

# CLUB RUNNING





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Post Office Box 366  
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# FOREWORD

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The situation in the United States is unique. No other country has anything like the school system for developing athletes. The training and selection process starts in junior high or even elementary school. The best prospects from there go on to compete in high school. The best prospects from there go to college. The best from there often hang around college town for graduate school—because there may not be anyplace else to go to run.

The greatest strength in the US athletic system also leads to one of its greatest weaknesses. The schools have always had the money, the professional coaches, the equipment, the facilities to make them the backbone of the sport. The clubs have given the schools that role by default. Most countries rely on their clubs to find and develop runners. The US hasn't seemed to need many clubs, so few have developed.

Running has changed. And with the change of the 1960s and '70s has come the need for an active club program. The school programs are fine for those who can use them. But what about the age-group runners who aren't in junior high yet, or haven't been in college since the Eisenhower era? What about the girls and women who are shut out of school competition most places? What about top-level runners who know they haven't fully matured when they get their degrees? What about the road runners (and walkers), the fun and fitness runners who can't find the kind of activity they like in most schools? Where do they go?

They go to clubs—if there are any clubs available. The sad truth is, in many if not most parts of the country there are none. The development of the club system hasn't kept pace with the recent spread of the sport. And the result is that runners are left on their own.

Runners are loners, but only to a point. They sometimes need support which only an organized group can give. Clubs offer support in one or more of these ways:

- **Coaching**—Clubs form around a brilliant coach like Mihaly Igloi, who offers the regular, structured training many runners need.

- **Competition**—The only role of some clubs is to organize races. The District of Columbia Road Runners, for one, promotes most of the events in its area.

- **Communication**—Either directly (through group runs and club meetings) or indirectly (through newsletters), runners like to hear about their own kind. The West Valley TC's monthly publication, for instance, has a circulation of nearly a thousand.

- **Cash**—Face it, this is a problem—particularly for national- and world-class athletes who do the most training and traveling. Several major clubs act as little more than business agencies for their runners.

The United States needs more clubs of all types to handle these functions. but the clubs aren't going to appear magically. The runners who want them have to help start them, the way they have done in recent years with long distance races.

## Chapter I

# THE U.S. CLUB



Michael Boitano, too young for high school, too talented not to compete (he's a 2:54 marathoner at 12). He races with the Pamakid Club in San Francisco. (John Marconi photo)

# HELPING THE UNATTACHED

Nearly 60% of the men on the last US Olympic team came from the country's track and field clubs. This was exactly twice the number who were on college teams at the time. The figures taken by themselves, though, give a false reading on the strength of the US club system. It's both stronger and weaker than it looks.

It is stronger in the sense of the promise this percentage indicates. The significant fact here is that only a few percent of American trackmen run for clubs, yet they account for more than half of the Olympic team. The clubs that do exist are doing something right, if only providing continuing opportunity for athletes who've served their apprenticeship in high school and college. Older runners tend to make the national teams. Older runners run for clubs, as was the case for all three 10,000-meter men and all three marathoners at Munich.

But US clubs aren't as strong as these statistics might hint. The Olympians came from a small number of clubs. The leading contributors were the Southern California (now Beverly Hills) Striders, Florida TC, Oregon TC, Pacific Coast Club, University of Chicago TC, Bay Area Striders and New York AC. The same small circle of clubs handles the bulk of the top post-graduate athletes year after year. There aren't many other places to go to chase Olympic ambitions.

In one sense, the women are better off. High schools and colleges haven't done well by them, so they've been forced to compete almost entirely within a club framework. That framework is relatively better than the men's. It produced nine out of every 10 Olympic contenders in 1972. The 10th was usually from Tennessee State University, one of the first schools with a women's team.

By necessity, the club prospects are brightest for women, road runners, fitness runners and age-groupers—all of whom are usually left out of school sport for one reason or another. Ironically, club choices are most limited for the best male athletes.

"US track athletes, as a whole, live a feast-or-famine existence," *Runner's World's* Joe Henderson wrote several years ago. "If they have the necessary ability, they're surrounded by luxury during their years as a student. Colleges, and high schools to a lesser extent, provide everything the young man needs except the energy he's asked to put out. Skilled coaching, the best in equipment and facilities, free travel are his.

"Then, boom, he graduates into poverty. All but the lucky few who hook up with military teams, or with the extremely rare club capable of shelling out expense money, are left with two unpleasant choices—support their own track habit or say good-bye to active competition."

Few can support themselves, particularly at the highest levels. (Only three athletes on the last men's Olympic team competed "unattached." All three were coaches or teachers at colleges where support was at hand.) Many of them leave the sport for good on graduation day. Others, like Buddy Edele, go to Europe where club running opportunities are more attractive.

More than a decade ago, Edelen went to England to become a marathoner. He wound up with a world best of 2:14, and gave British clubs part of the credit. He wrote then, "There are about 1300 clubs in England, and in a meet such as the national cross-country championships as many as 3500 runners will have toured the course." Almost all of them are club runners.

Edelen felt in the early 1960s that "if an extensive club setup could be established in the US, I feel the time would come when we would have the same depth in the middle and long distances that we now enjoy in the sprints, hurdles and most field events. Although the US is one of the top track powers in the world, the potential of the US to become *the* track power of the world is even greater if an English-type club system could be developed."

England has a club tradition that goes back more than 100 years. The London Athletic Club was founded in 1863. One of the country's leading clubs, the Blackheath Harriers, has operated continuously since 1869. Club coach Brian Mitchell says, "The British club system is the heart and sinews of athletics in the country, and perhaps is worth looking at as a model for club programs elsewhere."

While British clubs are a worthwhile model, the system can never be transplanted directly to US soil. The entire athletic environment is too different. The factor that makes the US different is the schools. Overemphasis on school sport can limit the growth of running. But the schools will remain the "heart and sinews" of the US system, and can and should be used to the clubs' benefit.

Lowell Paul, member of the University of Chicago TC's world record two-mile relay teams, spent several years in Germany. He writes, "School sport in Germany is essentially equivalent to physical education in America. Virtually all competitive sport is undertaken through the sports club, which provides training facilities and coaching assistance, and sponsors competition. Almost every community of any size has at least one club, and larger cities have several."

Paul is somewhat critical of the US school-based system. He says that "by greatly relaxing, if not completely severing, the unnatural tie between sport and school," the club "allows sport to be approached from an educational viewpoint in the schools, i.e., with a view to what sport can bring to the individual in his quest toward self-discovery and self-expression, not how the student can be used to bring prestige and glory to the scholastic institution and the coach."

Another advantage of a widespread club structure such as Germany's, Paul says, is that it could "remove the factor of athletic competition from the major role which it now plays in such non-sports-related decisions as choice of school or job."

As it is, US runners of Paul's ability pick colleges for their running programs (or, more likely, colleges pick the runners with their scholarship offers). If they want to keep running after their eligibility expires, they settle near a club. This usually means moving to Florida, California, New York or Illinois. For Lowell, it meant going to law school at the University of Chicago—where he was exposed to the best of both worlds. He ran as a club athlete in a college setting.



# GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

School running, by design and perhaps necessity, is one-dimensional. Coaches are paid, facilities are erected, equipment is purchased with one end in mind—the best possible record for the school in competition with other schools. Other motives are offered, but this is the overriding one. The system takes good care of those who qualify for it. But only a limited number of runners meet the ability, age or sex qualifications. The others are weeded out.

A club system doesn't have these same limits. It can approach running from a number of angles besides conventional "win-one-for-the-school" competition. Clubs can specialize in single events or sets of events. Clubs can offer a social outlet to otherwise isolated athletes. Clubs can stress running for fun and fitness. Above all, clubs can give opportunity to what the British call "no-hopers," who still want to do their best.

Lowell Paul says, "A widespread club structure can encourage and facilitate active participation in sport for a much broader range of people than can a school system. A club can offer training facilities, training companions, coaching assistance and opportunities for competition to men and women of all ages who desire to take an active part."

Paul and his University of Chicago TC teammates have set world records for the indoor and outdoor two-mile relays. Rick Wohlhuter holds the world half-mile mark. Yet the club's coach, Ted Haydon, says, "We don't discriminate against anyone because of race, creed or talent."

Lowell Paul says clubs should provide training facilities, coaching assistance and competition. They should, but do they or can they perform these roles effectively in the US, where most of the running resources—trained coaches, facilities, etc.—are school property? Only with the school's cooperation.

Ted Haydon has achieved the ideal in college-club cooperation with the UCTC. The club is an extension of the University of Chicago varsity team which he also coaches. The school's facilities are open to non-students.

Haydon says the original idea, back in the early 1950s, was to form a club "in which varsity members and alumni could participate as a team in AAU competition, a club which would supplement varsity track events. In the manner of things that fulfill a need, the idea was a success and the UCTC was born. By 1955, the club had attracted athletes from outside the university who sought to use our facilities for training purposes. These people were invited in."

Two even more successful examples of school-based clubs are the Oregon TC and Florida TC. Between them, they sent seven of the 11 longest distance runners (steeplechase to marathon) to Munich. (An eighth, Steve Prefontaine, was a student at the University of Oregon.) These clubs operate on much the same lines as the UCTC.

Roy Benson, a coach with the Florida TC, writes, "(Jimmy) Carnes, the University of Florida's coach, is a 100% promoter of track. He isn't content just to have a simple one-team situation. He wants a program that serves the youngest age-groupers through the oldest veterans and people of all abilities.

"The university actively supports and encourages the track club people. Carnes puts a lot of time into the club, as I do. But about the only material

support we offer is a clean towel every day.”

Simply having a regular meeting place is an attraction of the club. Runners have come to Gainesville from all over the eastern US. Morning runs on the campus may have groups as large as 50. In the afternoon, the club athletes have free use of the university's locker rooms and track.

It may sound like a small thing, this opening of school facilities to the general community. But it's the key to the future of club running in the United States. Thousands of cities and towns have high school track teams, hundreds have college and university programs. Every one is a potential base of operations for a running club.

Joe Henderson has written, “With a bare minimum of effort and expense, hundreds of schools could emulate the Chicago experience and provide a club program along with their regular one. They could open their little-used facilities to non-students, put on open meets and insert open events into regular (school) competitions. If schools want to promote track in general, not just *their* track, they can find room for outsiders and do the sport a huge service.”

Hal Higdon, an early member of the University of Chicago club, points out, however, that the problem “has been the almost total failure of the colleges to emulate the example of Ted Haydon with the UCTC. He provided a pattern by which a truly effective club running program could have been built in this country—college-centered clubs. But thus far, too few have followed his lead.”

One reason for the reluctance of school officials is, “We don't have the time or money to get involved with this kind of thing. We're tied up with our own programs.” Fine, if that's the case, just open the gates to the track and leave them open. The runners themselves will do the rest.

This is what has happened at Stanford University in California, where the track is never locked. Runners are on it 16-18 hours a day. During the lunch hour rush, a hundred or more runners may be circling the track, with others from the Stanford Running Club heading out from there into the hills. The university doesn't directly contribute a dime to the club. But the club probably wouldn't exist if not for the university's facilities.

The same is true with the UCTC. Hal Higdon writes in *On The Run From Dogs And People*, “The university built a new athletic arena with an expensive Tartan track. At first, several members of the athletic staff wanted to lock the gates of the field, fearful that the track might be firebombed. Haydon was one of those counseling against the action: ‘It could be ruined just as easily, and more likely, by someone throwing their firebomb over the fence.’

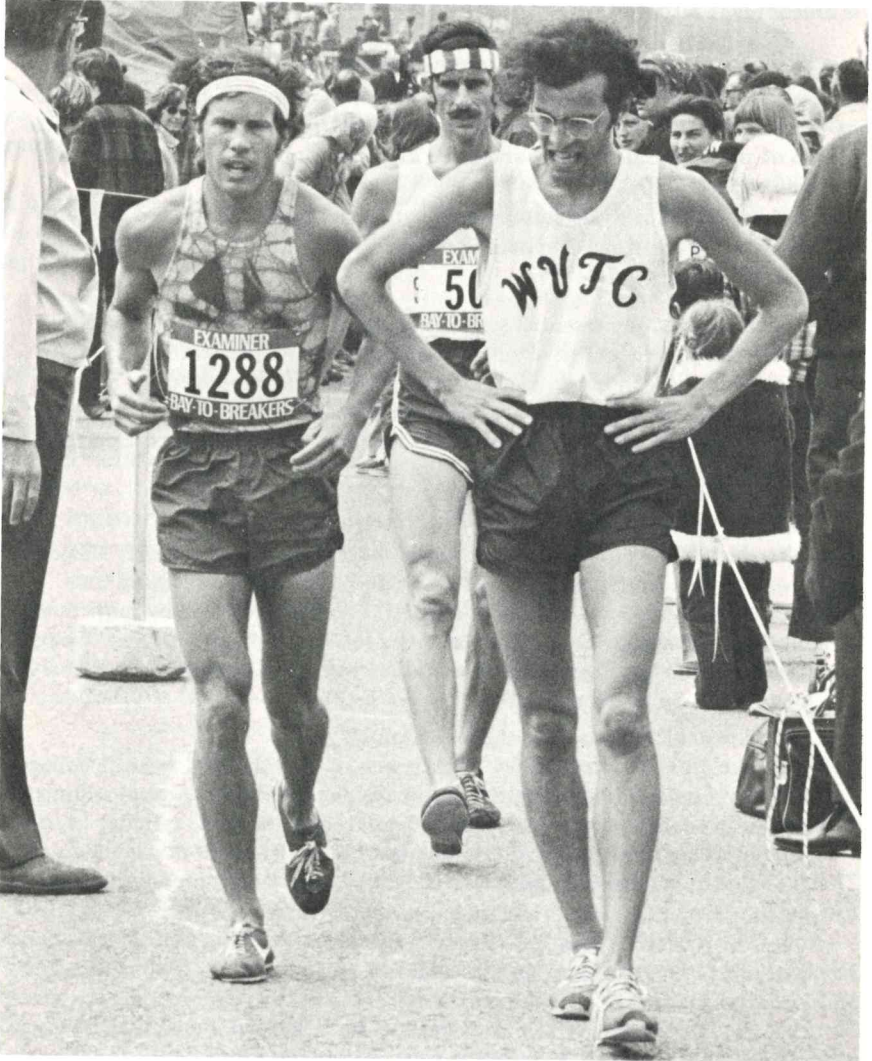
“The track remained unlocked, and no guard stands by the gate to check identification. This is different from the attitude of many involved in athletic programs around the United States. They seem more interested in building fences. Ted would rather build bridges.”

“Our main problem,” says Haydon, “is kids erecting sand castles in our jumping pits.”

## Chapter II

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# FORMING CLUBS



(l-r) Ritchie Geisel, Phil Camp and Bill Johnson all run for thriving California clubs. (John Marconi photo)

# GUIDE FOR ORGANIZING

## FROM THE ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA

The Road Runners Club of America doesn't appear on the surface to be a major force in US running. You never, for instance, saw an athlete representing one of the RRC's local branches in a race until recently. That's because the RRC was a behind-the-scenes organization which promoted running instead of sponsoring runners. The clubs now do both, thanks to a constitutional amendment in 1974.

Though the Road Runners have worked quietly, they have had a significant effect on the running boom of the 1960s and '70s. For one thing, this is the only group in the US making a concerted effort to organize clubs. The RRC has been doing this since the mid-1950s. In that time, it has polished the techniques of putting together and operating effective clubs with a minimum of fuss and expense.

Those techniques are summarized here. The hints are covered in much greater detail in the Road Runners Club Handbook. They apply to all clubs, not just RRCs.

There is only one essential step in starting a club: get together with several interested people and have a meeting at which you discuss the club's purposes and activities, and elect some officers. That's all there is to it. From there, you move on to the primary function of a club—promoting running for your members and others. This aspect is also easy—if you follow the cardinal rule of not trying to do it all yourself.

### ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

You'll probably get more done at the meeting if you invite only a select group of people whom you know are interested, rather than spending time trying to entice the general public to attend. There are certain key individuals around the community who can contribute a lot to a running program. So before calling the meeting, get in touch with most or all of the following and try to enlist their help in the project:

1. The dedicated local runners you know.
2. The cross-country and/or track coach of the local high school, college or university. In larger communities, approach the coaches of several schools. As stressed in chapter one, school-club cooperation is the most valuable kind.
3. The person in charge of the county or city recreation department. The department can help get needed facilities because it has some influence in the local government.
4. The physical education director of the local YMCA. Many Y's already have active running programs and may be a source of club members and logistical support.
5. Representatives of any local groups (such as boys' clubs) which may have an interest.
6. A representative from the state physical fitness commission. (This is usually headquartered in the Governor's office.) The larger the potential number of runners, the more interested this office will be. It could help with print-

ing, secretarial jobs and possibly funding.

7. A local medical association. Running for health is the approach to take with this group. Its backing can help attract adults into the club.

8. In smaller towns, the mayor or his representative. Ask him for his advice on funding and on which groups in the community might be interested in supporting club activities.

9. The track and field, long distance and race walking chairmen of the local AAU. They can explain the AAU's role in club activities.

10. Special Services officers from local military bases.

11. Active officials from the local running program.

12. Retired runners and interested running fans.

Many thriving clubs got their start from a handful of concerned runners, without involving any of these other people. But your chances of having a successful, lasting club will be much greater if you strive for the broadest possible representation.

At the initial meeting, agree on some broad but immediate goals and on a name for the club. Next, decide on the means for financing the club. Then elect officers. The final item on the agenda is very important: outline a definite plan for what to do next.

## CONSTITUTION

Many existing clubs got a good start from only one meeting and a little enthusiasm. Unfortunately, too many of them never get around to a further highly recommended step—drawing up a list of by-laws or a constitution. In addition to lending a greater degree of stability and professionalism to the club, a constitution is necessary in case the club wants to incorporate.

The Road Runners Club of America requires all member RRCs to draw up a constitution. This is a painless task, taking one man less than an hour. Once prepared, the constitution is ratified by a majority of the club members.

A typical constitution for a running club include the following: (1) title (name of the organization); (2) object (purposes and goals of the club); (3) affiliation (AAU, RRCA, etc.); (4) membership (requirements); (5) management or government (administrative structure); (6) finances; (7) dissolution (procedure for disbanding).

## INCORPORATION

The thought of becoming incorporated conjures up visions of unfathomable red-tape. In fact, the trouble and expense in incorporating as a non-profit organization are minimal—and there are definite advantages: (1) No officer or group of individuals in the club can be sued (e.g., if a runner is hit by a car during a club-sponsored race, except in the unlikely case that direct negligence can be proven); instead, the club bears responsibility and can only be sued for whatever it has in the treasury; (2) Having official non-profit status makes it easier to gain tax-exempt standing, so that no annual income tax return need be filed and donors can deduct contributions from their taxes.

Cost of incorporation is small. For example, in Washington, D.C., it is \$12 for the initial filing and \$1 per year thereafter. Incorporation is done in the state where the club has its headquarters. State offices of corporations or the Secretary of State's office can supply information about forming and

operating a non-profit corporation. The procedure is simple, ordinarily only requiring that you fill out a one-page form, have it signed by several members and notarized, and deliver it to the proper office along with the fee and club constitution.

## **TAX-EXEMPT STATUS**

If your club becomes incorporated, it must either file an annual income tax return or have tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service. The IRS provides a free pamphlet (“How to Apply for Recognition of Exemption for an Organization,” publication 557, revised April 1973) which tells you how to apply for exemption. When applying, you’ll need to include a copy of your articles of incorporation, club constitution, by-laws or general rules. There is no fee involved.

## **AAU MEMBERSHIP**

The Amateur Athletic Union claims jurisdiction over all open amateur competition in the United States. If members compete *for the team* or clubs compete *as a team* in AAU events, the club must belong to the local AAU association. This involves having an application for membership approved, and paying a yearly registration fee. This fee is about \$20 annually. Contact the AAU branch in your area for details.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

The minimum number of officers for a club is two—a president and a secretary-treasurer. However, on the basis of the RRC’s years of experience, one all-important principle has emerged as vital to a club’s success: *avoid having one or two people do all the work*. Frequently, the president is tempted to do most of the work himself, because it gets done quicker, the way he wants it, and he doesn’t have to ask others to help or explain the job to them. Overall club efficiency eventually suffers, because with one man doing everything the volume of work soon leads him to cut corners. If this person’s enthusiasm fades, the club may fold.

Enticing others to take part, even if it’s just holding a stopwatch at a race, will develop other administrators and will liberate the best man to oversee things. In fact, it is recommended that the president make a conscious effort to “farm out” small jobs to different club members, even though he could handle these duties himself. Make careful note of which people deliver and which ones don’t. Within a few months, the real workers will surface and the duds will have been revealed.

The offices of president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary are probably the only ones that should be elected by the membership. The president should appoint people to be in charge of various other aspects of club work: membership, publicity, scheduling of races, awards, meet directing, social affairs, sponsorship, etc.

## **DUES**

The Road Runners Club offers a “regular” membership fee (averaging \$4 per year), and a lower rates for students. Another common category, is the family membership, which enrolls everyone in the family for one fee. Some

clubs have “contributing” members who give more than the required amount to support the club.

Experience has shown the clubs lose a large amount of revenue if they do not clearly and emphatically remind members each time their renewals are due. You cannot leave the burden on the individual to remember this date and pay voluntarily. Either send out a special postcard, or insert a prominent announcement in the race schedule or newsletter.

Every club should have a supply of membership application forms available at all races, and the forms should be displayed prominently. Both new and renewing members want and deserve some sort of acknowledgment that their payment has been received and that they are bona fide members of the club. At the very least, send them a small membership card.

## **FINANCING**

Running clubs in the US traditionally have operated on a shoestring, supported only by annual membership dues and race entry fees. The fact that so many clubs have survived with this system indicates that you need not engage in any other fund-raising activities. But with no other sources of income, a club finds it difficult to grow and prosper. A few extra bucks enables you to do a lot more for the club and the sport.

One of the best and most common ways of helping the treasury is to enlist one or more sponsors for a race. A sponsor—individual, organization or company—contributes awards, money or both. In return, the sponsor receives favorable public exposure. Try to give the sponsors as much publicity as possible, if they want it (and in most cases they do).

Groups that are most inclined to sponsor races include YMCAs, insurance companies, health food stores, soft drink companies, Jaycees, Kiwanis and similar service-oriented groups, sporting goods dealers, city or county recreation departments, shopping centers, athletic shoe dealers and many more.

Other fund-raising ideas include the sale of merchandise to runners (World Publications offers a plan whereby clubs can keep the commission on books, magazines, etc. which they sell) and mass runs in which each runner is sponsored at the rate of, say, 10 cents per mile, all proceeds going to the club.

A major expense with most clubs is postage. You can save money by applying for a bulk mailing permit at the post office. A low rate is available to non-profit organizations which have been granted tax-exempt status by the IRS.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

It is the nature of clubs in the United States that members rarely get together as a group. Therefore, the best way to give a measure of cohesiveness to the club and to pass the word on club activities is through publications. The most important of these, in most clubs, is the race schedule which provides the necessary information on competition.

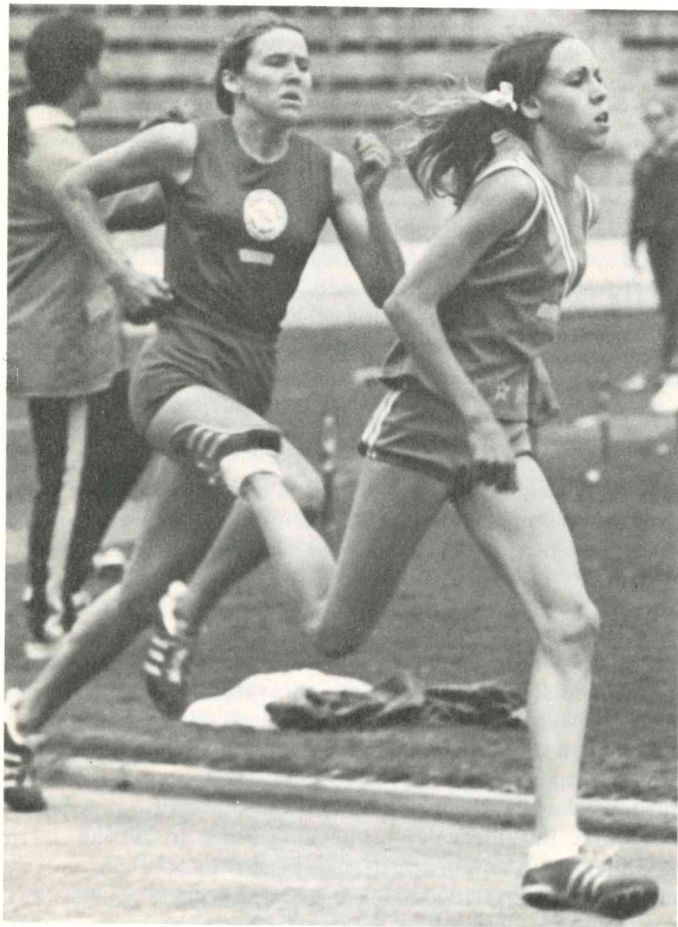
One of the most worthwhile things a club can do is to publish a newsletter. Sure, it's a bit of work. But it lets club members feel they are getting something for their money. Furthermore, it stimulates their interest and enthusiasm. So even if you do no more than publish a one-page dittoed job a few times per year, it's effort well spent.

The newsletter should include: race results, training profiles on club members, announcements of forthcoming club events, stories of recent events, minutes of business meetings, a personal message from the president, articles submitted by members, advertising (another money-maker), entry blanks, training tips and just about anything else related to the sport.

### ACTIVITIES

In competitive clubs, races are by far the most important activity. However, all clubs should have an occasional business meeting, if only to elect officers. And there are various other running-related activities which can stimulate interest and participation. Always make a deliberate attempt to involve as many members as possible in one or more of these activities: group training sessions, awards banquets, lectures and clinics, picnics, etc. They all contribute to the "club spirit," bringing runners together to find something they couldn't get on their own. This is the purpose of any club.

Mary Decker (r) of the Blue Angels TC. (Schwab)





# THE COORDINATOR

Seldom does a club have a coach. Clubs have administrators, advisors, directors, managers, presidents, coordinators or dictators, but rarely coaches in the usual sense of the word. In the United States, the schools have coaches because they can afford to pay them. Most clubs can't, so you can just about count the number of professional coaches in their ranks on one hand. There aren't even many amateur coaches at this level.

Mihaly Igloi, the brilliant Hungarian expatriot, was an exception. He made his living, somewhat precariously, by coaching the Santa Clara Valley, Los Angeles and Santa Monica clubs in the 1960s. He was supported by sponsors and dues from the athletes. A few age-group coaches follow the lead of swimming and draw modest paychecks from membership fees.

But this is unusual. The other coaches—most of whom deal with youngsters or beginners—work for nothing. This is a hobby for them, as it is for the administrators, etc., who handle club business. They aren't in it for the money. And in this sense, both they and their athletes are among the last bastions of amateurism. Operating a club is truly a labor of love, because seldom is there any material return on the investment of time, energy and money from one's own pocket.

The investment can be staggering. As with running itself, the prospects are open-ended. There's always the possibility of doing a little more and a little more until there's time for nothing else. Jack Leydig of the West Valley TC in California (see chapter three) found his club demanding so much of his time that he quit his job to give the club full attention.

Leydig has never thought of himself as a coach. The athletes in the club never get together with him for team training. Yet Leydig performs most of the other duties of a school coach—and then some. He is a publicist, spokesman, fund-raiser, recruiter, meet promoter. He *is* the West Valley TC. Without him, there probably would be no club.

The RRCA warned in the preceding article against centering too much power in one man's hands. Yet at the same time it is essential that a club have a single strongman who is setting the club's course. He is one who walks the thin line between providing leadership and making the club a one-man show. The first is essential. The second has obvious pitfalls.

The strongman's ideal role, according to British club administrator Brian Mitchell, "is to cohere and to persuade. He has to be in touch with everyone, without directly doing any of the work himself other than the vital business of keeping everything else going and closing any gaps that appear."

This is the ideal. It rarely develops in practice that most of the work goes to someone else. It usually ends up back with the strongman, because he has shown a willingness to work and others are quite willing to let him. If you take on the job of directing a club, figure you'll be doing much of the work yourself. Try to farm it out, but don't count on a rush of volunteers.

Starting a club is easy. Keeping it afloat is the hard part, requiring the constant attention of a strong, able, energetic central figure. Every club mentioned in this booklet has one.

# THE COMPETITION

BY DAVID THEALL

An important function of clubs—all competing clubs—is to provide races for members and others. This often means promoting your own events, and the burden of doing this often falls on the club leader. The District of Columbia Road Runners Club, largest RRC in the country, puts on a run nearly every weekend of the year. Fortunately, the work load is spread to a number of people. But the president still has to oversee the program. Dave Theall, an official with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and past president of the DC RRC, offers A-to-Z advice to his successors.

- The proper *atmosphere* at weekly meets is a primary concern, which you can influence favorably. Through your example and attitude, try to create a relaxed, friendly and appreciative atmosphere. Example: encourage the applauding of all finishers.

- *Awards* are tangible symbols of success. In the belief that the 44th place finisher is just as important as the fourth, we have tried to recognize maximum performances that are not high class. Eliminate prizes at least once monthly. Runners will thereby save the entry fee and your awards chairman will have a respite. And as amateur athletes, runners should be reminded occasionally that running is its own reward.

- *Commitment* to runners, sponsors and local government bodies are to be taken very seriously, i.e. honored. Lacking facilities of our own, our reputation and future success rides on whether or not our written and spoken word means something. Be careful whom you let speak for the club.

- *Gratitude* is pretty inexpensive, yet highly meaningful, to those volunteers who sustain our program. A short note or a phone call lets a person know his or her efforts were noticed and appreciated.

- *Marathons* may be the ultimate of long distance running, but all the other events are just as important—just as the average runner in our program is as important as the elite. Don't put all your energy and resources into one or two long events.

- A *monopoly* over the conduct of distance running events is not what our club should aspire to. Both recreation departments (with paid officials) and other clubs are interested in holding weekend meets. Our schedule can be used to publicize their meets—if they measure up to our requirements. To be avoided are exclusive meets, use of recycled junk trophies, hazardous courses and excessive fees designed to enrich the club's treasury or some other "worthy cause."

- *Proposals* for various types of events or projects should be referred to the appropriate committee, after the suggestor has thought through his idea and maybe even checked out some pertinent facts concerning it. Always be receptive to ideas, and try to adopt them at least on a one-trial basis.

- The limited *resources* of the club will not allow you to do all you'd

like in “adopting ideas” or merely extending services.

- *Responsibility* cannot be delegated; assignments and authority can. Therefore, look for results from subordinates. Keep informed of progress and get involved, if need be.

- *Safety* is your primary concern. The enemies are heat, cars, air pollution, rocky surfaces, starting line stampedes and unfit novices. You may have to make an unpopular decision on occasion to protect people. The “Spartans” will protest.

- *Scheduling* events is the main way the club promotes running, of course. I think fun and friendly competition are what it’s all about. A few special events for older, children, women and novices help maintain a high level of interest among less proficient members.

- *Scoring* races promptly, so that any awards can be presented before a decent gathering of participants, is one aspect that has seemed to get overlooked. The director himself usually gets immersed in stop-watching until the last runner finishes, and by that time it’s too late to score the race toward a worthwhile presentation ceremony—however modest.

- *Sponsors* are great, insofar as they provide awards. They also lend prestige to our program. Stay on top of this yourself, or get a dependable person to concentrate on enlisting sponsors. They usually want no more than a little favorable publicity. It can be provided easily among club members, but can’t be guaranteed with the free press unless the sponsor wants to pay for advertising.

- *Volunteers* are generally available, as long as the recruiter can spell out what the assignment is. Volunteers should be recruited on a direct “your turn to help” basis, rather than a persuasive “it’s fun” snow-job.

- *Zeal* is a good quality for race promoters, if it doesn’t do them in. Don’t get too ambitious. With some 55 meets annually, 160 events, four professional clinics, dinner meetings, banquets, pamphlets, routine correspondence (400 stamps), etc., you’ll be adequately committed to the cause without launching any new crusades.

# THE COMMUNICATION

BY LARRY ARMSTRONG

Whether your club has a cast of thousands or your membership is still in double figures, there is a sure-fire way to increase membership, instill club spirit and keep your regulars coming back for more: produce a club newsletter on a regular basis.

The Fulton/Williams County (Ohio) Road Runners, like many clubs, arose to fill a void of organized competition in our area. These distances between towns in these counties has made communications between members awkward, and our club newsletter has been the single factor that has kept us running smoothly. Our first newsletter came about more as a necessity than a brilliant idea. There was just no other way to inexpensively notify members of what we are doing.

Thus far, we have successfully used club membership fees to cover mailing and printing costs, so that race entry fees can be used to cover the cost of awards at races. During the summer, we produce a copy every two weeks, and one issue each month in the winter. Besides club members, copies go to other nearby clubs, AAU officials, news media personnel, club sponsors and high school coaches. A permanent list of addresses is a must.

To get a newsletter started, you need these things: a combination writer-editor-typist-mailman, a ditto machine, ingenuity and plenty of desire. The editor should be deeply involved in club affairs and should realize that each issue can take several hours from the first penned word to the mailing. Club members involved in teaching, churches or businesses can often locate a copying machine.

A two-page, three-column format has proven to be the most efficient and economical. A standard heading is used for each issue. It contains the club insignia, issue number and date. In our first 15 issues, quite a variety of articles has appeared. Some of these features are listed here. By experimenting, you can make them apply to your situation:

Statement of club purpose; membership information; upcoming races, distance, site; new members; club T-shirt and patch sales; information articles (shoes, vitamins, clothing, hot and cold weather running); member notes (accomplishments); race entry forms; holiday gift ideas for runners; "did you know?"; notice of relevant articles in national magazines; treasury report; club age-group records (15 and under to masters); season recap and highlights.

Each article serves either to recognize the support a member gives to the club (joining, competing, etc.) or to inform him of club and running topics. In terms of reinforcing these things, the more times a member's name appears in print, the better.

Our club started with eight members in 1972. It now has close to 100 and I'm sure the newsletter is responsible for this rapid growth.

# THE COST OF IT ALL

"Finances?" Jock Semple says, laughing at the use of that word in connection with his club. "There is just no such animal. In important races, we sometimes get a little help for gas money, but most of our runners are 'pure amateurs,' and pay their own way everywhere and buy their own equipment."

Jock works with the Boston Athletic Association. In the nickel-and-dime world of American clubs, the BAA situation is the rule. The runners are pure amateurs who pay their own way simply because they have no choice. Somehow, the system works. The BAA has operated continuously since 1887.

The University of Chicago TC has lasted more than 20 years of similarly low-budget operation. Ted Haydon says, "Our athletes provide their own equipment, including uniform, shoes and sweat suit. We have no regular dues, other than a locker fee, although many members contribute to our annual fund raising. We do not have a regular budget. Funds are raised according to our needs."

The UCTC's funds come from contributions, guarantees from meet sponsors, entry fees and gate receipts from UCTC-sponsored meets. Expenses, Haydon says, are used "principally for travel to meets and for lodging, and it is not unusual for our athletes to pay part of their own way." Pay their own way. It's a familiar refrain in club athletics. It's the only way most clubs can survive. Only a few US clubs can afford more than an occasional tank of gas and a post-race meal at McDonald's.

Only the rare club has an outside income (outside its own members' and their parents' pockets, that is). The ones that do are usually the clubs which cater to the best athletes in the country.

The Pacific Coast Club of California is made up entirely of national and world class trackmen and women. Their reputations earn them all the expenses money they need from major meet promoters. And the club also reportedly requests and receives additional donations for its treasury from these meets.

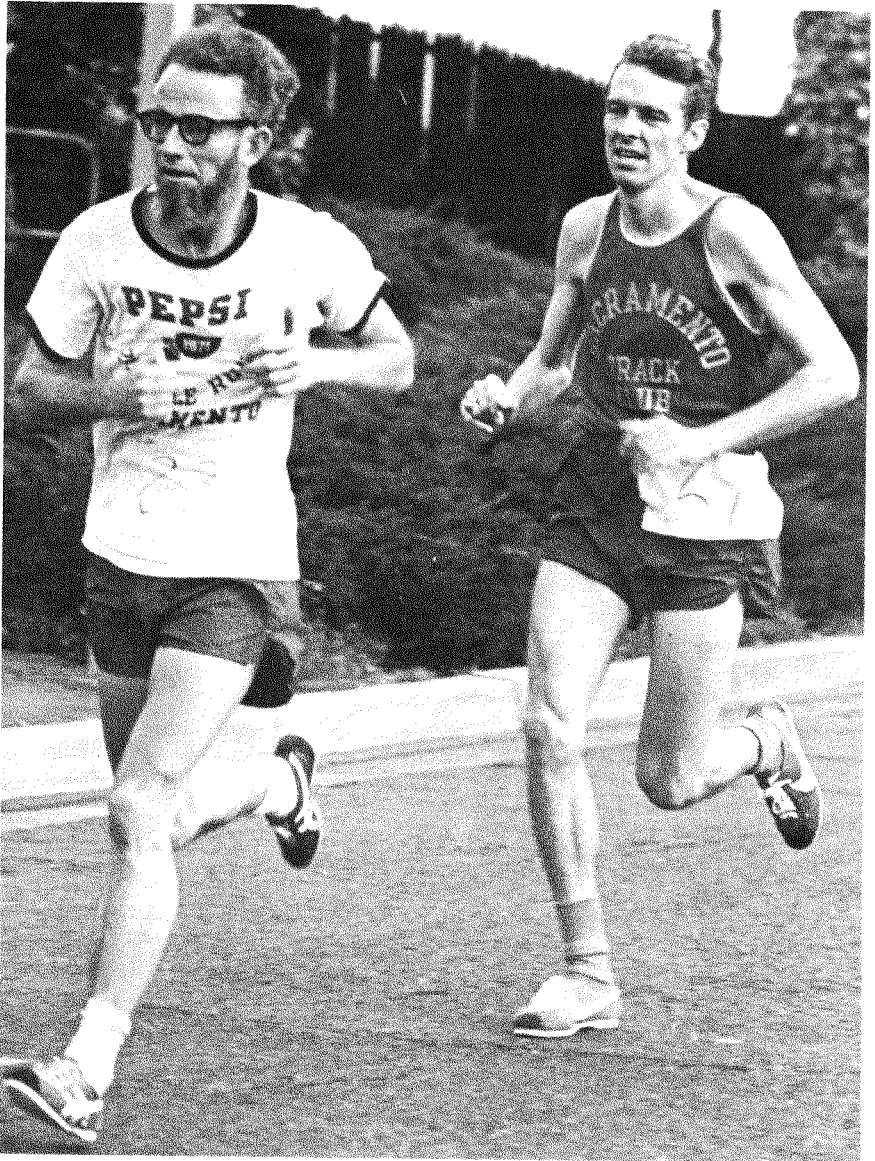
The New York AC is criticized for its strict membership policies and its free use of expense money to attract talent (see chapter one). But Ron Laird defends the club. "The NYAC's sponsorship is the only way I could have kept going at the level I have over the past dozen years," says the three-time Olympic walker. "They've been just great about helping out with travel expenses. I used to hitchhike all over the country to make races—get rides with all sorts of weirdos and not get sleep or rest for days on end while traveling, show up for the race all wiped out and cramped from the trip. And to take the time to do the hitching, I'd have to quit my job. But then the NYAC came along..."

Athletes of Laird's class need a NYAC or PCC because they can't afford to pay their own way. Neither, unfortunately, can most clubs formed to support them. Recent track history is littered with casualties that tried to "make it big": the Houston Striders, Athens AC, Mihaly Igloi's Santa Clara Valley Youth Village and Los Angeles TC, the 49ers TC.

The money pinch killed most of these clubs. It can kill any club, any size, that thinks there is easy money in amateur running.

# Chapter III

# CLUB SURVEY



California club runners Ross Smith (l) and Frank Krebs. (Beinhorn)

# A NEW YORKER'S CHOICE

BY HUGH SWEENY

Nowhere in the United States is club running more alive—and more like the system in Europe—than in and around New York City. Clubs have long been a mainstay of running activity there, and that tradition regularly spawns new clubs to augment the established ones. We publish this article not as a detailed directory of the New York club system, but to show what is available in one metropolitan area—and could be available in others. Writer Sweeny lives in New Jersey and competes regularly in New York.

If you're an unattached runner in the New York metropolitan area, the selection of clubs to join is vast and the choice is probably baffling. There are more than a dozen quite active clubs, and another dozen or so "minor" clubs operating within 25 miles of New York. Add to these the 10-15 colleges whose runners regularly participate in AAU competition, and you see that the team running scene in and around New York is the most active and diverse in the nation.

An examination of the clubs in the New York area reveals that each club seems to have a constituency all its own. While some clubs draw their members from only a specific local area, several clubs have out-of-state runners whose attachment to the club is based on interest or personality rather than geography.

Here is a sampling of the major clubs, how and for whom they operate:

**New York Athletic Club (NYAC).** This is the big-time club in New York. It is, in fact, the richest, longest established and perennially most successful club in the US. Through the years, athletes wearing the familiar red "winged foot" have garnered more national level championships than have any other club's members.

The reason is simple. The NYAC is a huge, powerful organization whose general membership pours thousands of dollars annually into the club coffers for the support of the club's athletic programs. Almost any athlete in the New York area who is good enough to run well on a national level can have his expenses paid by the AC. For that reason, the NYAC has for years "recruited" from surrounding AAU associations. From New Jersey alone, the AC has picked up Marty Liquori, Bill Reilly, Tom Fleming, Mike Keogh, Jim Crawford and others.

But to my mind, there's really nothing wrong with this. Many of these runners do have some tenable connection, either through college, business or temporary residence, with New York. And the others may not be able to receive expenses to the big meets without help from the club.

Expense money and top level ability seem to be the main ingredients of binding the NYAC's membership. If there is a national championship on the line, coach Jim Rafferty, a former national AAU steeplechase champion, spreads the word, the expense money goes out, the runners show up, run, win and depart. They seldom see each other between big meets. With a few exceptions, the "winged foot" is seldom seen at local road races.

The NYAC, which to its general membership is an exclusive social, business and recreational club, has a whites-only membership policy. Hence, no black runners, either. Only a few top white athletes in the area have, however, turned down the NYAC dollars for moral or idealistic reasons. "I just run for them. I don't affect their membership policy" is the justification which most of them give.

**New York Pioneer Club (NYPC).** The Pioneers were once an athletic force of a magnitude nearly equal to that of the NYAC. The difference is that while the Pioneers catered to black athletes, it was represented by white runners as well. The leading Jewish athletes also were accepted by the Pioneers.

The club was founded in 1936, and Ed Levy has been its driving force. Runners as diverse as Oscar Moore, John Carlos and Gordon McKenzie—Olympians at 5000, 200 and the marathon, respectively—have run for the NYPC. But at present the club has little potency. Ted Corbitt, the ultra-marathoner, is about the only distance member of note.

Joe Yancey, a coach and trainer for many American international teams, has long been associated with the Pioneers. Most of the current members are older men in their late 30s and 40s. Younger athletes seldom join. The Pioneers can't provide financial aid like they did in the old days when, as old-timers fondly recall, they won national team championships.

The Pioneers do, however, hold well-attended club practices three times a week in the winter at the 142nd Street Armory. From the 20-30 sprinters, mostly blacks but with a liberal smattering of whites, the Pioneers develop mile relay teams which compete well in the Garden.

**Atoms Track Club.** This is one of the finest women's track clubs in the country, having won a number of national titles and sent several athletes on international junkets. Cheryl Toussaint has been the leading runner. The club is centered in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. Fred Thompson has done the organizing, fund-raising and coaching of the group which has been a source of pride for the community.

A few men from nearby Boys High School have also run with the Atoms. The Atoms train together, and the club has the spirit and cohesiveness of a high school team—which it in fact is.

**Millrose Athletic Association.** This is one of the oldest distance running clubs in the country. Finn Hannes Kolehmainen ran for Millrose when he was living in the US in the early 1920s. Today, Millrose is still a good long distance club, and because NYAC runners don't show up for many AAU championships Millrose usually wins all the team prizes from 15 kilometers to 50 miles. The Millrose runners are the road running fanatics in the Met area. Week after week, there are enough of them to field a team. Week after week, you see the same Millrose faces.

The Millrose regulars are a close group. They're referred to as a "bunch of Irish Catholics from the Bronx", a description which fits their image but falls short in describing their varied backgrounds.

Joe Kleinerman, a key figure in New York road racing, is the Millrose "manager-director." The club members get modest expense money through the sponsoring Wanamaker Department Stores, which also promote the indoor Millrose Games.



**St. Anthony's Boys Club (St. ABC).** The club once was sponsored by the St. Anthony's church in Queens. It has a hard core of road runners, including many in their 30s and 40s. Milt Pataky coordinates things at St. ABC, and club expenses come largely from his pocket. Milt has converted the basement of his house into an athletic clubhouse, and many of the members use it as headquarters for training.

**Robin Campbell of Sports International. (Doug Schwab photo)**



**Central Park Track Club (CPTC).** A new club, it already has several dozen members who live in Manhattan and train in Central Park. They are late-starting runners who generally didn't begin until they were in their late 20s and 30s. They have a professional, midtown flavor and they mostly run for fun and fitness, rather than for competition.

Fred Lebow, the club's organizer, directs the New York marathon held in Central Park. He did no "pirating"—i.e., stealing runners from other clubs—to form the CPTC. Rather, he organized runners who were already training in the park into a pretty good distance team.

Kathrine Switzer, a top woman marathoner, Bennet Gershman, a 2:36 marathoner, and Frank Handleman, a sub-4:20 miler, are typical of the CPTC Manhattanites with good jobs who are becoming good runners. Many of them train together in the summer around the Central Park Reservoir.

**Long Island Athletic Club (LIAC).** The LIAC, like the NYAC, is more than a track team. It is rather a large organization of Long Island businessmen which sponsors teams in various sports. The LIAC draws more than 200 people per week to its summer track meets, but they are mostly high school and college runners who don't venture into the city for road races.

Paul Fetscher, a sub-2:40 marathoner, handles the organizational aspects of the running program, including the massive (400-plus starters) Earth Day marathon.

Ninety-nine percent of the clubs' members live on Long Island.

**Manhattan Flight Kings.** They are a creation of Ted Foy and the federal government. Foy has solicited federal funds to sponsor the club. His idea is to get disadvantaged youngsters interested in running. One of his programs has been to close off certain streets in Harlem and to hold "block championships." Only occasionally does a Flight King appear at an AAU meet.

**United BOHAA.** Jim Borden has gotten federal funding for the club, which recently—to the dismay of its road running contingent—merged with the sprint-oriented Brooklyn Over-The-Hill Athletic Association to form United BOHAA.

No road runner wants to be thought of as a sprinter, so the UAA distance men split to organize their own club, the "Eastern States AC."

A stereotype, not altogether inaccurate, of the United AA is that of a "group of working class guys from Brooklyn."

Even more clubs exist in the surrounding suburban areas, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey—particularly in New Jersey. The strongest of the New Jersey teams are the Central Jersey TC, North Jersey Striders and Shore AC. But since no clubs in New Jersey have the money to help significantly with expenses to meets outside the area, runners from this state generally go off to greener pastures as soon as they reach national caliber.

Small clubs, both in the city and in surrounding areas, appear and disappear like the waxing and waning of the moon. But every so often a small club has a dynamic leader and groups like the Atoms TC and Central Park TC develop, both of which are less than five years old yet are well established.

The clubs of New York are as varied as the people and the neighborhoods of the city. The clubs that have succeeded are the ones which have satisfied the needs of their members.

# A MIDWEST DILEMMA

BY JOHN SAMORE

The development of a track club program offers any enterprising, if foolhardy, person the opportunity to explore the euphoric heights of ecstasy and depths of depression. In the acknowledged coastal capitals of the sports world, such psychic extremes are quite readily achievable. In the comparative isolation of mid-America, the emotional register more frequently records the monotonous drone of mediocrity.

"Successful" midwestern clubs could hardly be measured by the same standards as organizations in track's hotbeds. No midwestern club harbors the delusion of a national track championship or an annual grand tour of Europe for its top athletes. We may sneak away with a minor road title on a rare occasion when the AAU awards our area a national event. However, the prevailing reality is that our goals, capacities and, therefore, achievements are more modest than our coastal contemporaries. By this scale, the continued vitality of a midwestern club must be measured...

The lack of any AAU program in the area of northwestern Iowa, eastern Nebraska and South Dakota had often caused trackmen to discuss the possibility of a summer track club. But the talk remained only muttered disaffection until August 1968, when something significant was finally attempted. While sidelined by an injury, I assumed the challenge of arousing interest in a couple of casual all-comers affairs and handled the organizational skeleton of a program: securing necessary equipment, lining the field, investigate liability and insurance, getting required city approval to use a park, contacting prospective competitors and prodding the media.

Subsequent summers brought the Sioux Valley Track Club measured success. The age-group program grew, the sponsored events increased, notable performances were registered and the SVTC Summer Classic was established. The resolved intent from the outset was to be a "club" only in the loosest sense of the word. We would compile no membership lists, charge no dues or entry fees, and would emphasize participation in sport for the sheer fun of competition. We sought to develop a healthy, spontaneous attitude in youngsters already too impressed with the "to lose is to die" philosophies of media-inflated national figures, and pervasive through schools and children's sport leagues.

The Classic, however, became the club's major competitive showcase. Through a full schedule of events, exquisite awards and utilization of the organizer-director's sport connections, the Classic was able to draw a talented mid-summer field of high school, college and open athletes, as well as offering the age-group boys and girls a chance for recognition. The meet annually drew more than 300 entries from 10-14 states and the records reflected the high quality of the field by anyone's standards.

However, something was missing. To exist, a body requires more than just a heart. Production of fresh blood is vital. In seeking to spur interest, I had made what had proven to be a crippling error—the "organization" of the track club was a single man. One young man had gone door-to-door raising funds. In Iowa, unlike California, local businessmen are less cognizant of the

benefits derived from having a group of well-mannered, talented representatives publicizing the community around the country. The difficulty of this task was compounded by the youth of the fund-raiser, the little "return on investment" he could assure the contributor and the obscurity of his cause. He nevertheless was able to finance a score of beautiful nylon uniforms in the hope of spurring pride in the new programs.

The same fellow handled all media contact. Consumed with his sport, he wrote all press releases and no doubt aroused antagonism in some members of the media in his sincere desire to see track receive the coverage he felt it deserved.

The single-handed guidance had a debilitating effect on subsequent attempts to delegate. Efforts to make particular individuals responsible for functional aspects of the program were notable only in their futility.

The enthusiasm was there. Yes, everyone loved the opportunity to run, jump, throw or watch, but no one really wanted to work. They assumed the track junkie would continue indefinitely to do it all. Despite avowals to the contrary, this admitted junkie did continue to accept the burden to the detriment of his own competitive performances as well as the club's future.

In retrospect, I feel several factors were largely responsible for these failures of participants to assume a fair share of the responsibility. They had no investment in the club. Not required to pay dues or entry fees, they were even less willing to commit their time. A general lack of expertise in our area as to a club program's functioning further stunted development. Certainly, the big boon to any club program is the presence of a knowledgeable, dedicated, non-competing representative with experience and the willingness to devote his time on behalf of the club.

Finally, and most damningly, my own dedication militated against club self-sufficiency. Perhaps I should have taken the advice of other, wiser folk who told me to disengage after the second year: "You've done your share, now let others do theirs." Rather than allow the ignominious demise of the SVTC, I made it a consuming cause, enlisting the aid of parents, relatives, girl friends, losing time from jobs, schoolwork and my own training. I deluded myself that soon a savior would emerge, deeply motivated by our noble experiment and assume the reins. The people on whom I thought I could count continued to espouse grand designs, but their talk greatly exceeded both their commitment and competence...

The SVTC is still alive because we've corrected many of our earlier problems. The program has expanded to include several road runs "between seasons." New, mature blood appears to be assuming responsibility and raising requisite financial support. Several of us have received partial expense assistance to national championships for which we qualified.

Yet, undeniably, the track club in mid-America still faces a constant struggle for survival that is unique. Indeed, with little to attract the outstanding athlete, seasonal limitations, and oppressive ignorance of the sport, considerable talent goes untapped or wanes underdeveloped every year. This overall loss to American track persists largely due to the misconception that a lack of numerous high quality performances is indicative of a lack of talent. All the athletes may really lack is opportunity.

# A FULL-TIME "DICTATOR"

BY HUGH BOWEN

By any standard, the West Valley Track Club of northern California is a success. It has more than 200 active athletes, ranging from national and world class runners (the club contributed more marathoners to the 1972 Olympic Trials than any other group, and Alvaro Mejia won the 1971 Boston marathon) to people who are new to running. It is the only club in the country to travel to each of the last four national AAU men's cross-country meets. And it publishes a magazine, the *Norcal Running Review*, which serves not only the club members but hundreds of other athletes in the area.

This success hasn't come easily or by chance. It has largely been the result of years of work by one man, president Jack Leydig. The WVTC began in the early 1960s as just one of many local distance clubs in and around San Francisco. Leydig told me, "I didn't join the club until 1968, and I was elected president in '69. I've been president—dictator—ever since."

"Are you a benevolent dictator?" I asked him.

"Hmm, not too benevolent... The club has a provision that I have to be unanimously re-elected by the executive counsel after four years in office, and every year no one disagrees. When it gets this big, you've almost got to treat it like a business. So I'm stuck unless I resign, which is a cop-out. Any club should divvy the work out, and that's probably one of the main things I do wrong. I try to take on too much myself. Somebody's got to do it, so I end up doing it."

Leydig, who estimates he puts in 100 hours per month on club business, quit his regular job as a computer programmer before the 1972 Olympic Trials (he is a 2:25 marathoner who qualified to run there) and hasn't gone back to it since. He now supports himself as an athletic supplies salesman, which leaves him more free time for club work. Much of the time is spent on the club's publication, which has a circulation of 1000.

"I started the newsletter about five years ago," he says. "I just started with a little mimeo sheet, then I realized that all of northern California needed something. So now there's just a little section on the club, and the rest of the *Norcal Running Review* relates to all runners in the area. It's not just long distance runners. It's also track and field and race walking. It comes out once every seven weeks because I just don't have the time to do it more often. I have advertising and subscription managers and people who send for the results and write the articles. But I still do the typing and the layout, which is a big job."

None of the profits from the *Review* goes into Leydig's pocket. It goes back into the club. The magazine ("it's now more of a magazine than a newsletter") provides \$100 a month, which is welcome, but, according to Jack, "is not very much considering the work that goes into it." Members pay dues ranging from \$5 (pre-high school) to \$15 (family membership, no limit on number). Last year, the WVTC collected over \$1000 from businesses which either sponsored races or made outright donations. The club also received \$500 from the AAU Club Aid Program simply by filling out a request form explaining the financial needs and assets.

What does the club offer? Leydig says, "Members get the *Norcal Re-*

view, free entry into all club-sponsored meets and money for half their gas for all "important" meets outside a 150-mile radius. Usually, we try to find places to stay with friends in private housing."

What advice would he give to someone starting a club? "Don't!" he laughs. "There's too much work to it." Still, he stays with the WVTC because he believes in what clubs have to offer. Jack explains:

"The main reason clubs form in the US is that there's no real strong coaching program for people out of college. There's nothing at all. You have to know a college coach who'll help you out, or get in an area with a lot of track freaks. Generally, you can learn from other people in the club."

Also, "it provides a lot of incentive if you can compete for a club instead of for yourself. A lot of times, people will let themselves down more easily than they'll let the team down. A lot of times, if you're out in a race and you're feeling lousy, you say, 'I'll just quit.' But if you're running for a club, you don't want to let the club down—especially if you're running in a 'counting' position. The club is there to help the athlete get better, and that's how he's going to get better—by competition. Club running instills better competition in each person."

Leydig says another of the important functions of a club is to provide communication. "I've found that any club which doesn't have some sort of communication breaks down. Now we're spread all over northern California. We've even got guys in Los Angeles competing for us. So if we don't have any communication, everything breaks down." Communication and coordination are his main jobs. They are almost full-time jobs.

"The only regret I have," says Jack, "is that I'm too ambitious." Because of the amount of work involved, he cautions prospective club directors against trying to become too big too fast. "If a club grows up overnight, you can't keep up with the growth. We've grown slowly over the years, and that's probably the best way. We've had time to build up a reputation."

With a reputation like the one the West Valley TC has, more and better members naturally join. This creates more work, which Leydig has learned to accommodate. "You've got to do more coordination with more people," he says. "You've got to worry about rides to meets. You've got to worry about housing. It's just a mess for one person to handle. No matter how carefully you plan, there are still screw-ups."

His own workload with the club keeps Jack from running as much as he'd like. On a good week now, he does less than a third of the mileage from his 2:25 marathon days. He welcomes more help, and readily gives credit to the "real hard workers in the club." But WVTC has been his responsibility for so long that the division of labor isn't easy.

He says it's not something you can hand to someone else and tell him, "Here, do it." Jack is serious when he says, "If someone wanted to help me do the newsletter, he'd almost have to live with me."

# A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

Runners of similar aptitude and interest band together. Few clubs want to or can appeal to more than one or two special interests. Few have the resources, human or financial, to be all things to all people. Only an ambitious club like the San Diego TC can take on a goal as large as "serving the entire running community" and live to tell about it.

The 20-year-old SDTC has room for at least seven different groups: (1) national class post-school athletes; (2) athletes of lesser talent who wants to compete; (3) pre-high school boys; (4) men over 40; (7) female competitors; (6) fun and fitness runners; (7) officials, administrators, spectators who don't run but still want to be involved. More than 500 people now belong to the club which began in 1954 because Bill Gookin was still hungry to race.

"There were 12 of us on the school track team," Gookin recalls, "and we wanted to continue to compete together, so we formed the club. I never thought it would go this far."

It has gone this far largely through Bill Gookin's work. Only in recent years has the leadership become as diverse as the membership. Gookin used to do everything. A club official, David Pain, says, "It wasn't unusual to see Bill mark the course for a race, send out entries, fire the starter's gun, shed his outer garments, run in the race, win, time himself along the way and stand at the finish timing the others."

Responsibilities are now passed around. A different runner directs each race or meet (the club has hosted several national cross-country and road championships, started the Masters program and promotes major indoor and outdoor track meets). Someone else edits the newsletter. Others handle club business matters.

"Based on our experience," writes Tom Bache of the SDTC, "the advice we would offer to other clubs is:

- "Make it the first priority of your club to encourage the participation of members and prospective members in competitions. Success in this will drag the remainder of your program with it.
- "Broaden your club to appeal to all groups interested in the sport.
- "Establish a club newsletter to serve as a means of communication and unifying force for your club. The newsletter should be prompt, current and written to have equal appeal to all segments of the club.
- "If the competitive schedule in your area is insufficient to meet your needs, add your own events. In addition, encourage your members to offer their assistance to existing meet-sponsoring organizations.
- "Most important, continually strive to widen the circle of those responsible for planning and carrying out your club's program. Get people involved, for once involved they may find they have discovered an avocation of great personal importance."

Bache adds, "We are no ordinary track club composed solely of superstars not willing to work. This is the track club of the future, different elements—women, kids, open athletes, varying track groups—under one roof."





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**LEFT:** The women's club system is relatively stronger than the men's in the US—because it has had to be. The schools have done little for the women. Patty Johnson, now with the La Jolla TC, is a product of the club program. (M. Julius Baum photo)

# RUNNER'S WORLD MAGAZINE

You can join or start a local club, and you can also join a club with world-wide membership—the **Runner's World** club.

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Heinz Weigand runs for the Chattanooga TC, one of a growing number of clubs in the south. (Rik Jesse photo)



## CLUB RUNNING

“ . . . Runners are loners, but only to a point. They sometimes need support which only an organized group can give. Clubs offer support in one or more ways: coaching, competition, communication, cash. The United States needs more clubs of all types to handle these functions, but the clubs aren't going to appear magically. The runners who want them have to help start them. . . ”  
This booklet tells how.

## FRONT COVER:

Tom Hale (1) and Bill Johnson run for two of the strongest clubs on the west coast—the Oregon and West Valley Track Clubs. (John Marconi photo)