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PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO

DISTANCE RUNNING

(TITLE)

BY

STAN F. WIGGAM

PLAN B PAPER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS PLAN B PAPER BE ACCEPTED AS
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INTRODUCTION

One concept of the mind-body relationship that has been recognized since the time of the early Greeks is "Mens sana in corpore sano," or "a sound mind in a sound body."¹ The cross-country coach is as much responsible for the psychological conditioning as he is for the physical conditioning of his athletes. An individual's psychological condition often has a direct relationship on his neuromuscular or physical response. The coach also is a teacher and must seek to develop accepted sociological and psychological patterns in those for whom he is responsible. He can contribute much to the emotional stability and the psychological maturity of his athletes.²

The purpose of this paper is to enrich the knowledge of those interested in the optimum performance of the distance runner. The effect of psychosomatic relationships and their applications to physical performance of distance running will be taken into consideration. The coach is often faced with emotional or sociological problems of the athlete because his work brings him into close personal contact with the individual. He is in an excel-

¹Carl E. Klafs and Daniel D. Arnheim, Modern Principles of Athletic Training (St. Louis: The C. V. Mosby Co., 1963), p. 137.

²Ibid.

lent position to assist with such problems. Therefore, he must become proficient in handling situations that call for an understanding of psychological factors and in knowing what course of action to follow. Some situations require sympathy and understanding, others, firmness. Still others require considerable restraint. The right word spoken at the right time can often resolve a situation that could develop into an unfortunate circumstance.

Enormous advances in science have had an explosive effect on distance running. Coaches are availing themselves of research in physiology, physics, chemistry, nutrition, medicine, and psychology to train their athletes for obtaining records that were once considered beyond human capacity.¹ The application of scientific principles to athletics has been a major factor in improving records. A coach owes it to his team and to himself to keep up to date on these techniques. It has been authoritatively stated that the mental attitude is the most important factor in athletic performance.² The need to stay abreast of these developments has greatly complicated the coach's job. Further demands upon him are made by such responsibilities as getting candidates out for the squad, keeping them out, making sure they remain eligible, developing sound public relations with students, parents, faculty, and community, publi-

¹Julian U. Stein, "Detailed Track Administration," Scholastic Coach, XXXII, No. 8 (April, 1963), p. 16.

²Victor F. Krumdick and Norman C. Lumian, "The Psychology of Athletic Success," Athletic Journal, XLIV, No. 1 (Sept., 1963), p. 52.

cizing the program, planning and running meets, and perhaps, scouting opponents. It is obvious, therefore, that a well organized program is essential for a coach to fulfill his variety of roles. Good organization promotes efficiency and gives the coach the time to do his basic job...to teach, to coach, to guide.

In essence, it is the expressed desire of the writer to enlighten the reader of the concept of the mind-body relationship. The coach who can positively effect the mental attitude of his athletes may not only field winning teams, but also may help assure the success of his runners in later life in any field of endeavor.

Chapter I

PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS

There is a reason for everything we do. All human activity has some cause. Unlike almost all other animals, man thinks not only under the stress of some immediate practical need, but at all times.¹ To be able to predict what a person will do in any given situation, we need to know something about his established habits and his organic condition.² What response any stimulus or situation will evoke depends upon the general nature of the individual and his particular condition at the time.³ The child watches and listens to all sorts of objects even when they have no meaning for his bodily needs.

The provisions of nature for the preservation of individuals do not follow the one simple pattern that people want what is good for them and that each want leads to an appropriate response to the situation in which the want is felt.⁴ Wants, attitudes, and interest not only influence behavior and modify the behavior of organisms, they

¹Edward L. Thorndike, The Principles of Teaching Based on Psychology (Syracuse: The Mason-Henry Press, 1906), p. 25.

²Karl S. Bernhardt, Practical Psychology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1953), p. 45.

³Edward L. Thorndike, The Psychology of Wants, Interests and Attitudes (New York: Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1935), p. 9.

⁴Ibid.

also are themselves changed.¹ They are strengthened and weakened by the course of inner development and by the experience of life.² The individual's structure is determined pretty much by hereditary factors. This structure determines in part, his activity but only in part, for everything that the individual experiences and everything that he does leaves him a little different from what he was before.³ The behavior is sometimes determined much more by the inner attitude or want than by any ordinary variations in the external situation. Living is adjusting. The human being, sensitive to happenings in his world, reacts to these events and, reacting, adjusts to changes in his environment.⁴ Such adjustments have their effect on his development, determining partly at least the direction, extent, and type of that development. Attitude has been defined in terms of three possible directions of movement. According to this view there is a tendency to move toward, against, or away from a person, object, or situation. The first is the compliant attitude, that of friendliness and willingness to cooperate or to do what one is told.⁵ The runner gladly participates in distance running and likes the coach and his running experiences. The second is the aggressive attitude, that of attack, opposition, and

¹Ibid., p. 5.

²Ibid.

³Bernhardt, op. cit., p. 45.

⁴Ibid.

⁵William Clark Trow, Psychology in Teaching and Learning (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1960), p. 23.

antagonism.¹ The runner makes as much trouble for the coach as possible. The third is the detached attitude, that of running away or escape.² The runner may reject the coach, skip practice, or even quit the team, or withdraw as much as possible from the situation.

How are attitudes acquired? The processes by which experiences determine attitudes have been described in various ways, the most common terms used are association, transfer, displacement, and condition.³

Association⁴ The runner associates experiences that have been joined together, or that have taken place together. The athlete may associate reprimands or scoldings with coaches.

Transfer The runner's attitudes transfer to other similar situations which have common purposes, motivations, and interests.⁵ For example, an athlete is likely to respond to greasy foods as a part of his meal at home in the same way that he came to respond to the coach who scolded him about eating greasy foods at school. If the athlete likes or dislikes his parents, the attitude could probably transfer to the coach who stands in loco parentis.

Displacement⁶ A person may have a hostile or aggressive attitude

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 24.

⁴Ibid.

⁵James L. Mursell, Psychology for Modern Education (New York: W. W. Norton Co., Inc., 1952), p. 303.

⁶Ibid., p. 25.

toward a parent, perhaps because he is in a position of authority. This attitude toward the authoritative figure may tend to be directed toward others who play a comparable role. Since coaches are in positions of authority, they are likely to feel the force of the hostile attitude athletes have toward their parents or toward certain other coaches. Therefore, the athlete's displaced aggression or hostility is really not direct at a particular coach as a consequence of anything he has said or done.

Conditioning¹ One of the earliest conditioning experiments on the human organism was performed by John B. Watson, who was studying the origins of emotional attitudes.² It was clear that an infant showed no fear of a rabbit until after he had been conditioned to fear it by hearing a loud, startling noise simultaneously with its appearance.³ Therefore, it would be possible to condition a distance runner to appreciate and enjoy distance running. Conversely, he could also be conditioned to dislike distance running without the proper guidance of the coach.

The coach's personal experiences are inadequate as a basis for interpreting the behavior of all the different personalities on his team. But there are certain kinds of facts to look for which may help him to understand the situation. Knowing these facts, he can treat the runners more intelligently and make more adequate provision for their develop-

¹Ibid.

²John B. Watson, Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1924), p. 234.

³Ibid., p. 232.

the point where they can not be easily satisfied.

Good coaching recognizes the variety of human nature, fits stimuli to individuals as far as possible and when that is not possible, choose those stimuli which are for the greatest good of the greatest number or of the most deserving. Desirable interests are perpetuated by furnishing the stimuli that arouse them and by rewarding them with satisfaction.¹ Successful coaching decides what is to be learned by an appeal not to material, but to the general aim of athletics.

¹Thorndike, The Psychology of Teaching Based on Psychology, p. 26.

Chapter II

DISTANCE RUNNING TECHNIQUES

The coaching methods used in distance running differ from those used for all of the other sports including track and field. The area covered in practice runs and for meets is so great that the coach must get most of his information of individual performance at an observation point which is located a distance from the action. Another distinctive problem confronting the coach is the few opportunities he has for actual coaching when the athlete is running. There are only three times when the runner can be given advice. He can be given a few words at the moment he passes the coach in the course of the run, or he can be coached before or after the run. Essentially, the runner is on his own after the starting gun.

Any participant who has done even a minimum amount of running soon realizes that his performance improves as a result of work. Many an athlete, however, does not realize when he improves, that an understanding of the changes that take place in his mind and body is a vital **step** in advancing toward an even better performance. The training that a distance runner does makes three significant contributions to his constant improvement. Briefly stated, they are:

1. Refinement of the mechanical aspects of running, commonly referred to as form or style.
2. Improvement in the mental approach to the distance to be covered, since by constant running, he begins to "feel" the race.

3. Increased efficiency of the metabolic processes such as the respiratory and the circulatory systems.¹

The importance of the mind over matter principle is so great that many coaches feel that the next great contribution in distance running performance will not be made by coaches or trainers, but by physiologists and psychologists. Through research, they demonstrate a practical method for men to overcome mental barriers that we know limit performance. Many laboratory experiments with isolated muscle groups have indicated that what we today regard as physical fatigue in the well-trained athlete, may by tomorrow be regarded as merely preliminary tiredness.² As mentioned, the most important factor of becoming a successful distance runner is in overcoming the feeling of being tired. If there is a secret to running long races well, it is the ability to distribute available energy evenly over the distance to be run while breaking through the individual ceiling on feeling tired. Few runners ever perform up to complete physical capacity during a long race. Some fail because they do not understand or realize their physiological limitations, and others fail due to improper training or lack of courage. Most runners feel tired long before they are actually physically fatigued. It is the understanding of fatigue, both mental and physical, that often aids in distinguishing between really being tired and thinking one is tired.

The 1952 Olympic Games at Helsinki, Finland, produced many exam-

¹Donald Canham, Cross-Country Techniques Illustrated (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1953), p. 24.

²Ibid.

ples of athletes of all nations breaking through their personal fatigue barriers.¹ One man, Emil Zatopek, of Czechoslovakia, won all three of the long races (5,000 meters, 10,000 meters, and the marathon), and did it in record time. It was almost as unbelievable for Horace Ashenfelter, of the United States, to run the 3,000 meter steeplechase in the world record time of 8:45.4.² These and other fantastic performances at Helsinki can mainly be considered as examples of men breaking through mental barriers that had previously limited their performances.

Championship performance in distance running involves four vital individual factors. They are:

1. Strength
2. Speed
3. Technique
4. Courage³

One without the other is of little value to the runner who aspires to be a champion. Physical requirements for college distance runners are no different than those for high school runners. Participants must have special mental as well as physical capacities. The key to good distance running is the ability to overcome the feeling of being tired, which usually precedes actual physical fatigue. A clear, alert mind has less difficulty discriminating between real fatigue and mental fatigue.

The development of courage is a necessity for a distance runner. Fears and lack of courage are usually based upon ignorance and an unfamiliarity with a given situation. The distance runner often is timid

¹Ibid., p. 25.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 54.

about carrying a fast pace because he has not found out just how strong he really is, and because he has not planned his race pace properly. The phenomenon of an average runner suddenly blossoming into a fine performer is quite often due to the sudden understanding of the problems at hand. He seems to develop courage, when the fear of fatigue and the apparent inability to finish have disappeared through a well-directed training program.

Group running is becoming even more important to the modern distance runner. The basic philosophy in distance running is teamwork. Many successful teams attempt to run in a group with the members giving each other encouragement. Running with a group of teammates will often help the slower man to better his performance. The value of constant practice in group running at a strong meet pace is obvious once it is realized that runners do not run well when strung out yards behind their teammates and competitors. Group running need not necessarily work against the outstanding distance runner. The pace for the group must be the ideal pace for the better men, then the slower runners must attempt to carry it for close to three quarters of the race. During the last quarter the better runners naturally continue to carry the faster pace, but usually this strong early pace has pulled some of the poorer runners away from many competitors who might have beaten them had the group running not been attempted. Some teams run in two groups, with the same basic strategy in mind. This might be more of an advantage for the team that is lacking in balance.

Psychology can play an important part in the final result of a long race. A smart runner (or group) can use devices which discourage the

opposition. For example, once an individual is out of sight around a corner or over a hill, a faster pace should be attempted. Followers can very often become discouraged by seeing that they have unexpectedly lost ground. This tactic repeated once or twice may cause the follower to forget the men in front and to start considering the men behind him. In passing a man, the runner should always give impression of being fresh. He should pass easily carrying a slightly faster pace until he has built up a lead. Runners should not pass at all unless they are strong enough to carry the faster pace. There is an additional advantage to running close behind an opponent. The man setting pace can act as a windbreak for the following runner.

Where the field is large the runner must assume that the first 200 yards or so of the race will practically be a sprint as athletes jockey for position. Not being drawn out too fast or too early and then making a move up through the field when the pace lags is the mark of the successful runner. In most of the larger college meets, the first half mile of the race is usually run too fast. Realizing this and capitalizing on it is important. It should be mentioned, however, that when the major part of the race is to be run over a narrow trail, a different approach to the race has to be taken. The race can often be partially decided by the position in which the runners go into the woods or trail. It is then essential to sprint for position.

When running behind another athlete, the distance runner should never watch his feet. He should keep his head up and avoid thinking about the repetitious and monotonous pounding of the feet of the man ahead. When an opponent starts carrying his arms higher during a race it usually means

he is getting tired. That is the time for a strong runner to pass him, and to keep in mind that a passing runner's feeling of fatigue must be disguised. Mentally, an opponent may be defeated at that point.

The successful coach will take into consideration all of these psychological techniques of distance running and instill them in his athletes, with the obvious outcome a far more improved team.

Chapter III

PROMOTING DISTANCE RUNNING

The major coaching problem presented to the average high school or college coach is dealing with beginners who know very little about the sport of cross-country or distance running. Getting individuals interested in wanting to run is usually the first step toward successful cross-country teams. The first procedure should be publicity on cross-country. Movies shown in the high school assembly, bulletin boards in the school halls, newspaper publicity and any other method of bringing the sport before the eyes of the student body is of great importance. Once the beginners respect the personality, enthusiasm and imagination of the coach they can then determine the difference between good and poor squad morale, and as in all team sports, high morale of the group is essential to success.

Handling new recruits in cross-country call for the use of a little applied psychology and TLC.¹ (Tender Loving Care) Simple techniques used in influencing potential runners may be as follows:

1. Capture his attention
2. Use of newness or novelty
3. Appeal to basic wants and needs
4. Break down defences
5. Paint word pictures
6. Start the runner out right

¹Anthony Orlando, "Training New Recruits in Cross-Country," Scholastic Coach, XXX, No. 10 (June, 1961), p. 16.

7. Recognize limitation¹

First and foremost, it is important to build up the confidence of these newcomers. This can be done by arranging the work-out in a graduated manner. The work-out during the early training period should never be such that it cannot be completed. Failure to complete any of these early assignments will do harm and destroy rather than develop confidence.

With new recruits in distance running, there are several points the coach should not overlook. He should:

1. Start slowly and build confidence by always working the runners at distances they can negotiate successfully.
2. Work with groups so that the poorer runners are not faced with humiliation by running far behind the better runners.
3. Be free with encouragement to even the poorest of runners.
4. Constantly emphasize improvement rather than fast running time.
5. Provide competition of some kind for even the youngest and poorest of runners.
6. Constantly remember and emphasize to the runners that a season of experience and another year of age often leads to remarkable improvement.
7. Select interesting courses to stimulate the runners and prevent boredom during a long practice or meet run.
8. Create a sense of team pride in the squad from the start.²

The coach is confronted with the problem of cross-country being accepted as a "minor sport." Promotion of the program is difficult which is primarily due to the problem of spectatorship. Often spectators will see the start of the meet and then ten to fifteen minutes later see the ending.

In the article, "Promoting Cross-Country," Lumian discusses four

¹Bernhardt, op. cit., p. 77.

²Canham, op. cit., p. 37.

major aspects that should be used in promoting cross-country programs.¹

These different aspects can be listed as follows:

1. Treat cross-country as a major sport
2. Publicize cross-country
 - a. school newspaper
 - b. local and regional newspaper
 - c. school bulletin boards
 - d. public address systems
 - e. school bulletin
 - f. football program
 - g. newsletter
3. Consider carefully where you can run the cross-country meets so that the runners may receive the recognition they crave and deserve
 - a. make the course interesting for spectators
 - b. run the course on the track at a football game
 - c. use girl officials
4. Build up team spirit
 - a. give participant team responsibility
 - b. distinctive dress
 - c. end of season dinner²

Several special administrative forms can be used in distance running.

A special practice form includes the daily workout, daily drills and routines, and places to record the mental attitude of the individual.³ At the end of each practice session it takes only minutes to assess the progress of every runner and determine the plan for the next practice.

Since the athletic administration and coaches are hired by the school, the school has an active hand in the supervision of athletics. The coach also has an added opportunity to teach moral and spiritual values, since he is always there when the athlete is faced with success and failure. Through successful promotion a responsible athlete sets for himself obtainable goals. He will have directed enthusiasm and a more vig-

¹Norman C. Lumian, "Promoting Cross-Country," Scholastic Coach, XXX, No. 8 (April, 1963), p. 16.

²Ibid.

³Stein, op. cit.

orous outlook on life. He can gain this needed confidence and spirit by participating in athletics.

Chapter IV

MENTAL ASPECTS OF DISTANCE RUNNING

Participation in athletics comes about principally as an effort on the part of an individual to satisfy various psychological needs. These needs may consist of desires to achieve social status or to seek prestige and recognition. Athletes usually select an activity because they have achieved some degree of success in that activity previously, either as participants in sandlot or recreational competition or as students in general physical education classes. Participants have developed an interest in the activity, although their actual participation experience may have been somewhat limited.

It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the psychological groundwork underlying the various complex mechanisms of human behavior. However, the coach must realize that his athletes will exhibit many conflict behaviors, and therefore it is important for him to be able to recognize and be of assistance in handling these problems.

One area that concerns the coach is the understanding of the exertion of emotional aspects upon physical performance. The various emotional states are endured by physiological adjustments. This function is controlled by the autonomic nervous system and include the acceleration and strengthening of the heartbeat, a rise in blood pressure, a release of glucose from the liver, the secretion of a small amount of adrenalin, and a relaxation of the muscles in the bronchial tubes which permits easier

breathing.¹ The body is permitted to function more efficiently under conditions of stress because of these physiological adjustments.

An athlete's self-confidence increases as his understanding of the stress and strategy of competition increases.² The competent runner learns to acknowledge the pain that indicates injury and to refine the pain of extreme fatigue.³ Some of this knowledge is gained in chalk talks or lectures, but more comes from experience. By challenging himself, the distance runner learns to make an accurate self-appraisal. Very successful athletes are extremely confident. Interesting research on the personality trait of champions shows they possess feelings of exceptional self-assurance.⁴ With the coach's guidance a reasonable personal objective can be set. Meeting this challenge thus provides the individual participant with a measure of his own ability and improvement. This develops self-respect and a new confidence. Certainly these two traits stimulate further success. It is also apparent why a mis-match type of situation is to be avoided. The successful coach capitalizes on every learning situation to which his athletes are exposed. He thus assures maximum increase in knowledge, and in a direct result, a more confident competitor.

Many times the coach will encounter an athlete who employs rationalization. Whenever errors, misunderstandings, or problems take place, even though it is evident that the fault lies with him, this particular

¹Klafs and Arnheim, op. cit., p. 71.

²Victor Krumdish and Norman Lumian, "The Psychology of Athletic Success," Athletic Journal, XLIV, No. 1 (September, 1963), p. 52.

³Ibid., p. 54.

⁴Ibid., p. 52.

individual defends his position with the support of a somewhat worthy explanation. His relationship to the coach and athletic program takes the form of projection. Sometimes he takes the position that the coach is not interested in him and that this attitude is due to some misunderstanding that has caused the coach to develop a feeling of personal resentment.¹ An individual who shows a pattern of this type is difficult to reach. He fails to follow training instructions, complaining that he cannot see the use of such procedures. Any attempt to point out his difficulty to him usually results in more rationalization, since he not only fails to realize his shortcomings but also refuses to accept them, seeking instead to cover his failures or confusion with reasoning which will, in his belief, justify his actions.

To want something and simultaneously to reject it is typical of an individual in conflict. As the distance runner achieves more satisfaction from one aspect, the greater is the frustration he encounters in the other.² To state it differently, whatever he does to fulfill one motive opposes the other. (Ambivalence) In such cases, individuals tend to develop personality patterns that reveal various types of behavior. Thus the accident-prone athlete, the overly aggressive individual, and the complacent person all indicate outward display of some hidden psychological problem.

The mental approach to all phases of distance running is vital. The mind can often be trained to overcome many difficult obstacles. The mental requirements for distance running are closely related to perfor-

¹Krumdick and Lumian, op. cit., p. 142.

²Klafs and Arnheim, op. cit., p. 141.

mance in several ways. The most obvious are:

1. sheer courage
2. ambition and pride in performance
3. pure judgment
4. confidence

One of the basic points to instill in an athlete is a constant desire for improvement. The runner must be well-directed, concentrate on weekly improvement, and take satisfaction in approaching his absolute physical capacity.¹ Other factors include pride, optimism, and confidence in the athlete's personal performance. The coach should have expanded enthusiasm for distance running, while the runners should have the will to prepare. This combination may develop the will to win.

¹Thomas O'Connor, "Training the Distance Runner," Scholastic Coach, XXXII, No. 8 (April, 1963), p. 82.

Chapter V

SUMMARY

Athletics teach free enterprise, independence, cooperation, and team work. These are all qualities needed to prepare the athlete for life's battles. To keep alive those qualities that are firmly fixed in a democracy we must place greater emphasis on the athletic program. Distance running can be very essential in the personal growth of an individual. It is the writer's belief that a coach who works with an athlete for one season can disclose the life story of the individual. Not only can he relate the past because of his relationship with the distance runner, but he can make a reasonable indication of the future of the athlete. Individuals express their personal traits while participating in athletics. A person who cannot adjust to his own failures will very often be the athlete who takes two or three days to recover mentally over a poor showing in a previous meet. As a leader of young athletes, the coach should be responsible enough to take a personal interest in his distance runners and to help prepare them for that which is ahead after their school career.

It is also the belief of the writer that in the past the coach was mainly concerned with the training of the body. Due to a more enlightened era, more emphasis is being placed upon the training of the mind. The modern coach is interested in the personality behavior of his dis-

tance runners. More specified attention can be given to the athlete because of a better understanding of the individual. A better concept of the psychology applied to athletics is beneficial in more than one way. Knowing the mental factors of the opponents could mean the difference of winning a cross-country meet. Realizing how to defeat the opponent mentally will be a considerable advantage to defeating him physically. One of the greatest accomplishments man can achieve is to develop his greatest weakness into a tool used for his advantage. A successful runner is usually one who has conquered mental fatigue and is using this understanding to his advantage.

There can be many values derived from distance running. Excluding the opportunity for high level competition, two very basic values received from cross-country are the gradual progress in running efficiency and the development of character and self-discipline. Moral and spiritual values may be those values which, when applied in human behavior, exalt and refine life and bring it into accord with the standards of conduct that are approved in our democratic society. The conscientious athlete should acquire these values because of his participation in distance running.

The successful distance runner, however, does not have to be a 'natural' in order to compete successfully. All he need is determination, health, and courage. At the latter part of the season, the distance runner should be able to run with increased power and confidence. Above all, he should have learned the necessity for self-control during the monotony and demands of the longer distance. The purpose of exploring some of the things that are known about attitudes and how they are ac-

quired is not merely to be able to make athletes admire coaches. Rather, it is to create favorable attitudes toward learning, and to provide a climate or atmosphere in which athletes can learn and can develop normally.

A sound mind in a sound body is one concept that has been accepted since early history. But only until recently has the coach applied this concept to distance running. One of the greatest rewards a coach can receive is to watch his distance runners develop successfully because of the coach's willingness to accept the psychological part as well as the physiological part of total development. A person being told that he will never be able to walk again because of severe burns he had received, but eventually due to sheer determination is one of the first men to approach the four-minute barrier of the mile is an excellent example of training the mind. Success is only for those distance runners who have the courage to achieve higher goals.

APPENDIX

In essence, the summary of this paper can be a poem found in
The Christian Athlete, written by an unknown author:^a

"If you think you are beaten,
 you are,
 If you think you dare not,
 you don't.
 If you'd like to win, but you think you can't
 It's almost a cinch that you won't.
 If you think you'll lose, you're lost,
 For out of the world we find
 Success begins with a fellow's will,
 It's all in the state of mind.
 "If you think you're outclassed,
 You are,
 You've got to think high to rise,
 You've got to be sure of yourself before
 You can ever win a prize.
 Life's battle doesn't always go
 To the swifter or faster man,
 But sooner or later the man who wins
 Is the man who thinks he can."

^a"Success Begins with the Will," The Christian Athlete, XXXIII,
 No. 6 (February, 1964), p. 10.

MENTAL ATTITUDE IN CROSS COUNTRY

by Bill Bernard (former cross country runner, Arlington, Va.)

"Runners take your marks--" Relax, Vince; you have two miles to go.
 "Now set--" Just two miles; you can run it in less than 11:30.
 "Go." Two miles! You'll never make it.
 I shouldn't have gone to that party last night;
 It wasn't over 'til 11:00
 I didn't get home 'til 3:00
 Four hours' sleep
 The pace is way too fast--
 Why don't they slow down?
 They can't keep this pace for two miles.
 1/4 mile--(...:88, :89, :90,...)
 I should have stayed home today--
 I should have said I was sick or something.
 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--
 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.
 One mile--(...5:48, 5:49, "Pick it up Bill," 5:50,)
 1 1/4 mile---Baker's passing me.
 Why did I ever go out for cross country?
 I'm no good; haven't got 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--
 Fright him off--check out.
 1 1/2 mile--I've passed Baker, but McClinton's still pulling away.
 I can't keep up with him;
 But I can't slow down because Baker's right behind me.
 1 3/4 mile--There's the finish--don't fag now, Bernard.
 What does McClinton think he's doing?
 He's running faster!
 So is Baker. I can't let him pass me now.
 Pick it up, Bernard.
 100 yards to go--SPRINT, darn 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.

HANDY ALIBI SHEET

This list is intended to simplify the problem of selecting the proper alibi to suit the occasion.

- Ate too much
- I was weak from lack of nourishment
- Not enough time to warm-up
- Not enough training
- Warmed up too much
- Overtrained
- Too much sleep
- Not enough sleep
- Started my kick too soon
- Started my kick too late
- Girl friend unfriendly last night
- He cut me off
- I cut him off and thought I was disqualified
- Track too soft
- Too cold
- Too hot
- Shin splints
- Blisters
- Cramp in my leg
- Chicken
- I thought I was having a heart attack
- Got lost
- I thought there was another lap to go.
- I can't run when I'm behind
- I can't run
- Too much competition
- Too many meets
- Not enough meets
- Cheap medals
- Wanted to see what the other placemedals looked like.
- I don't like organized athletics
- I only run for exercise
- I have emotional problems
- I can't stand too much success
- My coach is a _____
- Forgot to tie my shoes
- I got discouraged when a kid from the high school outran me
- I thought there was another lap to go
- Poor start
- Worried about studies
- Worried about finances
- Nobody cared about my performance
- My coach reminds me of my father and hate them both
- I only like to run in front of girls
- Too many people were depending on me

A-TO-Z RULES IN DISTANCE RUNNING

- a. Start slowly.
- b. Run YOUR speed, not someone else's.
- c. Run only such distances as you are capable of now.
- d. DON'T GET DISCOURAGED. When you have problems, tell the coach.
- e. Encourage others.
- f. Experience and age make you a better runner.
- g. Have pride in your squad and in other runners.
- h. Learn form. Be comfortable in running.
RELAX!
- i. Retain LOW KNEE ACTION.
- j. Avoid high kick-ups behind.
- k. Lean slightly forward.
- l. Chin down. No matter how fatigued DO NOT THROW HEAD BACK.
- m. Use a standing start.
- n. ALWAYS FINISH no matter how tired (excluding emergencies).
- o. After passing over the Finish line jog awhile. Taper off. DON'T SIT OR LIE DOWN.
- p. Stay with the top runners.
- q. Learn to "feel" pace.
- r. Don't miss one day of practice. Every day lost hacks into your season's work.
- s. Tell the coach immediately about your injuries.
- t. RUN "UNDER" DISTANCES at FASTER THEN RACE PACE.
- u. RUN "OVER DISTANCES SLOWER THEN RACE PACE.
- v. Swing arms rhythmically with your leg motion.
- w. Keep your hands relaxed. Fourth finger in to the palm, palms down.
- x. Learn to run 5 or 6 miles at a sustained speed.
- y. REMEMBER, YOU CAN ALWAYS RUN FASTER!
So know yourself. Speed and courage come when you begin to realize that you've got a lot more on the ball than you thought you had.
- z. Fatigue is momentary. GET OVER THE FATIGUE BARRIER IMMEDIATELY.

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