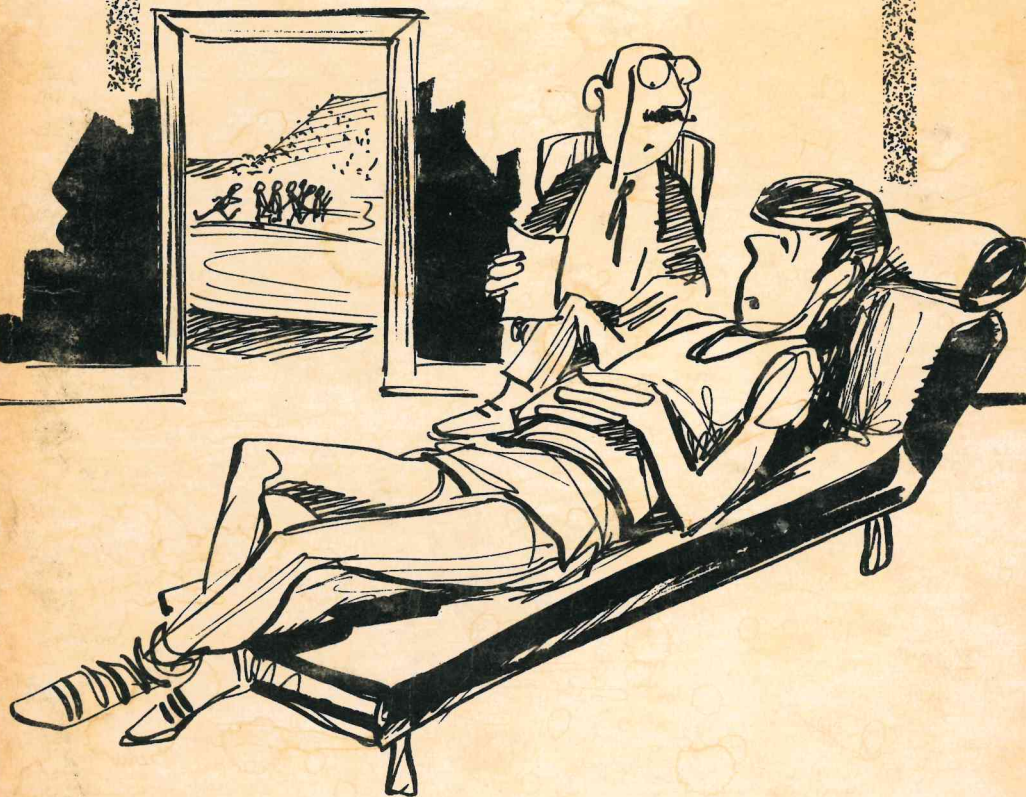


Practical Running Psychology



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**Practical Running
Psychology**

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FOREWORD

Running is a highly personal sport, filled with introspective people. The runner has plenty to think about, and plenty of time to think about it. He's constantly confronted with the struggle between willing spirit and weak flesh, and the mental juggling he goes through has a very real and direct effect on his training and racing results.

Because of these facts, every runner becomes something of an amateur psychologist. And that's what makes writing a booklet on the psychology of running so difficult. Every runner knows some of the answers about himself, and no one knows them all. Runners develop their own theories, yet not even the professionals who invest their lives in the field have explained all the mysteries of the mind.

The nature of runners' efforts makes them choice subjects for the psychologists. Dozens of studies have been carried out—a few scientific, most not. But with few exceptions the studies have fallen short of helping the runner help himself. They have been:

- *Puppet-like.* They told coaches how to "handle" athletes rather than focusing on the mental-emotional makeup and needs of the athlete himself.
- *Negative.* The emphasis was on the abnormal case, the "problem" athlete, instead of giving positive data to the basically "normal" runner.
- *Over-technical.* The studies were so loaded with technical jargon that only a trained psychologist could interpret them.
- *Over-simplified.* The cliches run: "It's 90% mental..." "It's all in your head..." "You can do anything you set your mind to..." These are empty non-answers.

All but the last type of material have an important place in running literature. Many of these studies are used as a basis for this booklet. But what we're trying to do here is digest some of the work and present it in a form that is readable and practical to the ultimate consumer—the individual runner. If it succeeds there, it will be valuable to anyone else—primarily coaches—directly concerned with a runner's performances.

We stop short of offering easy answers; there are even fewer psychological ones than physical. We shy away, too, from taking the "psychological gimmicks" approach because such gimmicks only treat the symptoms of problems, not the causes. And thinking runners aren't going to be fooled for long.

Finally, we don't probe the "why-I-run" question. It's a legitimate one, but falls more in the realm of philosophy. Maybe there'll be another booklet someday called *Practical Running Philosophy*.

For now, the attention is on the running mind and the running personality—those intriguing processes that make a man his own best friend and his own toughest competitor.

Chapter One

***Understanding
The Runner***



BARRY BROWN (Rick Levy photo)

TRUE ROLE OF SPORTS

BY GEORGE SHEEHAN, M.D.

"A winner, in our estimation, is a guy who works up to his potential even if he loses every goddamn game, but he does the best he possibly can."

—Thomas Tutko

I think the first one who said that virtue could not be taught was Socrates. It's still news, however, to the daily press which made a minor furor about an article in *Psychology Today* called "Sport; If You Want to Build Character, Try Something Else." The fact that the authors, San Jose State psychologists Bruce Ogilvie and Thomas Tutko, are consultants for 27 professional teams in basketball, football, ice hockey and golf, and have have worked with hundreds of high school and college teams in every major sport should have alerted the journalists to read their conclusions more carefully.

They didn't, and the country got the impression that the Ogilvie and Tutko opus was anti-sport. It isn't except for that catchy title. What they state is that sports may not build character (because nothing will and we're not sure, anyway, that we want to); but it can make happy, fulfilled people. This is what most of us are searching for now: exploring our possibilities, trying to become the thing we are.

A close reading of the essay will show Ogilvie and Tutko have nothing but good things to say about sport.

The following few quotes will put this conclusion in the proper perspective:

"Athletic competition has no more beneficial effect than intense, endeavor in any other field."

It is, however, one of the few fields into which people will put such intense endeavor. A fortunate few, points out philosopher Paul Weiss, carry an intense interest in their prime activity into their leisure time. Among them are the athlete, the artist, the scientist, the politician and the man of religion.

"The competitive sports experience is unique in the way it compresses the selection process into a compact time and space. The young athlete must face in a few hours the kind of pressure that occurs in the life of an achievement-oriented man over several years."

Sport has this tremendous potential for self-revelation. What we want to know is who we are. Sport can tell us as quickly, painlessly and as surely as any other human activity. Where else can we risk failure and defeat without the great fear that it will be irrevocable?

"The rapidity and clarity of the feedback in competitive sport provide a fine opportunity for the individual athlete who knows which traits he wants to change and who has the motivation to do so."

And this article was supposed to be against sports? Our psychologist friends are telling us that here, par excellence, is the learning situation. Here is a laboratory of life where one can pursue maturity without psychological hazard.

"The new direction in athletics will be toward helping athletes make personally chosen modifications in behavior; toward the joyous pursuit of esthetic experience; toward a wide variety of personality types and values."

Ogilvie and Tutko are revealing their true colors. They are sports fans and enthusiasts from the tip of their Freudian toes to the roots of their Jungian hair. The title was just a ploy—a Trojan Horse to get into the camp of the enemy. Sport will not build character; it will do something better. It will make a man free.

The free man is not what you or society want him to be. He wears no mask. He is the total expression of his body-mind-soul relationship—and nothing else, or he would be false. Sport, says Ogilvie and Tutko, can help you find that fully functioning person your whole being wants you to be.

Tom Tutko specializes in sports psychology and marriage counseling—two areas where pretense and masks will never work. "I am the original frustrated jock," he says. "I would like to play ball the rest of my life. Unfortunately, I have the motivation but not the talent."

This deficiency won't stop either him or us. Talent or not, character and virtue be damned, sport will continue to reveal each man to himself and to his brother.



LOOKING IN ON ATHLETES

"It's unfortunate that running isn't everybody's thing. At every level, you could have something for ego-fulfillment for everyone. That's what sport should be all about."

—Bruce Ogilvie

Bruce Ogilvie's interest in running isn't purely intellectual. He himself got caught up in the jogging craze of the late 1960s, and the running habit stuck.

He relaxes between classes in his cluttered office—a onetime upstairs bedroom in a converted house on the campus of San Jose State College. Dr. Ogilvie drifts back and forth between objective discussion of his work and subjective references to his exercise/recreation. The lines sometimes blur.

Ogilvie made running part of his personal as well as his professional life several years after he'd started testing the psychological makeup of track athletes. Now in his early 50s, Ogilvie weighs a well-muscled but trim 191. "I was 223 when I started running," he says proudly.

Like any runner on any level, Ogilvie seems as anxious to talk of his hobby as his work, which in his case relate closely. Running his two to five miles a day, he says, "keeps my head young." It also allows him to carry on a work load that keeps him going at a hard pace round the clock.

"My professional life is my personal life," he says. "I'm totally involved with my work all the time." He'd just returned from a speaking engagement in Colorado. He'd be leaving a few days later for a series of talks in Spain and South Africa.

Ogilvie isn't strictly a Sports Shrink. He's a regular professor at San Jose State, he directs the California school's Psychological Counseling Center and is "concerned with all types of stress-seeking people, and with behavior modification."

It's in the sports field, though, that Ogilvie—along with Thomas Tutko—has created the most stir. The Ogilvie-Tutko team has received worldwide attention for its ground-breaking studies on athletes and coaching. Their book, *Problem Athletes and How to Handle Them*, and a study released in *Psychology Today* magazine ("the most misrepresented article ever," Ogilvie calls it) have been at the same time revolutionary, valuable and controversial works.

Attacks are inevitable. On the one hand, radical athletes say Ogilvie and Tutko are putting "a dangerous weapon" in the hands of coaches wishing to "manipulate" athletes. On the other, hard-line jock-watchers charge the psychologists with attempting to undermine traditional athletic values. *Problem Athletes* stirred the ire of the former group. *Psychology Today* did it with the latter.

Ogilvie sits in the middle, a somewhat misunderstood man who calmly takes on all challenges to his work. He has the facts to back it up, and is getting together more all the time. By early 1972, the Ogilvie-Tutko Institute for the Study of Athletic Motivation had tested 17,000 athletes.

The net effect has been to blow away some of the misty romanticism and unfounded slander that have surrounded athletics. The two psychologists

talk frankly and rationally of sports, and in the process de-mythologize them. Their research is showing that athletics don't turn men into supermen. On the other hand, they're making it clear that the sports world isn't filled, in Ogilvie's words, with "overcompensating, psychoneurotic kooks."

For all the emphasis on identifying the qualities of championship-level athletes, Ogilvie and Tutko add the warning, too, that big success isn't the ideal goal for everyone and that simply *wishing* to do well isn't enough.

As he sits with his feet on his desk between classes, Dr. Ogilvie talks of running from several perspectives—the detached view of an eminent educator and psychologist, tempered by the personal view of an eight-minute-a-mile jogger and Saturday afternoon fan.

"Sports," says Ogilvie, "can be a wonderful learning experience if conducted with that goal in mind. I don't know any other area that has more natural appeal to people and can provide them with an opportunity to deal with reality in a very wholesome way."

It's clear he sees well beyond the multiple-choice answers on his psychological testing forms.

OGILVIE-TUTKO ATHLETIC TEST

"The factors which motivate an individual to athletic competition are unique to each participant. We believe that improved individual performance will result if the coach and each athlete he works with are aware of these psychological drives."

—Ogilvie and Tutko

The working tool of the Ogilvie-Tutko athlete testing program is a 190-part multiple-choice form called the "Athletic Motivation Inventory" (AMI). The psychologists simply call it "The Instrument."

It isn't even a test in the normal way that students think of testing. There are no passing or failing grades, nor are there any "right" or "wrong" answers. (Not immediately, anyway, though competition may eventually do its own kind of grading.) The athlete simply chooses one of three possible answers that best suits his thinking at the moment. "The first natural response that comes to you," the instructions say, "will generally be the best."

Some examples:

- "I practice alone so I can get more time in: (a) often, (b) sometimes, (c) seldom."
- "I would like to become a coach: (a) very true, (b) true, (c) uncertain."

The questions are formulated and balanced in such a way that they subtly draw the desired information from the athlete. Built-in checks also guard against jokers who don't bother to read the questions. For instance, "Professional athletes get paid for playing: (a) true, (b) uncertain, (c) false."

The completed questionnaires are fed into a computer, which instantly digests the individual's data and gives a readout on his "athletic personality."

The AMI is designed to measure 11 qualities which Ogilvie and Tutko

indicate are most important to athletic success: Drive, Aggressiveness, Determination, Guilt-Proneness, Leadership, Self-Confidence, Emotional Control, Mental Toughness, Coachability, Conscientiousness and Trust. The raw data from the athlete's questionnaire shows how the individual rates in each of these traits.

The next step is interpretation/analysis of the computer's verdict. This isn't so straightforward.

Ogilvie and Tutko make no claim that their Athletic Motivation Inventory can predict exactly how far a runner can go, and how long it will take him to get there. They aren't in the predicting business. Nor do they judge individuals to be "good" or "bad" runners on the basis of their test scores. They're attempting to provide an individualized guide that helps an athlete understand himself and to make the most of his athletic experience.

"CHAMPIONSHIP CHARACTER"

Certain personality traits predispose athletes to success in competition. In their testing, Drs. Ogilvie and Tutko have isolated 11 qualities which they consider to be the most important. Each of these can be measured by their Athletic Motivation Inventory. Ogilvie has outlined the traits of "Championship Character" as follows. (They are present to some degree in everyone. The overall strength of them, when compared with other athletes, is the key factor.)

DRIVE

1. Desires to win or be successful.
2. Aspires to accomplish difficult tasks.
3. Sets and maintains high goals for himself in athletics.
4. Responds positively to competition.
5. Desires to attain athletic excellence.

AGGRESSIVENESS

1. Believes one must be aggressive to win.
2. Releases aggression easily.
3. Enjoys confrontation and argument.
4. Sometimes willing to use force to get his way.
5. Will not allow others to push him around.
6. May seek to "get even" with people whom he perceived as having harmed him.

DETERMINATION

1. Willing to practice long and hard.
2. Works on skills until exhausted.
3. Often works out willingly by himself.
4. Persevering, even in the face of great difficulty.
5. Patient and unrelenting in his work habits.

6. Doesn't give up quickly on a problem.

GUILT-PRONENESS

1. Accepts responsibility for his actions.
2. Accepts blame and criticism even when not deserved.
3. Tends to dwell on his mistakes and to punish himself for them.
4. Willing to endure much physical and mental pain.
5. Will play even when injured.

LEADERSHIP

1. Enjoys the role of leader and may assume it spontaneously.
2. Believes others see him as a leader.
3. Attempts to control his environment and to influence or direct other people.
4. Expresses opinions forcefully.

SELF-CONFIDENCE

1. Has unfaltering confidence in himself and his capacity to deal with things.
2. Confident of his powers and abilities.
3. Handles unexpected situations well.
4. Makes decisions confidently.
5. Speaks up for his beliefs to coaches and players.

EMOTIONAL CONTROL

1. Tends to be emotionally stable and realistic about athletics.
2. Is not easily upset.
3. Will rarely allow his feelings to show and his performance is not affected by them.
4. Not easily depressed or frustrated by bad breaks, calls or mistakes.

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

1. Accepts strong criticism without feeling hurt.
2. Does not become easily upset when losing or playing badly.
3. Can bounce back quickly from adversity.
4. Can take rough coaching.
5. Does not need excessive encouragement from the coach.

COACHABILITY

1. Respects coaches and the coaching process.
2. Receptive to coaches' advice.
3. Considers coaching important in becoming a good athlete.
4. Accepts the leadership of the team captain.
5. Cooperates with authorities.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

1. Likes to do things as correctly as possible.
2. Tends to be exacting in character.
3. Dominated by sense of duty.
4. Does not try to "con" his coach or fellow players.

5. Will not attempt to bend rules and regulations to suit his own needs.
6. Places the good of the team above personal well being.

TRUST

1. Accepts people at face value.
 2. Believes what his coach and teammates say and does not look for ulterior motives behind their words and actions.
 3. Free of jealous tendencies.
 4. Tends to get along well with his teammates.
-

PUTTING NUMBERS TO WORK

"A champion is a champion is a champion. You see self-control, self-confidence, stickability are very prevalent. Self-blame, self-punishment are elevated. They're tough-minded—very emotionally tough-minded. Wherever you see athletic greatness, you tend to find at least these traits."

—Bruce Ogilvie

Just before the Olympic Games in Mexico City, a US team member visited Dr. Ogilvie, asking to be tested. Ogilvie was delighted to administer the AMI, since the Games would offer an immediate check on its reliability.

The volunteer was a long sprinter.

"The psychological profile of this champion athlete," Ogilvie says, "was outstanding for the traits of drive, aggression, leadership, emotional control, self-confidence and mental toughness."

But the psychologist noted that the sprinter was significantly below athletic norms for guilt-proneness, coachability, conscientiousness and trust.

When Ogilvie showed him the results, the Olympian's first response "was one of disbelief regarding the four low areas. Upon explanation and clarification of the meaning of each trait, he confirmed that the findings were in fact true. Since his freshman year he had gradually lost his respect for coaches, had rejected conformity in almost every social form, and come to distrust those who represented authority in sport, and had felt betrayed by the fans."

Here's where it was important to discuss and analyze the test's findings with a trained expert. The runner could have come away from the session one of two ways: he could have rejected the validity of the test completely, or he could have been severely depressed at a most crucial point in his career.

Ogilvie offered support. "The opportunity to review in detail the social and athletic factors that contributed to these negative attitudes (in the AMI) left me with the confidence to state that for this individual the findings were warranted on the basis of his personal experience."

The athlete went on to win a gold medal at Mexico City.

This case says several things about psychological testing of athletes. Ogilvie strongly emphasizes that cases must be judged on individual merits. While this runner adapted well enough to win an Olympic title, the psychologist says, "This same profile for a gifted freshman athlete would telegraph

psychological resistance and defensiveness that would seriously limit his capacity to use the skill and knowledge of even the most dedicated coach.”

Dr. Ogilvie also admits—readily—that psychological strength doesn’t stand alone. “You have to have other qualities,” he says. “You can’t just *think* success. You always have to consider ability. This is where we have a problem. We can’t judge physical ability. Superior ability will compensate for almost anything, any lacking in (psychological) qualities.

“The overall profile of (the Olympic champion discussed here) is outstanding. He has almost everything you’d want an athlete to have. But there are two or three things he’s low in. And yet he’s world class. What I’m saying is that his physical gifts, his motor gifts, are such that it’s possible he need not have had all his character strength.”

In short, strength in some areas can overpower weaknesses in others.

“The testing,” Ogilvie says, “really provides a fundamental basis for a new form of communication. This can be a kind of collaborative effort, which it’s turning out to be. A young man takes the test and then we compare him with the norms and say quite honestly what his traits are.

“We know that success is the determinant of change in these qualities. Say a youngster wants to run 400 meters but is low in determination. To run 400 meters, he really has to be able to lay it out—to push himself. You tell him it’s very difficult for him to do that. Let him know that he has to reintroduce this stickability quality. The runner says, ‘Great.’ He makes that his goal.”

It’s debatable to what extent an athlete can rework his personality. But understanding is clearly the first step to change.

PERSONALITY OF THE RUNNER

“Track athletes carry around a load of aggression corked up inside them, whereas football players get rid of it on the field.”

—Joe Jares, *Sports Illustrated*

Runners “aggressive”? That seems to be an unusual tag to put on these individuals who by all outward appearances are meek and mild—particularly in the case of long distance runners.

Aggressive is the right word, however. Once you’ve heard Dr. Bruce Ogilvie out, you’ll realize what he means when he says that aggression and introversion are the key distinguishing traits of runners in general and distance runners in particular.

“The one trait that distinguishes runners from athletes in other sports is their high level of aggression,” he says. “Track athletes look to us to be the most aggressive; only Grand Prix winners (racing drivers) beat them in terms of aggression, which is interesting.

“In fact, you can’t be a distance runner *without* aggression. You may be a short dashman without it, because the time is so short. But there doesn’t seem to be any way you can go those distances without it.”

Ogilvie goes on to explain the particular type of aggression present in runners. Partly because of a tendency toward introversion, they turn the ag-

gression on themselves rather than on others.

"A quality that distinguishes a distance runner is self-abasement. They're self-punishing sons of bitches. This doesn't seem to be as prevalent in dashmen, and certainly isn't in field events men. The non-distance people are more extroverted. The dashmen tend to be much more extroverted than distance men; our research supports this."

While field eventers and dashmen may be more extroverted than runners, it's all relative. Track and field athletes as a group show striking levels of introversion when compared to team sport performers, Ogilvie's and Tutko's test indicate.

"Extroverts don't seem to have the same staying power as introverts do," Ogilvie says. "That's part of the selection that goes on. Tenacity is part of introversion. It is an obsessiveness—a *healthy* obsessiveness."

This introverted tenacity is a significant trait in women runners—even more so than in men, Ogilvie claims. He explains:

"Outstanding women competitors show a greater tendency toward introversion, greater autonomy needs, and a combination of qualities suggesting that they are more creative than their male counterparts. They show less need for sensitive and understanding involvement with others. Women competitors are more reserved and cool, more experimental, more independent than male... We attribute this to cultural repression of women. To succeed in *any* field, a woman has to be able to stand up and spit in the eye of those in charge."

In this comment, Ogilvie identifies a third trait that distinguishes runners of both sexes: their great need for autonomy. Runners as a group show a strong desire to be their own bosses.

The picture he paints of a runner, then, is that he or she (she more so than he) is a self-battling, inward-looking loner. These qualities serve the runner well when he's enduring hard miles.

But they can produce value conflicts when confronted with man-to-man showdowns that often occur in competition, and with limits on personal freedom that occur in team situations. These conflicts can be more trying than his hard miles.

FREEDOM-CONTROL CONFLICT

"Most athletes indicate low interest in receiving support and concern from others, and low need for affiliation. Such a personality seems necessary to achieve victory over others."

—Ogilvie and Tutko

Drs. Ogilvie and Tutko have tested runners and found them to be self-motivated loners by nature.

They have also tested coaches. They found successful coaches to be "very high in leadership qualities (and) more dominant, take-charge types of persons who would actively seek roles of leadership."

It's obvious that there is high potential for conflict here. Not surprisingly, there are often flareups between the athlete seeking freedom and the

coach seeking control. Without taking sides, the roots of the conflict are easily uncovered.

"In terms of measurement," says Dr. Ogilvie, "runners turn out to be far more autonomous than in other sports. They need independence. They don't brook too much interference. They're less willing to bow to authority."

Perhaps, Ogilvie says, the runner-coach break is inevitable. "As you go up the developmental ladder," he notes, "you have to become more independent, more autonomous. You have to live with your own philosophy of training and strategy. It has to become your own possession. Whatever your talent is, it has to become your own or you can't use it.

"There has to be a point where a really gifted person turns away. Many athletes turn away from the teacher or instructor, much to the chagrin of the teacher, who feels rejected. That's the nature of excellence.

"Some of the overcompensatory greats have run for the coach who turns out to be a daddy, who will love them like the daddy they never had. That's fraught with all sorts of potential dangers. Usually it blows up. You're never free psychologically until you give up your need for a daddy."

Another conflict that can develop in the runner is the struggle between his aggression and his introversion. By nature (speaking, of course, in general terms) the runner isn't much of a man-to-man fighter. But at times he's called on to fight, symbolically, with his competitors. Then his inner aggression surfaces.

"Sometimes we have people," says Ogilvie, "who are frightened of their own anger. In years gone by, we've had distance men (at San Jose State College) who were so frightened of aggression that we've had to instill in them artificial ways of thinking about it.

"One of our two-milers had to warm up outside the stadium because if anyone said anything friendly or kind to him before a race, his competitiveness went down the tubes.

"So we had to tell him, 'Pretend something. What would be the most offensive thing that another runner could do to you?' He said for that guy to take his girl out. So we said, 'Okay, pretend he's trying to date your girl.' By God, it worked."

It's interesting that this runner should mention his girl friend, because a real stress point in the runner's life may not be with coaches or fellow runners, but with what Ogilvie terms "close-others" such as wives and girl friends.

"There's a camaraderie and general acceptance among the competitors themselves," he says, "because they're identified with the same things. But it's the girl friend or the wife in the life of the distance man who often has to suffer. A man who loves to run has to have a very special wife or girl friend to understand and accept his running, which may be a competitor to her.

"It's hard," Ogilvie adds, "for someone who doesn't run to understand the satisfaction that one could get from slavery. They don't know what it's like finishing a five-mile run dying and gasping, and then catching your breath and feeling wonderful."

Conflicts and misunderstanding are facts of a runner's life, and he must learn to deal with them. Some cope better than others.



ARE RUNNERS A BIT ODD?

"It turned out that most high-level athletes have personalities as solid as their muscles—especially when properly motivated."

—Joe Jares, *Sports Illustrated*

Jares was reporting the findings of Ogilvie and Tutko, who have tried their hardest to put down the idea that athletes are neurotics, and that abnormal success in sport hints of an abnormal personality.

We presented Dr. Ogilvie with two views of runners, asking him which he favored.

The first was from Kenny Moore, the marathoner-writer who was attempting here to answer the charge that distance runners are a bit deranged. Read closely; this isn't really a negative statement.

"Good distance runners are crazy, I'm sure," Moore writes, "in much the same way that politicians, corporation presidents and army generals are

crazy. Their approach to their work hints of obsession. Some mild aberration is perhaps necessary to make it to the top in any field, to spur continued effort when the better-adjusted have settled for the comfortable lower rungs."

A former British national coach, John Anderson, offers this opinion: "It is a misconception that athletes (track-men) are neurotics. They are perhaps the best balanced group of people in any community, extremely rational, invariably intelligent and remarkably able to cope with things."

When asked to choose between the two, Ogilvie declined. He said there was considerable truth in both, and that both were somewhat overstated.

"We find," he said, "that university athletes fall in the upper-middle level in terms of emotional stability. They're a little on the high end, though not terribly different from the general student population. The evidence suggests that there are more emotionally well put together people in athletics than there are people lacking control."

He indicated that the so-called neurotic athletes (the "overcompensatory greats") are a distinct minority, but that the press gives them more than their share of attention. "The regular guy who does his job and has his ego intact doesn't get his personality examined in the newspapers," Ogilvie said. So the public gets the wrong idea that the exception is the rule.

According to Ogilvie, "All our evidence about superior athletes shows them to be on the high end of the (personality) scale. In some cases, they are extraordinarily well put together. The women, particularly."

Perhaps one factor, more than any other, explains the public misrepresentation of runners. That's the fact that they suffer almost every day, yet seem to thrive on it. The term "masochistic" is often pinned on them. "Are runners masochistic?" Dr. Ogilvie replied:

"Runners are individuals who love to test their bodies to the fullest. It's really an esthetic experience for them. Masochism is self-destruction. You can't see running in this negative term. No, these are people who have to live out to the fullest extension of their abilities. Sure, there's punishment and pain in there, but they're not running for the pain. There are few feelings in life that lift you as high as when you've done the best you can, really laid it out. But you can't explain those things to people who've never experienced them."

NEGATIVE SIDE OF RACING

"We found no empirical support for the tradition that sport builds character. Indeed, there is evidence that athletic competition limits growth in some areas. It seems that the personality of the ideal athlete is not the result of any molding process, but comes out of the ruthless selection process that occurs at all levels of sport... Horatio Alger success—in sport or elsewhere—comes only to those who already are mentally fit, resilient and strong."

—Ogilvie and Tutko

This is the theme in the *Psychology Today* article of late 1971 that brought Ogilvie and Tutko worldwide attention and considerable criticism. They simply said, "Sports competition doesn't build character." From the

response they got, you'd think they attacked Motherhood.

"This is the truth," Ogilvie says. "I don't know why it is so offensive."

His aim wasn't to tear down sports but to strip away some of the phony values and lift competitive effort to a new level. Talking with him, one senses that he fears some of the directions organized sports have taken and are taking.

"The Cult of the Champion" has praised traits that are not always the most admirable in the general society: fierce independence, a cool aloofness to others, obsessive and uncompromising behavior, an orientation to conflict.

In a *Sports Illustrated* article on the work of the two psychologists, Joe Jares wrote, "Ogilvie and Tutko agree that competition can bring out the best in people, but they point out that it also brings out the worst. Studies at Michigan, Columbia and San Jose State (by Tutko) show that in those intensely competitive classrooms as many as 80% of the students cheat if given the opportunity. Neither prof believes in the term, 'friendly competitor.'"

Both apparently believe in the important yet limited values of sport, and are concerned with putting athletics in a healthy perspective.

Ogilvie hopes eventually to see the world of sport "take the emphasis off winning-at-any-cost. The new direction will be toward helping athletes make personally chosen modifications in behavior; toward the joyous pursuit of esthetic experience; toward wide variety of personality types and values."

A step toward this is recognizing what running, in this case, can and can't do.

"I can put the negative aspects into a general category," Ogilvie says. "The person that runs and competes in order to prove something that can never be proven by competition is the one who gets in a jam. You can't run and prove that you're loveable, that you're worthwhile, that you're a nice guy. If you're attempting to use it as a substitute for lack of fulfillment in other areas of life, it won't work. It's a vain-glorious pursuit.

"You have to run for the personal ego-fulfillment. It's a wonderful narcissistic trip—positive narcissism. If you're expecting anything more out of it than that, you're in danger."

Narcissism is defined as "falling in love with one's self and attainments," which is what Ogilvie is trying to promote.

"We have overemphasized achievement as a general ethic," he says. "If people select this as a particular ethic, fine. We're all for people seeking to excel in whatever they seek to excel in. But this shouldn't be used as a recommendation, as a way of life or an important human value, because it just isn't true.

"There's not a bit of evidence that competition leads to happiness or love. In fact, in a loving relationship there can't be competitiveness. *Can't* be. It's the absence of competitiveness that's one of the fundamental ingredients of a loving relationship."

Chapter Two

The Driving Forces

STEVE MURDOCK PHOTO



OBSERVING OLYMPIANS

BY A. R. BEISSER, M.D.

"The 'moment of truth' is axiomatic in the life of a great competitor. Therefore, it was to be expected that those who remain and those who excel would have a higher-than-average potential for coming to grips with reality."

—Bruce Ogilvie

During the final workouts before the 1964 Olympics, I was in contact with some of the coaches responsible for the United States track and field team. At their invitation, I brought together a group of four psychiatrists to conduct interviews with members of the team. We interviewed those members who volunteered—14 in all. They included eventual gold, silver and bronze medal winners; about half of them were runners at 400 meters or longer.

Our sample, then, was quite small and our observations must be considered speculative based on anecdotal evidence.

Perhaps the outstanding observation made in all of the interviews was that we were impressed with the "therapeutic" effects of running. It represented a focused attempt of the athlete to solve personal problems which he faced in life. Some were social, other psychological and some physical. I will give an example of each:

● **Social:** A runner who was a member of a disadvantaged minority saw running as a means of proving his worth as a human being and of competing against the majority society.

● **Psychological:** A runner who had grown up in a chaotic family situation had entered into a period of delinquency and had become a runner as a way of finding a place for himself within the world. His achievements in running coincided with his improved adjustment in society.

● **Physical:** As a sickly child with recurrent serious physical illnesses, an athlete had become increasingly isolated from his peers. Through running he had found a means of reestablishing himself with others and to develop a sense of physical and social competence.

Perhaps these examples seem only too common and no different from "what everybody knows." In a sense, that is true, but it was especially dramatic to see the consistency with which this finding appeared and that it appeared in the most talented and competent level of athlete in the world.

We also made another observation which appeared to hold up but would require much further study to substantiate. It was that long distance runners tended to be much more self-contained and solitary while those whose events were short distances tended to be more gregarious and to need people more. This was not related to the degree of adjustment or emotional stability but rather with preference: whether the individual preferred to have much or little contact with others. It also was not correlated with the competitive capacity of runners.

One last observation had to do with the level of achievement in the Olympic Games themselves. Two of the runners were at the time relatively

unknown; they were certainly not among the favored members in their events. Yet the interviewers made special note of the fact that these two men said flatly, without reservation, that they were going to win. In both cases, they did. They were the only two positive statements of this nature that were gratuitously made.

The controlled tension of a high-quality indoor two-mile. (Stan Pantovic)



MEASURING THE MIND

BY GEORGE SHEEHAN, M.D.

"The study of a person's physique can reveal to an experienced observer whether he would rather fight or negotiate."

—Dr. C. Wesley Dupertuis

Not all psychological testing is done by question-and-answer, multiple choice or problem solving. Sometimes all you need is a tape measure.

The tape measure is the working instrument in "constitutional psychology," a method based on the hypothesis that different body types have specific sets of personality characteristics.

This idea that body configuration could define a person's character began with the Greeks. Aristotle, for instance, thought there was a relationship between a person's mental and moral qualities, and his external appearance.

However, it was left to William Sheldon to give this off-shoot of medical examination some degree of validity. In the 1940s, he published a study of over 4000 student classified into various body types (*somatotypes*). It was titled *Varieties of Human Physique*.

Sheldon proposed three main body types. These were:

Ectomorph (predominantly nerve and skin tissue).

Mesomorph (predominantly bone and muscle).

Endomorph (predominantly intestine and gut).

Sheldon gave each subject a rating of his endomorphic, mesomorphic and ectomorphic tendencies—on a scale going from a low of one to a high of seven. The resultant Sheldon rating is a three-figure number establishing body build. For instance, he would rate a grossly fat person 7/1/1, an extremely athletic, broad-shouldered one 1/7/1, and a very skinny person 1/1/7.

Where is the distance runner in Sheldon's categories? What about this thin, bony, narrow shouldered, poorly muscled (except for the legs) runner? The tape measure comes up with the answer. The distance runner is the perfect ectomorph.

And what does that tell us? What do ectomorphs do? How do they act? What turns them on? Or off? Sheldon spells it out for us. And, at least for me, he is on target.

The ectomorph finds no special charm in youth. His childhood, says Sheldon, was an essentially painful experience which he would under no circumstances repeat. Age, on the other hand, holds no terrors. These thin, bony people with their alert, birdlike faces gave Sheldon the suggestion they would never grow old.

The loneliness of the long distance is natural for the ectomorph who copes with stress by seeking solitude. He also makes bad initial impressions, has inferior feelings before authority figures and dreads forced socializing.

Other qualities Sheldon found in ectomorphs included their tendency to form few but very intense attachments. They are tense, hyperattentive and speak—according to Sheldon—an intensive, subtle, subjective language.

Cool, introspective, serious, reflective, shy, detached, withdrawn and

gentle-tempered are other adjectives suitable for people with high scores in ectomorphy.

A recent sizeable study and review of somatotyping athletes was done by J. E. Lindsay Carter of San Diego State. He found that distance runner (both Olympic and San Diego State cross-country) has the highest ectomorphic and lowest endomorphic and mesomorphic indexes of any group of athletes studied. Golfers and channel swimmers were highest in fat, while weight lifters, football players and Olympic weight men were the most muscular. Oddly, baseball players had the next biggest set of hips after the golfers.

The only other sport with a fairly high ectomorphic index was basketball. Unfortunately no cyclists, cross-country skiers, or mountain climbers were studied.

Aristotle was right after all. By their measurements (and their sport) you can know them.



MOTIVATIONAL PROFILE

“ ‘Holism’ as it relates to endurance running is basically a simple idea. It seeks to understand and use all the positive factors and influences that help a man become a better runner, and at the same time to eliminate or restrict all the negative factors that might detract from his ability or stop him from running. It is as simple—and as complex—as that.”

—J. Kenneth Doherty

Dr. Doherty, former University of Pennsylvania track coach, uses “holism” as a key theme in his extensive writing on track topics. He says no factor in the runner’s life fails to leave its mark on his running. Some are more important than others, but every feature—physical, mental, social and environmental—blends for good or ill.

Any discussion of running motivation has to take the “holism” feature into account. Motivation clearly is a mixture of dozens of inseparable forces—some within the athlete’s control, some that aren’t.

For the sake of understanding, these motivational factors are divided arbitrarily here. But keep in mind that they don’t fall into such neat little boxes. They’re interrelated.

The first consideration is the individual’s physical and personality base. This is the foundation of success in any field, and to a great degree is established long before he tries sports. Basic physical, emotional and personality makeup sets general limits on potential.

With the qualification out of the way, let’s concentrate on how to develop that potential. Positive motivational forces can take runners great lengths, since it’s well known that most people never come close to their “limits.”

Educational psychologists say positive motivation is the product of realism (rational appraisal of possibilities), commitment (goals) and self-acceptance (emotional security and confidence). The main factors leading to this type of thinking are (1) competence; (2) self-respect; (3) affection; (4) peer approval; (5) approval of authority, and (6) independence.

Taking these as a basis, we can paint a picture of running motivation.

Running competence understandably is at the heart of it. The runner needs realistic goals and the feeling that he is accomplishing them on a fairly regular basis. Training is the means of reaching these goals. Running itself—racing and training—is the primary factor in motivation.

Secondary factors are the ones outside of personal running that clear or block the path to accomplishing goals. These include such things as personal living situation, inspiration/education, peer (fellow runner) relationships, authority (coach) relationships, and recognition/rewards.

These motivational factors need more explanation.

NEXT PAGE: A runner’s most agonizing moment—the last seconds at the starting line before his race. Francesco Arese (left) and Jim Ryun wait to begin. (Don Chadez photo)





TIMES INDOOR GAMES

1

CLUB WEST

TIMES INDOOR GAMES

2

ALCO

PRIMARY FACTORS

Racing—Success in racing is the Number One driving force. No one can deny that. With it, everything else naturally seems to fall in line. Without racing success, however, the other motivational factors can't compensate. (We're speaking here of success on the *individual's own terms*, it should be noted—not the ultimate success of winning every race. Setting a personal best time, finishing in the top 25, or merely *finishing* can be a personal success.)

Success feeds on success. It sets up a positive motivational cycle. A good race builds confidence and enthusiasm. This is translated into increased training. This results in improved condition, which should result in even more success, and so on.

It works the other way, too. A racing "failure" produces discouragement, which can lead to disinterest in training, a loss of condition, etc. This is the negative cycle.

No runner succeeds all the time. Periodic disappointments are inevitable. But when they become chronic and begin to harm his performance, it's best that he re-evaluate his level of aspiration, his training, and secondary factors that may be eating at him.

Training—Runners spend 10 times as much time and effort preparing for races as they do running them. Anything a man spends this much time with has to be somewhat enjoyable in its own right—or at the very minimum, tolerable. Joy (or tolerance) is a product of the runner's training approach, training location, etc.

Running can be fun. Proof of this is the fact that many runners rank their daily runs at least equal in importance to racing success.

The majority, though, train as a means—not as an end. Their training builds mental strength (confidence, self-respect) as much as physical.

George Young, a three-time Olympic steeplechaser, says, "You run to increase your endurance. And here I'm not talking so much of physical endurance. I ran more than 100 miles a week for a few years to increase my physical endurance. In all seriousness, it wasn't too hard to run 100 miles a week—*physically*. Mentally, however, it was hard to get out of bed at six o'clock in the morning, and it still is for me. Mentally, it is much harder to run 100 miles a week than it is physically."

Young is certain this training-instilled mental toughness carries over into his racing. Gerry Lindgren, former boy-wonder of distance running, agrees.

Lindgren says, "Every time I get into a workout, I'm working my mind more than anything else. I don't believe a person needs to work out 50 miles a day in order to get his *body* ready to run. I believe you can get by on one workout a day, if you need that much. I go hard for my mind. I get a lot out of it."

SECONDARY FACTORS

Personal Living Situation—Employment, school, family, physical environment. They all add their load—either positively or negatively—to the athlete's motivation. For example, an employed family man living in New York

City is working against handicaps not faced by an unmarried student living in a small town in sunny California. No runner is completely free from outside complications in his life-style, but some are more free than others.

When asked what he considered to be a good social environment for a runner, psychologist Bruce Ogilvie said, "I would hope that you could have a reasonably tranquil surrounding world in his life—a life free of unusual stresses so he can find joy in escaping into running. I think, too, it's important that he have good relationships with people away from track and to have diversions that are fulfilling and interests he's involved in. These things are very important if a man is going to devote himself to high-level competition. He has to have as full a life as possible around him."

Inspiration/Education—This can be summed up simply by saying that runners find contact with the running world outside themselves to be helpful. Reading about, watching and talking with other runners can be a useful guide to establishing high yet realistic goals and learning ways to reach them.

Peer Relationships—This refers to dealings with running mates, and the fellowship they feel with each other. Runners as a group don't show a strong need to be with others constantly. Yet they need to have like-thinking friends who offer respect, approval and support—which are a basis of motivation.

Authority Relationships—This is a somewhat ticklish situation, as explained in the last chapter. Runners need the approval of an authority figure, in most cases the coach. But they also have a strong independent force tugging at them. This can cause conflicts.

A good coach-athlete relationship apparently is based on mutual confidence and each respecting the needs and wants of the other.

George Young, who's both a runner and coach, says, "I believe a runner should consistently evaluate himself physically and mentally. Coaches should coach youngsters to the point where they can do this themselves."

Recognition/Rewards—In psychological terms, recognition and rewards for one's actions are a form of "positive reinforcement." In theory, a runner will work harder to reach a goal if he has these incentives to spur him. They are the carrots dangling in front of the donkey's nose. The "carrot" in this case may be a college scholarship or a pat on the back.

Actually, once the habit of striving for goals is established, the runner hardly needs the relatively small amount of acclaim and the material prizes he gains. The rewards of running are more subtle. And though publicity and prizes are nice to get, they are more by-products than goals.

LEVELS OF ASPIRATION

BY BRENT MC FARLANE

"When I got out of high school, I was just about bazooka-proof. I had a good mental attitude, I was doing really well in running, and thought there wasn't anything I couldn't do. I was ready to move mountains."

—Gerry Lindgren

Motivation is simply the general level of arousal to action, or urge to push toward a specific goal. There are two basic types of motivation:

- *Internal (intrinsic) motivation*, which arises from an inner cause, drive, wish or need.
- *External (extrinsic) motivation*, which is caused by outside forces.

Each athlete is responsible for providing his own internal motivation. And nothing can compensate for the lack of will to fight when the situation demands. In every race, there may be one moment (or more) when the runner wants to quit, and needs internal motivation to survive the crisis. Otherwise, the penalty is defeat. There is no defeat, no failure like ceasing to try.

In attempting to understand internal motivation, a main underlying factor is one's level of aspiration (LA). This is the runner's overall aims or goals.

The energy in each of us—physical and mental—does not stand at one precise level, but instead it flows within a broad, flexible range of possible use and development. Its upper limits apparently are far beyond what we see as humanly possible and healthful. Yet those who reach the upper levels of this range can operate day after day, year after year with no ill effects to health or longevity. Their organisms and minds develop, not only resulting in superior performances but also in an increase in their LA.

The satisfaction that a level of performance provides an individual depends on how the performance measures up to his expectations.

Another factor closely related to goal-achievement and LA is the nature and amount of experience. Past experiences provide a "perceptual anchoring point" upon which to base estimates of subsequent performances.

The amount and quality of experience influences both the accuracy of self-estimation and the difference between estimation and actual performance achieved. This is known as "goal discrepancy"—the difference between level of aspiration and level of actual performance. An "attainment discrepancy" is the difference between LA and the level of subsequent performances. An athlete is considered to have succeeded if the level of performance surpasses the LA set.

The level of aspiration pre-supposes a goal which has an inner structure consisting of an "ideal" goal and an "action" goal.

- *Ideal goal* is the ultimate the individual hopes to attain.
- *Action goal* is the immediate aim the individual has because of the present unobtainability of the ideal. LA is usually considered to be the action goal.

The LA is influenced by the relative strengths of three needs: (1) Need

to make LA about the same as the level of future performances; (2) Need to keep the LA as high as possible, regardless of past performances; (3) The need to avoid failure.

Success is progress towards a goal that is viewed as worthwhile. It is imperative that a man's goals should not significantly exceed his grasp. It has been shown that highly motivated persons—those with high need for achievement—set moderate, realistic goals. Conversely, those who possess high fear of failure often set goals so low they cannot fail, or so high that success is highly unlikely.

Very hard or very easy tasks cause no sense of success or failure, and likely are protecting the athlete from feelings of failure. Failing to reach an impossible goal could not subjectively be considered a failure. By choosing a realistic goal, these individuals would expose themselves to the risk of failure.

Once a firm goal is planted in an athlete's mind, he is on his way to success because he knows where he's going. The attainment of success is half-accomplished when an athlete directs his thoughts toward succeeding. (He must also think of the *means* of achieving his goal; this involves effort and getting into the work habit.)

An athlete becomes what he plants in his mind. Planting the goal of success in his mind is one of the athlete's most important personal responsibilities in achieving success. It is this necessary seed, "fertilized" by hard work and goal-directed behavior from which satisfying running performances bloom. Believe and succeed!

But no runner wins/succeeds all the time. What effect does defeat have on him? Defeat may be difficult to go through while still maintaining a high LA. Defeat may be a punishment to an athlete if he was intensely aroused to run and battle his hardest, only to lose. How much of this he can endure without becoming overtense, overexcited and upset in performance depends on this previous success.

The effects of failure on the LA are far more varied than those of success. When an individual experiences a performance below his LA, he may see it as a threat to his self-esteem or ego. Therefore, he may keep his LA low to prevent such situations from arising a second time, or too high so it is impossible to reach; thus no one can blame him for failing.

The fact that emotional upset can offset the body suggests strongly that being psychologically well-adjusted, emotionally stable, happy and successful would remove undue stress. The stress of training and racing is primarily a mental-emotional problem, not a physical one. Fundamentally, racing is not a struggle against one's opponents but rather against oneself. Opponents help.

A key to developing high LA is relaxation. Relaxation is achieved by gradually losing one's self-awareness—especially of negative aspects of effort and fatigue. This may happen best and most completely by accepting things for what they are, without doubt or fear.

Relaxation in running is related to one's approach to life in general. It develops more from unconscious than conscious learning, out of experiencing with composure the pain of training and anguish of early defeat. All great runners accept discomforts and disappointments as part of running. Through year-round training under all conditions, the champion becomes inured to suffering. Good training hurts, because new levels of development and added

intensity of effort bring their own quality of pain.

All runners hate the pain of effort from time to time, but they try to accept it rather than avoid it. They have experienced pain in the past and survived. They know they will survive again, no matter how intense the pain. To deliberately choose the difficult path in training tends to produce greater running powers and raises one's probability of success—one basis for a higher level of aspiration.

The question may be asked, "Does correct training *guarantee* success and consequent rise in one's LA?" The answer is no, but it does make competitive success *possible*, providing other factors (such as physical capacity and ability) are present. Such mental factors as courage, competitive instinct, will-to-win, subconscious desire for victory, capacity to suffer and ability to ignore pain, perseverance and tenacity, frustration-tolerance and "guts" combine with correct training to transform competitive potential into reality.

The coach, operating either in a formal or informal capacity, is an important source of external motivation. Perhaps the key role of the coach is in providing "information feedback." There are two kinds of feedback.

- *Intrinsic (or kinesthetic)* information arises within the body and represents a pooling of kinesthetic and perceptual clues that are natural consequences of movement. These affect the athlete's LA directly and can only be determined by him.

- *Extrinsic feedback* arises from artificial clues in the environment, such as the coach.

Feedback is the strongest, most important variable which controls performance, success and learning. If behavior is goal-directed, then the successful approach to the goal—indicated by feedback—can serve to sustain a high LA.

The coach has the power to "mold" an athlete. He cannot control the athlete's LA, but he can influence extrinsic feedback. The coach should focus the athlete's attention on improving the quality of desirable elements already present in his performance, and add missing elements.

Psychologists say that feedback—in the form of instruction—is most effective if presented in positive terms (what to do), rather than negative (what *not* to do). Coaching suggestions should be concrete and specific. This requires less rigid, less formal and more individualized coaching methods.

In most races, there comes a crucial point where victory hangs in the balance. At that instant, no matter how cleverly the runner had been coached, the issue of victory or defeat passes entirely to him. Only then does his power of physical and mental courage, will-power and guts stand exposed. Only internal motivation—directly supported by his high LA—can provide this answer when he's faced with this moment of truth. No coach can put speed into the runner's legs or oxygen into his lungs, or bring his level of aspiration to its maximum.

ADJUSTING THE SIGHTS

"In the reasonably healthy person, the level of aspiration is usually slightly elevated so that in effect he is always striving or reaching—in descriptive terms, standing on his tiptoes, not off balance or in fear of tumbling but with a ready capacity to regain his balance should he have overreaching his capacity."

—Ogilvie and Tutko

Athletic writing is rich with cliches: "Shoot for the stars..." "You can be anything you want to be..." "It's all mental..."

They sound nice. But the studies of psychologists don't support them. A common theme running through this booklet is that runners must set *high but realistic* targets. Aiming too high can be as damaging to athletic potential as aiming too low. Neither constant failure nor untested "success" is satisfying. *

Challenge is essential. "All things considered," says Dr. Bruce Ogilvie, "the outstanding athlete is at his very best when the odds are slightly against him. Ambitious people derive slight joy, if any, when their ability remains uncontested."

Challenge, yes. But the challenge must be within the individual's stretching power, allowing him to get up on his tiptoes without constantly falling on his face. How far can a man stretch without falling? That's for him to learn.

Fred Lester, an Australian coach, has written in this connection, "To ignore facts, to substitute wishful thinking under the slogan of 'mind over matter,' can only lead to abuse of the body and depression of the mind. In the case of an athlete, it amounts to stupidity, in the case of the coach it borders on the criminal.

"As for 'thinking big,' we have to interpret that phrase to mean having a long view of things, a perspective of what we aim to achieve. It becomes a case of building up gradually, step by step, consolidating one stage before the next. Know what you are capable of at the time. Then, and *only* then, you raise your targets to the next level. The confidence you have gained by fulfilling your earlier target leaves you free of mental strain to go on to higher places.

"Disappointment in not reaching a target which had been set too high in the first place acts like a brake by setting up of mental strain, expressed in nervous tension beyond the safe point.

"Knowing what you can do, knowing that you can go on improving by intelligent and correct conditioning for the task ahead is the only positive mental approach. Constant and regular application and an intellectual appraisal of facts are the highway to success and satisfaction, to getting the best out of yourself."

When interviewed in 1971, Frank Shorter and Jack Bachelier echoed these feelings.

Shorter indicated that high-level success crept up on him. He said it has to be that way. "If it doesn't," he said, "you're going to go through a lot of frustration. Wanting to be the best in the world when you're a nine- or 10-minute two-miler isn't going to do you any good."

Bachelor added, "You kind of have to keep a perspective about your goals. I've never been very goal-oriented, I guess. I remember starting out, I just wanted to make the varsity. After that, I just wanted to run against this guy I didn't like, who happened to be the third man. After beating him, I thought, gee, by the state meet it would be kind of neat to be first man. And after that, gee, I wonder if it would be possible to run in college." And on it went, step by step, until Bachelor was an Olympian and national champion.

Gerry Lindgren wouldn't agree with this appraisal. Lindgren recognizes no limits, mentally or physically. He belongs to the You-Can-Do-Anything school of thinking.

But even Lindgren's case, if you read it closely, shows he progressed gradually. He said in *The Gerry Lindgren Story* that when his coach told him he could be the best high school runner in Spokane (Wash) history, he was overwhelmed by the compliment. Gerry was surprised, initially, to find he compared favorably with the country's leaders when he was a high school senior. Running in the Olympics was clearly within his emotional-physical capabilities. His high aims were realistic. A less gifted boy would have fallen flat.

Gerry has an approach to positive thinking that many runners could copy in part, even though his method of achieving his high aims may not attract many imitators.

Lindgren says, "There's a universal law of farming. You can't plant corn and expect beans to come up. There's also a universal law of the mind. You can't plant negative thoughts and expect positive results to come out. Negative results will come back to you sooner or later. You have to be very, very positive. The more positive you are, the more you can do. I have very carefully planted the positive and weeded out the negative in my thinking."

Yes, but perhaps a part of positive thinking is recognizing legitimate limits, which Lindgren steadfastly refuses to do.

During the winter of 1971-72, his training load approached 50 miles a day. "Maybe it isn't necessary to run 50 miles a day. I don't know. Someone may be able to win running less than that," Lindgren said. "Everyone I run against isn't going to be running 50 miles a day. I can and will. And more than anything else I think it's going to help me. It's going to help my self-image. When I get on the track, I'll know I've done more than everyone else out there, and I'll know I'm stronger."

During this high-mileage period, Gerry raced his first marathon. He was one of the few runners ever to step *down* in distance on race day. He set off at world record pace. ("That's the way I think," he said.) By 17 miles, he was learning the hard lessons of marathon. By 20, he'd lost his lead. At the finish, he was fifth.

A cold fact of running is that the man who aims the highest and works the hardest doesn't always win.

PAIN IN PERSPECTIVE

"Good distance men are reputed to possess either great resistance or little sensitivity to pain. Yet I doubt whether runners as a group are any more brave when it comes to sitting in dentist chairs or receiving tetanus boosters than the general populace."

—Kenny Moore

Marathoner Moore has gone to great lengths to explain that distance runners aren't insensitive or masochistic brutes, and that running doesn't immunize them to all pain. He offers an example.

"In the summer of 1967, I was included in a group of Oregon runners who were invited to participate in a United States Olympic Committee study of high altitude training and procedures. The price of our three-week vacation in the Rockies was to submit every Friday to a series of tests that measured lactic acid content of our blood.

"It seemed strange to our doctors that while we showed no reluctance to run ourselves into unconsciousness at the end of a hard workout (quite easy to do at 7500 feet), the mention of another session with the needles set us all to whining like tormented alley cats.

"The explanation, of course, is that we were used to *our kind* of pain. Over the years, we had developed a familiarity with our bodies that let us know how much of the discomfort of extreme fatigue we could stand. Part of the runner's training consists of pushing back the limits of his mind, of proving to his doubting intellect that 66 seconds a lap for 12 laps won't reduce him to another cinder on the track.

"But the needle pain was relatively new and exposed our 'innate toughness' for what it was: a learned specialty."

Moore and other writers like him are contributing to the de-mythologizing of running by pointing out that runners are essentially normal individuals—specially trained to a fine edge, but still normal—who tolerate minor discomforts in search of major rewards.

In the same vein, miler Marty Liquori has said, "There is no satisfaction without first a struggle and deprivation." Runners are working for the satisfaction, not the struggle and deprivation.

Brian Mitchell, author of the sociological-psychological book titled *Today's Athlete*, writes: "Perhaps one of the biggest mistakes which an observer can make about this primary pleasure in movement is to look upon it as a form of 'self-immolation.' It is doubtful whether a wish for pain, or even for discomfort, characterizes the athlete; he does not look upon himself as a victim brought to the altar of the track to be sacrificed, and does not relish the pain that grows from the latter stages of a race. He distinguishes the pleasure in movement from the inevitable pain which has to be endured.

"The athlete will not like this pain; rather he will accept it. It is in an athlete's nature to savor physical movement, and he knows that if he is to achieve anything competitively he must take himself through speeds and distances that will be uncomfortable. This he is prepared to do, training and racing. But it does not constitute 'immolation.' If an athlete wished to cul-

tivate pain, he would buy himself a bed of nails.”

As Kenny Moore pointed out earlier, recognizing and accepting pain is the first step to reducing its effects. One successful high school coach, Skip Stolley of Illinois, formally schools his runners on the elements of fatigue that are a product of long, hard running.

“The results of this simple introduction to distance running physiology have been significant,” Stolley says. “Fear is caused by a lack of understanding. Once boys recognize the various aspects of fatigue as they occur in their training and racing, they rise to challenge them. They are not afraid to run fast from the outset of their races despite the distress they know they will encounter before they finish. They acquire a better understanding of themselves as distance runners, and as a result set their goals higher and come closer to achieving their potentials.”



In fast racing, all is a blur. (Jay McNally)

WILL-POWER AND WORK

"If a person likes his activity, there's no need to force him to do it. A banker friend of mine recently told me that he doesn't feel he has 'worked' a day in his life because he enjoys banking so much. A banker must practice his banking virtually 12 months a year. And a runner must do the same with his running. If he doesn't do it and doesn't enjoy it, he's never going to reach the top. Well, he may not reach the top anyway. But if he enjoys his running, he is getting one of the big prizes that come from this activity."

—Bill Bowerman

Outside observers make the mistake of thinking runners are immune to pain. They also tend to see runners as possessing iron will-power and self-discipline.

Yet "will" is something like pain-tolerance. It's a learned specialty, something that comes with training and racing success. They put up with the "discipline" of running so they can sample its fruits. The positive must outweigh the negative.

What is looked on as "will-power" and "self-discipline" might better be described simply as habit: the habit of getting up and getting out on the road or track every day for training, and the lessening of discomfort that comes with habitual pushing.

Ron Clarke has remarked that the hardest thing about running is "putting your legs in your shorts" and taking the first step. There's a lot of truth in that. Once the runner's will-power, or whatever, gets him through those small moves, habit takes over.

It's often harder, in other words, to get down to the little things of running—taking the first step every day—than it is to get up for the big ones such as throwing full energy into competition.

Brian Mitchell writes at length on the subject of "will-power" in *Today's Athlete*. "It is observably true," he says, "that once man has drilled himself into possession of will-power, he is unlikely ever to soften. But his will-power needs the support given by thorough preparation, which produces confidence, which in its turn vitalizes will-power.

It is again observable that people under the great stress of extreme illness or old age often 'lose the will' to carry on; they first lose confidence because they imagine (often rightly) that they cannot win, and this takes away their will to survive. Given a flicker of genuine hope, this 'will' may light again.

"So it is with the athlete. If he knows there is a chance, because he has by dint of hard training given himself that chance, his will-power is energized. Therefore, his job is to prepare thoroughly, to breed confidence in himself, and of course quite simply to practice the difficult art of running through a blanket of fatigue."

Will-power is but one factor that carries an athlete through racing and training, and it isn't self-sufficient. In his book, Mitchell quotes skilled sailor Eric Tabarly: "The limiting factor is human strength, and no amount of guts can make up for that."

“Therefore,” Mitchell adds, “and of greatest practical importance, the genuine athlete is seen to exert himself over many years, just in order to be able to exert himself over a few seconds or minutes.”

Talk of a “forcing yourself to do what you don’t want to do” will-power is significantly absent from coach Bill Bowerman’s running formula. He says, basically, do it because you like it, and if you like it you’ll keep doing it—and succeeding on your own terms.

“I think a person can make the most of his running experience if he is enjoying it,” says Bowerman, “if he has a plan, if his objectives are realistic and if he carries on over an extended period of time. If he becomes tired of running, he should lay off for awhile. If he’s still tired of it after that, maybe he ought to look for another activity.”

A man can only fight himself for so long.

Chapter Three

Psychological Warfare



Early miles of a marathon are almost pleasant. (Don Chadez photo)

FINDING THE LIMITS

"It is a horrible yet fascinating sight, this strange struggle between a set purpose and an utterly exhausted frame. He was practically delirious, staggering along the cinder path like a man in a dream."

—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Doyle's realm wasn't sports writing. He was a mystery writer, the creator of Sherlock Holmes. But in this short description of Dorando Pietri's staggering finish in the 1908 Olympic marathon, Doyle captured the essence of racing.

Racing puts the runner face-to-face with the classic conflict between a willing mind and a weak body. When he pushes to his limits, he can't avoid it. There comes a point in all hard races (except the shortest sprints) when the "set purpose" and the "exhausted frame" do battle, as they did to the extreme in Pietri's case.

The body sets the limits—limits that few runners come close to reaching. The mind, will, or whatever you choose to call it, determines how close the runner comes to those limits.

Running and racing involve the same basic action. But they're two different things. Running, most training, is sub-maximal; in other words, not all out. Running at moderate pace can be a satisfying experience.

Ona Dobratz, a woman marathoner, says, "With long distances, the body is feeling at home in its environment, functioning as 'a part,' not 'apart.' It's being at one; just as natural as everything around you." But, in contrast, she says harder running "is the meshing of mind, body and emotion into complete coordination, not being aware of your surrounding but only of your own movement through space... Just as our voices are not always meant to be calm and want to sing, our legs are not meant always to walk. They want sometimes to run—hard."

The training runner has the time and energy to look around. The racing one has neither. He has to concentrate fiercely on the competition, internal more than external. The demands of the race and the toll of fatigue turn him inside himself.

European sports psychologist Miroslav Vanek says, "Physical effort prevails in training, and psychic effort prevails in competition." At first glance, this reasoning appears faulty as far as middle and long distance runners are concerned. Isn't the competition the hardest physical work they do?

Probably not. It may be the most intense. But except for the longest distance men, the effort is focused in a period of minutes. The race only hurts briefly. Training, on the other hand, goes on for hours a day, months and years at a time, but at lower intensity. It is a dull, lingering ache, compared with the short, sharp pain of racing.

In training, the main problem is logging the miles which are a physical prerequisite to racing success. Racing mileages are usually puny beside those covered in preparation. There's nothing imposing, physically, about a mile for one who's doing 100-a-week in training.

But the thoughts and feelings that are focused into that few minutes

give the race its challenge. These thoughts-feelings aren't experienced every day. They set up conflicts that aren't present in everyday running. How they're handled has a significant effect on the outcome.

Races are preceded by a mixture of anticipation and dread. During the race itself, there are blends of control and recklessness, exhilaration and frustration, fear and courage. Afterwards, there's pain and pleasure—the proportion of each depending on whether or not the race met expectations.

The runner who only runs comfortably only sees the flatlands around him. The racer seeks out the valleys and peaks of himself.

A USEFUL KIND OF FEAR

"I was just busting like hell, worrying like hell all the way. But this is a good thing to develop, you know—that fear. It keeps you moving."

—Ron Hill

Ron Hill has come to grips with fear. The world record distance man has recognized what it does to him, he has accepted it as a component of competition, and he now has channeled it to work in his behalf.

It hasn't always been that way. Ron recalls racing in the 1964 Olympics.

"When I went to Tokyo," he says, "I was the second fastest man in the world over six miles and also the second fastest man in the world over the marathon. But the night before the 10,000 I was thinking, 'Tomorrow's the 10,000 meters.' There I was lying in bed, turning it over in my mind. And the first thing I thought about when I woke up was, 'Today's the day. It's the 10,000 meters.' The stomach turned over. I didn't want to get out of bed. Finally, I dragged myself out.

"During the warmup, my legs felt like lead, and I was just dragging them around the track. There was no desire to get into the competition. In fact, the only desire was to get away from it. If somehow I could have got out of it, I wouldn't have run at all.

"The gun went. That was it. I was dead from the soles of my feet upwards. And I couldn't do anything about it. I was lapped. I finished a disgusting 18th."

Hill immediately set about finding ways to cope with pre-race anxiety. He has succeeded. Oh, the fear is still there—as shown in the comment starting this article; he said that after the 1970 Boston marathon, which he won in record time. But he now has the fear working *for* instead of against him. He talks objectively about it.

"The fear of running a long race can come from the fact that you know it's going to be physically painful. And unless you're a masochist, nobody likes pain. I certainly don't like pain. And if you dwell on this, it can make you nervous. Also, you can be overawed by the fact that you're in interna-

tional competition. There's no doubt about it, one can get very, very nervous before a big race.

"I've now developed some ways of turning off thoughts of the race, some way I can step outside myself. I can even talk about the race in terms of what it's going to involve physically and where the pain is going to come and what it's going to be like and how distressing it's going to be without actually thinking that the guy who's speaking is going to be in that position so many hours hence. Don't ask me how I can do this, but I can.

"Whereas in the past I used to start thinking about the race hours before, now I can just switch right away from it and forget about the race until just a few minutes before the start. And this, to me, has been a great help because I used to get really scared before competitions—so scared it affected my physical performance."

Hill has learned some important lessons about pre-race "nerves" that other runners might copy. First off, he saw that within limits this condition was normal and even beneficial; but fearing the fear could push him outside the safe limits and hurt his performance. By recognizing it, knowing the signs and symptoms, and accepting them as natural, he was better able to keep them within safe limits.

Pre-race fear takes many forms—fear of pain, fear of competitors, fear of failure, as well as fear of fear itself. And it goes by several names—"anxiety," "butterflies," "tension," "psyching." Whatever the type and name, a certain amount of it is a fact in the racer's life. It may be a bit unpleasant, but that doesn't mean it's bad.

The body-mind team gets itself ready for racing with certain natural reactions. The scientists call these "fight-or-flight reactions." They are the body-mind's way of warming up for a potentially stressful encounter. They are only harmful when they reach such extremes that they interfere with performance instead of enhancing it.

Anyone who has raced will be perfectly familiar with these physical-emotional reactions. The most telling signs during the last hours before racing are the following:

- *Dryness of mouth*—often called "cotton-mouth."
- *Stomach distress*—a queezy stomach ("butterflies"), often accompanied by decreased appetite, and in some cases vomiting.
- *Heavy perspiration.*
- *Frequent urination and mild diarrhea.*
- *Deeper, more rapid breathing.*
- *Faster, stronger heartbeat.*
- *Tense, tight muscles*—particularly in the neck and shoulder areas.
- *Overall feeling of weakness and lethargy.*
- *Pale complexion.*
- *Fingernail biting*—and other unconscious hand-occupying actions.
- *Irritability and restlessness*—along with difficulty in getting to sleep and staying asleep.
- *Preoccupied*—and wanting to avoid social contacts.

● *Vague desire to escape* the event at hand, and to establish excuses in advance for failing to perform up to expectations.

These reactions to approaching confrontation are scientifically recognized. They're based on a list prepared by Scottish doctor A.M.D. MacIntyre. However, they're so common that it doesn't take a medical man or a psychologist to point them out. Every runner "suffers" (if that's the right word) to a certain degree. One look at the lines of tense faces at restrooms before any race says that more eloquently than words can.

Once the gun sounds, most of the pent-up emotion, the healthy tension and fear, is translated into action—as intended.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

"Sport does not have to be so exclusively competitive that all but the most skilled must be discouraged from participating. Sport doesn't have to be unconditionally aggressive, either. Anyone who has been active well knows that man vs. man is but one form of sports conflict. The athlete must compete against himself and the environment, and these common struggles outweigh the interpersonal struggle almost every time."

—Bruce Kidd

Much is made of the man-to-man conflict aspect of competition, the "killer instinct" and "psyching" directed at opponents. Bruce Kidd isn't denying it exists. But the former teenage distance sensation, now a well-known writer and political figure in Canada, downplays it. This is a middle-long distance man talking.

Sprinters look at it somewhat differently. Pat Putnam described an indoor dash in *Sports Illustrated*. "No one ever made an Olympic team by running beneath a roof, especially in a footrace which ends after 60 yards, but a national championship is a national championship, and in the cocky, swaggering world of sprinters there is no such thing as a meaningless race. Dash men are not unlike gunfighters. Each is ready to prove his is the fastest, be it in a challenge match down a back alley in Schenectady or over a slow, spongy Fastrac straightaway in Madison Square Garden in the AAU indoor meet."

The comments on sprinters and distance runners reflect differences in the events and in the men who run them.

The short sprints, like the field events, erupt violently. The split-second at the start, the takeoff, or the release can decide everything. The sprint races are concentrated explosions of effort, lasting only seconds.

Sprinters match their event. They tend to be aggressive, explosive individuals capable of concentrating their fury into a few seconds. Sprinters—even more so, the field event men whose efforts are focused on an even briefer span—may intentionally work themselves into emotional turmoil before

aces. Shot putters practice mental preparation that borders on self-hypnosis to get themselves "juiced," as they say. Having a human target to point for often makes it easier to get properly worked up. This is released in one big "oomph."

As distances grow, they present different problems and attract different people. Distance men tend to be more restrained than sprinters, less aggressive. These attitudes and personalities are better suited to events that put a premium on rationing effort. What has a miler gained by exploding in the first 10 seconds?

The marathon is an even more extreme example. Kenny Moore, a 2:11 man, has described the mental state he tries to get himself in:

"To be effective over the last six miles, one must harbor some sort of emotional as well as physical reserve. An intensive, highly competitive frame of mind over the early part of the run seems to evaporate after 20 miles. So I prefer to begin in a low key, sort of yawning-sleepy state of semi-consciousness. I watch the scenery and the other runners with appreciation rather than with any sort of competitive response. I chat with anyone so inclined.

"Later, entering the last six miles, I try to get enthusiastic about racing. A strong acceleration gives a lift and I can usually hold a new rhythm to the finish. It's more fun to pass people late in the race when it means something. The last six miles is the stage where I try to honestly use everything I have left. That, of necessity, hurts."

But the key here is that the distance man is hurting himself, more than inflicting it on someone else. By this point in a long race, he may not even notice anyone else is running. Each runner is fighting his own kind of battle.

Frank Shorter and Jack Bachelier have tied—intentionally—in several of their races. This has outraged many critics, who say "they're working against the whole purpose of competition." To this, Frank has replied:

"Maybe in part our tying is sort of an attempt to thumb our noses at the attitude that it has to be like that—the whole basic idea that the goal is to trample everyone underfoot; to put on your spikes and run over them, literally; if a guy gets in your way, run him through.

"It isn't all or nothing to me. I don't consider coming in second losing. It's just not winning. If you're satisfied with what you've done, you certainly haven't won, but you haven't lost. What the hell. If you want to tie and you consider that you've won, then what's wrong with that?"

Make no mistake. Shorter competes—hard. You don't run 28-minute 10,000-meters and 2:12 marathons without competing. Only the *form* of the competition has changed.

The sprinter, as Pat Putnam suggested, may be like a gunfighter. He tries to draw and shoot fastest, thereby killing (figuratively, of course) his opponents with sudden decisiveness.

The distance man isn't so outwardly aggressive. He's more suicidal by nature. In his races, he deliberately hacks away at himself and hopes he doesn't expire before the race does. The man vs. man feature of distance racing still is there, but often is secondary.

In this connection, miler Marty Liquori has commented, "Every race makes you a better man. It's not beating another guy so much, but triumphing over yourself."

AFTER THE RACE IS OVER

"Men, it is said, live together and die alone. Runners live alone and die together. Only after a race does their reserve dissolve. In that common agony, they can reveal themselves to each other."

—George Sheehan

The race is over. But the talk of it lingers on; and if it is a long-distance race—on, and on, and on. Post-race discussion seems to vary in direct proportion to the distance covered. The more a man runs, the more he's compelled to talk about it afterwards.

This was what Dr. Sheehan was getting at in his observation of post-competitive distance runners. Leonard Shecter, writer for now defunct *Look* magazine, said it slightly differently. "People who live with pain, like boxers and long distance runners, show very little aggression outside the sports arena."

After long races, physical lows and emotional highs occur simultaneously. Runners who've gone through the agony alone, now wallow in the ecstasy together. Perhaps the best explanation of this scene was written by Kenny Moore, a professional writer as well as a top-class distance man.

"Human beings are reluctant to accept meaningless suffering. Families of dead soldiers refuse to believe such sacrifice could be in vain. In that way, the pain in a marathon's closing stages can be so great as to *force* meaning upon the run. Men submit to the ordeal not in spite of the pain but because of it. Competitive urges can carry you for 10 or 15 miles, but then the distance and discomfort already endured scream that this must not be for nothing. So you go on.

"Afterward, in the dressing room, men hang stiffly on one another, too exhausted to untie their shoes...and jabber uncontrollably. It sounds like a combination cocktail party and SDS caucus. The pain has made everything suffered so extraordinarily important that it *has* to be expressed. The cramp that seized your left leg coming off the hills at 20 miles must be described in loving, urgent detail, if only to the wall because nobody listens.

"Later, when you recover, you remember your babbling and the others', and in an embarrassed sort of recognition understand you shared something. It is the same for everyone."

The high wears off. Maybe it takes a few hours, maybe a day. But it wears off, often leaving a hangover in its wake. You realize you're tired and sore, and that you can't dwell too long on yesterday's races when you have tomorrow's to run.

Strangely enough, the comedown can be particularly hard after an unexpectedly fine performance.

A fellow long jumper described what Bob Beamon went through after his super-jump in the 1968 Olympics. "When he went 29'2½" in Mexico, he was relaxed, uninhibited. He was loose on the runway and everything came together perfectly. After he got the long jump, he started asking himself why he got it, and realized he didn't know. It was unconscious. He has gotten himself all tied up trying to reconstruct the elements that went into that one. He is trying to think of too many things, and his jumping has suffered. I once

had the same problem, and I practically had to learn to jump all over again.”

Dick Fosbury experienced this “trauma of the breakthrough,” too. Looking back on the ’68 Olympics, He said, “One of my problems was that I went too high. When I jumped 7’4¼” I exceeded my goal for the year by a couple of inches. That threw me off. I was sort of lost for awhile as far as my mind was concerned. I had nowhere to go. Now that I got completely away from competition for awhile, I’m starting over again. I can set a goal again, and come close to it, working up that way.”

In a runner’s context, Ron Clarke went through similar feelings time and again as he repeatedly broke world distance records in the late ’60s. Ron’s book, *The Unforgiving Minute*, has an eloquent description of post-race let-down.

“It has happened in Melbourne, in London and in Oslo. In fact, almost every time that I’ve been fortunate enough to achieve a world record, a peculiar sense of disappointment has engulfed me soon afterwards. The shouting and hand-shaking have ceased. The record has been confirmed and announced, and the crowd has drifted home. A man is able to think again; to give himself up entirely to his feelings. And invariably the exhilaration of achievement drains away, leaving the record holder dejected and profoundly weary.

“Perhaps the experience of a record holder is not unlike that of a young man who has just celebrated his 21st birthday. The young man has looked forward to the occasion for so long, but after the excitement of the party, the congratulations and the gifts, he realizes that, although he is now officially a man, he doesn’t feel any differently and that life will go on much the same.”

There are new races to run; new standards to meet and to beat.

Chapter Four

Mind and Medicine



PUSHING ONLY SO FAR

"It proved very hard to find subjects who exercised regularly and yet were willing to deprive themselves of exercise for a month. Notwithstanding the fact that they were being offered higher pay than usual, many prospective subjects (especially those who exercised daily) asserted that they would not stop exercising for any amount of money."

—Frederick Baekeland, M.D.

Running is habit-forming. The physical-emotional addiction to daily exercise can become so powerful that scientific interests, the runner's own health considerations, or even the offer of outright payoffs can't break it.

Dr. Baekeland learned this when he set out to study the reactions of steady exercisers who were to be deprived of their exercise for long periods.

First finding: Difficulty in recruiting volunteers. Daily exercisers refused to join in the study, despite generous money offers. Baekeland finally settled for three-day-a-week athletes.

Second finding: After studying the reactions of 14 volunteers, the doctor concluded that the month-long exerciseless period resulted in impaired sleep (a symptom of anxiety), increased sexual tension and an increased need to be with others.

"Among other things," Baekeland said, "exercise is a discharge mechanism for aggressive drive, while it also contributes to feelings of mastery and self-esteem in individuals who regularly seek it out. Hence, with prohibition of exercise, it seems reasonable to expect compensatory increases in the expression of other drives (libidinal, for example), whose gratification would reduce general levels of drive pressure."

This is a way of saying when a man runs regularly, it becomes an habitual physical-emotional outlet. When deprived of this outlet, he feels lousy—angry, tense and frustrated.

A break from running may be in a runner's best interest. In the case of injury or illness, for instance, resting may speed his recovery; continued running may retard it. But try getting a hooked runner unhooked. . .

Denis Wright, a British sports physiotherapist, expresses a standard medical viewpoint on recovery-rest: " 'Run it off' and 'go through the pain barrier' are phrases of folly and ignorance. The word 'rest' has, unfortunately, become a dirty word in modern athletics. To miss a day's training becomes a national disaster. It always interests me to notice that the reverse is often the case. And I always consider that the mental benefit from rest far outweighs any physical loss."

Rest undoubtedly is often a must if the body is to mend properly. But the mental benefit? That's questionable, in the light of Dr. Baekeland's studies and the experience of other medical men.

Dr. George Sheehan, a medical doctor/marathoner, has mixed feelings on the subject.

On the one hand, he says, "Athletes are noted for being the worst hypochondriacs of all—a condition which may well stem from the horror they have of being injured or operating at less than their best. It may well be, however, that once the injury sets in the athlete can adjust well to the actual experience, much like the relative peace one experiences after he has finished a marathon."

Dr. Sheehan is talking about getting breaks from difficult running situations. "Injury and disability," he says, "can lead to removing the athlete from a competitive situation that was too much for him physically or psychologically to begin with. In such instances the disability then is actually welcomed, and the runner can turn to more satisfying and integrating activities than the particular form of sport and competition he is engaged in."

But this situation is different, Sheehan says, from an involuntary disruption of *pleasant* physical activity. That often can produce the mild trauma that Dr. Baekeland's research uncovered.

"Deprivation of an activity that has become part of their lives and life styles," Sheehan says, "can be a most difficult situation. As with most problems, the recognition of its existence leads partly to the remedy. While the totality of the athlete's sports experience cannot be recreated when he is injured, every effort should be made to simulate the experiences and values he was getting from that type of activity."

"In the case of the runner, this would be to substitute another form of endurance activity—swimming, bicycling, light weight lifting, or some such thing. Some may find this actually appeals to them more than running, and was what they should have been doing all along.

"Others will find it incomplete. For them, the exploration of other body abilities such as suppleness, agility, strength and speed may prove the injury to be a blessing in disguise. The possibilities (yoga, modern dance, the use of the heavy and light bag, etc.) are endless.

"Willie Sutton once said about prison, 'Don't serve time; let time serve you.' The injured runner should use the time to explore the possibilities of his body, many of which we unfortunately ignore in our pursuit of specialized performance goals."

In other words, when the normal outlet is blocked, don't just sit up nights stewing about it. Get out and find an alternate.

THE TRAUMA OF RESTING

"In every case, I would prefer to undertrain a runner rather than overtrain him."

—Bill Bowerman

Left to their own devices, runners literally can work themselves right out of competition. Distance men particularly are, in psychologist Bruce Ogilvie's words, "self-punishing sons of bitches."

Runners seek stress. That's both good and bad, depending on how much they find and how much they can handle. Unfortunately, in this high-mileage era, they often run into more than they can cope with.

Roy Benson, a former assistant coach (in charge of runners) at the University of Florida, has said, "I do more pulling on the reins to hold people back than cracking the whip to get them going. One man does 30 miles a day, day after day, but just doesn't have the maturity for it. He thinks, 'If I work harder, I'll run better,' So far it hasn't worked for him. He either gets hurt or sick."

Stress is an important feature in running training, and runners have to find the balance between "enough" and "too much." Canadian physiologist Hans Selye explains this in his General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) theories. Selye says if stress is applied in small amounts and regularly the body adapts. But if the doses are too heavy, the body can't cope. It is left wide open to physical breakdowns of many types. The most common of these "overuse" ailments in runners are foot and leg injuries, and respiratory infections. They occur with depressing regularity in highly motivated, hard working runners. At best, they lower his performance level. At worst, he's disabled.

Running isn't the only stress at work on the runner. He has to take a "holistic" view of stresses, since the effect of them is cumulative.

The major families of stresses are these:

- **Work**—not just running, but all physical *and* mental strain.

- **Emotional**—anxiety, depression, boredom, etc.
- **Social**—alienation, isolation, overcrowding, etc.
- **Dietary**—too much food, too little, wrong type.
- **Rest**—inadequate recovery from work, sleep deprivation, etc.
- **Health**—injury, illness, infection, etc.
- **Environmental**—heat and cold; air, water and noise pollution, etc.

Running may not be fully to blame for a stress-related ailment that crops up. But the runner is first to feel its effects because it requires maximum physical fitness. The smallest drop is immediately apparent.

The runner is a constant candidate for overstressing because he demands so much of himself. Fortunately, the body and mind offer early-warning signals which, if heeded, can prevent serious problems from developing.

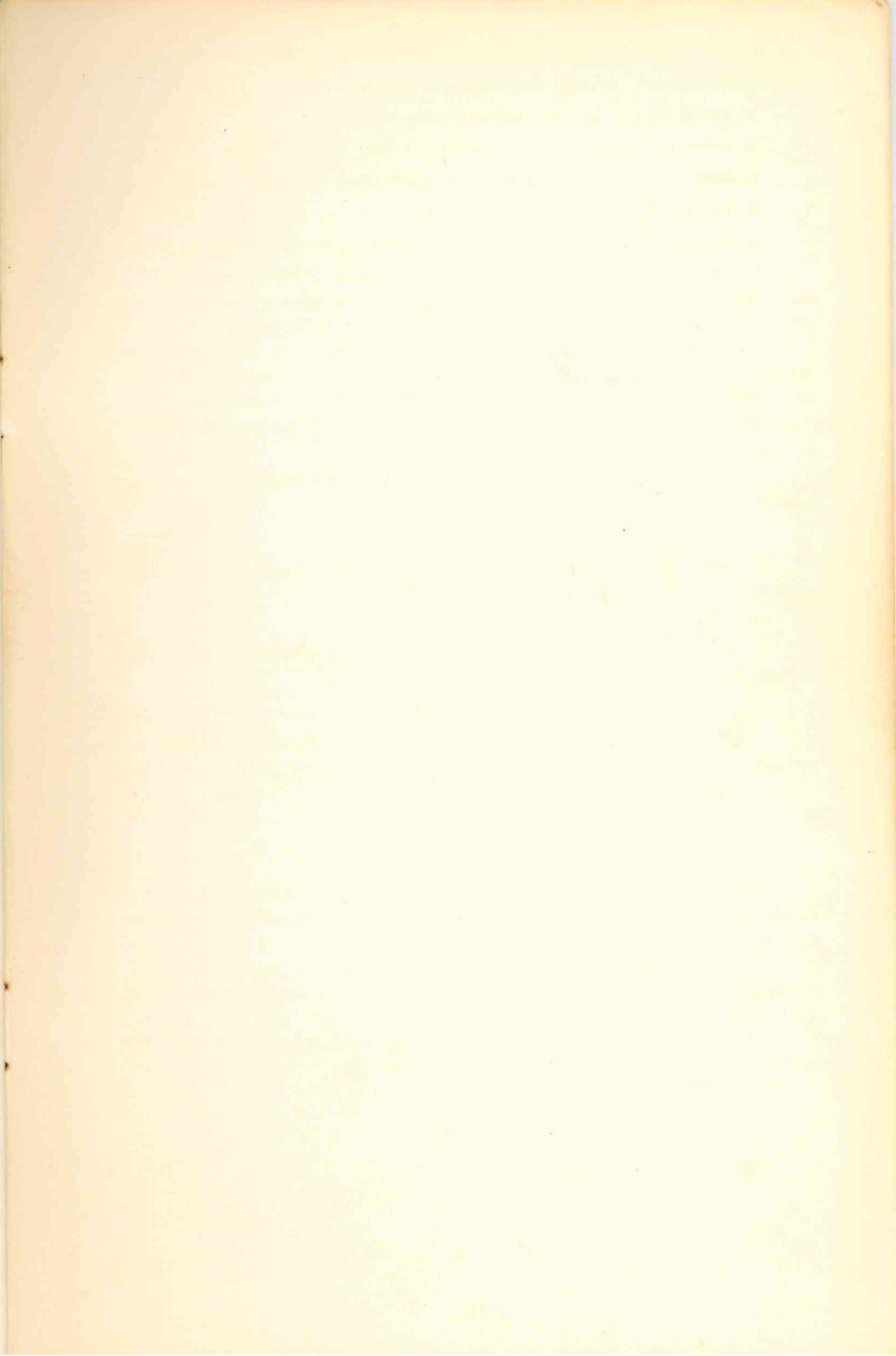
Hans Selye has identified 10 danger signs that runners are most likely to experience.

1. *Low-level and persistent soreness and stiffness in muscles, joints and tendons.*
2. *Frequent mild colds and sore throats.*
3. *Swelling and aching in the lymph glands, particularly in the neck, underarm and groin areas.*
4. *Skin eruptions among non-adolescents.*
5. *Excessive nervousness, depression, irritability, headaches and inability to relax or sleep.*
6. *Nagging fatigue and general sluggishness that lingers from day to day.*
7. *Aching stomach, often accompanied by loss of appetite and loss of weight.*
8. *Diarrhea or constipation.*
9. *Unexplained drops in performance levels.*
10. *Disinterest in normally exciting activities.*

These are the body's and mind's way of saying "ease off!" They are gentle reminders to take appropriate corrective action. If subsequent reminders are required, they aren't so gentle.

Dr. George Sheehan, a medical doctor with a strong interest in the implications of stress on runners, has written, "When a runner is in peak condition, he is just a step away from exhaustion."

He advises, "The next time you run out of GAS, fill up your tank with rest."



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