves to the strictest discipline, who give up certain pleasurable things in order to achieve a goal, are the happiest men. When you see 20 or 30 men line up for a distance race in some meet, don't pity them, don't feel sorry for them. Better envy them instead. You are probably looking at the 20 or 30 best "bon vivants" in the world. They are completely and joyously happy in their simple tastes, their strong and well-conditioned bodies, and with the thrill of wholesome competition before them. These are the days of their youth, when they can run without weariness; these are their buoyant, golden days, and they are running because they love it. Their lives are fuller because of this competition and their memories will be far richer. That's why men love to run. That's why men do run. There is something clean and noble about it.

## SUMMARY

Distance running requires a great deal of hard work and sacrifice on the part of the athlete. There are certain times during a runner's training period where disappointment and frustration interfere with the concentration needed to achieve success. The coach has to be prepared to meet these mental and physical problems to insure the opportunity of individual and team success throughout the season.

All of the motivational methods listed have worked for different coaches at various times. There are no magic formulas that will insure a change in

---

<sup>(18)</sup> Newton and Schindl, op. cit. p. 203.



attitudes every time different methods are used. Coaches may experiment with the different types of motivation and select various ones they feel are most beneficial and work them into the regular training program. Coaches should keep in mind that gadgets and gimmicks can be used too often and disrupt the regular training program.

It is a known fact that mental attitude plays an important role in athletic success. All types of motivation then, must play an important role in keeping mental attitudes on a healthy level. To be down mentally and then be motivated is a great feeling for anyone. Whether runners are in sand, on the hills, racing down pine-needled pathes, on golf courses, or on the track, motivation at the proper time is essential.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Larry W. Burgess, Mattoon, Illinois Senior High School, "Use Drills to Decrease Monotony and Boredom in Distance Running", Athletic Journal, January, 1969.
- DeLoss Dodds, Coach, Kansas State University, "Conference with DeLoss Dodds", December, 1970.
- David Fultz, "Motivating Cross Country Runners", Athletic Journal, September, 1968.
- Harvey Greer, Kansas City, Missouri Central High School, "A Cross Country Recruiting Film", Scholastic Coach, January, 1969.
- Brother G. Luke, West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania High School, "Stimulating Interest in Track and Field", Scholastic Coach, March, 1959.
- Norman C. Lumcan, Orange Coast California, Junior College, "Promoting Cross Country", Scholastic Coach, September, 1960.
- Joe Newton and Karl Schindl, The Long Green Line, Illinois, All-American Publishing Co., 1969.
- Otto Plum and Ron Sevier, Hawthorne, California High School, "A Belt For Training Runners", Scholastic Coach, April, 1960.
- Thomas P. Rosandich, University of Wisconsin, Parkside, Wisconsin, "The American Technique of Distance Running", Athletic Journal, February, 1969.
- Dr. Don Veller, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, "Choosing and Using Captains", Athletic Journal, March, 1965.
- Bruce L. Waha and Robert A. Briner, Michigan, "Cross Country Gadgets and Gimmicks", Scholastic Coach, March, 1964.
- Mr. Thomas Woodall, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota, "Work and Fun in Cross Country and Distance Running", Athletic Journal, June, 1965.

MOTIVATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL METHODS USED BY  
HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY COACHES

by

JOHN DAY MARSHBARGER

B.S., Northwestern State College, 1957

---

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Physical Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1972

The paper was written to discover different methods of motivating cross country runners in their training procedures. Motivation is needed in order to promote and develop a program of dedication in distance running.

Many articles in Scholastic Coach, Athletic Journal, and other informative magazines and books were used to find the most useful motivators.

Talking to numerous coaches and taking notes at several clinics provided needed information.

The paper considers in-season motivation first with the emphasis on a good training program. Included in this are the different types of training everyone needs for distance running. To have the body physically prepared is the biggest motivator for a runner.

The report covers different types of motivation needed to keep the runners mentally prepared as the season progresses. Included here are gadgets and gimmicks that are included in the regular training program to decrease monotony and boredom. If the coach feels that the runners need more speed work, then the "Flag Race" or "Cross-Country Golf" motivator may be included in the training session. These are the same old sprints at top speed, but presented in a manner that will be more fun to the runners. When finished, the runners have accomplished as much or more than they normally would have. There are motivators to cover each type of workout, whether it be overdistance, interval training, repetition, or sprints.

Other areas of motivation include publicity, related to the school, the public, the parents and to the runners. Whether this be school assemblies, record boards, family picnics, or local newspapers, all are important to a successful season.

Motivation out-of-season is very important to a successful program also. The coach must show concern for the runners during the long months of non-competition. Keeping the school and the community informed about what the

boys are doing during the off-season is covered by motivational ideas such as the 1000 mile club and the Goodwill Ambassador.

Included in the out-of-season motivations are ideas that help the runners have fun, but still create situations for hard work and concentration. All of the motivations are geared to keep the runners involved with their own program whether it be strenuous workouts or individual publicity.

The report is concluded with a few random thoughts on running and mental attitudes that show why motivation of runners or the public is sometimes a necessary ingredient.