

# *The Varied World of Cross-Country*

*Booklet No. 2*



**A RUNNER'S WORLD  
BOOKLET OF THE MONTH**



*Runner's World*  
*"Booklet Of The Month" No. 2*

AUGUST, 1971

---

***The Varied World  
of Cross-Country***

---

Publisher — BOB ANDERSON

Editor — JOE HENDERSON

© 1971 by

Runner's World Magazine

No information in this book may be reprinted in  
any form without permission from the publisher.

Published by  
Runner's World Magazine  
Post Office Box 366  
Mountain View, Calif. 94040

# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	3
<b>MOVING BACK TO THE EARTH</b> .....	4
An Ecological Experience .....	5
Something for Everyone .....	6
Protecting the Purity .....	8
Cross-Country's Future .....	10
<b>RUNNING AROUND THE WORLD</b> .....	13
All Alone at the Top .....	14
Heavy Traffic at "Vanny" (by Hugh Sweeny) .....	18
Cross-Country Gone Wild .....	24
Tradition Reigns in Britain (by Wilf Richards) .....	26
Spain's Love of Country (by Pat Tarnawsky) .....	28
Mexicans Hit the Peak (by Peter Burkhart) .....	31
The New Zealand Scene (by Jack Foster) .....	34
"Too Artificial" for Africans (by Geoff Fenwick) .....	35
<b>ON RACING AND TRAINING</b> .....	38
Surveying Training Styles .....	39
Individuals and Teams .....	41
Helping or Hurting Track? .....	43
Hints on Race Promoting .....	45
<b>INDEX</b> .....	48

**Cover Photo:** Mud and guts. They play equal roles when runners take to the open countryside. Cross-country is sport in its purest form—man and man, man and nature. (This Ed Lacey photo is at the 1971 International.)



---

# FOREWORD

---

Cross-country means different things to different people. To some, it means any non-track run—on the roads, through the parks, on the beaches, across the fields, anywhere. Others—Bruce Tulloh and Don Shepherd among them—have taken the term literally; they've run *across the country*—across the United States.

In our discussion here, we can't go that far afield. For this booklet's purposes, "cross-country" is defined as the racing that occurs on more or less natural terrain. This definition excludes man-made tracks and man-made roads, and it excludes merely training-type runs.

But even within these limits, cross-country can mean almost anything. In England, it can mean racing across plowed fields. . . in Europe, racing on flat turf littered with obstacles. . . in Africa, racing over jungle paths. . . in Australia, racing through sand. . . in the United States, racing along golf course fairways.

It's a sport of unsurpassed variety, the single common denominator being that it stays—even more than other types of running—close to nature. That's the beauty of it.

An aim of this booklet is to describe the unique simplicity, beauty and variety of cross-country running—and to suggest ways of protecting and promoting it.

But factors beyond terrain set cross-country apart—and these deserve protecting and promoting as well. There are inherent differences in attitude and approach. In this several months a year set aside for cross-country racing, emphasis shifts away from times. On most courses, times are meaningless. This is pure sport. The race itself is everything; comparisons with those running at another place and time are nothing.

And for some, the team aspect of cross-country adds new meaning to an essentially individual activity. Unlike track—where athletes go in 18 separate directions and come together only to throw their points in a common basket—cross-country puts runners in a common pursuit of team points that have some relevance. Without destroying the individual character of the run.

Cross-country—as a competitive, conditioning and companionship activity—has limitless potential. It offers a combination of ingredients that neither track nor road racing can match. We're not suggesting that it *replace* the other two facets of racing—just that it complement them more effectively than it now does. Except in England, the sport is underdeveloped and subject to certain "perversions" that make it too much a cheap imitation of the track and road sports.

For jogger to internationalist, cross-country offers rich experiences that are yet to be exploited to their fullest.

## Chapter One

# *Moving Back to the Earth*





# AN ECOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE

Ecology talk is in the air. In the early 1970s, there exists a renewed awareness of the urgency of preserving what's left of our good air and earth. So far, unfortunately, most of the talk has stopped short of action, and we go on consuming our limited natural resources at a wicked pace. We go on making over the earth in man's image, in the name of progress and comfort—blithely ignoring the damage being done to nature's perfect but precarious balance, and the cost to ours and future generations.

But in the 1970s, there's the germ of a back-to-the-earth movement. Sizeable numbers of disenchanting city-dwellers—and not just the radical young—have migrated to the country to live a simpler sort of life. Others, stuck in the city, split for the country at every opportunity to back-pack, mountain-climb, hike and run—away from the noise, pavement and fumes of the crowded, car-oriented metropolitan areas.

The more urbanized and mechanized a person's daily life becomes, the more he wants and needs to reestablish non-mechanical contact with the natural elements. The more he enjoys the feel of the unpaved earth under his feet and the taste of unpolluted air.

What does this have to do with cross-country?

Everything. Even the runner gets somewhat separated from the earth, and from running in its purest and simplest form.

There are two basic types of distance people—track runners and road runners. Tommie Track spends most of his year running around in circles, usually on artificial surfaces and on a rigidly standardized course designed for speed. Ronnie Road gets a bit more variety; he gets to see some of the countryside, but still he's on courses designed for cars and must compete with them.

Both track and road racing are mechanical. They're watch-conscious, and runners of both spend most of their year chasing the elusive time.

In cross-country, though, both Tommie Track and Ronnie Road can get together and get away—if the race is properly conceived—from the artificial surface and dependence on the stopwatch. Back to the earth for a couple of months. Away from restrictive tracks and traffic and times. Back to the purity, beauty, variety and challenge of a run in the country. It's an ecological experience.

There's a lot to be said in favor of this unsophisticated, primitive mode of running. Nothing could be simpler. You don't need anything but the most general idea of distance. You don't need times except as a basis for judging this one race. You don't need anything more elaborate than the open spaces at hand. Come to think of it, available open spaces aren't so easy to find any more. Run to your cross-country course. Before it's too late.

---

In Europe, runners flock to the countryside. They get back to the earth in huge throngs, as is evident in these photos of (above) the 1971 international race in Spain and (below) the 1971 British national. (Mark Shearman photos)

# SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Every track race is pretty much like every other. See one 440 track, you've seen them all. About the only thing that differentiates one event from another is the number of times you circle the track. Even in road races—where there's an increasing emphasis on times—courses are becoming increasingly alike—i.e., drab. Variety is lacking.

Not so in cross-country.

Its most obvious source of refreshing variety is terrain. No two courses are alike, so during a season a well-traveled runner might encounter everything from Kansas plains to Colorado mountains, Arizona deserts to Louisiana bayous, California beaches to Washington forests, Iowa farmlands to New York City parks. And of course the golf courses—a contrived, somewhat artificial setting where runners never get over the feeling that they're intruders.

There's variety, too, in weather. We normally think of cross-country as a "cool-weather" sport. But as the US season is spanning the fall months, the runner experiences nearly everything that nature can dish out. The heat and humidity of September, the Indian Summer days mingling with the coolness of approaching winter in October, the rain and frost and, finally, snow of November. It's ironic. In full view of cross-country runners, weather cools and plant-life dies as the season heats up and comes alive.

And the distances. There are attempts at standardization. The NCAA race is always six miles, the AAU men's race 10 kilometers, the women's two miles. But elsewhere, as often as not, the distances are dictated by available terrain—and are likely to be 4.05 miles or a rough approximation that might be described as "about three miles." Many courses are impossible to measure with any degree of accuracy, which is just as well since times can only be compared with other times on that day.

But the biggest source of variety—at least potentially—is in the people who participate, their abilities and approaches.

The moderate distances make this a common meeting ground for the miler and marathoner. They can compete on equal terms in cross-country. Look at the results of the 1970 AAU championships. Six-mile/marathon types Frank Shorter and Jack Bachelier placed one-two. Three-milers Don Kardong and Steve Stageberg were third and fourth. Milers John Mason and Sam Bair were fifth and sixth. *Half-miler* Keith Colburn was seventh. Into this "melting pot" also go runners from the fastest to the slowest, those most serious to those "just in it for a workout."

Runners put varying degrees of emphasis on their cross-country seasons. Unlike in England, where the cross-country season stretches over nearly half the year and many athletes put all their energy into it, there are few true "cross-country specialists" in the US. Many—Art Dulong for one—find more success here, but this is more by accident than design. The only true specialist that comes to mind is Mike Ryan. He competed well enough in cross-country to win the NCAA title in 1968, but he never tried track seriously while attending the Air Force Academy.

On the other hand, many distance runners avoid cross-country competition altogether, figuring it is wise to concentrate on basic training during the fall. Two examples are Jim Ryun and George Young—both world record holders on the track who have managed nicely without extensive cross-country racing.

Most runners choose a middle course. They either give cross-country and track equal emphasis, or take a low-key approach while continuing to race.

Villanova University is one school which treats the fall sport as a distinct unit which is valuable on its own merits. The school's results over the years show where this emphasis leads. It's significant to note that even after a hard winter, spring and summer of track racing, Marty Liquori was able to place ninth in the 1970 NCAA cross-country race. And then went directly into more hard track racing.

The University of Oregon goes in the other direction, treating cross-country as a relatively small preparatory step en route to the track season. At Oregon, there's little concern with reaching maximum sharpness for races over the country. Yet in 1970 Steve Prefontaine won the NCAA individual title. Villanova beat Oregon for the team title by one point.

In the United States, the something-for-everyone character of cross-country isn't as well developed yet as it is in road racing. Athletes of every type mingle indiscriminately on the roads—old and young, male and female. US cross-country, however, is still available only to the school-age runners on a major scale, and the sexes are generally segregated. Nothing like in Britain, where a truly democratic spirit prevails and runners of all descriptions turn out by the thousands for cross-country races every weekend of every winter. With the same type of promotional efforts that have gone into road runs, US cross-country will develop along the same lines. It's too flexible and beautiful to remain the exclusive property of school kids.



# PROTECTING THE PURITY

Perhaps because it's so basic, so innocent, cross-country is easy to manipulate and pervert.

Cross-country is best when it is allowed to be itself. It has values and strengths that allow it to stand on its own. As a retreat to primitive terrain, and as a temporary refuge from time and distance hangups, it shows its best side. In these traits, it is unique.

But when we try to force cross-country into the image of either track or road racing, we get nothing but a third-rate imitation.

Unfortunately, in the United States, there is too little independence for cross-country and too much imitation. The sport suffers, as do the individuals running it.

Time is the main culprit—stopwatch time. Runners and coaches invest it with a holy quality that profoundly influences our entire outlook toward running. Tracks are fast, and times on different tracks are comparable. Roads are reasonably fast (as long as they're reasonably flat), and times can be compared to a certain degree. True cross-country courses aren't fast, and times can't be compared.

So what happens? Instead of accepting these basic differences, we manipulate cross-country to meet the demands of the stopwatch. We carefully gerrymander courses so they go *around* the hills instead of over them. We choose carefully-manicured golf courses for races instead of rougher (i.e., slower) footing. Distances are measured to the inch, times are timed to the tenth, and coaches and managers station themselves at quarter-mile intervals to holler splits.

The end result of this misplaced emphasis is that cross-country races have all the pressures of the road and the track, and slower times. The catch is that natural surfaces can *never* be as consistent as artificial ones, and therefore never as fast. Runners will be disappointed unless they realize that the beauty of the country isn't in the artificial, stopwatch challenge but in the natural one offered by the course itself. Give yourself a break. Take your mental eye off the clock long enough to look at the countryside.

Even if a cross-country runner does have his times in proper perspective, though, and is lucky enough to run on representative courses, he has other problems to concern him.

The sport's apparent popularity is deceptive. In the US, it's still a school-oriented form of running, and as good a job as the schools do, they're a limited and limiting force. Student running lasts eight years if you're good enough to make it to college, four years or less if you're not. High school and college competitive teams are limited to the seven fastest boys (these are the only ones who get to compete in *every* meet, anyway), and very few schools make any provision for girls. The AAU and clubs haven't picked up open cross-country meet organization the way they have road races and all-comer track meets, so non-students and slow students generally don't get a season. They may, if fortunate, get a race or two. Exposure and incentives are severely limited, and it needn't be that way.

The first and biggest need is more meets, preferably meets where ability is no barrier. In track, there may be a justification for limiting the number of entrants. But in cross-country it's a crime to allow only 14 dual-meet runners to travel a course that's big enough for 10 times that many. Schools could open their meets to any fit and willing student. AAU districts and clubs simply have to transfer their techniques for promoting wide-open road races from the road to the country. A simple switch.

If there is unneeded exclusiveness on the low levels—brought on by limited-entry meets, or the total absence of meets—there are similar problems on the highest levels. Track has the Olympics and scads of international tours of other types. Marathoning is similar. In cross-country, there's nothing but a meet that's laughingly called the "International." In reality, only a handful of countries are allowed access to it, and only if they send full teams (no individuals need apply). In this situation, there is little incentive for a cross-country man to develop his skills to the fullest. Internationally, the sport is strictly third-rate.

A final form of de facto segregation limits cross-country's potential. As now run in most countries, it is a distance specialist's activity. The international distance for men is 7½ miles. The English championship is nine miles. In the US, it's 10 kilometers. This means the race appeals most to the track and road man accustomed to these distances or longer. The distances don't *exclude* the short and middle distance runner. But it's always a lot harder to step up in distance than to step down. Thought might be given to holding distances (say, 2-6 miles) where the half-miler and marathoner and everyone in between can meet on fairly even terms.

Cross-country has two unique traits. "Anything-goes" from the terrain angle, so long as it's natural. And "something-for-everyone" in terms of the runners it attracts. Time orientations and elitism borrowed from either track or road racing can only dilute cross-country's purity.

# CROSS-COUNTRY'S FUTURE

Cross-country sits in a curious position. Here it is, one of the world's most universal sports—if not *the* universal one. People in every area of the world run through the country, either in formalized competition or on a free-lance basis. It's easier to promote, cheaper and perhaps more widespread even than track and field.

Cross-country may be universal in scope, but it isn't international in the way track is international. A trackman has the Olympics, the Pan-American Games, the European Championships, the Commonwealth Games, international matches, foreign tours for the choosing. Only his ability limits his opportunity for travel and competition. The world class marathoner faces the same pleasant situation.

But the poor cross-country runner. Where does he go? His international prospects are all but non-existent, and it's a shameful situation. There isn't a sport of this size and scope in the world which offers so little opportunity.

Compare the trackman/marathoner's prospects with those of the cross-country runner of similar ability, and you'll understand why there are so few cross-country specialists.

- There is no Olympic cross-country race, and there has been none since the event was dropped from the program in the 1920s.
- None of the other international meets attempt to put on a cross-country run, either, though there undoubtedly are athletes who'd prefer to seek their medals by this route.
- The "international" cross-country meet is a joke. It's nothing but an exclusive club. To run the race, athletes must come from countries that belong to the International Cross-Country Union, and they must be members of full teams. The ICCU has only a handful of member nations, most of them European—western European, that is.
- International cross-country invitationals similar to the Fukuoka marathon and the track meets that abound each spring and summer? A cross-country runner will have to look mighty hard to find one.

Cross-country remains a provincial sport, each country an isolated unit of activity. And in the United States the situation is worsened by the fact that there is further isolation of local areas within an isolated country. It will remain this way until basic policies governing the sport are revised.

So why not just revise them? Well, it isn't that easy. The main problem is that runners have to work through athletic politicians to get things changed. And unfortunately many of the politicians in power employ thinking that is firmly rooted in the 19th century.

Take the example of the Olympics readmitting cross-country. A few years ago, there was a small flurry of support for such an idea. The Road Runners Club of America and some Australians were the prime backers of the proposal. It seemed to make good sense considering it would admit a new group of distance runners to the Games and even the poorest countries could be represented by a few cross-country runners.



The proposal died a quiet death at the hands of the politicians who call themselves the International Amateur Athletic Federation. In fact, the Australians withdrew the proposal before it came to a vote.

A US representative to the IAAF explained his stand: "Despite the fact that I personally felt that it (reinstating cross-country) was inadvisable, I was prepared to vote for its inclusion. . . With the 1924 cross-country event still in mind, I could not bring myself to believe that a cross-country race in mid-summer would be a good event on the Olympic program. The athletes that competed in that race were dropping like flies along the course from complete exhaustion and heat prostration. One of our runners was out of his head for hours after the race. He never recovered from the effects of it and died shortly thereafter."

It's curious why he didn't call for eliminating the 10,000 meters—a race nearly as long which has had its hot-weather collapses, too. Or why the marathon—nearly four times longer—should stay on the Olympic program. Or why it is okay for modern pentathlon competitors to run a cross-country race in mid-summer, but not trained cross-country specialists.

The Olympics is but one side of the international cross-country dilemma, but it is a key side. For as the Olympics go, so go the other big championship meets. If the Olympics reinstated cross-country, the Commonwealth Games, European Championships, et al, might be moved to follow. And they might provide the incentive for forming international invitational races.

Olympic reinstatement—and the prestige that would inevitably come to cross-country because of it—could also help make the international cross-country championships more meaningful. The first need, obviously, is to change the International Cross-Country Union's absurd policies. Or if the meet isn't willing to admit *all* nations and individuals, as well as teams from member nations, maybe an entirely new "international"—one that lives up to its name—should be formed. Possibly under the auspices of the IAAF.

These moves are up to the men at the top. As long as they sit and do nothing, this most universal of sports runs on without a badly needed international focus.

Meanwhile, in the United States the same sort of situation exists on a smaller scale. Cross-country is run everywhere, but there's little that resembles a national focus for those who are qualified. One national meet. That's all most men and women get. Two if they're lucky. The rest of the races are regional or strictly local affairs compressed into a season that seldom spans more than eight weeks. A good women's team goes to the international meet each year but, for some curious reason, not a representative men's delegation.

Track always has been strong and popular in the US. Road racing has matured to a position of strength and respectability in its own right. Cross-country remains a stepchild of the two. It deserves better.

Some suggestions for improving the lot of cross-country in the United States:

- Send strong teams to the international championships *every* year—both women and men, and keep sending them no matter how they fare against the rest of the world. Give cross-country runners at least this one trip of their own that they can aim for.

- Form more meets where the nation's leading runners can get together to race. Possibly this should be labeled "dream" rather than suggestion, because money for such races must come from somewhere, and most athletes can't afford to shell out the travel expenses themselves. But at any rate, there could be more high-quality meets than now exist—even if they aren't truly "national."

- Lengthen the season and provide more meets for everyone. Few runners who aren't in school get what could be called a cross-country season. They may get a couple of meets. In fact, for those who really enjoy cross-country over all else, there is no reason why this season should be concentrated in a couple of months each year. Trackmen race on the track year-round. Roadmen on the road. Why not cross-country men on the country?

- Keep it open to all. Logically, this should be the democratic area of running—even more so than on the roads. Cross-country distances are shorter, the ground is softer and the scenery more pleasant. In England, cross-country is the "free-for-all" sport. But in the US road racing has gained this honor. The difference is in emphasis. With more multi-division meets and more races where ability is no barrier, cross-country could gain the same mass appeal.

- Stick with rather short distances. For men, the two- to six-mile range is far enough. For women, one to two miles. Longer distances are regularly available elsewhere. They don't need to be so long in cross-country that they automatically exclude all but long distance people.

In its stepchild role, cross-country suffers from too many abuses. Being overshadowed by track and marathon races, hidden from the bright lights and fame of big-time international competition, it remains in a terrifically underdeveloped state from the highest levels to the lowest.

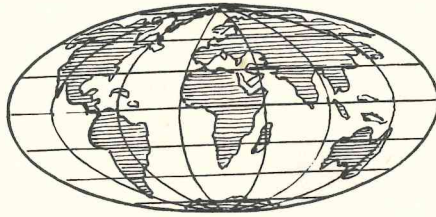
But in cross-country lies the potential of spectacular growth. As the relentless quest for fast times forces runners onto more and more drab terrain, hill and dale courses offer pleasant relief. As Tartan and asphalt increasingly dominate his life, he welcomes the chance to get his feet back on solid ground.

Cross-country—more than any other sort of running—offers both testing and therapy.



**Chapter Two**

***Running Around  
the World***



—Mark Shearman photo—

# ALL ALONE AT THE TOP

---

As of mid-1971, two distinct leaders stood above the international crowd. Englishman Dave Bedford for his overpowering victory in the 1971 international (he won by 22 seconds), and American Doris Brown, who has won EVERY international women's title—five straight since the race began in 1967. The two are pioneers in their training approaches, both choosing higher-mileage routines than their counterparts in hopes of gaining higher returns. They have gambled for fame in a sport that has precious few international heroes and heroines.

---



---

Doris Brown and Dave Bedford  
at the scene of their 1971 Inter-  
national wins. (M. Shearman)

---



Cross-country running in Britain is as much a social as a competitive event. But the emphasis placed on it and the resulting glut of runners nonetheless creates a highly-competitive situation upfront. Competition is so fierce that in the past not even a Ron Hill could be assured of consistent leadership.

Into this scene steps Dave Bedford, a somewhat unique figure in British athletics.

Britons are traditionally late-maturing in the distances. Dave was 20 when he gained a spot atop the world 10,000-meter list during the 1970 season. He was 21 when he did his spectacular running in 1971.

In a country where cross-country dominates the runner's year, Dave chooses to point mainly towards the major national and international events. And even those are used as preparation for the somewhat more important track racing that lies ahead. In other words, he isn't as serious about the sport as many of his countrymen.

But the most startling fact about Bedford is that, in a country where distance men train rather conservatively (by modern standards, anyway), he consistently covers as much as 200 miles a week.

You see, Dave has a working philosophy. He says, "You only get back in proportion to what you put in." After all the preparation he'd been putting in over the last couple of years, he naturally expected much in return when he ran the big races of 1971.

Armed with this sort of make-or-break preparation, Bedford won the national championship by 40 seconds—an unheard of margin in a country of cross-country runners, the best 1000 of them at that.

From there he went to San Sebastian, Spain, a few weeks later for the international—the *Cross de las Naciones*. Faced with an un-British flat course—mostly on a grass racetrack—but with typically British ankle deep mud, Bedford wasn't concerned. As reporter Cliff Temple explained in *Athletics Weekly*:

"... Bedford knew that that one man was going to break away from the field as soon as possible, make his own running all the way, and still win with ease, and that man was Dave Bedford. It's always difficult to explain the phenomenon of the Confident Athlete; they're usually such a self-doubting breed. But Dave Bedford's belief in impending victory is based not upon any idea that he is God, or at all special beyond the bounds of natural talent. It is based on knowledge that he has trained harder than any of his rivals. And that if he does win he will deserve to simply because of the effort he has put into it."

Before the field had sloshed one kilometer, Bedford had a clear lead. He kept piling on the pace, until at the tape he held a ridiculous margin of 22 seconds over the second-place finish. Bedford's confidence, it would appear, was well founded.

Now obviously everyone who goes out and runs 200 miles a week isn't going to become a Dave Bedford. But it's interesting just the same to see how Bedford—a big (6'0", 144 pounds) man who's uniquely suited for this sort of thing, physically, emotionally and personally (he's a bachelor with few pressing responsibilities beyond running)—goes about it.

First off, he trains three times most days, a typical day including eight miles in the morning, six miles during lunch hour and a final 16-mile surge



at night. Some days the evening session will include fast intervals. On weekends, he cuts back to one or two runs a day, but ups the mileage to 20-25 on his longest runs. Most of the running is on the road, nearly all of it at brisk pace. This young man doesn't have an LSD temperament.

He's serious, needless to say, about his running. But at the same time Dave retains certain humor and perspective. While his targets are "Olympic, European, Commonwealth 'golds' and world records," he says he has taken the most pleasure at "breaking my 100, 200 and 400 (meter) personal bests all in one race."

In mid-1971, Dave was well on his way to reaching his major goals. He'd broken three European records and was within seconds of Ron Clarke's world marks at three miles, 5000 and 10,000 meters. Dave could become the greatest distance runner to date. Or he could crumble under the heavy load he has imposed on himself. "You only get back in proportion to what you put in" works two ways. Bedford knows this. He's willing to gamble.



Doris Brown is as much an oddity and a figure of awe in her country as Dave Bedford is in his—though for somewhat different reasons.

Dave has dominated his country's and the international cross-country races for a mere one year. Doris has done it for *five!* That's right, five years. When she cruised to her win on the muddy 3.1-kilometer course at San Sebastian in March 1971, Doris continued a winning streak that had started in 1967. She owns a similar number of national championships.

What Dave has done in training in England—pushing beyond commonly accepted limits—Doris did long ago in the United States. At a time when US women trained lightly, Doris was going through sessions that would give a man trouble. She often totaled 100 miles a week, and still does. Other women have realized it might not be such a bad idea.

As more women have trained more, US women's distance running has gone through a spell of spectacular growth in the last four or five years. Doris Brown and the sport have matured together, and she has been able to hold her place despite growing pressure from the younger runners below—Francie Larrieu, Francie Johnson, etc.

Traditionally, US women runners rise quickly and fade from the scene by the time they reach voting age. Mrs. Brown, a marvel of longevity, is going better than ever at age 28 (she turns 29 on Sept, 17, 1971).

Here's an indication of her spirit. In mid-1971, Francie Larrieu broke Doris' long-standing American mile record. The very next day, Doris regained it. A week later, she brought it down to 4:39.6—making her one of the few women to break 4:40—and she later ran a world record 10:07 two-mile.

Obviously she is fast on the track. But her true loyalties and abilities lie with the longer cross-country distances. Her training—planned in cooperation with Coach Ken Foreman of Seattle Pacific College—is partly responsible.

The 5'3½", 115-pound physical education teacher generally covers between 70 and 100 miles a week, throughout the year. Her five-mile morning runs take her on a hilly course around a lake. Most afternoons, she does high numbers of intervals on the track. The combination adequately suits her for races of 800 to 4000 meters—and probably longer if she decided to

try. She says, "I have approximated my own private marathon." She doesn't mention how fast she ran it, but one knowledgeable observer of women long distance runners has estimated she could run "in the 2:40s, possibly in the 2:30s" if she gave the race a serious try.

Meanwhile, Doris is content to keep winning at the shorter distances, and this activity keeps her too busy at the moment to think about going longer. With young runners pressing her on the track and better competition waiting in ambush on the international level, she must specialize.

Her biggest problem at the moment, though, doesn't seem to be her competitors. It's her own injuries, the leg problems that have bugged her regularly for the past several years. While she was breaking mile records in 1971, she said, "I was training hard one day and limping the next."

If she can manage to keep her aches and pains on a minor level and can keep returning to the international cross-country race every year, thought may have to be given to renaming the event. Maybe calling it the "Doris Brown Run." Since the race began in 1967, no one else has won it. Don't bet on anyone else winning it until Doris voluntarily surrenders her throne.



# HEAVY TRAFFIC AT "VANNY"

BY HUGH SWEENEY

Nowhere in the United States is cross-country as firmly established as in the northeast. And in the northeast, the name Van Cortlandt Park is synonymous with cross-country. Nearly every eastern runner gets to test this course—a surprisingly rugged and natural one considering it's surrounded by New York City. Van Cortlandt is unique. In a sport notably lacking in history, tradition and legend in this country, this heavily-traveled course drips with all three. Hugh Sweeney, who did his college running at nearby Princeton, writes about the course he has seen so much of—both from the competitor and spectator viewpoints.

I've seen indoor track meets, which resemble continuous three-ring circuses. I've run the Boston marathon, a 3½-hour stampede. But I don't think there is any show in the runner's world quite like an October Saturday morning at Van Cortlandt Park.

"Vanny" is situated in the northernmost tip of New York City. Manhattan College and the exclusive Riverdale section of the Bronx are on the hill west of the park. Yonkers is to the north, and a golf course is to the east. The park once was part of the Van Cortlandt estate, and the Van Cortlandt House—built in the early 1700s—now is open to the public.

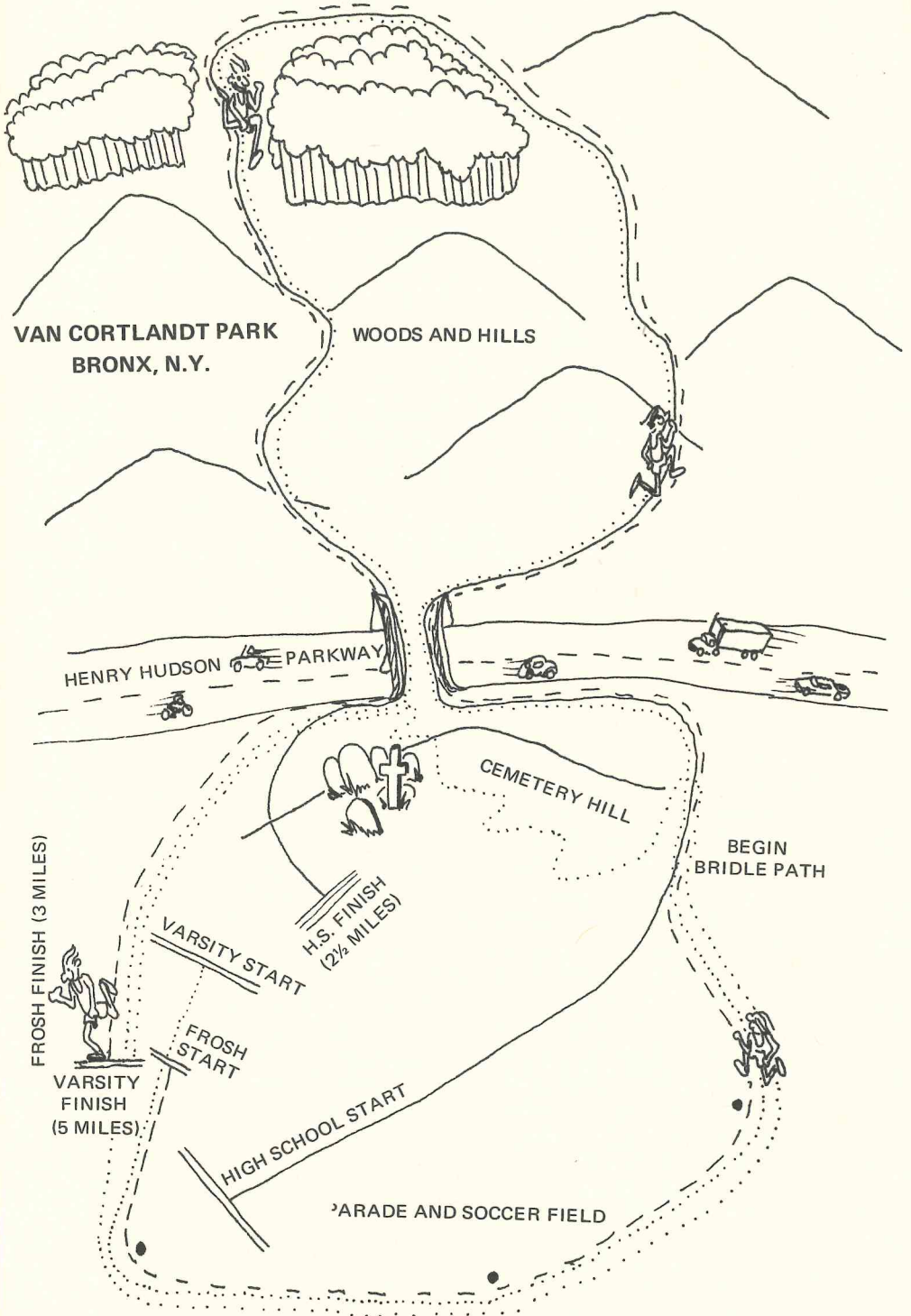
But to thousands of eastern cross-country runners and fans, and to virtually every AAU distance runner in the New York area, Van Cortlandt Park means cross-country.

New York City high school championship meets, high school races involving schools from four or more states, New York college dual meets, the Metropolitan and Heptagonal championships, the IC4As, the NCAAs in 1968 and 1969, the AAU race when it is run in the east, Metropolitan AAU championship and development races. All are run over the trails of Van Cortlandt Park. Sometimes races are run concurrently, and because of the way the trails overlap and intersect, runners from different races may use the same trail at the same time.

The course at Van Cortlandt is well known to all who have run there. But it is an interesting course to anyone who likes cross-country, and a brief description may be beneficial to those who have not seen it. (Refer to the diagram.)

The college varsity, freshman and high school course all begin on the huge, open parade field. The varsity runs about seven-eighths of a mile before entering a hilly, stone-covering dirt bridle path. The frosh and high school courses cover about three-fourths and one-third of a mile on the field before hitting the bridle path. On this flat region are situated four or five soccer fields. They are in continuous use on Sundays, as teams representing New York's many ethnic groups turn the area into a "Plain of Babble."

The first big hill on the path is at about the 1.1-mile point on the varsity course, just before the trail crosses the bridge over the Henry Hudson



Parkway. In my opinion, the course is most difficult between 1.1 and 2.6 miles, where it comes back out of the woods, recrosses the bridge and returns to the flat, open area. Back in the woods there are short, steep hills to climb, sharp turns while running downhill at top speed, and dangerous footing. The dirt path is covered with stones, roots and tree branches. It is less than five feet wide in places, making passing difficult in a large field, and assuring a fast start in the battle for early position. In the IC4As, for example, the flat first mile is regularly covered in 4:25. In 1964, Walter Hewlett reportedly went out in 4:19.

One steep hill at about two miles is marked by a turn so sharp that a long playground fence has been installed to keep people from falling over the side.

After leaving the woods and hills north of the Henry Hudson Parkway, the course returns to a flat section from 2.6 to 3.7 miles. At that point, the path again enters the bridge path. But instead of continuing over the bridge a second time, the varsity course veers to the left and backtracks a bit. It then goes up the infamous "Cemetery Hill," where more men have battled than on the Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg. The hill is so named neither because of the numerous runners who have died on its slopes, nor because the hill is a killer. (Although both are true.) Rather, the name is derived from the small old cemetery plot located on the hill, at about 4.3 miles on the varsity course. The cemetery has only two markers, one for the Van Cortlandt vault and one for the Bagley vault. The markers are enclosed by an eight-foot high stone wall. This 35 x 40 foot enclosure can be entered, and is used as a walled "soccer field" for local boys, three or four on a team.

Cemetery Hill is brutal, rising about 80 feet between 4.2 and 4.4 miles, and dropping back down to the bridge and then the flat area at 4.6 miles. The long finishing stretch to five miles is a tough one because of the damage done by Cemetery Hill.

Because of the way the varsity course loops back and forth, a seasoned cross-country observer can see the varsity runners at the start, the mile mark, and the return across the bridge at 2½ miles. He can then go backwards up Cemetery Hill and see the leaders again at 3.8 and 4.1 miles, leaving himself enough time to run across the soccer fields to see the leaders finish. Perhaps some harrier buffs know of better ways to see the race, but I prefer the above method, which allows one to see the leaders at four points plus the finish.

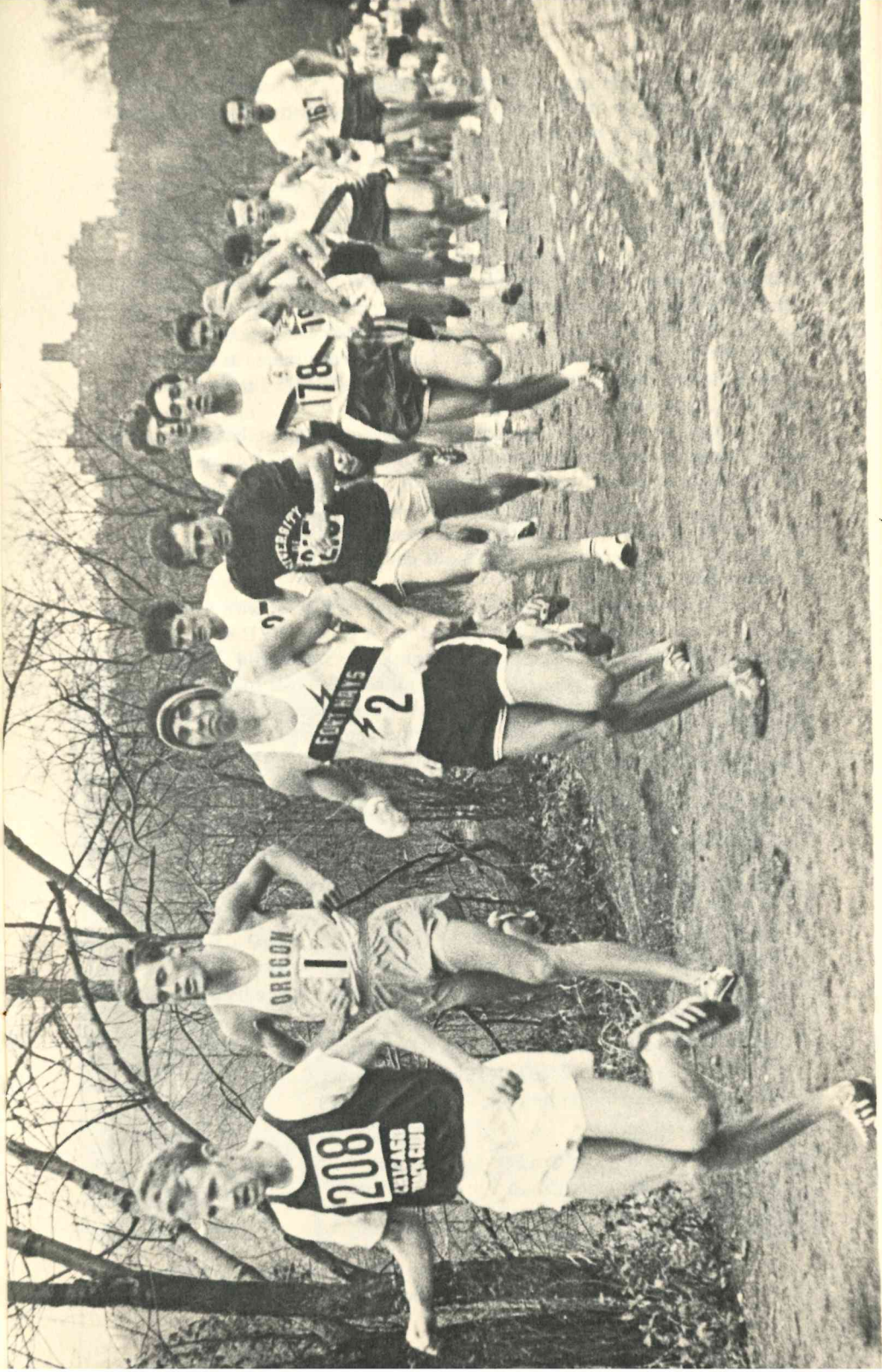
This five-mile course is the traditional one for the area's varsity runners. They've stuck with the distance despite the NCAA's six-mile standard in its championship race. When the NCAA and other six-mile/10,000-meter championships are held at Van Cortlandt, then the course is lengthened. The traditional college freshman course follows the three-mile "outer loop" (basically the first three miles of the varsity course). High schools cover about the same route as the frosh, but only go 2½ miles.

Does organized confusion or confused organization better describe

---

Van Cortlandt's narrow, rough path usually makes free running difficult for all but the leaders of big races. Grant Colehour, Kenny Moore and John Mason (the eventual winner) are outfront here in the 1969 AAU race. (J. Goodridge)





the scene at Vanny on an October Saturday morning? At any point in time, there are at least two or three races being run concurrently. The high school mob scenes are the most spectacular.

The Easterns, held Oct. 24, 1970, has four varsity sections and several "B" or junior varsity races. Something like 1500 boys ran, 250 or so to a race. The narrow paths on the back loop (north of Henry Hudson Parkway) were packed with runners four abreast. Between starts of the high school races, college dual meets got underway. New York schools with names like Pratt Institute, Lehman, CCNY staged races won in about 29 minutes. Manhattan romped through a dual meet against somebody, and Ron Stonitsch of C.W. Post beat Lehigh's Tim Steele with 24:42. Stonitsch would have been a bit faster if he hadn't run into a mob of high school runners as he went down Cemetery Hill at the varsity 4½-mile mark, while the high schoolers were at 2.1 miles of their race.

During a second high school race, I noticed several familiar faces coming out of the woods and crossing the bridge along with the schoolboy mob. The Princeton cross-country team, practicing on the course for the upcoming Heptagonals, had been overrun by high schoolers on the back loop and were now running with the pack, I cheered as Princeton's Dennis O'Brian went by. He couldn't understand how someone could be encouraging him when he wasn't even in the race.

Every year new signs pop up on the course. Students with paint brushes decorate stones and trees along the back loop. A violet "NYU Frosh Met Champs 1968" is on the bridge at the bottom of Cemetery Hill. Green M's (for Manhattan) are on trees every 50 yards or so. Red (St. John's) KACZ, McQUADE, LAYER on the hardtop. High school names—Molloy, Power, Loughlin, Rice—are on trees and stones. There is even a "Let's go Lehman" (whose best man does about 29:30!).

At Van Cortlandt, the spectators are as enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their sport as any football fan is about his.

---

This is one of the rare courses—perhaps the only one—where comparative times have much meaning. With the course staying the same for a long period, and virtually all the eastern distance runners running it while in college, a list has validity. Below are the best five-mile times at Van Cortlandt. The course was lengthened by about 600 yards (or 90 seconds) in 1960. But none of the pre-1960 runners would have bettered 25:30 on the present course. Henry Kennedy set a course record of 24:01 in 1956. His brother Crawford did 23:51 in 1959. (Marks made through the 1970 season.)

Name (School)	5-Mile Time	Year
Art Dulong (Holy Cross)	24:04	1967
Art Dulong (Holy Cross)	24:06	1969
Donal Walsh (Villanova)	24:10	1970
Charles Messenger (Villanova)	24:15	1966
Greg Fredericks (Penn State)	24:17	1970
Eamon O'Reilly (Georgetown)	24:24	1965



Richard Sharkey (Mich. State)	24:24	1966
Ambrose Burfoot (Wesleyan)	24:25	1967
Steve Stageberg (Georgetown)	24:29	1967
Donal Walsh (Villanova)	24:29	1969
Tom Donnelly (Villanova)	24:30	1966
Steve Stageberg (Georgetown)	24:32	1968
Keith Colburn (Harvard)	24:32	1969
Doug Hardin (Harvard)	24:35	1968
Jon Anderson (Cornell)	24:39	1970
Ambrose Burfoot (Wesleyan)	24:40	1966
Joe Lynch (Georgetown)	24:41	1964
Oscar Moore (NYPC)	24:42	1964
Ron Stonitsch (CW Post)	24:42	1970
Jerry Ritchey (Pittsburgh)	24:42	1969
Art Dulong (Holy Cross)	24:44	1968
Jon Anderson (Cornell)	24:45	1970
Vic Zwolak (Villanova)	24:46	1963
Vic Zwolak (Villanova)	24:47	1962
John Lawler (Navy)	24:47	1966
Walter Hewlett (Harvard)	24:47	1964



After a fast first mile on the flat, runners reach the bridle path at Van Cortlandt in the 1969 NCAA championship. (Jeff Johnson photo)

# CROSS-COUNTRY GONE WILD

The Dipsea. Perhaps no cross-country race in the United States has its tradition and mass appeal. The 6.8-mile trail race that snakes over the mountains between Mill Valley and Stinson Beach, Calif., annually lures a field of 1000 runners. The 67-year-old (as of its 1971 running) event is more than cross-country. It's SUPER-cross-country. Or, if you prefer, cross-country gone wild.

Norman Bright knows of the Dipsea's irresistible attraction. He's all too aware of the hold it has on him.

In 1937, Bright, then one of the leading distance runners in the United States, studiously surveyed the already legendary Dipsea trail. He sought out shortcuts. (It's legal here. This is a so-called "open course," meaning the name of the game is "Get to Stinson Beach the shortest and fastest way you can.") As the story goes, Norman even smoothed out rough spots in his path before the race. He broke the course record. But he lost the race. He finished second in the handicap running.

Bright gradually faded out of the running scene, joined the sedentary majority and moved to Seattle, where he worked as a school teacher and counselor. But the Dipsea continued to haunt him. In 1969, he came back to watch the race. He was surprised to learn that his record had stood the test of the years and he still had the fastest time. He watched with more than detached interest. The next day he hiked the trail. He got the urge to run it again.

Norman, by now a white-haired gentleman approaching 60, started training again. Not just jogging, but running like a man possessed, which he was. He had a vision of not only running the Dipsea again, but *winning* it. He reckoned that with a 15-minute handicap (the maximum), he just might do it. During the next year, he rode the bus from Seattle to San Francisco a half-dozen times and ran the Dipsea trail 26 times.

Come race day in August 1970, Bright was fit.

A crowd—a big one for this sort of race—stood at the finish line beside the Pacific Ocean, squinting anxiously into the fog that obscured the mountain hovering over Stinson Beach. Suddenly, out of the fog burst a white-haired man, grimacing and with head thrown back. It was unmistakably Norman Bright. After a 33-year delay, he was winning.

But a short time later, a delightful bit of irony occurred. A young man named Don Makela—who'd started from scratch and waded through the entire pack—broke Bright's 33-year-old course record.

Stories like this run through the history of the Dipsea race. The mystical hold the Dipsea has on Norman Bright also has grabbed hundreds upon hundreds of other runners in the San Francisco area, and they turn out in droves each August to take on the monster.

That's the only way to describe the course. It starts in Mill Valley, a quaint town a few miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge which steadfastly resists the evils of suburban sprawl. Runners gather in the town square to begin their journey. Wave after wave of them (sent off on an age-handicap



basis) storm through the streets. The start is deceptively flat and easy.

Not a half-mile later, though, the man-eating course shows itself for what it is. It has lured the runners in, and is now prepared to gobble them up. Facing them at this point are nearly 500 steps climbing abruptly up the mountain. As traffic jams up, there's little choice but to walk. Hillside residents don't even blink as runners climb past their houses, inches from their windows. They're accustomed by now to living beside a human freeway.

After the steps, runners pass through a barnyard to the first hilltop. It's here, on the first downward plunge, that the true nature of the Dipsea course reveals itself. A choice of trails is available. Runners scatter in five directions, each on his special route. The course is called 6.8 miles, but it can be anywhere from 6½ to 7½, depending on familiarity with shortcuts.

"Oh, no. You must be kidding!" That's the normal reaction on first seeing a sharp drop down into Muir Woods, far below. Thousands of feet have ground the rutted path into inches of dust and pebbles. A little slip on it can mean tumbling head over heels like a snowball for a quarter-mile. Some people tiptoe down it like an old lady recovering from a broken hip. Less conservative individuals release their brakes, toss back their heads, fling out their arms and race straight down the 60-degree mountain face. It's roughly the equivalent of dashing down a ski jump—with the snow on it. Needless to say, the hill has racked up its share of broken arms and ankles and assorted other injuries. But no fatalities yet.

Having lost all the altitude that the step-climbing had won, the trail starts back up, changing character drastically after a shallow creek crossing. Trees, bushes and poison oak close in on the trail. The downhill daredevils pay their dues. They're walking before the new hill is 100 yards old. For most of the rest of the way, the trail is narrow—too narrow for more than a couple of dozen runners to navigate without obstruction. This race, remember, usually has 1000, so it's a rare man who runs all the way. On a trail this narrow, another man's rest-break suddenly becomes yours, too, even if you don't need it.

Maybe 15 minutes later, this climb through the woods ends in a treeless meadow on the mountaintop overlooking the ocean. But don't spend too much time admiring the view. The trail sits precariously on the edge of yet another nearly sheer wall. A misstep can land a runner in the valley below.

Finally, the dip to the sea begins, plowing down another too-slick, too-steep ravine that becomes a mass of jagged rocks and foot-snagging roots near the bottom. It's a trail that no self-respecting pack mule would attempt.

Once out of "Steep Ravine" (many points on the course have picked up names over the years—"Cardiac Hill," "Insult Hill," etc.), the rest of the run is something of an anti-climax. Sensible downgrades and some road running take the runner to the finish in Stinson Beach. After picking his way carefully and struggling along for the better part of the race, he's able to release his speed at the end.

This is the course that has so captivated Norman Bright and hundreds of like-thinking individuals. The course that draws people to practice on it year-round. The one that a San Francisco runner named Pax Beale filmed in 1969 and '70 for a full-length movie. The one that a large number of runners return to a few weeks later for a *Double Dipsea*—Mill Valley to Stinson Beach and back.



There's nothing easy about it, with two mountains to climb (that's two each way for the Double Dipsea). It isn't a safe course. It definitely isn't a fast course. A one-way trip takes the better part of an hour for even the accomplished distance runner. That works out to about nine minutes a mile. Time doesn't count for much, anyway—except comparing one Dipsea run with another.

But still the number of Dipsea devotees grows year after year. Their enthusiasm indicates a healthy market for this sort of running.

---

## **TRADITION REIGNS IN BRITAIN**

**BY WILF RICHARDS**

The British love their cross-country, and at the same time they take it seriously. Their entire running year pivots on the period between October and March, when they take to the "country" by the thousands. In terms of numbers and types of runners, their races approximate the bigger US road runs. There's the same unrestricted, democratic spirit. The style of these races, though, is unlike anything in the US. They take the environment as it is—with fences, creeks, mud and all—and make no attempt at arranging "time" courses. In fact, they sometimes go out of their way to make them slower. Wilf Richards, Runner's World's European editor, sets the scene.

That the winter sport of cross-country running is immensely popular in England can be deduced by the fact that close to a thousand runners turn out for the senior national championship race alone. And bear in mind that this is a team event in which each club is limited to one team of nine members. Many hundreds of runners who are out with their clubs week after week are excluded from this huge national field.

The English cross-country season lasts from the beginning of October to the end of March, though the tendency is to devote the early and late weeks of the season to road relays. Almost all British distance runners take their cross-country activities just as seriously as their track events. Gaining a place on the national team for the big "International" in March is as important to them as being selected for the more glamorous track teams.

The first half of the season is taken over by league and interclub races; the second half by the various county, intercounty, district, area and national championships. Only in championship events is there any restriction in the number of competitors. In other races, some of the larger clubs will turn out as many as 70 or 80 members for what are called "mob" matches.

In these, each runner scores according to his position and thus feels that he is making a contribution, however lowly his position.

Scotland, Wales and Ireland follow on much the same lines as England, though, with their smaller populations and more widespread towns, turnouts are naturally on a reduced scale.

The sport is very rarely brought to a halt on account of bad weather. Torrential rain, snow and ice, gale-force winds, freezing temperatures—all these are accepted as part of the game. Courses vary considerably, though they are usually what could be described as “traditional,” with a few gates or fences to be negotiated, some ditches or streams to cross, some hill climbs, as much grassland and as little road as possible, and, in short, a course with as much variation as can be obtained in these days of diminishing countryside. Distance are usually around seven miles, rarely less, while in the area and national championships the seniors have nine miles to cover.

In Europe, the countries most like Britain in their love of cross-country running are France and Belgium. There is, however, some difference. The Continentals appear to consider the winter sport more from the point of view of its aid to the distance track runner than—as in Britain—regarding it as a sport in its own right. They prefer shorter, faster courses with few of the natural hazards enjoyed by the British.

Sporadic efforts have been made in England to follow Continental practice in this respect, but so far these efforts have been successfully resisted. Very few would be in favor of such a move, even if the idea behind it (that of preventing the British distance runner from becoming a plodder) were proved to have any substance. Most enlightened coaches and runners feel that more harm is likely to result from over-intensive track work than from running in a natural environment, even though conditions may make the run very much a test of endurance rather than speed.

# SPAIN'S LOVE OF COUNTRY

BY PAT TARNAWSKY

In many respects, Spanish cross-country is like that of the other European countries. Courses and distances are similar (i.e., not usually as demanding as those in Britain), and many races are spectator events. San Sebastian, Spain, hosted the 1971 international championships, and the event was enthusiastically received there. But as international as the flavor of cross-country has become in Spain, it retains a uniquely Spanish touch. Every country, to an extent, gives its own touch to cross-country. Pat Tarnawsky—one-time resident of Spain—describes the scene there in "El Cross."

On the sunny afternoon of Feb. 14, 1971, a scene familiar to us all took place in a big wooded city park. As cheerful crowds braved the chill breeze, a whopping total of 5800 boys and girls rampaged over the rolling cross-country course. The eight events ranged from 1500 to 9000 meters. It might have been one of those mass meets so typical of the booming west coast US cross-country scene.

But it wasn't. The setting was the Casa del Campo park in Madrid. The meet was the Gran Premio de la Juventud, Spain's biggest age-group cross-country affair. In fact, those 5800 entrants are an awful lot by *any* country's standard—especially when you consider how small Spain is.

Long-distance running finally has hit Iberia. And hit it hard.

At first glance, Spain might not seem fertile soil for growing distance runners. Up until recently, the country had been more noted for poets and bullfighters. Since there had been no large leisured middle class, amateur sports had always fallen mostly to the rich *senoritos*, who tended to prefer less strenuous activities like horses and partridge shoots. Fishermen, workers and peasants were too busy keeping body and soul together to train for running. When they did have time for sports, it was traditionally popular things like bowls, trout fishing, Basque log-chopping contests—not very helpful at the Olympics. Every four years, Spain did manage somehow to scrape together a mediocre team and send them to the Olympics—where they always got zapped.

Spain, however, pays frenzied attention to two major pro spectator sports. And it's interesting to note that both sports idolize endurance and demand a fair degree of cardiovascular development—fine background for distance runners. Soccer and cycling.

The average Spaniard is built like a distance runner anyway. He is short, fine-boned, wiry. He even has a certain natural lifelong fitness, thanks to living in a society that still values a lot of brisk daily walking and still prizes good natural foods (though more cars and the appearance of junk foods in Spanish supermarkets are beginning to change this.)

Another factor might be national temperament. The Spanish man makes a profession of lonely individualism—he's better at solo anarchy than teamwork. In addition, he is driven by harsh social pressure to prove he is a *macho* (he-man). *Machismo* is a very "in" word in the US right now, but most Americans use it without understanding what it really means in Spanish.



Being a *macho* isn't making bold stances or women. It is a cold-blooded existential tenacity and courage. The best toreros, for instance, are respected not for their amorous exploits, but for the way they let the bull's horn graze their fly. Interest guys with qualities like these in long distance running, and you have something.

Curiously, track and short-distance stuff still languishes somewhat, while cross-country is grabbing the headlines. *El cross* (as the Spanish call it) is also drawing large crowds of spectators. (Possibly that's because the woodsy atmosphere of these open-air meets is so in tune with the holiday-time mass family outings that the Spanish are so fond of called *romerías*.)

The Gran Premio meet in Madrid, then, is dramatic proof that this program is producing runners. Age-group cross-country, with its power to galvanize mobs of young runners, is now a fact of life in Spain. In the Gran Premio, the most exciting event was the international junior 7000-meter run, for entrants from Spain, Portugal, Scotland, Belgium, Ireland, Germany, Holland, Hungary. True, the Spanish didn't win the solo title—a Scots kid named MacDonald did, with 22:27.6. But the Spanish "A" team took the team title with 19 points.

And the fact that the Gran Premio included a 2500-meter run for 15 girls shows another big change. Spanish females, thanks to a fanatically conservative society, have always been more defensive about their femininity than women elsewhere. So they've been more vulnerable to the hoary old arguments against women's athletics. But now that the winds of women's lib are blowing gently there and Spanish girls have discovered everything from law careers to miniskirts, they are also hesitantly, fearfully discovering *deportismo*.

One promising girl now active in international competition is Belen Azpeitia, who represented her country in Spain's most important cross-country affair. This was the Cross de las Naciones (the international), held in the Basque town of Lasarte near San Sebastian, in which 130 top-flight runners from 13 nations took part. In the 3100-meter run for women, Belen met some of the world's best, including Maria Gommers, Rita Ridley and Doris Brown. And she got roundly beaten; she ran 11:47.6 for 15th against Doris Brown's winning 11:08.4. But Spain will probably close the girl runner gap soon.

For the moment, though, it's the male runners who enjoy the brand new limelight. Probably the finest university cross-country team is the U. of Madrid, which is beginning to make its punch and depth felt in European meets. In March these runners went to the international university "cross" held at Versailles, France. There they faced tough opposition from the U. of Louvain team, which had swept the team title for five straight years. The rugged 7400-meter course was dangerously slick with rain. But the Spanish kids stormed recklessly over it and took the title away from Louvain.

Spain's best single cross-country and middle distance runner is a skinny Castilian in his mid-20s named Mariano Haro. He has beaten England's Mike Tagg, and has run a close second to both Frank Shorter and Trevor Wright.

On the same day as the Gran Premio in Madrid, Haro was busy at another big international "cross" up north in Santander province. It was the 8000-meter Cross Internacional "Costa Esmeralda," held in the resort city of Laredo. Before a big rain-drenched crowd, 36 competitors churned off along a course too muddy for comfort. Three top Spanish runners—Carlos Perez, Ramon

Tasende and Haro, in that order—quickly forged to the front. Then Haro picked up and flailed into the lead to win with 23:01.

The way Haro is written up in Spanish the press, it looks like runners are on their way there to having the same charisma as tennis aces (like Manuel Santana, for instance). At the aforementioned Cross de las Naciones, Spanish hopes were high that Haro would do well, even though the terrible Dave Bedford of England, was entered. After all, the Spanish reasoned, Haro knew the four-loop 12,000-meter course perfectly, and the spectators would egg him on with wild cheering. But Bedford simply ran away and left the field (at one point he was 80 meters in the lead), winning with 38:42.8. Haro had to content himself with eighth place, in 39:38.5, and the fact that he had beaten Ian Stewart and Gaston Roelants.

In general, Spanish running activities seem concentrated between Madrid and the north Atlantic shore. One reason for this could be—again—temperament. Distance running seems more suited to the energetic northerners than to the Andalusians of the hot south. In fact, most of the big races take place on the north shore. Since the Gulf Stream hits that coast, its climate is mild year-round—never above 80 in summer, never below freezing in winter, with a lot of rain and mist. This makes for ideal racing conditions, in contrast to the torrid summer heat and bitter winter cold that runners have to face farther south. (Most Americans think of Spain as a land of palms and pleasant sun 365 days of the year. Nothing could be further from the truth.)

In short, this spirited little country has made a spirited beginning in distance running—particularly cross-country. It will be interesting to see how far their unique blend of pride and guts will carry them.



Spain's leading cross-country man, Mariano Haro.



# MEXICANS HIT THE PEAK

BY PETER BURKHART

Mexico's cross-country tradition resembles Africa's. In the mountains of northern Mexico reside, in their natural state, some of the greatest distance runners in the world. The Tarahumara Indians are known to race 100 or more miles cross-country—as a sport, not merely to survive. Yet this is nothing like the formalized cross-country that exists in other parts of the world. International style cross-country isn't well developed in Mexico. But there is activity. And as elsewhere it uses the terrain that's available. That means mountains. Peter Burkhart, a transplanted New Englander, writes of his experiences in a Mexican mountain race.

The city of Puebla is in southeastern Mexico high in the central plateau country of 7000 feet-plus elevation. This is my home amid the towering crags of four volcanos which stand like sentinels around the "city of angels."

I usually train at a local high school which is more like a beautiful botanical garden with its multi-colored plants, flowers and winding grass pathways. Here I cover various laps on the red cinder track several times weekly. My jogging was about a month along from scratch when I was approached one day by a local sports instructor, Maestro Guerro.

The maestro came across the grass infield and took a seat beside me.

"Manana, we go in the bus, yes?" he states.

"Where?" I asked.

"Up to Tepozuchitl."

With a sweeping wave of the arm he pointed in the direction of the clouds above the city. I looked hard, but all I could see was the faint line of foliage disappearing into the haze aloft. I quickly discovered that there was a 7000-meter race in the military city known as Tepozuchitl, in a small forest above Puebla. The school had received an invite to run, and some of the boys wanted me along. Although my physical condition was far below par, I was enthused with the chance to see the inside of a Mexican military complex.

"What type of race is it?" I asked.

"Cross-country on a hill," the maestro replied.

This sounded good, so I said I'd accompany the team the next morning. Guerro told me that it was a small race, normally limited to soldiers stationed in the state of Puebla. Inasmuch as a United States road runner is an oddity here, he was positive I could compete.

Shortly after we rumbled into the military city, I was presented to the commanding general who was very impressed when Guerro told him that I had competed in the Boston marathon. A runner is practically an immortal of Olympus to the Mexicans if he has toed the mark at Boston. The general wished me well and told me to take a walk over to the prize table.

The trophy table was out of this world. There were 10 huge statues with the first place a giant sky-blue affair with a series of runners on it. It's amazing how after several years away from serious running the greed could return so fast. I scanned the area to see how my opposition stacked up.



My estimation was about 25 starters for so. "Peter, my lad, you are in like Flynn," I surmised.

The whistle for assembly blew at 11 a.m. and the ground seemed to open as the runners poured out of barracks and vehicle sections. The final count was 20 complete teams and 140 starters. I was really shell-shocked to see such a large field. A quick look at the footgear revealed that 90% were decked out in big heavy basketball sneakers. Now everyone knows that good racers don't wear these, right?

After being lined up by a colonel, we marked to the review table in the central plaza where the race was to begin. There were last-minute instructions on courtesy and "rules of the road" before we were sent to our marks. While all this was going on, a Latin marimba band was beating out the theme from a local TV show. At the height of the music, the gun went off. About half the athletes heard it, and the result was shoving, elbowing and a pile of falling runners as the rest of the field surged away.

It was a typical Van Cortlandt Park-type race with a flat-out sprint for the first corner. We went by a series of military buildings and up a hill which was about 300 yards steep. I was sandwiched in a huge group in the vanguard as we hit a level area. I put on a burst to get loose, but so did the others and we roared around another corner as one. My legs wobbled as they beheld another hill with no crest in sight.

"Hang in there, they'll fade," I thought. They faded all right—gradually out of sight.

After what seemed like an eternity, I approached the 2000-meter mark and a pancake stretch. The runners were like dominoes stretching out in front of me. My pace took me past about 10 runners on this dirt route, and the course appeared to drop into the woods below. It dropped for about 50 yards and then turned sharply to the right. Staring me squarely in the face was a winding trail disappearing up a hill, with stones of all sizes and shapes lining the way.

I was soon reduced to a quick walk and had the opportunity to look at the scenery. Although the colors were all blurred, I could make out the city of Puebla below at 7300 feet, and I was still going up. One soldier ahead of me lost his footing and fell. He was lucky indeed, for another foot to the left and he would have been a paratrooper without a chute. It was all I could do to just keep putting one foot in front of the other. This is a cross-country course?

The grading was extremely treacherous and I was starting to get a bit concerned for my life as I ascended a high pyramid practically on my hands and knees. The trail was swirling with a red dust and narrowing rapidly so I hoped the summit was coming. At least let me see another runner ahead, I prayed.

All of a sudden the leader went by me on his way down. He was lean like a deer and also traveling like one. The second-place runner darted by about 10 seconds behind. I couldn't make out if he was a tank or a bowling ball because he was covered with the red dust and looked like he had crawled to the top. The crest was just behind them, but it was a good 200 yards away, and there were a couple of dozen "sneakered doggies" in between.

I went up and over the summit on my last breath! It was a sharp turn-

around. Down I started like an express train, disregarding rocks and runners. Along the cliffs I raced with one eye on the rim and the other watching for the numerous dropouts. They were in tough shape at this stage of the game. There was to be no top for them this day. The sun beat down harshly and my face and neck were like a Veracruz lobster. It was brutal!

I didn't gain any places or lose any on the descent. For all practical purposes, the race was over at the peak. The soldier just ahead of me at the end went all-out to keep this place and collapsed as he crossed the finish line. He was out cold! The band was still there playing away to their hearts' content.

Several days later via the high school, I received a beautiful military certificate and also a small trophy from the commander. He sent his thanks for competing in the run to the top of "Tepoz." It was a very nice gesture and typical of the graciousness of the Mexicans.

If you are ever in the volcano country of Puebla during late February, take care. The invitation to a small cross-country race could turn into a mountain.

# THE NEW ZEALAND SCENE

BY JACK FOSTER

New Zealand is a distance-oriented country. It's also a country of spectacular natural beauty and open space. Given these circumstances, it's easy to see why the New Zealanders thrive on cross-country. One of those who does is Jack Foster, who in 1970 ran a 2:12 marathon at age 38. Jack briefly describes the state of cross-country running on his islands.

Every New Zealand town of any size at all (with populations of, say, 7000 or above) boasts a "harrier" and/or athletic club, harrier being the winter or cross-country section. In comparison with the United States, track and field is non-existent in our school system. The schools hold one annual cross-country race and that is it. All the rest of the running—cross-country, road and track—is carried on at the club level.

The clubs are not very large, but usually they are very keen, and harrier events are *never* cancelled. During the year, races are graded on a "something-for-everyone" basis, beginning with two-mile events for seniors and half-mile for midgets, getting longer through the season to the 12,000 meters for men and 2000 for youngsters.

The terrain for these races can vary alarmingly—from really rugged, testing farmland courses to horse race track-parkland type. The pity of it all is that the really great "testing" courses are giving way slowly to the more park-like runs. This, of course, caters more to the trackie—5000 and 10,000 man. Unlike in England, where they include a lot of plowed land, we don't. But we do provide many obstacles—streams, gates, fences, etc. I can see a good case for *cross-country* for harriers and park running for the fast lads.

The club which I belong to has a dozen or so keen seniors (not veterans, or those over 40), including a store manager, teacher, scientist, surveyor, civil engineer, mechanical engineer, clerk, draftsman, two farmers and two plumbers. (I don't know why we are duplicated in farmers and plumbers!) I would say most of our top men are over 25 years and long out of school, quite the opposite of the US system where the best men are mostly school men or just beyond. The US system seems to produce much faster men; ours encourages longer athletic careers. These are differences in environment, and as neither system is proved better than the other, radical changes in either might be impractical and possibly unworkable.



# "TOO ARTIFICIAL" FOR AFRICANS

BY GEOFF FENWICK

There's a basic paradox in Africa. The sprawling continent contains perhaps the greatest natural cross-country runners in the world, yet cross-country racing remains undeveloped there. African athletics expert Geoff Fenwick examines the continent's running—in its pure state, and as it has been developed as a sport.

Africa covers too vast an area for any one person to write authoritatively about cross-country running throughout the whole continent. Only a very general picture is possible. For it must be remembered that within Africa are countries at many different stages of athletics development, ranging from ones where sport as we know it does not exist to others where Olympic gold medalists are already being produced.

In a purely informal way, Africa's cross-country tradition is magnificent. The largest map reveals relatively few roads there. Yet if you flew over the land you would see that it is criss-crossed with innumerable trackways created by both animals and men. Long experience has made the African skilled at moving over this type of countryside.

In most areas outside the towns, people travel on foot. And although the nomads of the Sahara depend upon animals for their transport, one must not forget that the toughest and most natural of all men traverses the wastes of the Kalahari Desert on foot. In his own environment, there is little doubt that the Kalahari Bushman would be a match for the world's best cross-country runners.

Elsewhere, in terrain only a little less difficult, Africans move untroubled over the merest pathways. Pygmies flit through the dense Congo forests pursuing game in places white men could not reach. Pastoral tribes like the Masai and the Samburu cover long distances daily with their herds. Well over a hundred years ago, the regiments of the primitive Zulu army were covering 50 miles a day in country where trained European soldiery could scarcely cover 15, and the tradition is further back in time than that.

More personally, I have encountered elderly men, bowed down with goods, who thought little of covering 30 miles a day. And yet more personally, I remember the young Muhutu boy who accompanied me on the ascent of a 14,000-foot mountain on the spur of the moment. Having reached the summit before me, he passed the time reading his English dictionary and generally gave the impression that he had just completed a mild afternoon stroll.

Yet none of this can by any stretch of the imagination be classified as cross-country running within the sport's framework of laws. Facile reasons for this marked absence of organized cross-country sport are many.

There is, of course, the climate. Cross-country is essentially a winter operation, and except in the extreme north and south of the African continent, winter is not a clearly defined season.

There is, too, the African countryside where generally the hills are steeper, the pathways bumpier and the thorns thornier than they would be in, say, Europe—where a cross-country course usually consists of parkland

with the odd plowed field thrown in to provide a bit of ruggedness. Where cross-country running does exist in Africa, difficult terrain often presents the home team with an unassailable advantage, and the whole point of competition is lost.

Yet neither of these reasons for cross-country's near non-existence is wholly satisfactory. As we have already seen, Africans do walk and run over difficult countryside, often when the temperatures are high. What likely reasons are there for the lack of competitive spirit?

One obvious factor is that the club structure, for cross-country running is traditionally a team affair. Very, very few athletics clubs in Africa are open to the general public, partly because most African people live in scattered communities and partly because financing open clubs is difficult in underdeveloped countries. Thus a high percentage of the population is automatically eliminated and the responsibility for cross-country running rests with schools, colleges, military and quasi-military organizations. Not that rugged individualists like the Bushmen and the Masai are very clubbable anyway.

Furthermore, African tradition and history is against cross-country running. The whole point of moving over the land, for both hunter and hunted, was to do so by the quickest possible route. Organized cross-country with its fixed points is directly against this tradition. Orienteering would suit Africans better. Explain, if you could, to a Pygmy, where you wanted him to go and he, with his highly sharpened senses of hearing and sight, would surprise you with his speed and accuracy.

One thing I am convinced of: if African women ever begin to take sport seriously, the weaker sex in Europe and the US had better look out. On yet another mountain, a friend and I were contemplating a very long, very crude ladder of branches set up a sheer cliff face. As we did so, we were overtaken by three strapping African girls who offered to carry our haversack for us. We were in no fit state to refuse, and besides it was a very cheerful offer. But the speed with which those girls climbed the ladder made us feel like 90-year-olds.

Not that there isn't some organized cross-country in Africa. Some of it, in fact, is of a high quality.

Obviously, climatic factors rule out the hot, damp regions in the west. In the east, where heat is tempered by altitude, cross-country exists in the form of infrequent competition. Not surprisingly, the highlands of Kenya is an important center for the sport. Many of Kenya's best long distance men, Kip Keino included, have competed in the annual Maseno cross-country race which, if my memory serves me right, crosses the Equator during its course.

To the south, the temperature is more favorable, but the main interest is in road running. It is from the north that the greatest contribution comes, possibly because of its contiguity to Europe where cross-country running has a great tradition.

One of the successful nations is Ethiopia, although there is not a great amount of competition there. Much training is carried out over rocky countryside, however, and this holds Ethiopian runners in good stead when they compete in cross-country races. They have tackled European races with success, and among their representatives have been such stalwarts as Abebe

Bikila and Mamo Wolde. Wolde, in particular, has performed well over the country, often during wintry European weather he could hardly have appreciated.

Yet closer to Europe, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria also produce good cross-country teams. In these countries there is a definite winter season. There has also been the influence of France. Examine the list of French internationalists as far back as the 1930s, and it will become evident that France depended, to some extent, on her colonies for a supply of talented long distance runners. El Ouafi and Alain Mimoun, both French winners of Olympic marathons in their time, were North Africans, and there have been others. Since independence, men like Mohamed Gammoudi (Tunisia) have competed with success on the track and over the country. Gammoudi has won both an Olympic track title and an international cross-country championship.

Yet the fact remains that at present, cross-country is a needless, artificial sport to the vast majority of people in Africa. Given good health, most Africans are basically fit in any case. As the continent becomes more "developed," the people might feel the need for sport as we know it, including cross-country *racing*—as opposed to cross-country *running* which so many of them already do in leading their daily lives. But by then the most interesting ones, like the Bushman, may not be with us.



**Chapter Three**

***On Racing and  
Training***



**MIKE RYAN**  
(by Johnson)

# SURVEYING TRAINING STYLES

Don't count on any startling conclusions on training matters. After surveying coaches of leading US colleges and glancing at the methods of other top runners, we have few to offer. Cross-country training seems to be based as much on tradition and superstition as on scientific knowledge. All training is somewhat this way.

Scientific principles apply equally to six-mile running on the track, the pavement and the country. Six miles is six miles, regardless of surface, and adequate training should be adequate for all three. But methods of preparing for the three types of racing vary radically. The main benefit of the varying approaches is perhaps the change of pace—psychological as well as physical—offered the athlete.

As elsewhere, every solidly based cross-country training program is tried; every one works. Methods run the gamut from highly patterned repeat work to the loosest sort of distance training. Within broad limits, there's no one right way and no absolute wrong way to go about it.

With this qualifying statement in mind, let's look at how—in general—the college coaches we surveyed train their runners. We're using colleges as the standard here because they tend to give more emphasis to the sport than any other US group.

The summer lays the groundwork for the season. Students typically are away from school (and away from their coach's direct influence), and are free to train. Nearly all the coaches questioned recommended that their runners (1) forget competition; (2) forget the track and the speed work that goes with it, and (3) pile on the miles. Many coaches advise "1000-mile summers" (i.e., 10 weeks at 100 miles each). This is the "Marathon Training" period that Arthur Lydiard made famous.

There are dissenters, however. A few coaches feel the summer vacation should be just that—a *vacation*. Jim Gibbard of Michigan State, a school which always finishes at or near the front in its conference, says, "We lay off until Aug. 1, then do long road running until school starts in mid-September." Stanford's Marshall Clark advises his runners, "Build mileage gradually; we are not interested in setting mileage records."

In the fall, during the season, there are obvious differences from the training employed in track. Here's the consensus on the variations, drawn from the questionnaires:

- Runs are of a longer, slower, steadier nature.
- Nearly all the running takes place away from the track.
- Some specialized training is added—such as technique work on the hills.
- Runners from different events come together to train as a team.
- Special provisions—modified training and shortened, informal races—are generally provided for non-distance runners.

But, again, these are generalities. Specifics vary according to individual coach's philosophies and the degree of emphasis they're putting on the fall sport.

A final important consideration is the post-season phase of training. Here the coaches split about equally into three camps. One group gives their runners

a short vacation. A second puts them back on the slow, steady distance running—the Lydiard-type program—that they were following in the summer. (The idea behind this is to regain “background” for the coming track season.) Yet another group of coaches puts their men right on the track, hoping to recapture a high level of sharpness before indoor track racing begins.

This last direction is the one Villanova takes. “We start preparing for the indoor season with workouts on our board track.” This is one school whose runners have been able to carry on a rigorous year-round program of racing and training. Marty Liquori, for instance, finished ninth in the NCAA cross-country race in the fall of 1970. He went directly into the indoor season, winning almost every race he ran. Then he went outdoors, and had his best-ever spring. Then he continued on to the summer international competitions. After almost a year of racing, he still was going strong. He has the background to manage it.

As it develops, there are hints that cross-country training—with its distance/endurance orientation—may in fact be the ideal way to prepare for track racing. Two examples come to mind.

Jack Bacheler takes a break from running in Florida’s mid-summer heat. When he comes back, he has a couple of months to prepare for the AAU cross-country championships. He won the race in 1969, placed second in 1970. Shortly after both of those races, he ran three-mile track times close to his best. And these post-cross-country races were little more than solo time-trials.

Dave Bedford doesn’t really train for cross-country. His efforts point toward the track, but most of his 200 miles a week come on the roads. He won the international cross-country in 1971. In the weeks and months that followed, he was pushing Ron Clarke’s world 5000-meter record—with the same sort of training he’d used all winter.

Jay Dirksen is finding the same thing happening at his school, South Dakota State. The runners thrive on cross-country preparation, and they do their best running during that season. “They really love cross-country,” says the coach of the team that finished a surprising fourth in the 1970 NCAA college division race. “I’m considering the possibility of doing almost identical training in track.”

If it works, and the runner likes it, why change? Running distances and terrain change. Human physiology and psychology don’t.



# INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS

In track, team scoring is an arbitrary, on-paper exercise that has little to do with the action on the track and field. The hammer throw and the six-mile are about as similar as chess and cross-country skiing. Hammer throwers and six-milers have little in common. In fact, they may never see each other except in the locker room and on the bus en route to meets. They go in different directions when they get to the meet. The only factor tying them together is the team points they contribute to the common cause. At best, it's a loose tie.

To pick an example, Villanova runners can and do sweep the distance races in nearly every dual track meet they run. They humiliate the opponent. But because Villanova doesn't give equal attention to other events and doesn't have a big, balanced team, it often loses duals by big margins. The scores are deceiving.

But come cross-country season, scores take on more significance, more relevance. Cross-country is a single-event sport, meaning every runner is running the same course at the same time. They're all pushing in the same direction, so to speak. Team success and individual success are tightly inter-related. For a school like Villanova, loaded with distance runners, this is the season to shine.

Cross-country has another built-in factor that enhances the team ideal. Every runner who makes the team—usually seven of them—has a role in the scoring, a responsibility to his teammates. Each of them gets points, not just those who slip into the top three, or the top six places as in track. And those points aren't given arbitrary value—like 10 for first, eight for second and the like. The cross-country points equal the finish place, all the way down the line.

So it is that cross-country offers the best of both worlds. A runner gets to run his own race, as always, but at the same time he gets to sample the good vibrations that come with team effort and unity. As long as the "team" is kept in perspective, that is. Despite all protests to the contrary, generally from coaches, cross-country and all other forms of running are primarily *individual* activities. The runner doesn't need a team to compete and compete well. When the team shackles the individual—by unnecessarily eliminating deserving runners from the competition, or by slowing those who do run—the team has stepped beyond its positive role.

Two pictures come to mind to illustrate this point. One is of 14 runners sweeping off across a wide plain, wide enough to handle 10 times that number; other members of the two competing schools stand on the sidelines watching because the teams have been limited to seven men apiece. A second picture is of the faster runners braking so that slower teammates can stay with them, thereby maintaining the integrity of the team pack. Both these incidents happen; fortunately not too regularly.

Since cross-country is to a certain degree a team sport, particularly on the high school and college levels, most schools employ a team strategy in their races.

The coach's dream, naturally, is to have his seven men cross the finish

line hand-in-hand, far ahead of all opposition. They put a lot of stock in the "low team spread"—the number of seconds separating the team's first and last finisher. They put even more stock in the low team score, which of course determines winners in this sport. And the best way to compile a low score is to get as many men home as early as possible.

Most of the successful college coaches questioned for this booklet encourage their runners to stay in a group as long as possible and practical. The strong ones thereby tug the weaker ones along; occasionally, a "weak" one hangs on all the way.

Coaches say that pack running is particularly helpful to the runner who might not otherwise be up so well. Bill Silverberg of Eastern New Mexico University, one of the leading small colleges in the country, says, "We try to run together as long as they can and then it's everyone for himself near the end of the race. I really believe this helps the slower boy who might otherwise drop off and let the others go on. . . It's a team effort and all seven boys have to work together."

Of course, the strategy has to be tempered by the level of the competition. In high-class meets, every runner sometimes has to go for all he's worth, letting the team race take care of itself. "We try to use team strategy," says Marshall Clark of Stanford University. "Obviously it doesn't always work. The strength and ability of our runners in comparison with the competition is a big factor."

Jay Dirksen, coach at South Dakota State and a runner there himself only a few years ago, expresses a somewhat different view than other coaches. Dirksen explains his team strategy this way: "We feel that if each boy tries to do *his best* that this will be best for the team as a whole. I feel that each person should have the freedom to do his best without being held down by a slower teammate or in a pack."

Dirksen's statement gets at the essence of cross-country—a sport that uniquely blends individual and team; that successfully adds the excitement of group competition to this lonely activity of distance running.



# HELPING OR HURTING TRACK?

The question is, "How compatible are success in cross-country and success in track?" In other words, can an athlete compete well through a hard and serious cross-country season in the fall, then bounce right back and run hard, serious indoor and outdoor track races?

There are no absolute answers. For every trackman who skips cross-country, there's another who races well through the year. Who's to say Runner A would do better in track if he raced cross-country, or Runner B would do better in one or the other if he didn't spread himself so thin?

The consensus of technical opinion is that a runner can't race effectively the year-round. He has to have breaks in the racing routine. But what sort of breaks he needs, how many of them, and how long are questions without simple answers. The answers lie in individual preferences and priorities—how much importance the runner and his coach place on the various phases of the sport.

US college athletes traditionally face the toughest of all racing schedules. Many runners go from cross-country directly to indoor directly to outdoor; and if they're good enough they continue racing well into the summer. At the same time, the college runners typically are required to race hard in all these seasons, and cross-country gets its heaviest emphasis among them.

We surveyed several dozen coaches of leading US college and university cross-country teams. One of the questions asked the amount of emphasis placed on cross-country racing. Not surprisingly, a majority of them—over 60%—answered "equal in importance to the track season." This is the way coaches Jumbo Elliott and Jack Pyrah of Villanova feel, though Pyrah adds, "It's different for different men. Some of them treat it as low-key preparation for track."

The remaining coaches are evenly split. Half say it's strictly secondary to track. (John Chaplin of Washington State goes so far as to comment, "WSU does not give letters to cross-country men, even if they are All-American.") Another 20% say the fall sport is given somewhat heavier emphasis than track. (Bill Silverberg of Eastern New Mexico, an NAIA power, tells his position: "I try to recruit the boy who can run a good five- or six-mile instead of a two-miler who I try to convert into a longer distance runner. This way I can build a strong distance team and hope that some boys, with speed work, can drop down and run a good two-mile or mile during track season.")

Tony Sucec of San Diego State may have provided the best answer of all. He says, "I feel it (cross-country) is just as important as track. However, some runners feel it is more important, while others feel it is less important than track." That's the way it should be—the runner's preference.

One key fact emerges from the survey: the teams that produce the leading cross-country runners tend to be the same ones that produce the best track runners year after year. Good runners, backed by wise coaches, adapt quickly to changing surroundings. A runner such as Mike Ryan, who won the NCAA cross-country race in 1968 but never gave college track a serious go, is indeed a rarity. The majority glides smoothly from one environment to the next without complications.

Statistics seem to bear out this conclusion. Over the five-year period,



1966-70, right at 50% of the AAU and NCAA cross-country leaders (top 10 in one race or the other) also made the top 10 in one of the track lists the same year. In 1970, Frank Shorter and Steve Prefontaine were the brightest of US track stars. Shorter won the AAU cross-country; "Pre" won the NCAA.

During the same years, the same trend showed itself for the women. Right down the line, 50% of the cross-country leaders (top 10) held down similar spots on the year's track lists.

Internationally, however, the figures for cross-country and track compatibility are considerably lower. (This, of course, is partly explained by the exclusive nature of the international cross-country races). Over the last few years, cross-country leaders on men's track lists have averaged barely 35%. For women it's less than 20%.

Well, are track and cross-country compatible? They are and they aren't. If a runner wants to be a specialist in one or the other, he can. If he wants to run both, he can. Cross-country, as we've stressed all along, is flexible. It can blend with track, or the two can exist as entirely separate entities. You're free to make of them what you will.



Gerry Lindgren (left) and Frank Shorter  
—top runners regardless of the setting.  
(Francie Johnson & Rich Rollins photos)

# HINTS ON RACE PROMOTING

Cross-country races at the same time are the easiest and hardest events to promote and organize successfully. On the one hand, there's no concern with traffic control, and measuring and timing aren't the crucial problems they are in other branches of the sport. But on the other hand, laying out a course and keeping a horde of runners on it can become a god-awful job.

Imagine sending a city-bred hiker off into the wilderness without a map or compass. That same lost feeling is what a cross-country runner gets as he sets off on a poorly conceived, improperly marked course. He feels like an explorer about to get lost in the uncharted wastelands. Try telling the lost soul about the beauties and challenges of natural terrain.

The number one essential of a good cross-country race, then, is the course. It should be as primitive as possible, yes, but at the same time it must be "runable." The sport is, after all, cross-country *running*. What good is even the most beautiful course if runners can't follow it, and spend half their time at obscure points standing and scratching their heads, trying to decide which way to go next? And what good is the most challenging one if "runners" spend 95% of their time walking, hands pushing the knees?

Good courses demand compromises—beauty with practical considerations of navigation; challenge with equal thought to "runability."

And, of course, there's the pressing matter of availability. Most good cross-country running land, unfortunately, sits on private property. For some reason, many landowners don't relish the idea of several hundred pairs of running feet scurrying across their property, no matter how pure the runners' motives. Between reluctant landlords and a fast-disappearing natural landscape (a southern Californian moans, "Every time I find a good cross-country course, it automatically turns into a freeway or a housing tract!"), adequate courses aren't easy to come by.

The answer lies in making do with the best (i.e., most natural and challenging) *available* location, be it farmer's field, public park or unclaimed wilderness.

But finding the location is only the first step. You have only the raw material of a course. It requires careful developing. Considerations in laying out a course include:

- **Obstacles**—A good course has a representative sampling of them. Depending on area and tradition, these may be simply hills, or they may be a full sampling of creeks, fences, plowed areas and the like. Regardless of what obstacles you choose, a solid cross-country course is one that takes at least some of these *as they come*—doesn't carefully avoid *all* of them in the name of fast times.

- **Surface**—Again, it's generally taken in stride, in the variety that it presents. However, it should be such that there is little critical danger of injury from sharp rocks, hidden depressions, etc. Stay within reasonable safety limits.

- **Space**—A man needs room to roam. Avoid areas which offer so little room that a runner is frequently and unduly crowded. There's nothing



more frustrating than falling into a creeping traffic jam on a narrow stretch. The course should be open enough to allow large numbers of runners free movement. Their own fatigue should be the only limiting factor, not crowding.

● **Marking**—This is crucial. It's preferable to stake out a course which follows the natural lay of the land. One on which few markings are necessary. However, every course requires some guideposts. Many rule books suggest the flag system. White for a right turn, blue for left, red straight ahead. Or is it red for left? Anyway, the point is, few runners take the trouble to memorize the rules. They come to a flag and start asking themselves, "Now does that mean right, or left, or caution—men working?" We can't carry a map and compass, and who has time to stop and ponder the question during a race? The best marking method involves easily-read signs and ground-markings, combined perhaps with flags and even human course monitors. A course should be so easy to follow that even a stranger to the area can negotiate it without doubt.

● **Measurement**—All runners want to know how far they've gone. Even when times don't mean a whole lot—the usual case in cross-country—they want to know the extent of their slowdown. Exact, to-the-inch measurements aren't as crucial here as elsewhere in the running world, and they aren't as easy to obtain. But a good general estimate is in order. A walk around the course behind a measuring wheel, or a walk/ride with a counter-equipped bicycle will do the job admirably. The distance needn't be a standard one, like two or three or six miles. Any distance will do, so long as you and the runners know what it is.

● **Visibility**—Don't bother reading this unless you're concerned with spectators. If they are a factor, choose a cross-country layout that offers maximum view of the runners consistent with runner considerations. Don't run them around in tight circles in pseudo-track fashion. But by ingenious routing you can send them past the spectators several times while preserving the natural beauty and challenge of the course.

Once an adequate course is established, cross-country is a snap to promote. Races practically run themselves. A half-dozen mildly competent officials can smoothly send several hundred athletes on a tour of the countryside.

Cross-country has inherent traits that make it easy to operate—easier, in fact, than either track or road races. Open terrain is one factor, but as has been pointed out it both causes and eliminates hangups.

Because distances are moderate, it's easy to divide the meet up into as many as a half-dozen sections of manageable size without having the day's activities drag on all day. Imagine a marathon with separate sections for junior, open and veteran men and women. In cross-country, you can easily run off all six races in a few hours' time—less time even than it would take to run a track meet with a comparable number of people. Cross-country runners can conveniently be separated by age, ability and sex—or they can just as easily all be thrown together. Whichever you want.

Officiating on race day is the final concern in a smoothly-operating cross-country gathering.

Theoretically, two officials could handle it all—one doing the timing and the other doing place recording. But if the trace gets too big and the



runners swarm across the finish line too thick and fast, these two officials each may need four arms and two sets of eyes to manage it.

Practically, you'd be better off having the extra arms and eyes supplied by a couple of extra officials. Match them up in teams. One reading times (from a running watch is adequate) and his partner recording them. The other reading the numbers of finishers as his partner writes them down. If you want to avoid the numbers-and-pins hassle (a meet director called our office and asked, "Where the hell can I buy 500 safety pins?"), you may want to go the popsicle-stick route. Mark the sticks (or a suitable substitute) with finish places, hand them to people as they cross the line, and instruct them to check in with the recorder when they regain their senses.

However the finish is handled, though, time and record *everyone*. Everyone, down to 350th place (if your last place goes that high) wants to know how he or she did. If they have what it takes to run your course, the least you can do is reward them with a time and place when they finish it.

Above all, remember what cross-country is. It isn't track and it isn't road running. It's itself—basic and natural, demanding and thrilling, ruggedly beautiful. Promote it as such.

# INDEX

- A —  
Africa, c-c in—35-37  
AAU c-c race—6  
Anderson, Jon—23  
Azpeitia, Belen—29
- B —  
Bachelier, Jack—6, 40  
Bair, Sam—6  
Beale, Pax—25  
Bedford, Dave—14-16,  
30, 40  
Bright, Norman—24  
Britain, c-c in—26-27  
Brown, Doris—14-17, 29  
Burfoot, Amby—23  
Burkhart, Peter—31
- C —  
Chaplin, John—43  
Clark, Marshall—39, 42  
Clarke, Ron—16  
Colburn, Keith—6, 23  
Course layout—45
- D —  
Dipsea race—24-26  
Dirksen, Jay—40, 42  
Donnelly, Tom—23  
Dulong, Art—6, 22
- E —  
Ecology & c-c—5  
Elliott, Jumbo—43  
England, c-c in—26-27  
Europe, c-c in—26-27
- F —  
Fenwick, Geoff—35  
Foreman, Ken—16  
Fredericks, Greg—22  
Foster, Jack—34  
Future of c-c—10
- G —  
Gibbard, Jim—39  
Gomers, Maria—29  
Guerro, Maestro—31
- H —  
Hardin, Doub—23  
Haro, Mariano—29
- Hewlett, Walt—21, 23  
Hill, Ron—15
- I —  
IAAF—11  
International C-C—9, 10  
ICCU—11
- J —  
Johnson, Francie—16
- K —  
Kardong, Don—6
- L —  
Larrieu, Francie—16  
Lawler, John—23  
Liquori, Marty—7, 40  
Lydiard, Arthur—39  
Lynch, Joe—23
- M —  
Makela, Don—24  
Marking, course—46  
Mason, John—6  
Measurement, course—46  
Messenger, Charles—22  
Mexico, c-c in—31-33
- N —  
New Zealand, c-c in—34
- O —  
O'Brian, Dennis—22  
Officiating c-c—46  
Olympics, c-c in—10-11  
Oregon, University of—7  
O'Reilly, Eamon—22
- P —  
Perez, Carlos—29  
Prefontaine, Steve—7, 44  
Purity of c-c—8  
Pyrah, Jack—43
- R —  
Race promoting—45-47  
Richards, Wilf—26  
Ridley, Rita—29  
Ritchey, Jerry—23  
Roelants, Gaston—30  
Ryan, Mike—6, 43  
Ryun, Jim—7
- S —  
Seasons, c-c—6  
Sharkey, Richard—23  
Shepherd, Don—3  
Shorter, Frank—6, 29, 44  
Silverberg, Bill—42, 43  
Spain, c-c in—28-30  
Stageberg, Steve—6, 23  
Steele, Tim—22  
Stewart, Ian—30  
Stonitsch, Ron—22-23  
Sucec, Tony—43  
Sweeney, Hugh—18
- T —  
Tagg, Mike—29  
Tarnawsky, Pat—28  
Team scoring—41  
Temple, Cliff—15  
Tesende, Ramon—30  
Training methods—39-40
- V —  
Van Cortlandt Park—18-23  
Villanova University—7, 41
- W —  
Walsh, Donal—22-23  
Wright, Trevor—29
- Y —  
Young, George—7
- Z —  
Zwolak, Vic—22





# **The Varied World of Cross-Country**

“Cross-country” can mean almost anything. In England, it can mean racing across plowed fields . . . in Europe, racing on flat turf littered with obstacles . . . in Africa, racing over jungle paths . . . in Australia, racing through sand . . . in the United States, racing along golf course fairways.

Here, we broadly define cross-country as racing that occurs on more or less natural terrain—which excludes man-made tracks and man-made roads. This is a sport of unsurpassed variety, the single common denominator being that it stays close to nature. That’s the beauty of it.

This booklet describes the unique simplicity, beauty and variety of cross-country running—and suggests ways of protecting and promoting it. Highlights are the “Running Around the World” section—eight articles on differing approaches to cross-country racing—and the “Racing and Training” segment, with four articles on techniques tailored to the sport.

Cross-country—as a competitive, conditioning and championship activity—has limitless potential. It offers a combination of ingredients that neither track nor road racing can match. There opportunities are yet to be exploited to their fullest.

48 pages, \$1.25

World Publications  
P.O. Box 366  
Mountain View, Calif. 94040