

# THE YOUNG RUNNER





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# FOREWORD

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The age barriers have dropped in the last 10 or 15 years. In what used to be an old man's sport, high school distance runners have made the Olympic team. Runners in their mid-teens now run as fast as the national champions of the late 1950s. Age-group track for pre-high schoolers rivals swimming and Little League in participation in some areas. There are national championships for runners as young as six. Five-year-olds run marathons.

For the first time ever, any runner of any age can run anything he—or she—chooses. Now we know the kids can run farther and faster than cautious grown-ups thought they could.

It's apparent too that the young runners want to run this way. As Dr. Gabe Mirkin, an AAU age-group official, says, "You can't *make* a kid do anything he doesn't think is his idea. The kid who succeeds does so by his own initiative. Anyone who thinks he can force a kid into the pursuit of excellence is in for a surprise.

The central question of this booklet, though, is not whether young runners can have or want the kind of excellence demanded in high level running. It is, *should they seek it?* What, in other words, are the side-effects of this kind of running on growing bodies and minds?

That remains to be answered. The debate runs to the two extremes: the "no-running-before-high-school-and-then-only-lightly" camp on one side and the "kids-can-do-anything-because-they're-indestructible" camp on the other.

We don't offer *the* answer to this question. But we do have some answers, based on the experiences of this first generation of super-youngsters.

This booklet takes a hard, objective look at the subject of what running—all kinds of running from sprinting to ultra-marathoning—is doing to children who are taking it seriously.

For our purposes, runners are "young" until they graduate from high school, or until about age 18, when most of their physical growth has stopped. (Unfortunately, that's also the age when most of them have stopped running as well, a problem we'll discuss at length.)

Among young runners, there are two very different groups, separated by the revolutionary developments of puberty. Through about age 12, a youngster has the playfulness, confidence and naivete of a child. But from 13 on, he goes through an uncertain several years where he's no longer a child but not yet grown up. Each group has its own distinct abilities and needs in running. We'll get into those.

Here, we're most interested in the way young runners are being coached, the way the sport is being organized for them, and how they are reacting physically and emotionally to the new opportunities and pressures. We want to see why some runners at this age get turned on enough by running to make international teams, while others get turned off and never run again after their early teens.

The reasons probably are not much different than at any other age. But youth has a way of magnifying inspirations and disappointments far beyond adult proportions.

## Chapter 1

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# THE NEW AGE



They're starting younger every year. (Steve Sutton photo)

# GROWING WITH RUNNING

Running was a late and slow starter in age-group sports. It had a lot of dusty old ideas to shake off.

At a time when most states still weren't allowing their high school runners to go two miles because it was "too taxing," girl swimmers of 14 were winning Olympic distance championships.

While arguments still raged over runners "burning themselves out" if they trained more than a few miles a day for a few months of the year, swimmers were thriving on year-round double workouts.

If pre-high schoolers and any young girls raced at all, it was only in the short dashes.

Even though running is the most normal and natural of childhood activities, organized and competitive running for youngsters was hung up until fairly recently by age and sex limitations, and by doubts about training and performance capabilities.

Swimming's highly successful age-group program has done a great deal to show running the way out of its inhibitions. Running has taken much of the good from swimming's example, along with a few of the excesses inherent in any program that combines enthusiastic kids with overzealous coaches and parents.

The schools' program is better than ever. The two-mile is almost universal now in high school, and many states are going up to three for cross-country. Some states have added championships for girls. Runners in high school have never been more sophisticated in their training and racing approach.

The real boom, though, is at the pre-high school level, in club running outside of the schools. Fifteen years ago, this was all but non-existent.

Then the AAU began pushing its Junior Olympics which reached down to the nine- and 10-year-olds and brought the best of the older runners together for a national championship.

The AAU's rival, the US Track and Field Federation, organized a similar program of its own—the Junior Champs.

The Road Runners Club now sponsors two yearly events which expose more youngsters to national level competition than perhaps any other sport does, even swimming. The RRC's National Age-Group cross-country championships in New York City have races for boys and girls from six and seven through high school age. In 1972, this event drew over 2000 runners. The RRC also sponsors a national mile race each spring.

Top high schoolers get a choice of a number of post-season all-star meets, most prominent of which is the Golden West Invitational each June in Sacramento, Calif.

And, starting in 1972, international competition was available to juniors—runners 19 and under. In 1973, US junior men's and women's teams raced the West Germans, Poles and Soviets.

Another boon to interest has been the age-group record lists published by several track magazines: *Marathon Handbook* from *Runner's World*, *Age Records* from *Track & Field News*, and the annuals from *Women's Track & Field World* and *Starting Line*.

*Starting Line* is exclusively an age-groupers publication, which indicates the popularity of this kind of running.

*RW*'s marathon lists carry the names of a five-year-old boy and a six-year-old girl, while the *Age Records* booklet has marks for toddlers of age one.

Running may have been slow out of the blocks in this area, but its acceleration has been astounding.

Once the problem in youth sports was too much caution. No more. Now young runners and those influencing them must be careful not to tip the balance too far in the other direction—to a too organized, too competitive, too demanding arrangement which ignores the fact that youth is still a time of playing, growing and exploring.

Young runners have their own needs, and their programs must be shaped to fit those.

Young athletes are a bundle of contradictions.

They're more flexible than mature ones in certain circumstances, and more fragile in others.

They take their setbacks harder, but they're quicker to bounce back from them.

They have fewer inhibitions, but the ones they have can seem gigantic.

They have a greater well of fitness to start with, but they aren't as well prepared to master technical skills.

They can improve overnight, but can decline just as rapidly.

Their craving for recognition reaches a high peak in the teens, but they often react clumsily to attention.

They're wanting independence, and yet they still need more support than older runners.

At no time in life is one so capable of fanatical attachment to an activity, and at no other time can this so quickly turn to indifference as interests change.

The most constant trait of children and adolescents is sudden change—change in interests, change in appearance, change in abilities. For this reason, it's hard to generalize about young runners—and we don't really want to try.

The point is, these changes already are taxing a young individual's capacity to adapt—even without running added in. So running has to be lined up as well as possible with one's rate and stage of growth. If it isn't, if the runner is manipulated to fit a grown-up concept of sport that doesn't suit him, he'll likely break.

Worry over effects has centered on the young children. But in a way there's less chance of harm coming to them than to adolescents.

With kids 12 and under, sport is a natural extension of play. They'll do it if they like it, and only as long as they continue liking it. Then they'll stop, as they do when they're playing.

Even without special training, children this age are well adapted to distance running. Their everyday activity is a form of fartlek, combining moderate but almost perpetual motion with frequent short bursts of speed and brief recovery breaks.

"My own experience is this," says German Dr. Ernst van Aaken, "that the child endures a constant but not too strenuous a task just as well as the grown-up. Children, however, can't take very well explosive muscle functions, such as the long sprints."

Van Aaken, who has spent much of his medical and coaching careers working with youngsters and with endurance running, says children up to the age of puberty take long gentle runs instinctively, but they're poorly equipped for races requiring great muscular strength and high oxygen debt.

New Zealand coach Arthur Lydiard agrees. He writes in his book *Run to the Top*, "It is sustained *speed* that does the damage, not sustained running."

Lydiard advises parents of a young runner to "confine him to short sprints where he may use all his reserves but won't be forced to run beyond them, or else send him out on one-mile to three-mile runs. He may get tired, but his only reaction will be to slow his pace down, even to a walk, and that won't harm him."

The New Zealander says boys as young as eight take long runs in his country. "Our boys out here," he writes, "like nothing better than to run in packs over hills and valleys, jumping creeks and fences, enjoying fresh air and sunshine in a sport that recognizes none of the confines of the measured field."

Steve Sutton photo





**Mary Decker (No. 5) was only 14 years old when she ran a 4:40 mile. (Stan Pantovic photo)**

“I have seen boys run to the club rooms on a Saturday, play chasing round the hall for half an hour, run up to three miles in packs, change back at the rooms and then run round for another half an hour waiting for afternoon tea. They are still going afterwards. They don’t fall in exhausted heaps and wait to be carried away.”

The important thing, Lydiard says, is to encourage the child, not force him. “Let him play at athletics and with athletics.”

Let him play while he can, because after puberty sport loses much of its innocence. Psychological studies have determined that most people consider adolescence the most uncertain and unhappy time of their lives. Running offers something solid to cling to, a source of individual identity and group attention. It can fill more important needs than play. When this happens, young runners can start driving themselves—often past safe limits.



"Only the adolescent in the stage of puberty," says Dr. van Aaken, "storms on (past instinctive limits) and squanders his strength."

*Runner's World* once carried an article on two 14-year-old marathoners who'd run incredibly fast times for their age. It illustrates how attachments to running can become so strong at this point in life.

"For a boy—any boy—age 14 is a time of turmoil," the article reads. "Revolutionary physical changes and entrance into high school place him on what Ken Moore aptly describes as 'the uncertain sands of adolescent society.' Serious considerations such as gaining peer-group status, scoring points with the opposite sex and handling facial outbursts occupy the 14-year-old boy's mind. Running long distances isn't often a serious consideration."

But, the story goes on to say, some find running to be a valuable steady-influence. Writer-marathoner Moore recalls his own youthful turn to distance running by speculating, "Perhaps the clear delineation of excellence found in running provides a solidarity that balances the uncertain sands...I certainly felt less anxiety on the track than on the dance floor."

At an uncertain age, running provides a degree of certainty. And young runners are suddenly quite willing to endure pain to have this.

Puberty also separates the boys from the girls. Up to this time, they're more or less alike in their approach to running. As they mature, girls retain their ability to run, and often their interest in running, but there's less social acceptance of their running than the boys'. This is a young woman's main conflict.

Bob Hyten, a girls' coach from Illinois, says in the booklet *Coaching Distance Runners*, "The major difference in the sexes lies in their psychological makeup. While it was long ago determined that women *could* endure more pain than men, this does not mean that they *will*. While society urges a boy to endure hardship for athletic success, it does not ask that of a girl. In fact, it probably discourages mental strength by thinking of all girls as soft and emotionally weak."

Girls have quite different forces working on them at this age than boys do. Pat Lanin, a coach of both sexes in a Minnesota high school, says a boy often runs because of "the desire to prove his manly sexuality through sport." But a girl runs *in spite of* a society that generally considers competitive running unfeminine.

"The girl's self-concept of her female sexuality may be challenged by peers or family if she participates in such a demanding activity as distance running," Lanin says. So the result is that girls who stay active "seem to have fewer sex-identity problems than the boys do."

This goes along with the conclusions of sports psychologist Bruce Ogilvie, who says the most outstanding trait of women athletes is their independence and self-assurance. "We attribute this to cultural repression of women," Ogilvie says. "To succeed in *any* field, a woman has to be able to stand up and spit in the eye of those in charge."

Puberty is the most significant dividing point for young runners. It is the point where boys are expected to become athletes and girls ladies, the point where sport quits being childlike and playful and starts becoming adult and goal-oriented.

# NATURE'S TRUE ATHLETE

BY GEORGE SHEEHAN

George Sheehan, a medical doctor and father of 12 children, is a regular contributor to *Runner's World* magazine. This article, originally a newspaper column, won a statewide award in New Jersey.

Consider the nine-year-old. If any one has made it in this life, it's the nine-year-old. You could, of course, just say the child. That would put you right with the Lord ("Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.") and the poets like Eliot ("The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time.").

The child is the answer, and, of those years, I pick the nine-year-old. He is pound for pound the world's best endurance athlete. And he moves with the grace and elegance of the free animal. Strength and power he may not have, but fatigue is foreign to him. He has, as German physiologists have discovered, the biggest heart volume for his weight that he will ever have unless he is an Olympic champion. He is therefore the nearest thing to perpetual motion in human form you will ever see. And yet he is capable at other times of the contented lethargy of a lion after a kill.

The nine-year-old can teach us a lot about our bodies. He does nothing, you see, that his body doesn't tell him is in some way good. Consider some of his instinctive reactions: his recess periods, his desire to go barefoot, his aversion to baths.

Take recess for one—those quarter-hours of helter skelter bedlam and hilarity, those 15 minutes of maximum unprogrammed physical activity with the noise level of Kennedy Airport. Where are adults' recesses? Gone, of course. Gone and replaced by low blood sugar and coffee breaks. Now that mid-morning feeling that called us to action, that low blood sugar that told us we were now ready for our best physical effort, is being dieted and medicated and fed out of existence. Only the nine-year-old knows his recess brings him and his blood sugar up to normal until lunch. If we listened to him, the streets would be filled with running, playing people about 10:30 every morning.

For the nine-year-old playing comes naturally. No Canadian Air Force exercise for him. His preferences come from his total person, not the dictates of social status, or medical authorities. If we take to exercise now, we should remember what we liked to do when we were nine, before we began to conform, to do the "right" things, to follow the current craze whether it be jogging, skiing or weight lifting.

Whatever the nine-year-old does, he is in no hurry. His tempo is decided by his body, and senses, and emotions working in harmony. Ready at times to exploit to the fullest every hour of the day, to use himself to the bone, he also can spend a day in idleness, recognizing all these actions as ends, not means.

Whatever he does, he would prefer to do it in bare feet. Every school-boy knows shoes to be the enemy. The foot wants no shoe, any more than the body wants to ride in a car. If we must have shoes, let them be the mold

of our footprint. Some adults have already discovered that and are making shoes like that footprint.

Some adults may also discover the truth about baths. Why do nine-year-olds who love to swim hate baths? Why do children who won't leave the water in the summertime refuse to get into a tub in the winter? Swimming is good; baths are bad.

It could be simply aesthetics. The bathtub is not the finest work of art in the house. But it may be more than that. Baths in the winter lead to chills and chills to colds. Baths also drain energy. Any athlete or nine-year-old knows that. Baths make one relaxed and sleepy, and no one with the world and its wonders in front of him wants to sleep.

So the nine-year-olds do have lessons for us. They are, I suggest, one of those small "pockets of phenomena" which anthropologists like Claude Levi-Strauss are studying to understand other ways of life, other ways of happiness.

"Anthropology," says Levi-Strauss, "invites us to temper our pride and to respect other life styles."

I'll take the life style of the nine-year-old: spontaneous, effortless, innocent and easy, filled with wonder and new things to which he responds totally with his head, his heart, his gut.

# RACING FOR CHILDREN?

BY GEOFF FENWICK

Geoff Fenwick of Great Britain has coached young runners at the club and school level, as well as serving for a time as a national coach in Uganda. He now is a college of education lecturer in Britain, involved in promoting sports for youth.

Every able-bodied child is, unconsciously, an athlete. It might even be true to say that every child is unconsciously a distance runner.

I've never measured just how much mileage our two young children get through each day, but it must be considerable. When I lived in Africa, I knew a lot of young boys and girls who thought nothing of the five-mile walk they took to reach school each morning. And from what I read from the US, young children there cover amazing distances, usually in the congenial atmosphere of family groups or joggers' clubs.

Yet few educational establishments encourage young children to run anything more than very short distances as part of their physical education program. It's worth asking why. Is it because it is thought that children can derive more benefit and pleasure from other planned physical activities? Or is it simply that running long distances is thought to be harmful?

Children might well prefer other activities. But they are not going to know unless they get the chance to compare running with other sports. Provided it's not harmful, why not let them?

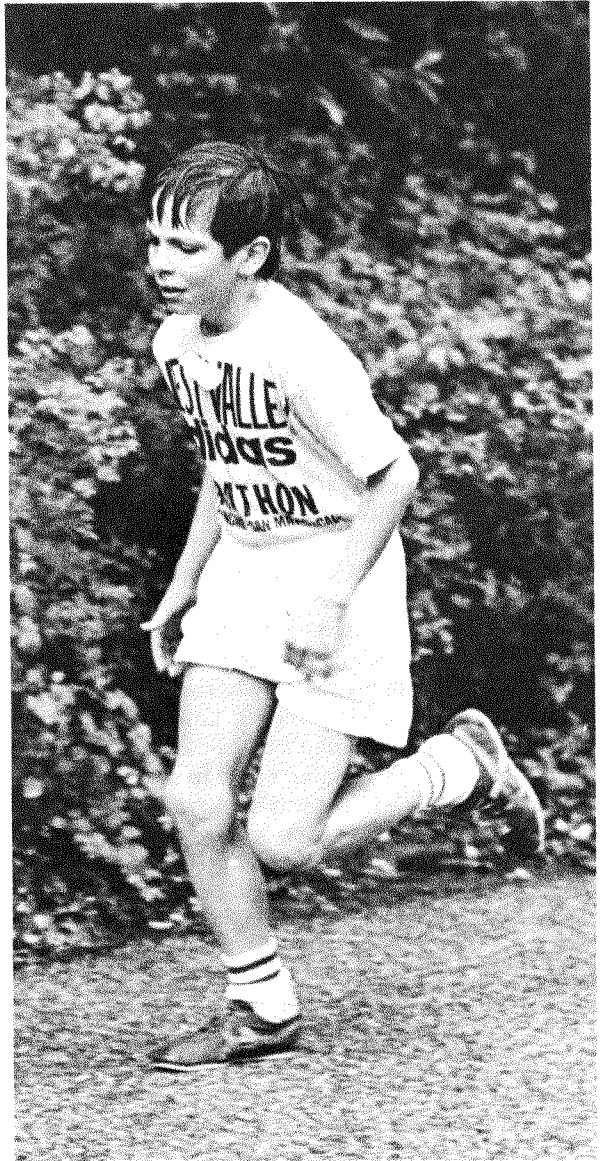
From a physical education aspect, I'm inclined to think that children derive most benefit from the sports and physical activities they like best. This, I think, is a key factor in running or any other sport. If it's compulsory, its value probably deteriorates. In *The First Four Minutes*, one of the best books written about athletics, Roger Bannister recalls how compulsory rugby football practice at school almost turned him off to the sport. So, within the limits of organization, I'd say let running be as optional as possible. But if children, having been provided with the opportunity, like running, then why not let them continue to run?

Is running long distances harmful to young children, or even teenagers? The evidence coming out of the US suggests not. Children there are covering the marathon, apparently without difficulty, though no one would seriously suggest that many of them should be encouraged to run that far.

The highly respected New Zealand coach Arthur Lydiard seems to make sense on this question of effects. In *Run to the Top* he says there seems no reason why children of eight should not run as far as two miles, *if they want to*. But it is interesting to note that Lydiard regards the longer sprints as the danger events for children. The 200 to 800 meters he thinks unsuitable because children run at a fast pace and, as they begin to tire, are often urged on by eager spectators. The strain involved might well be harmful. On the other hand, children who run a mile or more get tired and react by slowing down or even walking.

Lydiard says, "How far and how fast a child runs in training should be left to his own feelings." In New Zealand, youngsters go on club runs from the age of eight, covering two to three miles without difficulty. Lydiard sees

**“How far and  
how fast a child  
runs in training  
should be left to  
his own feelings.”  
(G. Beinhorn)**



no reason why, as they get older, longer distances should not be tackled: “There is no reason why a boy of 14 should not run 10, 15 or even 20 miles, so long as he is allowed to do so of his own free will.”

In Great Britain, Dave Couling’s approach is similar to Lydiard’s. Couling’s experience is described in Brian Mitchell’s book *Today’s Athlete*.

Working with school children 11 and younger, Couling is a great advocate of cross-country running on a voluntary basis. He finds that children, not always the most successful, persevere with the sport rather than play other

games. And, like Lydiard, he finds that when children become tired they merely stop and walk.

Working with children aged seven to 11 in both Great Britain and Africa, I have had similar results. Just as long as it is voluntary, there doesn't seem much harm in distance running for kids. This assumes, of course, that they have reasonably good health and no serious medical defects.

Children's marathon efforts in the US are looked on with suspicion in Great Britain. This, I think, is rather unfair. I suspect it shows a lack of understanding of the different structure of the sport in the US. Although distance running on road, track and over the country is very popular in Great Britain, it is a highly competitive sport which is taken very seriously by most of its participants. The sport has only grown in the US during the past decade, and perhaps because of this it seems to have a more light-hearted side to it whereby many people run mainly for fun. Regulations are more tolerant of the very slow, the very old and the very young as well as the women than in Britain.

The highly competitive atmosphere of British distance running also makes people here suspicious of junior records. Again, I think this probably shows a lack of understanding of the US setup. Mention records of very young athletes in Britain and people have visions of a Svengali state of affairs in which the doting parent sets out to ensure that his child will crack a 50-mile record for 11-year-olds, assisted by a diabolical, parent-supervised training scheme. All of which is somewhat inaccurate because you have to go to extreme lengths to make young children adhere to rigid training.

This sort of suspicion does, however, point out one other vital factor concerning young children's athletics. Parents simply can't afford to be over-ambitious for their children or try to organize them into rigid overtaxing training routines. That's why Lydiard prefers cross-country and, provided they are quiet, roads for very young runners. He's seen too many demanding parents standing at the side of tracks with stopwatches in their hands. So have I.

The study of child development is part of my job. So I'm interested when my son John, aged five, suddenly said out of the blue, "Daddy, can I learn to run?" When I told him he didn't need to learn because he could run already, he said yes, but he wanted to get better. We bought him a pair of road shoes and when I didn't wake him up the next morning he played hell and went for his own run around the block before school. Now, sometimes he wakes up in time to go with me, sometimes he doesn't. It's up to him to make up his own mind about it.

I get upset when people say, "Oh, you'll make him into a runner, won't you?" My reply is that it would be a good thing if he became interested, but no one at home will be heart-broken if he doesn't. And if he becomes really good, I'd be the last person to coach him.

Basically, I think young children's running should be promoted by the family in a relaxed, voluntary, non-competitive way. Anyone who is roused from slumber with the words, "Dad, it's time for our run," is really winning.



# TWO BARRIER-BREAKERS

If there was one point in time when attitudes towards high school distance runners and their capabilities changed dramatically, it was 1964. To pin down the start of it more precisely, the time was Christmas season 1963, the place San Francisco. That was the dawning of the age of the super-prep in the United States.

There had been flashes of it before. Bruce Kidd had started shaking up older runners on the US indoor circuit when he was 16. Bruce was a Canadian. From 1960 on, he ran eye-opening and mind-changing times: 8:46 for the two-mile at age 17, 13:17 for three when he was 18. Tom Sullivan of Illinois ran 4:03.5 for the mile in 1961.

But these runners only set things up for Gerry Lindgren and Jim Ryun, runners who would no longer need the qualifying line "great for their age." They were great for *any* age. That was the significant change they brought in. Never had runners so young raced so well for so long.

The San Francisco event was the first time either of them had raced outside his local area. Lindgren was from Spokane, Wash. Ryun grew up in Wichita, Kans. Gerry was a senior, 17 years old, with no reputation outside of Washington at all. Ryun was a year behind Lindgren in school and a year younger. He'd attracted more than a little attention with his 4:07 miles as a sophomore, and this first national high school invitational indoor two-mile was designed around him.

Ryun stumbled and fell on the first lap. But the race was far from disappointing. Lindgren burned through the race in nine minutes flat—by far the fastest two-mile ever run by an American his age. This race sent them both on their way to careers which were strikingly similar, in direction as well as quality.

Lindgren was the first US high schooler under nine minutes for two miles (he ran 8:40 indoors). Ryun was the first under four minutes for a mile.

Both made the Olympic team that year—Lindgren in the 10,000, Ryun in the 1500.

Both set world records within a year after high school—Lindgren in the six-mile, and Ryun in the 880 and mile.

And both had mixed fortunes later on. They'd so conditioned track followers to expect miracles that they had a hard time meeting expectations. There were more big victories and records for both, but there were fairly serious physical and emotional problems as well.

Yet 10 years after San Francisco, both are still running—now as pros on the International Track Association circuit. From this perspective, a decade later, both can look back and tell what set them on the road they were to take—one which no other high school runner had taken before. There are similarities here, too.

Neither showed any apparent talent until meeting with strong-willed, positive-thinking coaches. In junior high, Lindgren says in *The Gerry Lindgren Story*, he ran his paper route for practice. "In races, I was always the last guy on the track. By the time I finished a 660-yard race—the longest we had—everyone else would be done and have their sweats on, ready to go home."

In the ninth grade, Ryun ran a 56.4 quarter-mile. For his training, he says in *The Jim Ryun Story*, “I’d run from my house down two blocks and back, and then lie down on the ground and die.” Ryun said his only goal in track was to be a 440 man “and maybe to letter in my senior year.”

Then Lindgren and coach Tracy Walters found each other. Gerry described their relationship:

“I have great respect and admiration for Tracy Walters. I owe more to him than anyone realizes. You see, the first time I ever ran for this man, I was lousy. No ability, no nothing. I’ve been this way all my life—late developing and kind of a runt. I could never play football, or baseball or anything. else.... I had a terrible self-image. I couldn’t do anything.

“Well, I get to high school and here is this guy Walter who says, ‘You can do it. If you keep working hard and trying hard, by the time you’re a senior you’ll be one of the best runners this city (Spokane) ever had.’

“This was the first time anybody had ever really given me any positive interest. I was overwhelmed, and I was ready to do anything this man asked. He was feeding my confidence and I was starving for this kind of attention....”

Ryun signed up with Bob Timmons’ cross-country team in the fall of Jim’s sophomore year. In his first race, an intrasquad mile, Jim ran 5:38 and 13 boys from East High School beat him.

But six months later, early in the track season, Ryun’s time came down to 4:26. Coach Timmons rushed up to him afterwards and said, “Jim, you’ve got a chance to run under four minutes in high school. From now on, you should not think like a high school sophomore. Instead, think like a four-minute miler.”

“It was unreal,” Ryun says in his biography, “because I was running 4:26 at the time, wondering if I was going to finish. When you’ve only been in track four weeks and someone approaches you after you run 4:26 and says you can run four minutes...why, I thought he was nuts!”

However, as times kept coming down Ryun became as much a believer in Timmons as Lindgren was in Walters. The young runners willingly did the huge doses of training that their coaches dealt out, loads as heavy as any high school runners had handled successfully.

“I really don’t think Coach Walters knew that much about what kind of workouts a man should do to run good times,” Lindgren says. “Oh, his knowledge certainly was adequate. But he didn’t have any special, super-secret training technique. He simply worked on my attitude all the time.”

In Lindgren’s view, “Too many people say a young runner has to do a lot less than an older person because his developing body can’t take the stress. But this theory has never been adequately proven. Theories like this, and the people who pass them along, often do more to limit us than to help us.”

Ryun’s coach Timmons agrees. He says, “It’s my feeling that as track coaches many of us have a great many negative thoughts about achievement, that we still have a tendency to talk about things that *can’t* be done instead of things that can be done, are being done, will be done.”

During the summer before the Olympics, Lindgren and Ryun gave track the total dedication that perhaps only a runner of their age could or would give.

Lindgren was training 25-35 miles a day before the '64 Olympics. "I would get up in the morning and do something like 17-18 miles," he says. "I would be so tired from it when I got back that I'd just flop into bed and sleep until two in the afternoon." Then he'd get up and do an interval workout, come back and eat, sleep some more, and finally finish the day with another 10 miles or so before bedtime.

Ryun's work was more track-oriented and intensive, but equally demanding. He took to it just as readily. Timmons said at the time, "I don't threaten him or force him. I feel that he ought to become the best miler in the world, but it doesn't matter how outsiders feel. It's all up to Jim. He does the work. He gets the credit, and he should make the decision about himself. He has to decide if he wants to go to the top of the world himself."

There were doubters. Some said Gerry Lindgren was working too hard, that he'd crack. Gerry says he was told that "the human body can't do this kind of thing. We didn't know, or probably we never would have been able to do it. Most of the people who do something they aren't supposed to be able to do are people who are too dumb to know they're not supposed to do it."

Timmons' answer to critics who said he should be holding Ryun back for the future was, in effect, if he's good enough to be the best at 17, why wait for the future that may never come? Let him have the good things now.

Ryun and Lindgren showed later runners what it is possible to have at 16, 17 or 18.

# WAITING FOR SUCCESS

There's the Lindgren and Ryun side of the young runners story. They had success early, spectacularly and regularly. This success made their methods work. They got the publicity and inspired imitators.

But what of the other side of the story, the failures of this kind of approach? What becomes of the ones who show potential, train hard and then don't get the success that was promised?

This is one view of that other side.

The saddest kind of talk in sports is an ex-jock saying "what I did then..." and "what I could have done if...." He feeds on a past that looks better through the mists of time, and on a future that never came. He's suspended between faded memory and aborted hope—not able to hold onto either one.

He doesn't have to be an old man. He can be a senior in high school, 18 years old. Runners this age seem particularly susceptible to tearing by these opposing forces. The case of a young man we'll call Mark George illustrates this point.

Mark has been called a "born runner." The term usually means little. Everyone, in a way, is a born runner, and yet no one is. We all inherit the equipment and heritage of runners, but most of the things that make a man a great racer don't come through the genes. They are picked up from the environment.

But Mark had the right surroundings as well as heredity. Almost from birth, well-meaning friends of the family patted him on the head and said, "Now there's a runner!"

They said this because his father was a runner. Back around World War II, Mr. George was about the fastest man in the country. He won NCAA championships and that kind of thing. It was naturally assumed his son would inherit all that.

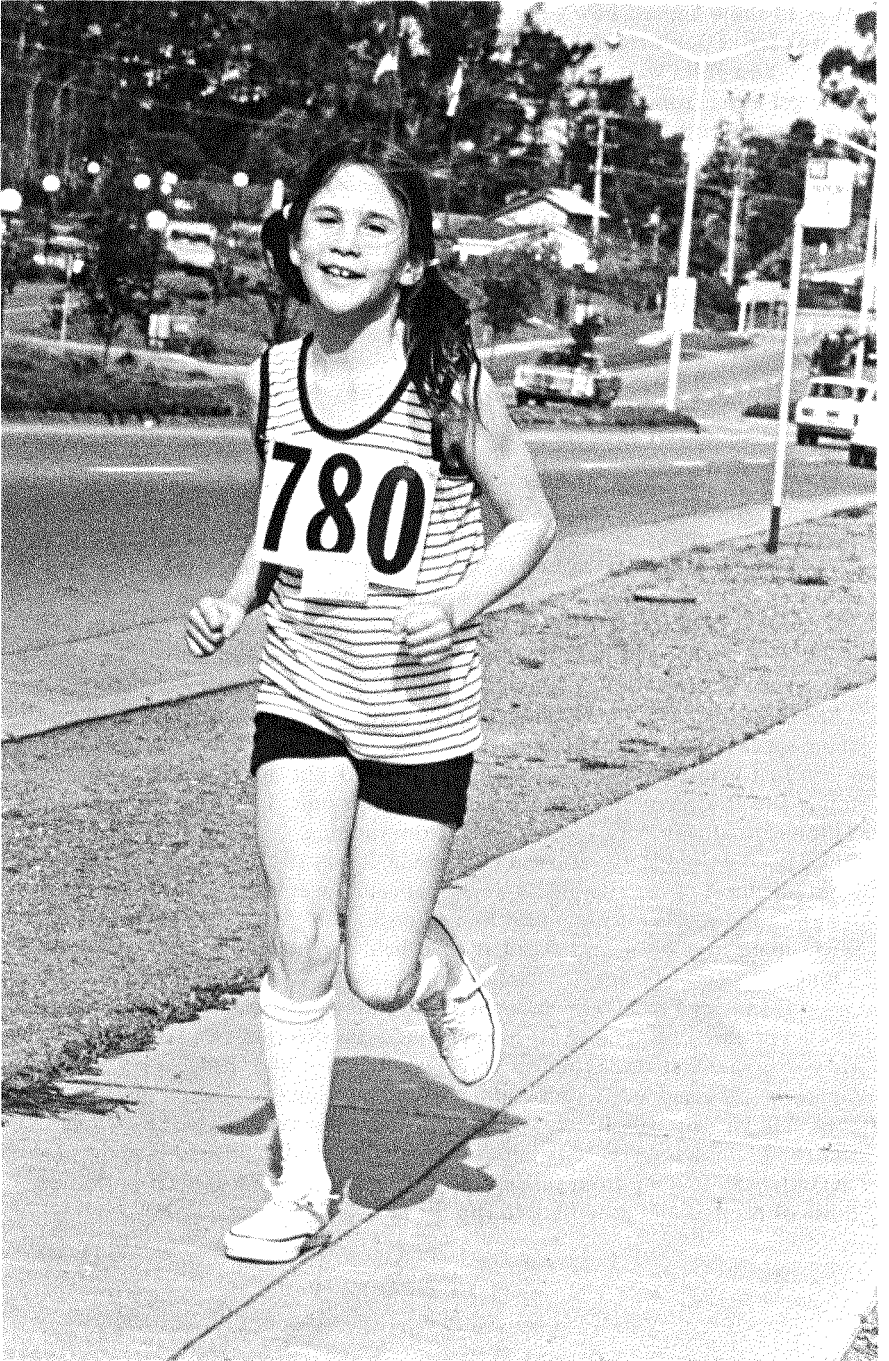
The father never pushed his boy into running. He may have wanted to, but he didn't get much chance. Mark's parents are divorced, and they live on opposite coasts. Mark lives with his mother.

But when he started running in junior high school, Mark was well aware of the tradition he was carrying—its burden as well as its promise. His coach was aware right away, too, of what kind of prospect he had. The boy ran a 15-minute three-mile while still in the ninth grade.

The coach partially blamed himself for what happened to Mark later in high school. He shouldn't have. He did what any good coach with a sense of perspective would do. Instead of exploiting the hell out of him for the sake of the team's dual meet scores, the coach pulled back on the reins. He told Mark, "Save yourself for the big races to come. They'll be better if you do."

Looking back later, the coach wondered if this was the right thing to do. Maybe he had held the boy back too much and for too long.

"When you're that age," he said, "you need constant support, reassurance and recognition of your abilities. Your confidence is shaky, and you need it reinforced regularly. I think Mark is the type of kid who needs a race every



The hardest thing for a child to do is wait. (George Beinhorn)

week to show himself how good he is. If he doesn't have this proof, he begins to wonder. I don't think I let him open up often enough."

"You gotta wait," kids hear from the time they first remember until they get away from home. At an age when patience is the least of their virtues, they're constantly told to wait. All the good things in life seem to be three inches beyond the end of their outstretched fingers, like a cookie jar on a high shelf.

Wait till dinner. Wait till the weekend. Wait till your birthday. Wait till Christmas. Wait for the chance to drive the car. Wait for a job that brings in your own paycheck. Wait for your first taste of forbidden fruits.

It's hard for an 18-year-old, who's no longer a boy yet not quite a man, to wait for the things that have been promised to him. He's itching to start cashing in.

Mark George knew how well he could run, and how much better he might run. But he got caught in the middle too long, waiting.

He transferred schools to stay with his coach. School rules made him ineligible for sports for a semester. He had to stand back and watch kids he knew he could outrun as they won races with times slower than he ran in practice.

Mark had to settle for AAU open races or time-trials. There were some good ones. He stayed with the best open runners in the area in road races. One Sunday morning in the fall, he did a 4:16 mile by himself. But those weren't the same as proving himself man-to-man against runners his age.

His coach said, "Be patient. You'll be there next spring when it counts." They delayed sharpening training. In the early spring races, Mark showed nothing special. Doubts crept in.

Just when he started gathering speed, Mark got sick. The doctor told him, "I'm afraid you'll have to have your tonsils out. They're badly infected. This means at least four months away from running."

By the time Mark returned to training, it was the fall of his senior year. He'd lost most of his 100-mile-a-week shape, and was having trouble finding it again. He watched people beat him who shouldn't have. He looked back at what might have been, and ahead at what he'd expected to be. Both seemed a long ways off.

He decided what's the use. He quit running. He was tired of waiting.

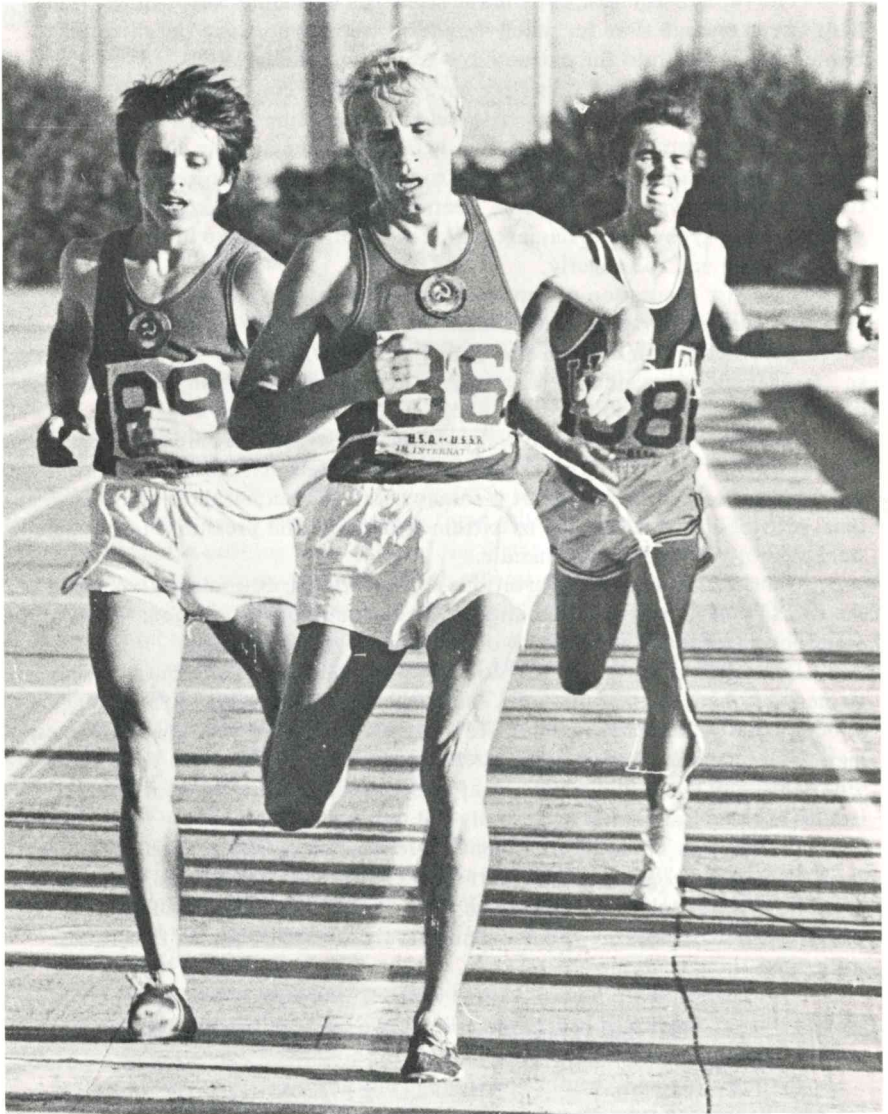
The case isn't unique. It happens thousands of times a year. Once they stop, most of these runners stayed stopped for life. However, Mark George's story had a different ending. He did nothing for several months except play pick-up basketball. Then he began to miss running—a little bit at first, and later a lot. He took a long look at what had happened, and decided the only way to keep from getting tripped up again was to get out of the shadows of his past and potential, to run for now.



## Chapter 2

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# THE EFFECTS



Young runners now have international racing opportunities. Here Craig Virgin finishes behind two Soviet runners. (Steve Sutton)

# AN AREA OF CONCERN

The present generation of runners is stepping into the unknown. They have no reliable precedents to follow, because never have so many runners from such a diverse age and ability range run so many miles so fast. Only as they do this running are we finding out what effects really are.

The verdict still isn't in from the scientists who study such things. There hasn't been enough time for much long-term testing yet, since the running boom only spread into the extreme age groups in the late 1960s.

So supporters and critics alike have based their conclusions on hearsay and superstition because solid factual evidence hasn't been available.

More concern centers on the young runners than anyone else. And the concerns are legitimate. Supporters of running are anxious to get information that clears away needless fears. Detractors are honestly worried that physical and psychological damage will result if children jump into competition too early and too eagerly.

This first generation of runners to undergo intensive training and racing at tender ages is providing answers that will help future ones. Much of what is being learned is coming trial-and-error fashion. While there have been many spectacular successes among the young, a depressingly high number of breakdowns have shown up too.

Examination goes on, and we're still learning. Answers are slowly coming out on how running influences physical and emotional growth. The consensus seems to be that this sport is somewhere between harmless and beneficial provided it is not carried to extremes of effort and pressure that youngsters are not yet equipped to handle.

Gabe Mirkin has few reservations about early hard running after seeing the sport from several different angles: medical doctor, marathoner, AAU age-group official and father of two outstanding young runners.

Dr. Mirkin says, "A 20-year follow-up of young female swimmers who trained very hard in their pre-teens found them to be superior to their non-athletic counterparts across the board: happier marriages with fewer divorces, high socio-economic status, more interests, more accomplished in their chosen fields, etc. This does not say that athletics made them superior people. It does say that hard training certainly did not hurt them."

Dr. Thomas Tutko, a prominent sports psychologist, says early running can do nothing but good so long as the stress is on "strivers" rather than "winners." Unfortunately, he says this isn't usually the case in the United States, where the sports pages are full of comments from coaches saying that losing is the next thing to dying.

"We need to learn how to lose as well," Tutko says. "Losing is part of growth, just as important as winning. But if we say losing is like dying, no sane kid is going to want to compete."

Participating and keeping the sport in a healthy perspective. These are the keys to making running competition a worthwhile experience. When the final analysis is in, we'll probably find this to hold true for all ages.

# ON THE PHYSICAL SIDE

Arthur Lydiard and Ernst van Aaken maintain that moderate endurance running is the true activity of children. They're made for it, the two coaches say, and as long as they don't go too hard they can go all day.

On the other hand, long sprint and middle-distance racing are somewhat foreign to pre-teenagers, and they should only work into them gradually as they mature.

These contentions raise questions:

- What is the scientific basis of their claims, if any?
- Is the child different, physiologically speaking, from the grown-up runner?
  - Is there any more reason to worry about the effects of running on a growing child than on any other runner?
  - What types of races, if any, best match a young runner's physical capabilities?

Taking the last question first, evidence increasingly points to the conclusion that youth programs start children from the wrong end. The general—and apparently erroneous—feeling is that youngsters, particularly before puberty, aren't able to run long distances. So they're limited to short ones and do jumping and throwing, which are "easier."

"What children do badly," says Dr. van Aaken, "are such exertions as sprinting, particularly in excess of 100 meters. On the other hand, any healthy boy or girl is able to run as much as three miles at moderate pace. The play of children is nothing more than a long distance run because in a couple of hours they cover many kilometers with several pauses."

At this age, the German says, general endurance is high but strength and skill have barely begun to develop. This development can't be rushed, as it comes only through growth. No matter how hard they try, children can't overcome their nature. It's in the trying that they get hurt.

Independent research in a number of countries supports van Aaken's claim. Perhaps the most convincing arguments that young runners are indeed different than mature ones in their abilities and limits come from Soviet studies. Dr. A. Viru, an exercise physiologist, conducted extensive testing on young athletes of all ages and compared them with adults.

Viru writes that runners in all events reach their maximum racing potential "in the third decade," or between the ages of 20 and 30. That's the time when youthful vigor and mature speed-strength-stamina should combine best, if training is adequate.

There are several physical reasons for this:

**1. Heart and Circulatory System**—Viru says although there is no great difference in heart volume relative to body weight when comparing adults and children, "the pulse rate at rest is higher in younger athletes and the minute volume (pumping capacity) for each kilogram of body weight is inversely proportional to the age. This indicates that the child's circulatory system is required to work harder at rest than the adult's, making up for the smaller minute volume and lower contraction capacity by a higher working rate."



In other words, the heart grows stronger (therefore slower and more efficient) with age. Athletes in the 9-13 age group get only one-third to one-half the oxygen supply of adults from each heart beat, according to Viru. "The differences decrease with age," he says, "but even the 16-18 age groups react to the same work load with a higher pulse rate."

Not only does the young runner's heart have to work harder for comparable results; the blood being pumped also is lower in oxygen-carrying hemoglobin until about age 14 or 15. This gives young runners lower oxygen reserves.

Additionally, there is less blood sugar available for quick conversion to energy under conditions of high stress.

This adds up to the fact that young runners can't possibly do as well as adults in efforts that rely on maximum oxygen and carbohydrate burning.

**2. Respiration**—Even "untrained" children have high rates of oxygen intake, which is considered a good measurement of endurance fitness.

Jack Wilmore, a physiologist at the University of California in Davis, tested 100 children ages 8-12. Many of them had oxygen intake readings in the neighborhood of 60 milligrams per kilogram per minute. Only well-trained mature distance runners routinely score higher.

But these results are somewhat deceiving. High oxygen intake doesn't mean youngsters can use this oxygen efficiently. They can't. As Viru said earlier, red blood cell counts are still rather low, so the oxygen doesn't have good transport through the system.

And, he says, young runners have less of a tolerance to oxygen debt. "While untrained adults are capable of (tolerating) an oxygen drop to 80-85%, the percentage for youngsters is only 90-92%."

Viru's test showed that oxygen consumption in younger runners at rest and at set work loads is higher than adults'. They needed more oxygen just to keep going, and they drop into oxygen debt at lower levels. Young runners also have a smaller capacity to deal with the fatigue product lactic acid that collects in the system during anaerobic work. They tire quicker than mature runners when breathing is strained.

**3. Muscle Strength**—The changes with age in this trait are dramatic, with a spectacular spurt coming at puberty.

"From the age of about five until the third decade," Viru says, "the muscle mass grows 7.7 to 8.5 times and muscle strength nine to 14 times.

"At the age of eight, the muscles form about 27% of the body weight and are still low in contraction capacity. The main development begins at the age of 12, and at 15 the muscles make up about 32% of the body weight. While for the first 15 years the muscle mass, relative to body weight, increases 9%, in the next two or three years the growth is 11%."

Viru measured the amount of weight the young athletes could lift with one hand and carry a few steps. For the eight- and nine-year-olds, it averaged only about a third of body weight. By age 12-13, the relative weight lifted had doubled. At 16, his subjects could lift and carry their own weight.

The sprints and middle distances are "muscle" events, relying heavily on strength and power which are slow in developing.

**4. Speed**—This relates to anaerobic capacity and muscle strength, as well



Young children lack strength and speed, but they excel in endurance activities like distance running. (Steve Sutton)

as to reaction time and coordination. Since these factors are related to maturity, too, speed also comes along slowly. It doesn't reach its highest level, Viru says, until between age 20 and 30.

**5. Endurance**—Here is the one area in which children excel from the earliest years.

While watching children play at a "steady-state work load where no oxygen debt occurs and the nervous system is not under stress," Viru found that they have "excellent endurance for extended workloads, especially where

there is sufficient variation in the intensity of the load and they are truly motivated. In these cases, they are virtually capable of non-stop activities—running, jumping and climbing—for hours.”

Any adult who has tried to keep pace with a playing child knows this without an exercise physiologist having to verify it.

Dr. Viru is reluctant to draw any conclusions himself on how his tests translate into practical running experience. The apparent message, though, is to give young runners the type of exercise they're capable of handling, when they're capable of handling it: relaxed endurance running first, to take advantage of their inherent stamina, adding hard speed and strength work later.

According to Dr. Wildor Hollmann, one of Europe's leading sports doctors, “tempo runs”—better known as intensive interval training—should be used only very moderately before the age of 17. Weight training, he says, should be avoided completely because the muscles, bones and joints still aren't sufficiently mature to take it until after high school.

This advice leads to the great unanswered question. What is the effect of early sport on the growing body? We don't have *the* answer yet, but young runners may be susceptible to structural problems from abnormal stress.

A *Medical World News* article on high-stress training in young athletes reports that rats forced to swim strenuously suffered retardation of growth and various deformities. Young runners aren't rats, but as the magazine says, “Recent animal experiments suggest that the effect of early sports training on children's structural development should be studied in detail.”



# EMPHASIZING EMOTIONS

Thomas Tutko is one of the world's foremost sports psychologists. With Bruce Ogilvie, he co-directs the Institute for the Study of Athletic Motivation at San Jose State University in California.

Dr. Tutko, a professor of clinical psychology at the school, has tested thousands of athletes to find the inner forces that drive them. He is a lecturer to sports audiences, a consultant to teams as high as the professional level, and an author of sports books.

The reason for this accounting of his credentials is to show he's hardly anti-sports. And yet Tutko is disturbed by some of the directions sports is taking. He has written in his latest book, *Beyond Winning*, that victory in competition is grossly overemphasized at the expense of other, greater values. He says the emotional cost of this is high, and it's the young that suffer most.

A vast amount of educating has to be done in the area of psychological effects of competition. "There has to be an educational movement in this whole area," Tutko says. "Coaches have to be educated. Parents have to be educated. And athletes themselves have to be educated. I think this education involves taking a whole different view of sports."

He thinks it's a question of emphasis, and "the thing that not only isn't emphasized but often is not even brought up is the emotional aspect of participation. How does the child react in this situation? What is the emotional response to being defeated? And what is the response to winning? These are things that need to be explored."

Tutko has done some exploring himself with his own children, and they have educated him on how to deal with promising young athletes.

Forget for a moment that he's a leading sports psychologist. Think of him as a parent. Like any parent, Tutko has hopes for his children. He wants them to succeed. He was proud when his son began succeeding in Little League.

"He was a good baseball player," Tutko says, "a very good baseball player. He was coming along in excellent form. Then he decided he didn't want to play any more."

The parent side of Tutko was "eating my heart out." He wanted very much for his boy to keep playing. But the psychologist in him told him not to apply any pressure. He decided his son had good reasons for being turned off to baseball, and nothing he as a father could say would change the boy's mind.

"If he wants to play next year," Tutko says, "the game will still be there. If he doesn't want to play, that's all right too."

Tutko, the psychologist, had to resist the urge to force his own wishes on the boy. He sees other parents who aren't so prudent.

"Children are forced into Little League," he says. "If you're talking about standing holding a gun to the kid's head, we don't have that. But parents are so subtle you can't believe it. The kid who doesn't want to play gets frowns, gets nagged, gets tough chores. On the other hand, if he plays, his chores are eliminated, he's constantly rewarded, his parents pay attention. This is the form that pressure takes."

Parents, and coaches as well, play on the child's need for attention and reward. Sometimes, Tutko says, this approach gets twisted and short-sighted,

and it keeps "authority figures" from seeing the child as a whole, not as one who "has headaches, stomach aches, who is frightened of tests, who is afraid of being beaten up. He's just like everybody else. But there's a tendency not to view that person as a total human being, only as an athlete."

Tutko urges parents and coaches to take the youngster's entire emotional makeup into account, especially the need for guidance and support from mature models.

His own daughter has been running three miles with him since she was eight. She asked to go along, and now she often beats her father ("very legitimately") over the distance.

"What I've done is act as a model," Tutko says, "to run slowly at first and say, 'See how much farther we can go this way.' The younger the child, the greater the tendency right off the bat to give it a real burst. They run like hell and then they're dead. They don't want to run any more. At this age, the kid's enthusiasm can actually become a detrimental factor, so the growth has to be fostered by the mature authority."

He says it doesn't matter what the sport is, the first major problem with young people is their tendency to be impulsive, to go overboard initially and then to lose interest. Tutko feels "they really need an adult authority who has the maturity to let them see the total picture."

That's the first problem. The second is to give the *right kind* of support and reward. The key, Tutko says, "is to make the sport very, very rewarding. It sounds so simple, but this is most meaningful at this age."

His Institute made a study of young runners. They were divided into five groups, each going through a series of 14 time trials. The groups received different types of reinforcement after the runs: one got none at all, one was "blame" group, one a "praise" group, one got praise then blame, and one got blame then praise.

The praise group ran faster in every one of their 14 trials than in the original one. But in the blame group, only 15% of the times were faster than the first.

"It was clear," Tutko says, "that positive reinforcement made the most dramatic changes. We found that continual criticism caused (1) erratic performance, and (2) overall slowing in times. These runners got demoralized. Criticism in any form was detrimental to performance.

"If there's one thing parents and coaches need to know about children, it's that praise is the best form of approach. It's hard to praise someone who's not doing well, but wait until a spurt occurs then reinforce that aspect. If you have to give blame, the blame should come first. Then praise the person. Blame followed by praise seems to show good results, but praise alone is best."

This sounds simple enough, but it isn't often the case in athletics where a "drill-sergeant" form of discipline prevails. When a person has a broken arm, Tutko says, we don't run up and whack him on the fracture or twist his wrist. We say, "Let's set this thing."

Yet for some reason "we have a tendency to add to psychological pain. With psychological pain, the belief is that if we insult someone, put him down, remind him of his mistakes, or make him feel worse, he's going to buck up. We don't stop to think that with young athletes we may actually be doing the reverse, creating more pain and a real negativism toward athletics. It's pain enough to fail without being constantly reminded of it."

Support is important, positive reinforcement is important, but perhaps most important of all to Tutko's way of thinking is a redefinition of the word "winner." It has to be more, he says, than "Did you finish first or didn't you?"

What comes out of the athletic experience besides that? "If all you gained was a rinky-dink little medal that collects dust in your room you've missed the point in athletics. I'd recommend emphasizing those characteristics that everyone can derive from athletics, not just the 'winners.'"

He says the emphasis now is obviously on something else. "The emphasis now is on the product and not the process. The product is temporary. The trouble with the product is that it always has to be replaced by another one. After you set a record, you have to run faster next time. That's a hell of a way to live."

We're concentrating on the wrong end, Tutko says. What can be gained in addition to medals and records, or beyond them, or instead of them?

"Athletics represent miniature life," in Tutko's view. "A race is a miniature of life. There's a start and a finish. You've got to prepare mentally. You've got to go into it with the idea of coming out successfully. It's a struggle, a battle, you and the guy ahead of you, or the guy behind you, or with yourself. All of these things are miniatures, of life, and adjusting to them is the important factor. It is a model for not quitting in other areas of life."

The key, he says, is what can be gained psychologically from sports participation: goal-setting, dedication, that kind of thing.

"We're talking about athletics, but it holds true in every aspect of life. There should be a center of focus, and commitment. You really hung in there. You battled down to the end. You were tough and gutsy. These are the things that are most important. The concepts of striving, of hard work and dedication, these are the vital factors. It's these that need reinforcing."

In the psychologist's estimation, the important thing to teach young runners is that it is more vital to finish—to run the race as best one can—than to finish first.

"Here is the crux of it," he says. "Life is continually competition, whether you're competing for a job, competing in school, or if you're in the wilderness trying to survive. There's no way you're going to avoid competition because it is part of life itself.

"If we emphasize that it is not competition alone but winning that is most important, we've made the burden which is already painful now intolerable. There are eight teams in the league and we only recognize one. That means there are seven losers for every winner. Life's not really like that. Odds are not really that steep.

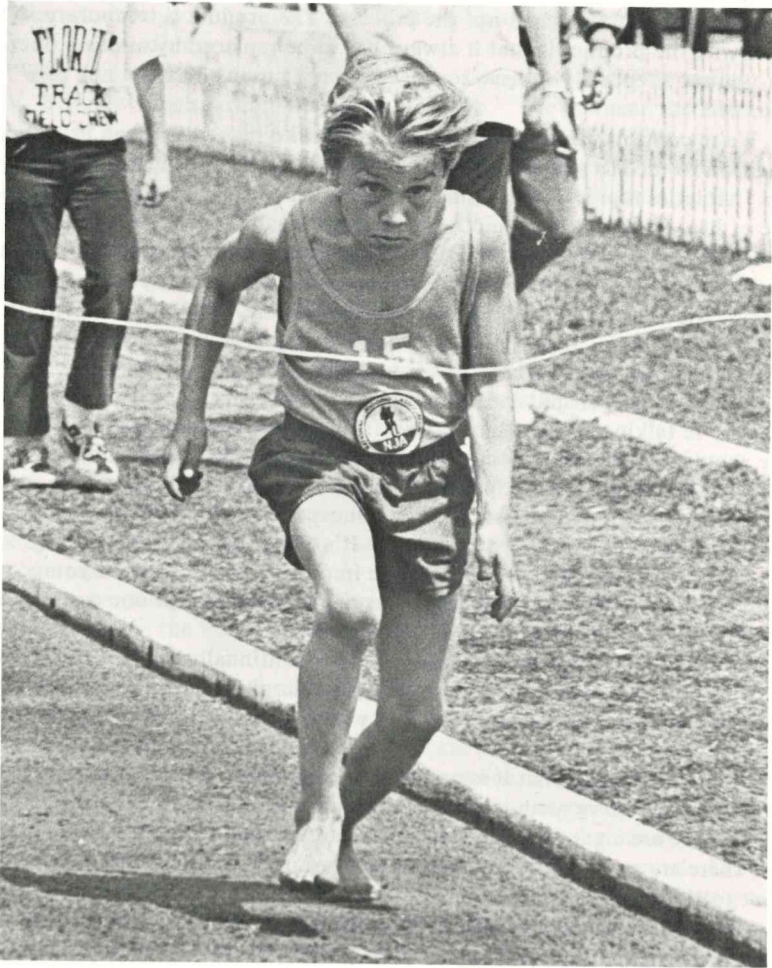
"Maybe the best thing athletics can contribute is to teach us to face competition realistically—not to run away from it, or deny it, or shy away from it, but to get in there and compete well. And whatever the outcome, to be able to adjust to it."



## Chapter 3

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# THE FUTURE



Early success offers no promise of more of the same later on. But to find it once, for only a brief period, may be enough. (Bob Kasper photo)

# WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

What about later?

Runners can and do compete well at young ages. But does this early success assure an even higher peak later on? Not usually, a number of sources say.

Dr. Harmon Brown coaches a girls' team in California and is chairman of the AAU's age-group committee. He takes exception to the claim that the young champions of today grow into the world-beaters of tomorrow.

"I think that we must take a hard look at our program as it is presently organized," he says, "and realize that participation in the nine-and-under and 10-11 age groups is not (I emphasize *not*) the great spawning ground for our girls and women's programs that we have supposed it to be, or as it is purported to be in age-group swimming."

Since 1967, Dr. Brown has been tracing the progress—or lack of it—among young runners competing in the California state cross-country meet. He finds a consistent dropout rate of about 50% per year. After the first three years, only 15% of his original test group remained in the sport.

He says, "Although the dropout rate is higher among the lower ranked runners, the best are not immune." So the attrition can't be blamed entirely on survival of the fittest.

"The message is clear," says Dr. Brown. "In our present age-group program, many are called but few choose to stay. It is up to us (the coaches and officials) to find a solution to this inordinate dropout rate."

This doesn't just happen among young girls. It occurs throughout the sport. A *Track & Field News* survey several years ago showed that of the high school runners making the national open list as seniors, two out of three were absent from that same list the next season. Only one in three survived the jump from high school to college.

The article concluded, "A particularly perilous time for the prep stars appears to be their first year away from the sanctuary of high school competition... Up to the final year of high school (the young runner) has been saturated with success, and this pleasant situation is accepted as the normal state of affairs. In the limited environment of high school track, he attains the importance of royalty. He can be shocked to the core, if not completely crushed, when he steps out of the domain he has ruled and finds he's no longer king but—temporarily at least—just one of the crowd. Some adapt to the new and more demanding set of circumstances and many fall out."

The selection process weeds out many young athletes. This usually relates to early failure. But early success takes its toll, too, success and the hard work and high expectations that accompany it. When work becomes unrewarding and expectations go unmet, frustration undermines enthusiasm.

Runner-writer Hal Higdon has a theory about this: "That while the human body can be subjected to extremes in training, the human mind cannot." There are obvious exceptions, he says, but as a rule "three or four years seems to be the maximum for sustaining the high level of training necessary for victory today."

Higdon says the three- or four-year limit stays rather constant, regard-

less of whether the individual begins racing at age nine, or 19, or 29.

*Runner's World* once did a study of long distance longevity that supports Higdon's claim. The article looked at the 100-plus marathoners who'd broken 2½ hours at that time. Two-thirty was considered "national class." Only eight of the runners had lasted four years or more at that level, and less than one-fourth of the total had broken 2:30 in more than two years. Almost 70% of them only had one fast season.

The demands of this kind of racing apparently are such that few runners bear them for long. And the same thing seems to be happening with younger runners at shorter distances. It may be that the sooner they go into intensive sport, the sooner their athletic life span will be used up.

Gerry Lindgren and Jim Ryun were singled out as examples of what young runners can accomplish. But even they weren't immune to these forces. They started their quick climbs to the top in the 1963-64 season. They set world records the next few years. But by 1968—about four years later—their best running was behind them.

Lindgren and Ryun fared far better than most. Generally, all that can safely be said about a fast young runner is that he's a fast young runner. Early success has only a distant relationship to future stardom.



# WHEN INTEREST DIES

BY HUGH SWEENEY

Distance runner Hugh Sweeney from New Jersey is a senior contributor to *Runner's World* magazine.

I once wrote a story for *Runner's World* about a junior high school track team which had seven boys with mile times averaging 4:47. This "4:47 Team" was moving up to a high school which had just produced a 4:17 mile and a 9:12 miler, both of whom would be returning the following year. It seemed likely that the seven junior high schoolers would be the backbone of a distance running dynasty for years to come.

Now it's the spring of 1973, and the eighth and ninth graders of 1970 are junior and seniors in high school. The school which these runners advanced to has, at present, two boys in the distance events. Clearly, the 4:47 Team failed to fulfill its early promise. The question is why. Why did they almost stop running before graduation?

I'm not pointing an accusing finger or blaming anyone or chastizing anyone. What happened to these boys can, and often does, happen to other runners who lose interest in the sport and drop out of organized scholastic running. Because I feel the experience of the 4:47 Team is representative of what has happened at other schools, it serves no purpose to name names here. What we should be interested in is what happened, not who it happened to or who caused it. What is important are the various reasons all the boys but one left the high school team. Any coach will recognize them, and I hope learn from them.

The boys on the 4:47 Team were a diverse group, and their reasons for dropping out of running are likewise diverse. Let's meet the members:

- "M" ran a 4:45 mile in ninth grade, his first season of running. In high school, he went out for soccer as a sophomore, then got a job and gave up running. He said, "Too many people expect too much of me in running."

- "S" did pretty well in cross-country his sophomore year. But he couldn't see taking the time away from studying, which he did a lot of, to be serious about track. He would run for a week or two, then stop for long periods. His junior year and part of his senior year he ran cross-country, but without enthusiasm.

- "W" did quite well in cross-country as a sophomore, after having done 4:51 and 10:19 for the mile and two-mile in ninth grade. But his interest dwindled, and he stopped running after cross-country his senior year. "It's not the same as in junior high," he said. "Then we were all close. We went to road races on weekends. We were all good friends and we were always together. But now, some of the others are into things I'd rather stay away from, and the group has broken up. We just don't have the same team feeling."

- "A" did 4:54 and 10:20 as an eighth grader, and was one of the leading ninth-grade cross-country runners in the state. But he was small and physically weak, and having to start all over as a 10th grader with all

the other boys larger and stronger than he was too hard. He didn't improve his two-mile time as a sophomore, was a mediocre cross-country runner as a junior and then he stopped running. I think he had talent. But he trained hard in junior high, and since he hadn't kept it up his times hadn't kept up either. His interest, too, disappeared.

- "N" was an eighth grader who didn't break five minutes on the 4:47 team. But he ran 2:05 for the half-mile the next year. He's a big boy, 170 pounds now, and he participated in football rather than cross-country. In 11th grade, he ran a 2:03 one week after football ended. But N didn't like the way the high school track coach operated. N is an independent type, and he didn't like the structured interval workouts the coach ordered. So N quit the team. He says he "didn't need the hassle." But he still runs three or four miles by himself each morning, and he entered the state AAU track meet, running unattached.

- "Z" was the biggest disappointment. In seventh grade, he ran a 2:11 880, an age-12 national record. On the 4:47 Team in eighth grade, he did 4:45. He probably was the best ninth grade cross-country runner in the state. But he gained a lot of weight, filling out from 5'11", 130 pounds to 6'0", 165-170 in the next two years. His size hurt him in cross-country, but he did run 1:58 for the half as a sophomore. In 11th grade, he again was only able to struggle around the cross-country course. He had grown too big to run well at 2½ miles, and he developed psychological blocks, thinking of himself only as an 880 specialist. This spring, he took a couple of weeks off between the indoor and outdoor seasons. The coach badgered him to start training and finally Z just quit. He might be back sometime later. He has talent. But his interest now is nil.

- "Q" was an eighth grader on the 4:47 Team. He ran 4:52 and 10:20, but he was the backbone of the group. He recruited others, and helped keep them going with his enthusiasm. He and his family moved to Texas after that, and the team lost its chief motivator. Q has run 4:31 and 9:32 as a junior at his high school in Texas.

- "T" was the real talent on the 4:47 Team. His 4:24.7 that year was the fastest in the US by a ninth grader. But he is injury prone, and has been more or less injured ever since. His best time is still only 4:23. One injury after another has prevented T from ever getting in much more than one or two consecutive months of training. His attitude is still good and maybe, barring injuries, he'll run up to his potential. He is the only member of the 4:47 Team still participating in this high school.

I think that sometimes the boys I talked to were just giving me the easy, cliché answers on what had happened. There are other factors which probably were significant, and which the boys perhaps could not verbalize.

For most runners, track gets more and more interesting as they move the ladder. Starting as "scrubs" on the high school team, they make progress little by little until as seniors they get their letter, place in the county meet, break 4:30, or whatever. I've found that if progress is slow and hard-earned, one tends to appreciate it more.

The 4:47 Team started at the top. They had a very good coach, Mr. G, who made the workouts interesting and fun. The boys responded to Mr.



G's enthusiasm, and trained regularly and fairly hard. Certainly they practiced more than any of their ninth grade opponents. So naturally they were quite successful in junior high competition.

But when they began to run in high school, they were up against boys who themselves trained pretty hard. The distance runners in the county were perhaps the best in the state. The 4:47 boys no longer had a training advantage, so they began to do rather poorly in competition. Consequently, their interest flagged. It's hard to adjust to not succeeding after having nothing but success for two or three years.

The track program itself was not as interesting in high school as in junior high. Earlier, Coach G had taken the team to school meets during the week and age-group races and road runs on weekends. As any confirmed road racer will tell you, a road run is much more fun than an unimportant little dual meet.

The 4:47 Team already had tasted the best there is in distance running. High school competition was, by comparison, like having jello for dessert after a steak dinner.

I can remember the thrill of receiving my first medal in high school competition. Winning medals was something to look forward to and to be proud of. But the members of the 4:47 Team had been going to age-group races for two years, and winning them. Each boy already had a shoe box full of medals. In short, there was nothing left for them to aim for, to be hungry for.

Only T, the 4:24 miler, and Z, the "12-year-old record holder," had the basic talent to become real stars. The other boys, lacking the talent to succeed without training extra hard, just lost the motivation for it.

Some of these individuals, however, became motivated in other directions. The town in which the 4:47 Team lives is an affluent, white, commuter-bedroom suburb of New York. The parents are busy, the kids have money and are curious, independent, "normal" high school students of the 1970s. Drugs are available. Need I say more? This sort of milieu, while not all bad, is probably detrimental to one's development in running.

Then there were the inevitable conflicts with the high school coach, Coach B. Coach B had been at the school for several years, and in the seasons immediately prior to the coming of the 4:47 Team, he had helped develop a 7:52 two-mile relay team, a 4:17 miler and a 9:12 two-miler. By many standards he is a successful coach. But like all of us, he has his foibles. He has had stars recently, and he has vicariously enjoyed their successes. In doing so, he has tended to ignore the less-talented boys on the team.

This, I suppose, is understandable. But the boy who is running 4:45 while a teammate is doing 4:15 feels he's being neglected, and it hurts. Several of the 4:40-4:50 milers mentioned this to me. They felt they were just "tagging along" and were not a necessary part of the team in the eyes of Coach B.

Not only the "scrubs" had their differences with Coach B. One of the star milers was on the verge of dropping off the team, at the height of his success, because of what he considered excessive nagging and pressure from B. And the 4:24 miler T did quit for a while, to train on his own,

because he thought the coach would put him into races too soon after he resumed training following an injury. T had pride in his performances, and didn't want to lose unimportant races to boys he would easily beat when in good shape.

Finally, I feel that Mr. G, the ninth grade coach, was partially a cause of the breakup. He is a fine coach—too good, in fact. He is extremely interested in track, and he infected the boys with his enthusiasm...temporarily.

When they got to high school, there was a letdown. The high school coaches gave them more freedom and expected the boys to train a bit on their own. They didn't. They couldn't maintain the high pitch of enthusiasm they'd had in junior high. They stopped running on weekends. They didn't run with much effort when the high school coach wasn't watching. In short, they were not self-motivated.

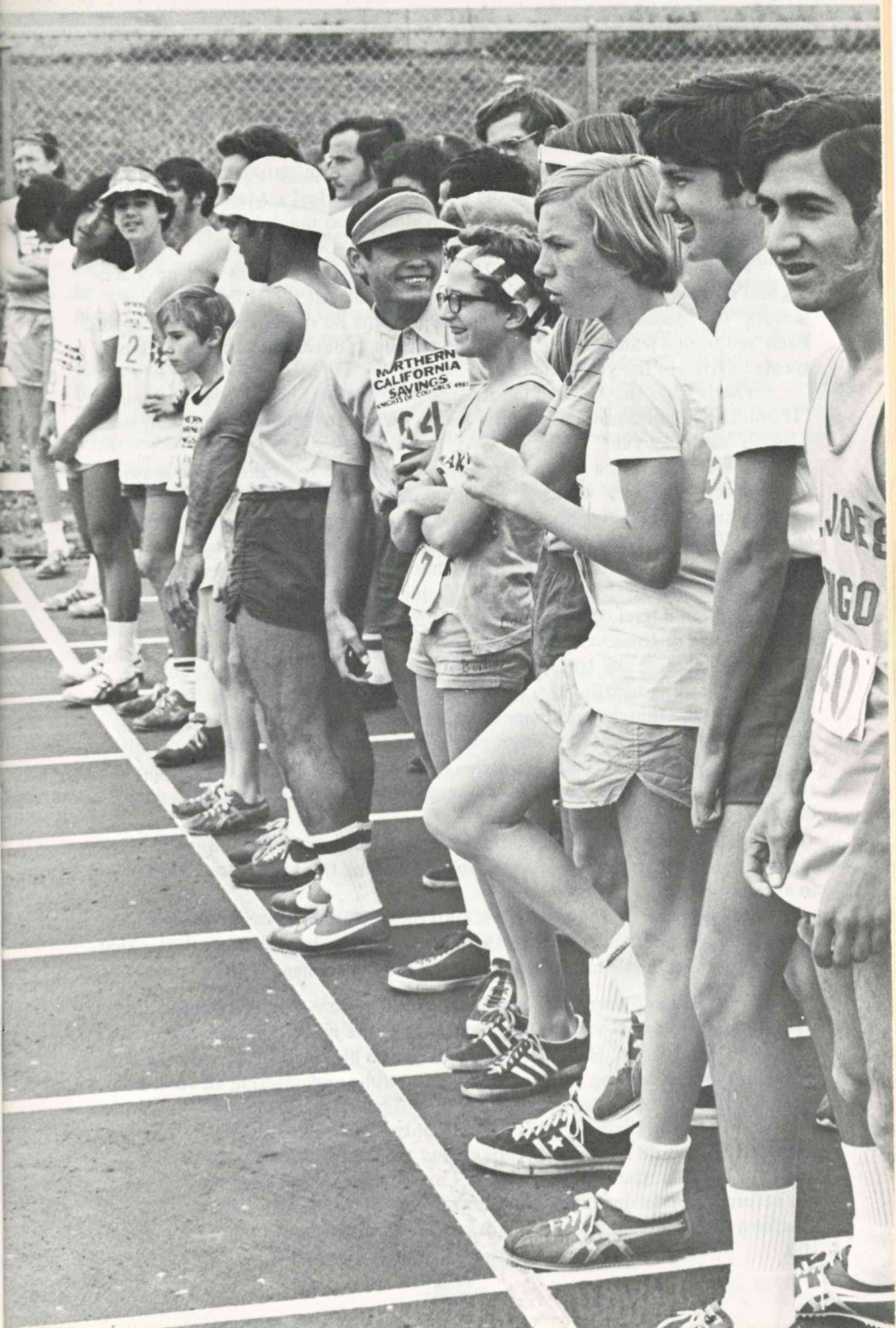
What had happened, I think, is that Mr. G had gotten six or seven kids who didn't have within them the self-motivation which, in the end, a runner needs to have to succeed. Coach G gave the boys their motivation through his own drive and enthusiasm. The boys did well, they had a good time. But when they got to high school this motivation was lacking. Without the coach, the interest was gone, and they either dropped out of running or just went through the motions.

The reasons for their failure run the gamut from too much early success to not enough success later on; from an overly active, highly concerned coach to a somewhat remote coach.

What would have been the right course to follow with the 4:47 Team? It's hard to say, of course. What makes one individual train twice a day, month after month, while others, like the 4:47 boys give up when they get away from their first coach?

I really don't think it's a cop-out answer to say that the individual makeup of the person, in the long run, determines his course. For a short time, a dynamic coach can provide it. But after a couple of years, the individual knows whether he likes running or not, and he makes his own decisions. These boys made theirs.

**RIGHT: Young runners  
in mixed sizes await the  
start of a distance race.  
(John Marconi photo)**





# THE CLASS OF 1968

"Wait till '72!" That's what people were saying of them four years earlier, and it was what they themselves were thinking.

It was 1968, an Olympic year, and they had been serious in high school—the 80 fastest senior runners in the country. None had made the team for Mexico City that summer. That had been almost too much to hope at their age. But '72... Now there was a goal.

The timing seemed perfect. They'd have the advantage of college coaching and competition for four years, ending in a short at the Munich team as seniors. It's reasonable to assume that each of the 80 runners was thinking this. Each had been a leading prep, and could expect to develop steadily—perhaps spectacularly—in the years to come.

That's what they'd been led to expect. Coaches and admirers had said, "If you're this good now, think how good you'll be when you reach your peak. That's years away yet."

Bob Bornkessel, a hurdler from Kansas, was the top runner that season, in *Track & Field News'* view. It was no contest, really. Bornkessel broke 50 seconds in the 400-meter hurdles and was the only prep runner in the final Olympic Trials. Bornkessel was headed for the University of Kansas.

Other names on that year's high school list: sprinters Warren Edmonson of California, Herb Washington of Michigan, Ivory Crockett of Missouri. Quarter-milers Edesel Garrison and John Smith of the Los Angeles area. Miler Jerome Howe of Iowa. Only Garrison had the fastest time in his event, with Washington sharing the 100 lead. None of this group was attracting any unusual attention nationally, yet. But the potential obviously was there.

In 1968, Munich was a possible dream for all 80 of the top high school seniors. But by the time that Olympic Games came around, only John Smith was on the team. The selection process had been so tough that only one of the original group had endured well enough to realize the biggest track goal of all.

The ones who didn't make it can't, of course, be called failures. Making an Olympic team is never comparable to making the high school top 10 in a single season.

But the point is, the top high school runners aren't always the ones who go on to bigger and better things. Evidence from the class of '68 indicates that they seldom are. Let's follow these runners through college:

**1969:** Hugh Sweeny showed in the article before this one what happens when highly successful young runners step from the junior high/age-group program into high school. High school to college is a bigger step yet: leaving home and family, leaving a doting coach and public and entering an environment where everyone was a high school star. This can be shocking.

It was to the Class of '68, anyway. Only 12 of the original 80 runners made the US top 50 list in any event during the freshman season. For one reason or another, the majority couldn't match high school marks of the season before. Prep leaders from three events were never heard of again. But Southern Illinois freshman Ivory Crockett was a surprising winner in the AAU 100.

**1970:** For many, there was an adjustment to college competition as sophomores. Seventeen of the original 80 appeared on the lists of US leaders.

Herb Washington of Michigan State emerged as one of the best indoor sprinters in history. He tied the world record for 60 yards.

**1971:** A year of further development for some. Five more of the original 80 crept into national rankings. John Smith of UCLA broke the world 440 record, and Herb Washington again tied the indoor 60 mark.

**1972:** This was *the* year. Herb Washington started fast, breaking the long-standing 60-yard record by a tenth-second and tying the 50 as well. But he wasn't ever as good outdoors. Warren Edmonson and Ivory Crockett were faster there, but not quite fast enough themselves to make the Munich team.

Edesel Garrison quit track after the NCAA meet to concentrate on football. John Smith had a frustrating year, even though he made the Olympic team. He had hepatitis early in the year, then was injured before the Games.

Jerome Howe, meanwhile, had developed into one of the country's best 1500-meter runners. He finished fourth in the Trials, the most agonizing place to be when three qualify.

Fewer than one-fourth of the class of '68 made the national listings.

Among this one class's best runners, about 60% quit the chase for good in the first year away from high school. By 1972, the casualty rate had climbed to almost 80%.

Yet this is not a knock on any of the individuals concerned, and it isn't meant to discourage runners from seeking higher kinds of prizes. It is only the courageous and talented athletes who take these risks.

There are risks. Many runners take them, but few ever get just what they want from running. The turnover at the top is quick and regular, and the mentality that gets a runner there once usually won't let him settle for anything less later on.

But is that so tragic? Getting to the top once, at any level, is more than most people have ever done or dared to try to do.

## Chapter 4

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# THE ADVICE



Young runners need someone they respect to point the way for them. (George Beinhorn photo)





Parents back up their children at a meet. (Steve Sutton)

## LET THE CHILDREN PLAY

At these ages, the burdens are on parents and coaches. They have considerable say in the directions young runners take.

Concerned parents and coaches wonder, "What should we do? We want to see these kids run, but of course we don't want to hurt them. What kind of guidance should we give?"

There's no single answer, any more than there's one best way to rear children. But in general, do as Thomas Tutko says: remember that the youngster is a whole person, not just an "athlete." Consider his emotions as well as his physical performance. Consider his future as well as his present.

Remember that youth is a time of playing, growing, exploring, learning. Fit running in comfortably with the young person's total development and it should contribute to the process of maturing. At the very least, running shouldn't stand in the way of it.

The role of both parents and coaches is to help the youngster toward maturity, not to hold him in a suspended state of childhood.

Canadian national coach Lionel Pugh says, "I believe a coach, like a parent, should kick the fledgling out of the nest as soon as possible. A coach should never be a crutch."

Support of "mature models," in Dr. Tutko's terms, is essential in the early years. But parents and coaches walk a thin line between supporting the young runner enough and pushing him too much.

Concerned people worry about finding the proper balance.

Hal Higdon, father of three, says, "I fear my sport will become subject to the same abuses as Little League baseball, with its accompanying tensions, excessive organization and parental domination. Things were happier when I was a kid playing baseball out in the vacant lot behind my home..."

Higdon says he views suspiciously "any parent who would use his chil-

dren as substitutes to fulfill his own athletic ambitions.... As a parent, I certainly want my children to succeed in what they do, but I feel I can survive if they never win an Olympic medal, just as I survived my own inability to do the same."

Coach Arthur Lydiard concurs: "Parental influence in sport can be a wonderful contribution, but it can also be a real danger and even a destroyer. Far too many parents are more interested in seeing their children excel than in encouraging them merely to enjoy themselves. Too often they force the child to show his superiority, not at the expense of others but at the expense of himself."

Hal Higdon once was called on to put his effort where his ideals were.

A group of parents asked him to coach their kids. He could think of no not to do it, so he said okay.

"We had boys and girls at all grade levels from eighth down to second," Higdon says. "I limited practice to two or three days a week. I'd appear at 3:00 after school got out and we'd run off into the woods. Once or twice we also ran a few wind sprints on the football field. Practice sessions never ran longer than 15 minutes, then I shoed them away to take part in the more normal activities of grade schoolers: baseball, fighting and playing with dolls."

Higdon remembered what others sometimes forget. These are children first. They have to mature into a high-intensity program, after they've had time to find out if this is what they want.

The expansion of track and field for the young "probably is good," says Higdon, who himself has been in the sport for more than 25 years. "But we should watch closely so that the abuses inherent with the athletic establishment don't come along as part of the package."



# TO PARENTS, COACHES

BY DON HELLISON

Don Hellison is a professor in the department of health and physical education at Portland State University in Oregon.

*Sports Illustrated* frequently carries references in its "Faces in the Crowd" section to age-group record setters and champions. The magazine has mentioned Kevin Strain, who holds an age-group mark for the marathon. Kevin is five. Before that it was Mike McKinney, seven-and-under national cross-country champion.

I hadn't thought much about this trend to younger and younger athletes, though, until I read a letter about one of them in *SI*. It was from Dr. Gabe Mirkin, national chairman of the AAU boys' age-group subcommittee.

Gabe wrote, "As competent physiologists have been preaching for years, track and field—and particularly distance running—is 10 years behind the swimmers, figure skaters and gymnasts. With programs such as (those of one young runner), the mile will eventually be run in 3:40, and runners who start later than age seven or eight will not be able to compete."

The last line—"runners who start later than age seven or eight will not be able to compete"—concerned me enough that I began to consider alternatives to this distressing possibility.

My perspective is decidedly humanistic, and it has important applications to the growth of young people who run. This differs from the materialistic, survival-of-the-fittest attitudes that pervade sports.

The humanistic model of human development begins with self-esteem—that is, feeling good about oneself, about one's abilities and competencies. Self-esteem forms a base of support for the remainder of the individual's development. Many times, especially for the boy in our society, the need for self-esteem emerges as an effort to prove himself in culturally approved and valued physical activities.

Once self-esteem development is under way, the individual can begin the never-ending process of self-actualization. Self-actualization basically means becoming what one is capable of becoming, fulfilling one's own potentialities, bringing one's individual talents into full bloom. Although self-actualization is a complex concept, there are three rather clear implications of this theory for the physical education of any child.

- Each individual has certain unique physical potentialities which he has a need to realize, no matter what the cultural values dictate.

- Physical activity should provide each individual with an avenue for self-expression, emphasizing the open, exploratory and creative nature of self-actualization.

- Physical activity can provide its own special meaning, its own total involvement, its own emphasis on the process rather than the product.

There is yet another level to this humanistic model of development: self-understanding. If an individual is really going to become what he alone can become, he must elevate his level of consciousness.

First, he must truly know himself—what he can do (his abilities), what he would like to do (his interests), what he “must” do (his needs). Second, he must be aware of the variety of activities open to him at his age, sex and location. Third, he must understand that these activities can help him achieve a number of goals, including self-esteem, self-actualization, self-expression and personal involvement/meaning. Fourth, he must be able to step back and reflect on cultural values which give direction and set boundaries.

Self-understanding, therefore, requires a blend of introspection (self-analysis) and cultural analysis so that the individual’s uniqueness can be fully developed. He must be able to identify goals and opportunities which best meet his own needs, abilities and interests, while at the same time moving toward the rejection of cultural values which will restrict his growth.

So what does this have to do with the young runner?

Running has much to contribute within the humanistic perspective.

First, there is the matter of self-esteem. Running, particularly distance running, provides an opportunity to improve significantly as the result of training. If a young runner perceives himself to be improving, to be growing in physical competence, and this improvement is pointed out and rewarded (perhaps just a word or a touch) by “significant others” such as parents or the coach, it is likely that he will feel better about himself as a runner—and maybe even about his abilities in general.

The extent to which running can serve as a proving ground, and therefore as a base of support for future behavioral development, depends on its value to the individual, which in turn rests somewhat on cultural values.

Self-actualization has been described as a three-part process. One’s unique physical potentialities need to be developed as the first part of this process. First, these potentialities have to be identified. One approach is to expose all children to a wide range of activities in a non-threatening environment so that their potentialities will emerge as they explore.

As development progresses, the self-expressive and personal-meaning dimensions of self-actualization can come into play. Distance running, perhaps more than most other activities in the American culture, has received attention as a means for self-expression and as a “process-oriented” rather than “product-oriented” activity. Listen to marathoner-writer Kenny Moore on this:

“The rewards of cross-country may be unrelated to competitive success. This is not to say that one cannot derive satisfaction from winning. But if competition is the runner’s only goal, he is clearly deranged. He would pursue Sophia Loren for her money, order Russian caviar for its protein content.”

But Moore notes that such involvement for the sake of involvement does not occur until a skill and fitness base has been established. In other words, some proficiency must be reached before running can mean anything other than pain, torture and agony.

Self-understanding can be encouraged in young runners by both group and individual discussion. Young runners should be encouraged to identify: (1) their own physical potentialities; (2) their interests; (3) their needs.

These factors can be tied to the variety of opportunities available in running, and finally can be linked to cultural values such as competitive achievement (winning vs. trying, success vs. experience) so that the young runners

can move beyond these boundaries if their true abilities, interests and needs dictate.

The goal throughout this process is the young runner's self-understanding via an expanded awareness of his own feelings and capabilities, and exposure to possibilities open to him. The goal is not to propagandize and radicalize him so that he will reject all cultural values, just as it is not to meet the coach's or parent's needs and interests.

Running should introduce the youngster to who he is and what he can become.

The advent of age-group running as a highly-competitive intensive-training phenomenon may well mean, as Dr. Mirkin suggests, that excellence will be reserved for those who start this kind of training at a young age.

But the key question is, will these young stars have as positive a view of the sport and themselves as those who have taken a more humanistic course?



# TO THE YOUNG RUNNER

BY BRIAN MITCHELL

Brian Mitchell, a well-known British coach and writer, is the author of "How to Train and Race: A Handbook for Young Runners." That book is due for publication in late 1973.

In the beginning, do one thing: take a long, thorough look at what you wish to achieve, how you think it can be achieved, and how long it will take you. Time spent on this survey of ambitions is time well spent. Even if you only want to look forward one season, that is still worthwhile. Study carefully the factors involved in your training and racing, and accept that there has to be long-term preparation.

Intelligent forethought is the foundation of success, and positive pride its creator. Thinking will map out a route, and pride will ensure progress along that route. Intelligence—seeking and using knowledge—is a necessary quality of the successful athlete. The more you know about training and racing, the better you will be as a competitor. The more self-respect you have, the more you will stay on the route that you have worked out.

It will probably help, at least at some stages of training, to have somebody else want to persuade and support you. But in the end you will train and race successfully because you want to, not because somebody else wants you to. This strength of mind and character is perhaps best seen in those men and women who do essentially solitary deeds or carry essentially solitary responsibilities.

The true athlete must have this kind of spirit—vigorous, sane, not easily demoralized or defeated. Allied to intelligence, it prophesies success.

The cultivation of this spirit, or will-power, is possible. Running coach Franz Stampfl has said, "It is capable of tremendous development under training and stimulus, or of near extinction under neglect." This may not be mental alone. It is possible to train the nervous system, to nurture the reserves, to increase the durability of the body's structure. Contrarily, it is possible to deplete the nervous energy, and produce malnutrition of the spirit as well as of the body. All defeats tend to do this, and unintelligent overexertion of the will can break down the physique, thus demoralizing the athlete. Thereby he defeats himself.

Accept the very severe limitations under which the animal body must work (need for sleep and rest, capacity to function only within a narrow range of temperatures, need for proper nourishment, sensitivity to heavy and repeated doses of fatigue, etc.) And while not giving way to slight signs of discomfort, learn to judge when you have started to break yourself down rather than build yourself up. The history of running is littered with the bodies of people who believed that all they had to do was exert an iron will in order to succeed. Their success was finally not much greater than that of men and women who lacked the necessary will; their disappointment and frustrations were bigger.

The best advice is that given by a former British Olympic runner, Frank Sando, who recommended that young athletes should "make haste slowly." Nature cannot be hurried, as coach Percy Cerutti is rightly fond of pointing

out. There are no crash courses in the preparation of a runner, but the iron-willed athlete who lacks intelligence thinks there are. It is when that iron will is a partner to intelligence that athletic greatness emerges.

Cultivate your physical resources. Don't try to thrash them into life, or you may end up killing them.

The pride which is an integral part of the athlete's character operates to make him, or her, want to carry through whatever plans have been conceived. It also operates to make the athlete want to beat other athletes. This, after all, is what competition is about. There is satisfaction in beating a stopwatch. There is more satisfaction in beating other runners. While this kind of pride need not—and preferably *does* not—become an arrogance that sees defeated opponents as necessarily inferior people, it will be very stubborn and evident to its owner.

Tennis player Arthur Ashe has said, "Inwardly I'm not modest. I don't think it's human nature to be modest. Modesty and competition are opposed to one another." Such a lack of modesty will belong to the athlete's nature. But it need only function in training and competition, and even there silently.

Finally, the young athlete is well advised to keep running in its place. Be passionately involved in it, certainly. Exert yourself to succeed. Get from running the massive satisfaction that running offers. Yet be a rounded, sensitive, literate human being. It is not the job of athletics to produce people who know or care for nothing except athletics.

Keep it in its place, which is behind your family, your concern for the general life of the community and your education.



## Booklet of the Month

1. All About Distance Running Shoes	52pp.	\$1.50
2. The Varied World of Cross-Country	52pp.	\$1.25
3. Coaching Distance Runners	52pp.	\$1.25
4. New Views of Speed Training	52pp.	\$1.25
5. Running After Forty	40pp.	\$1.00
6. Gerry Lindgren Story	36pp.	\$1.00
7. 1972 Marathon Handbook	100pp.	\$1.95
8. Runner's World Pictorial	52pp.	\$1.50
9. 1972 Runner's Almanac	148pp.	\$2.50
10. The Boston Marathon	52pp.	\$1.00
11. Practical Running Psychology	52pp.	\$1.50
12. Encyclopedia of Athletic Medicine	84pp.	\$1.95
13. Racing Techniques	52pp.	\$1.50
14. The Runner's Diet	84pp.	\$1.95
15. Beginning Running	36pp.	\$1.00
16. Interval Training	84pp.	\$1.95
17. 1972 Olympic Games	100pp.	\$1.95
18. Frank Shorter Story	52pp.	\$1.00
19. 1973 Marathon Handbook	100pp.	\$1.95
20. Runner's World Pictorial	52pp.	\$1.75
21. 1973 Runner's World Almanac	116pp.	\$2.50
22. Race Promotion	36pp.	\$1.00
23. Runner's Training Guide	100pp.	\$2.50
24. The Young Runner	52pp.	\$1.00
25. Shoes for Runners	84pp.	\$1.95
26. Guide to Sprinting	36pp.	\$1.25
27. The Running Body	52pp.	\$1.50
28. Finnish Running Secrets	68pp.	\$1.50
29. Exercises for Runners	84pp.	\$1.95
30. Biography	52pp.	\$1.50
31. 1974 Marathon Handbook	116pp.	\$1.95
32. Runner's World Pictorial	52pp.	\$2.00
33. 1974 Runner's Almanac	100pp.	\$1.95
34. The Female Runner	36pp.	\$1.25
35. Running with the Elements	100pp.	\$2.75
36. Club Running	36pp.	\$1.00

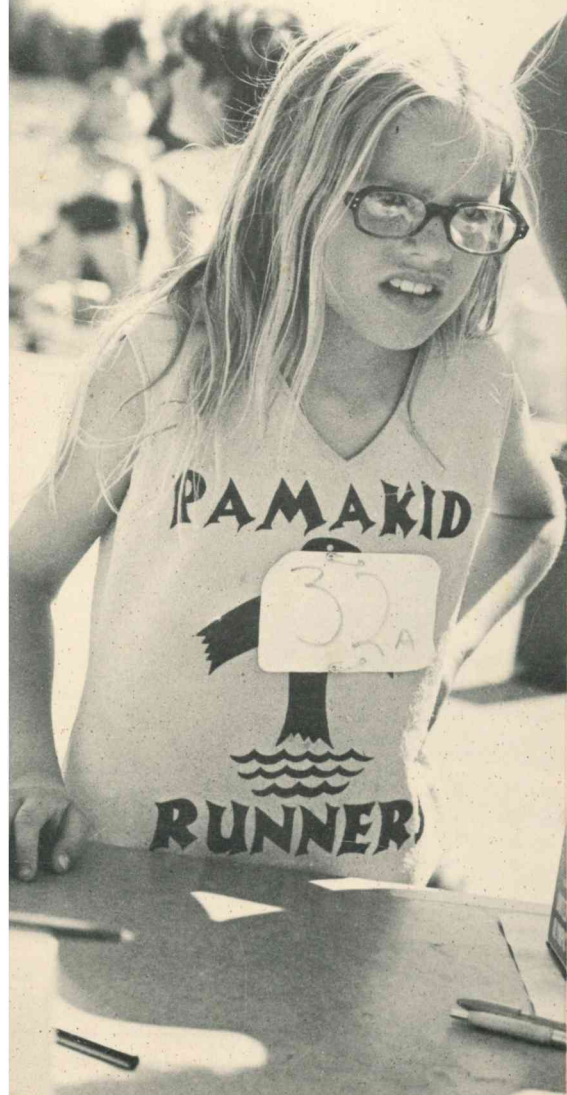
Booklet of the Month, Box 366, Mountain View, Ca. 94040





## THE YOUNG RUNNER

“... For the first time ever, any runner of any age can run anything he or she chooses. Now we know the kids can run farther and faster than cautious grown-ups thought they could. . . The central question of this booklet, though, is not whether young runners can have or want the kind of excellence demanded in high level running. It is, should they seek it?”



### FRONT COVER:

A young winner in the national age-group cross-country championships. (Steve Sutton photo)

### PHOTO LEFT:

Mary Etta Boitano, who has been running marathons since she was six. (Brian Anderson photo)