RANDOM THOUGHTS

One of the great things about our sport is that we can measure success in many different ways, and for the most part, our success is determined by ourselves and the effort we put forth (and our genetics). But beyond picking our parents wisely, we mostly control what we accomplish. We can’t control what others are doing, or if others are more naturally gifted, but we can control how much we invest into becoming the best we can be. And that’s the true race, the true competition. That’s the only thing we can ultimately control, whether it be running, school, relationships, or careers, we just need to strive to be the best we can be. And, sometimes, it’s ok, to just enjoy something for what it is and not necessarily have to be the best. We have only so much energy and time, and so we must choose what it is we want to excel at, and apply ourselves to that goal. But we are fortunate in that our great sport, we can measure success in getting faster, placing higher, being more consistent in our training, taking care of ourselves physically and mentally, and many other things that have nothing to do with “winning” or “losing”.

Jack Fultz, who won the 1976 Boston marathon and now teaches Sports Psychology says the following: “When we emphasize simply beating others, or to win a race, you don’t necessarily have to do your best—to win a race, you simply have to do better than everyone else. That’s the way we set up our games, even our society, and I understand, but there’s a corrosive effect to pursuing the activity with that as the primary or sole objective all the time. That’s true for lots of reasons, not the least of which is that no one wins all the time, and most people don’t win much of the time. So if that’s the driving force, it can undermine the intrinsic aspect of the activity…and there is no joy left in the activity. When you look at some of the great coaches—Vince Lombardi, John Wooden, people who had dynasties—they didn’t talk that much about beating the other team per se. They talked about ideal preparation, ideal execution, and the outcome was a byproduct of playing the perfect game. Prepare yourself to the best of your ability and go out and be smart about your approach and do everything you can to make sure at the end of the game or race that you’ve left nothing out there, that you’ve given your best shot. And then the outcome is going to be what it’s going to be.”

One of the other great things about our sport is that we can measure success in many different ways, and for the most part, our success is determined by ourselves physically and mentally, and many other things that have nothing to do with “winning” or “losing”.

SPORTSMANSHIP

I want to continue to emphasize that we act in a respectful, positive, and appropriate manner when competing and traveling. There is no place in sport for destructive conflict, trash talking, fighting, and other negative behaviors. I would encourage you to check out the website, http://www.competitionnotconflict.com/ for ways in which sport can serve to help bridge gaps and build relationships and help develop each of us to be a better person and citizen. In the past couple of years, I have had the unfortunate task of having serious discussions and even disciplining students who acted inappropriately in competition or practice. It was not enjoyable in any way, and I expressed that the action did not change my opinion or how I felt about the person, but we needed to make some changes. Unfortunately, people too often take that the wrong way and feel like the coach who corrects them “has it in for them” or doesn’t like them and chooses not to continue with cross country and pursues other activities. However, I will maintain that we must resolve to maintain high standards and be known as a team of character. Teams of character will overcome, and they will gain more from the experience than even the most talented runners. Mental toughness is in part built by making mistakes, accepting correction, and overcoming.

TRAINING TIP OF THE WEEK #1

Be as active as possible. Walk, run, or bike instead of driving or riding whenever possible. Instead of sitting in the house playing video baseball or basketball, go out and actually play real baseball, basketball, or other games. Mow the lawn with a push mower. Garden. Help a local farmer put up hay. So many of our modern day injuries are a result of the fact that we sit all day, every day, let our bodies deteriorate, and then for 1 hour a day, or 3 months a year, we push them to the limit. Regular physical activity also burns calories, increases metabolism, improves cardiovascular and muscular fitness, and strengthens tendons and ligaments.

TRAINING TIP OF THE WEEK #2

I went to a clinic a year or so ago, and one of the speakers there used the phrase “Possibility Thinking” – in other words, he liked to expose his athletes to what was possible, help expand their expectations and horizons. I like to share information on other teams with you, not to diminish or discourage you, but rather to get you to think about might be possible. These other teams and runners are no different than you, have no secret advantages. Yes, you could be them. On the CD, I would encourage you to read the articles in the motivation section: A Dynasty Continues to Grow; Caldwell HS 1986; Cross town; Lambkin Girls Cross Country; Saugus HS Girls Team; The Greatest HS Team Ever; The Stotan Way; and Marietta Girls Ice Cream Run. The one thing they all have in common – they make it a point to train together whenever possible. Great teams, and great runners, are made in the summer. A coach can only do so much when August rolls around. The more you train together, support each other, in the words of Colorado coach Mark Wetmore “vibe each other”–the more critical mass we build and the more successful we can become in all ways.
TRAINING TIP OF THE WEEK #3

Running is a skill. It can be practiced and improved. It has been worked on consciously however so that when you become fatigued, you don’t start using bad habits. Unfortunately, as distance runners we too often get into the habit of shuffling along, barely picking our feet up. On your CD in the Running Technique folder are several videos of correct technique, pictures, and also videos on how to do drills to improve form. I would encourage you to take a few minutes to view the videos and the drills, and try to do the drills CORRECTLY 1-2x a week. In addition, the strides, short sprints, and hill sprints included in your summer training are critical for improving technique and stride rate. AND FINALLY, try to maintain a stride rate of about 180 strides per minute when running – to check this, every so often time how often your right foot hits the ground in 30 seconds, and then multiply by 4. Why 180? Better runners all maintain a rate of 180-185 strides per minute, regardless of how fast they are running. Slower runners usually have stride rates in the 160-170 range. The good news is, by concentrating and following the suggestions in this paragraph, you can improve stride rate. Also, by perfecting technique, you can improve 1/100th of a second per stride. Doesn't sound like much? Let's do the math - 1600m: 1,000 strides x .01 = 10 seconds improvement per 1600m = 30+ seconds for 5K.

HEALTH TIP OF THE WEEK

Too often we try to cram so much into a day that we wind up with late nights and erratic sleep schedules, and athletes don't seem to be much of an exception. Stanford sleep researcher Cheri Mah studied a group of football players on her campus and found surprising levels of daytime fatigue at the beginning of the season, even though the players thought they were getting adequate sleep. So she was curious to know: If each of them added a couple of hours of sleep per night, how might that influence their performance? The goal was to aim for 10 hours of sleep at nighttime. Throughout the season, she definitely got players sleeping more - not always the full 10 hours, but in each case a significant extension of nighttime Z's. And then she documented how these players performed on drills. In the 40 yard dash, early in the season, the average time was 4.99 seconds. But after six weeks of getting more sleep each night, they saw a drop in a tenth of a second, down to 4.89 seconds.

So, while 1/10 of a second doesn’t sound like much, if this were to hold true over a 5K race, it would equal to about 12-15 seconds. If you were to improve your form by the above techniques and get adequate sleep, that's maybe 40-45 seconds with no extra training! NOTE: I encourage adequate sleep, not sleeping in until noon every day!

In addition, the benefits of adequate sleep extend far beyond what's now being documented on athletic performance. And when it comes to teaching good sleep hygiene, it seems you can never start too young. Sleep habits seem to have a unique contribution to four-year-olds' development, and having a rule about bedtime was associated with higher scores on language and math skills. Other research has indicated that after reducing sleep for just 1 hour per night, students had significantly lower ratings for academic performance and attention during the week that they slept fewer hours.

The great Villanova coach Jumbo Elliott always told his runners to “Live like a clock!” meaning to go to bed at the same time and wake up at the same time every day. Villanova runners dominated the college distance running scene in the 70’s and 80’s.

- Develop a sleep/wake schedule – try to get to sleep and awake at the same time each day; an erratic sleep schedule causes difficulty in getting to sleep and waking up.
- Strive for 8 hours of sleep a night – average adult needs 7-9 hours; teens need 9 - 9 1/2 hours.
- Avoid daytime napping – napping disrupts the sleep schedule.
- Avoid substances with caffeine before going to bed.
- Learn to associate your bed with sleeping and relaxing – no studying, watching TV, doing work, texting, etc.
- Don’t lie in bed awake – if you can’t get to sleep within a short amount of time, get up, read or do something quiet.

NEW FEATURE

We now have a message and discussion board. You can link to it from our website, or by going to - http://excoboard.com/warrenc
You can discuss team goals, ask training questions, post your training, find people to run with, discuss ideas, and interact with alumni.

SUMMER RUN SCHEDULES

Junior High will begin meeting on Monday, June 14th, at 6:30 PM at the track. For more information or questions, contact Debbie Blevins at dblevins@ccmh.org or 740-336-2235.

Varsity began on Tuesday, June 8th at 6:30 PM at the track. The schedule is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, June 8</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, June 12</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, June 15</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, June 22</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, June 26</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, June 29</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, July 6</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, July 10</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, July 13</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At our first run we had 14 people, including 2 alumni. Welcome to our new summer runners Logan Ross, Taylor Balachowski, and Cassandra Thompson! Cassandra measured off 150 meters on the road in front of her house to do strides! I like it!

**MOUNTAIN RUN IN WEST VIRGINIA** date is changing – **DATE to TBD** – July 17th or July 31st. What works for you if you want to go???

Jr High Uniforms
Finally! New jr high uniforms were finally ordered Wednesday, June 9th. If all goes well, our junior high team will be running in style in 2010! We had just enough money in fundraising to cover the costs.

Future events
Saturday, June 26th 8 AM Meet at WHS track, car pool to Mountwood Park for a trail run.

**ACADEMICS**
The art or practice of concentration is to eliminate distraction and focus on the task at hand. If you find that you read through material and suddenly discover that you have no idea about what you've just read, or if you attend lectures and have difficulty paying attention to what is being said, these tips may help:

- Stick to a routine, efficient study schedule
- Study in a quiet environment
- For a study break, do something different from what you've been doing (e.g., walk around if you've been sitting), and in a different area
- Avoid daydreaming by asking yourself questions about the material as you study it
- Before lectures, look over the notes of the previous lecture and read the course material pertaining to the lecture so that you can anticipate the main ideas that the instructor will cover
- Show outward interest during lectures (attentive expression and posture) to self-motivate internal interest
- Resist distractions by sitting in front of the room away from disruptive classmates and by focusing on the instructor through listening and note taking

**HELPING OTHERS**

- Smile and be friendly. Sometimes a simple little thing like this can put a smile and warm feeling in someone else’s heart, and make their day a little better. They might then do the same for others.
- Call a charity to volunteer. You don’t have to go to a soup kitchen today. Just look up the number, make the call, and make an appointment to volunteer sometime in the next month. It can be whatever charity you like. Volunteering is one of the most amazing things you can do.
- Donate something you don’t use. Or a whole box of somethings. Drop them off at a charity — others can put your clutter to good use.
- Make a donation. There are lots of ways to donate to charities online, or in your local community. Instead of buying yourself a new gadget or outfit, spend that money in a more positive way.
- Teach. Take the time to teach someone a skill you know. This could be teaching your grandma to use email, teaching your brother or sister to ride a bike, or teaching a friend a valuable computer skill.
- Help someone get active. A person in your life who wants to get healthy might need a helping hand — offer to go walking or running together, to join a gym together. Once they get started, it can have profound effects.

**VIDEOS OF THE WEEK**


**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**
“Stop slacking at practice!!!! I regret not giving a 100% everyday from when I started to run xc my sophomore year. I was pretty good but I could have been great!” Justin Murphy, Warren HS 2006.

Keep your dream - author unknown
I have a friend named Monty Roberts who owns a horse ranch in San Ysidro. He has let me use his house to put on fund-raising events to raise money for youth at risk programs.
The last time I was there he introduced me by saying, “I want to tell you why I let Jack use my horse. It all goes back to a story about a young man who was the son of an itinerant horse trainer who would go from stable to stable, race track to race track, farm to farm and ranch to ranch, training horses. As a result, the boy’s high school career was continually interrupted. When he was a senior, he was asked to write a paper about what he wanted to be and do when he grew up.

“That night he wrote a seven-page paper describing his goal of someday owning a horse ranch. He wrote about his dream in great detail and he even drew a diagram of a 200-acre ranch, showing the location of all the buildings, the stables and the track. Then he drew a detailed floor plan for a 4,000-square-foot house that would sit on a 200-acre dream ranch.

“He put a great deal of his heart into the project and the next day he handed it in to his teacher. Two days later he received his paper back. On the front page was a large red F with a note that read, ‘See me after class.’

“The boy with the dream went to see the teacher after class and asked, ‘Why did I receive an F?’

“The teacher said, ‘This is an unrealistic dream for a young boy like you. You have no money. You come from an itinerant family. You have no resources. Owning a horse ranch requires a lot of money. You have to buy the land. You have to pay for the original breeding stock and later you’ll have to pay large stud fees. There’s no way you could ever do it.’ Then the teacher added, ‘If you will rewrite this paper with a more realistic goal, I will reconsider your grade.’

“The boy went home and thought about it long and hard. He asked his father what he should do. His father said, ‘Look, son, you have to make up your mind on this. However, I think it is a very important decision for you.’ Finally, after sitting with it for a week, the boy turned in the same paper, making no changes at all.

He stated, “You can keep the F and I’ll keep my dream.”

Monty then turned to the assembled group and said, “I tell you this story because you are sitting in my 4,000-square-foot house in the middle of my 200-acre horse ranch. I still have that school paper framed over the fireplace.” He added, “The best part of the story is that two summers ago that same schoolteacher brought 30 kids to camp out on my ranch for a week.” When the teacher was leaving, he said, “Look, Monty, I can tell you this now. When I was your teacher, I was something of a dream stealer. During those years I stole a lot of kids’ dreams. Fortunately you had enough gumption not to give up on yours.”

“Don’t let anyone steal your dreams. Follow your heart, no matter what.”

Until next time, good running!

Rich Hoffman
Cross Country Coach
Warren High School
http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~hoffmar1/warrencc.html

Rich Hoffman, M.S.
Neuromusculoskeletal Physiology Laboratory
Department of Biomedical Sciences
210C Irvine Hall
Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine
Athens OH 45701
740-593-2233
http://www.ooucom.ohiou.edu/dbms-clark/neuro-physio-lab.htm