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Distance Running

Orville O'Neil

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1. Marathon

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Liberal Arts, Marquette
University in Partial Fulfill-
ment of the requirements
for the Degree of
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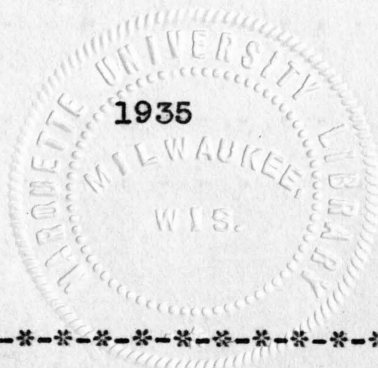


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INTRODUCTION

PREFACE

This is a brief account of the history and development of long distance running in the United States and foreign countries.

I am greatly indebted to S. A. Mussabini, and his book "The Complete Athletic Trainer" for his advice and sound judgment. I am also indebted to the authors listed in the bibliography for their complete and helpful explanations on running.

The primitive man developed, and he became more proficient in his methods of obtaining a livelihood. He found that he had some leisure time, and he began to devise methods and means of using this time.

"Survival of the fittest" was the motto of the early ages, but was gradually changing. Instead of meeting his enemies in deadly contests, man would rather a few of the group, and as teams, or groups, they would have a running, jumping or throwing contest. This was the beginning of competitive sport.

Running was also used as a means of transferring messages. The messages were carried, on foot, for military purposes, and also for private messages. It was from this that it was derived as a competitive sport.

INTRODUCTION

The present thesis being an essay on the development of distance running, I will attempt to show how man's tendency to engage in such sport developed, how this competition has led up to the present great records, and why we have greater performances each year.

If we go back to the early or middle ages we will find that athletics have been connected, in some form or other, with man's existence. If we investigate the origin of our games we can usually find that they have been developed from some fundamental physical activity. As the intellect of the primitive man developed, and he became more proficient in his methods of obtaining a livelihood, he found that he had some leisure time, and he began to devise methods and means of using this time.

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CHAPTER I

ANCIENT DISTANCE RUNNING

Long distance running was the most primitive of athletic sports, and was practiced most by the early Greeks and Finlanders. The Ancient Greeks especially were strongly in favor of running. Due to poor transportation, messages had to be carried on foot, and during war time the runners were used to much advantage.

The Marathon is undoubtedly the most gruelling race man could enter. It received its name when the defeat of the Persians was announced to the Athenians by a soldier who ran twenty-five miles on the day of the battle, and who after reaching his goal and shouting, "Rejoice, the Victory is ours", fell dead from exhaustion.

The first marathon was run in Athens in 1896. Eighteen contestants had entered the race that was to start at the same place at which the memorable battle was fought, and the finish of the race was to be in the stadium in front of the royal boxes. Greeks, Germans, Austrians, Americans, and French were running, but the desire was universal that a Greek should win. The Greeks were much in favor of this event, and felt that they could not afford to lose.

"The Greek patriotism and pride are at stake in this race and it is on this that Greece prides herself, and one of the precious remnants of that period renown is the memory of the victory in the marathon."(1)

(1) Cook, T. A.: International Sport.

Much credit is bestowed on the victor of this race. The Crown Prince embraces the winner, the King thanks him publicly, and his countrymen shower him with honors. The victor in this race was a young Greek named Spyrid Loues, twenty-four years old, and the son of a peasant farmer who lived not far from Athens. He ran the distance of twenty-five miles in two hours, fifty-five minutes and twenty seconds over a road that tried the stoutest hearts.

"Faster marathons have been run since, but no victory was more deserved; his name will live as long as Olympic itself."(2)

(2) Cook, T. A.: op. cit.

The main event of a track program, to the Greeks, is the marathon. Many events have been added, to track, but Greek interest lies in the long race. Greece has produced many good men, although they have won but one first place in Olympic Marathon running. The athlete and the fan still believe the marathon is their event and they try to specialize in it.

Distance running was also practiced in Finland, in the early ages, and it later developed into one of their most important and attractive sports. Many champions have been produced by Finland.

It took some time before distance running was started in Finland, because the people thought it was too much of a strain on the individual competing. This topic received much discussion, and finally it was decided to have a

man and a horse race for a distance of forty kilometers. This race created much interest, and the problem was finally settled. The result of the race was that the horse was forced to cross the finish line a minute before its human competitor. The man was in much better condition than the horse, and the time for the race was slightly over three hours.

The condition of the man, and the time for the race greatly excited the people, because the marathon had been won at Paris, that year, in two hours, fifty-nine minutes, and forty-five seconds. The comparison led the Finns to the fact that they might stand a chance of winning. This is what opened the road to Finnish long distance running.

"Perhaps because there was some dim idea that it was best to begin with short distances, a beginning was made with the 800 and the 1500 meter distances. These events figured largest in programs. There were no specialists at that early date, and the sprinter beat all comers at any distance up to two miles. The 5,000 and 10,000 meter events did not begin to appear on programs until about 1904."(3)

(3) Jukola, Martti: Athletics in Finland, p. 13.

The "prehistoric" track records of Finland are as follows:

- 1500 Meters - V. Johanson....4:26.4
- 3,000 Meters - J. Adameson....9:59.8
- 5,000 Meters - C. Nyberg.....17:43.4
- 10,000 Meters - J. Nieminen...37:44.6

in the nineteenth century athletic clubs were formed at Oxford and Cambridge, and in 1857 the first intercollegiate

CHAPTER II

MODERN DISTANCE RUNNING

From 1900, to the present, distance running has become more popular each year. This is true in all countries and records are continually being broken. The foreign countries, especially Great Britain, Finland, France, and Germany, have produced many world's record breakers.

England studied, and practiced, distance running long before the United States. Distance running in foreign countries was carried on mostly by professionals. The best man of a certain town would run against a man of a neighboring town, and the owners, or backers, of each man would bet on the results. One of the best men of this period was a Seneca Indian named Deerfoot. He ran in England and in America, and made many enviable records, the most notable one is the record he made in London in 1863 when he ran twelve miles in 1 hour, 2 minutes, 2.5 seconds.

Although this was extraordinary running, for the period, he received much competition, especially from another Englander named William Lang. Lang made records of 9 minutes, 11.5 seconds for two miles, and four minutes, two seconds for one mile in 1863. The time made for these records is questionable and are not accepted as world records.

England, and other foreign countries, gained much of their advancement by the formation of Athletic Clubs. Early in the nineteenth century athletic clubs were formed at Oxford and Cambridge, and in 1857 the first intercollegiate

meet was held between the two schools.

Many people claim that England is more advanced than America, in distance running, and give many facts to back their argument.

"The most plausible explanation of the average superiority of Englishmen at the long distances is the fact that outdoor sport has been, for generations, a real and vital thing in a sense that we do not yet understand fully."(1)

(1) Crowther, Samuel, and Ruhl, Arthur: Track Athletics.

England introduced another form of distance running named Cross-Country. This form of exercise is practical in the fall of the year, and the distance to be run varies from two miles to six miles with few exceptions.

English schoolboys were beginning cross-country runs, as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century. This type of sport developed rapidly and is more popular in England than in any other country. Although the originator of the sport, France has produced men, of late, that have beaten the best that England, Scotland, or Ireland could produce. An international race of ten miles is held annually in England, and that is the distance of the English National Championship.

In England the main event on a track program is the mile run, and England has produced many good men in the past fifty years. Among the best men of the late nineteenth century were W. G. George, who, in 1886, ran the mile in 4 minutes, 12.7 seconds; J. Cummings who ran 4 minutes,

18.4 seconds in the English National Championship in 1884; and J. Binks, who ran 4 minutes 16.8 seconds in the English Championships in 1902.

In recent years America, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, and Sweden have produced a number of extraordinary world's record-breakers. Harrow, Cheltenham, and Durham Universities began holding regular meets, and from that time on one can trace the growth of Athletic sport in English schools which now has reached its climax in the public school meetings promoted annually by the London Athletic Club.

Finland was also advancing rapidly at this period. Many good men have been produced by Finland during the present century. Such men as Murmi, Larva, Lehtinen, and Holehmainen have made records that compare with those of today.

The names of the stars and their records are as follows:

A. P. Nurmi:

1. 1500 Meters -- 3:52.6
2. Mile -- 4:10.4
3. Two Mile -- 8:59.5
4. 5,000 Meters -14:28.2
5. 10,000 Meters -30:06.1
6. 20,000 Meters -1 hour 4 minutes 38.4 seconds.

B. H. E. Larva:

1. 1500 Meters -- 3:52
2. Mile -- 4:11

C. Lauri Lehtinen:

1. 1500 Meters -- 3:55.5
2. 3,000 Meters -- 8:28.6
3. 5,000 Meters -- 14:16.9

D. Hannes Kolehmainen:

1. 5,000 Meters -- 14:36.6
2. 10,000 Meters -- 31:20
3. Marathon -- 2 hours, 32 minutes, 35.8 seconds.

Many of these great records were made in the Olympic Games. In the 1912 Olympic Games, at Stockholm, Hannes Kolehmainen won the 5,000 meter and the 10,000 meter races from Jean Bouin of France, who was a world record holder in distance running. Another great feat was performed by Paavo Nurmi in the Olympic Games at Paris in 1924. In that memorable meet he won the 1,500 meters, the 5,000 meters, and the 10,000 meter events, establishing new world records in the first two events.

Finland has practically dominated the Olympic 5,000 meter run since it has been put on the program. Hannes Kolehmainen won in 1912; J. Guillemot of France, in 1920; Paavo Nurmi in 1924; Willie Ritola of Finland, in 1928; and Lauri Lehtinen of Finland, in 1932.

The Finlanders begin training during the winter on skis. They get their muscles into good condition for hard work in early spring. They have about the best group of distance runners in the world. Distance running, and javelin throwing are the two events they emphasize, and they have developed world record breakers in both.

Distance running became popular during the colonial period and after the Civil War. This was mostly due to immigration to America from the northern countries of Europe, especially England and Ireland. This has developed and progressed until it has undoubtedly attained an important position in the national life of America.

The first college meet was held in 1874, at Saratoga, in connection with the regatta. Much interest was aroused in the meet and a brisk rivalry was started. Many of the athletes competed in both the regatta and the track meet. There were five events on the program; the mile, the one-hundred-yard dash, the three-mile run, the one-hundred-twenty-yard hurdles, and the seven-mile walk. The most interest was in the distance runs, and the seven-mile walk. The results of the main events were: the mile was won by Copeland of Cornell in four minutes, fifty-eight seconds; the three mile was won by Downs of Princeton in eighteen minutes even; and the seven mile walk was won by Eustis of Wesleyan in seventy-one minutes.

The meet was a big success and the following year, 1875, prizes were awarded to the winners. New records were made in the mile run, when Barber of Amherst won the event in four-minutes, forty-four and seven tenths seconds, and in the three mile race when Morrell of Amherst negotiated the distance in seventeen minutes, seven and three tenths seconds.

Most of the famous Americans distance runners of the late nineteenth century, came to America from foreign

countries. One of the first was E. C. Carter, an Englishman, who achieved much on American tracks. He joined the New York Athletic Club, and in 1886 and 1887 he won the championships in both the one mile and five mile runs, breaking the longer run record by ten seconds. Two of his greatest achievements were when he ran five miles in twenty-five minutes, twenty-three and six tenths seconds, and when he ran nine and one-half miles in the remarkable time of fifty minutes, twenty-five and four tenths seconds.

Tommy Conneff, a native of Ireland, was the next famous American distance runner. He won the national five mile championship in 1888, 1889, 1890, and in 1891. In 1890 he performed the remarkable feat of winning the one mile, the five mile, and the ten mile championships. This performance has not been duplicated. Conneff was the best miler in America for many years, and in 1895, when in a trial race to see who would compete against the Oxford-Cambridge team, he ran the mile in 4 minutes, 15.6 seconds. This was a new record for the period, and Conneff, in the meet against the combined Oxford-Cambridge team, easily won the mile run in 4 minutes, 18 seconds, but did not try to break the record.

"Although our best long-distance has been done by athletes, and under club colors, the best men at the middle distances have been college bred."(2)

(2) Crowther, Samuel and Ruhl, Arthur: op. cit.

Other great American distance runners of the late nineteenth century were J. F. Cregan and George Orton. Both

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of these men were great runners, in their day, having established many enviable records. For three consecutive years Cregan won the Mott Haven one mile run in the respective times of four minutes, twenty-three and six tenths seconds; four minutes, twenty-five seconds; and four minutes, twenty-four seconds. Cregan was a Princeton man while Orton ran for Pennsylvania and various athletic clubs. He established the intercollegiate mile record of four minutes, twenty-three and four-tenths seconds. Orton was a typical mile runner, and won the amateur championships for the mile run in 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, and 1900. His best time for these races was four minutes, twenty-four and four tenths seconds, which he made in 1894, the year before he broke the intercollegiate record. The early American distance runners were well trained men who established records that remained for many years.

Many great distance runners have been produced in the United States in the past fifty years. World record breakers were brought forth in every event.

Although England and Finland held the spotlight for many years, the Americans are advancing rapidly, and in the past ten years have practically dominated the major events. The Olympic Games have been won more often by the American team than by any of her foreign competitors.

Of all the great runners ever produced by the United States the most capable men, I believe, are performing today. Many remarkable records have been made in the last five years,

the best of which are Bill Bonthron's great race, in the National Amateur Athletic Union meet in which he ran 1,500 meters in three minutes, forty-eight and eight tenths seconds, and Glenn Cunningham's performance in running the mile in four minutes, six and seven tenths seconds. The world's record for the mile, before Cunningham's appearance, was four minutes, ten seconds, and was held by Gene Venske. Cunningham consistently runs the mile under the old record, a feat which no other athlete has accomplished.

Great American performers of today are Glenn Cunningham, Bill Bonthron, and Gene Venske in the mile; Ray Sears, Bill Zepp, Johnny Follows, and Frank Crowley in the two mile; and Harold Manning, Thomas Ottey, and Louis Gregory in the longer distances.

All of the men mentioned above are great performers and are capable of competing favorably with the men that the foreign countries can produce.

The American distance records are:

1,500 Meters	- Bill Bonthron, Princeton	- 3:48.8
One Mile	- Glenn Cunningham, Kansas	- 4m.6.7s.
3,000 Meters	- J. W. Ray, New York City	- 8m.31.2s.
Two Mile	- Ray Sears, Butler	- 9m.7.4s.
5,000 Meters	- Ralph Hill, Oregon	- 14m.30s.
10,000 Meters	- J. W. Ray, New York City	- 31m.28.4s.

CHAPTER III

COMPARISON

A comparison of track and distance running in foreign countries, and in America can only be accomplished in a general manner.

During the nineteenth century England practically dominated the longer runs, but as the sport developed, Germany, Finland, and finally the United States began producing record breakers.

At the present time, I believe, Finland has the greatest group of distance runners ever assembled, and are better than the United States in all the distance runs except the mile. This event is one of the strongest in America with such men as Glenn Cunningham, Bill Bonthron, and Gene Venske. As a team the United States is far superior today.

It is not good for young and immature athletes to attempt the marathon distance; it has been proven that men of over thirty years of age are generally the most enduring for such a race.

Other distance runs, such as the mile and two mile events, are not too strenuous for young athletes providing they are in good physical condition. A strict training program is necessary for a successful runner; food, sleep, and practice must be followed more closely in track than in any other sport.

A distance runner, when first learning to run, should practice running on the balls of his feet, and then coming down lightly, if at all, on his heel. Do not run flat-

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Distance running is taking more of a foothold in the United States every year, and the training of the men must be serious.

Marathon racing is far more strenuous than any form of track or cross-country running, since it is all road-work. The runner must go through at least three months of rigorous training to become sound in wind and limb, so that he may gradually, by constant practice, bring his muscles and sinews to the highest pitch of endurance. In this form of running the pace and not the distance is hard on the individual. Tall, heavy runners do not fare well in this event, but small, light men with powerful legs and plenty of lung and heart room are most likely to develop into champions.

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A distance runner, when first learning to run, should practice running on the balls of his feet, and then coming down lightly, if at all, on his heel. Do not run flat-

footed. In the forward reach of the stride the foot is well out in front with the toe pointed straight ahead. As the foot touches the ground the knee is slightly bent, but gradually straightens. The body is inclined forward, arms swinging freely at the side with the same action used by the middle distance runner, but with less force.

A physical examination should be given to every athlete before, during, and at the end of each season. He should be taught to breath deeply through both nose and mouth.

The secret of long-distance running is relaxation, and attaining the maximum amount of speed by using the minimum amount of effort.

The most outstanding mile runner in the country today is undoubtedly Glenn Cunningham, of the University of Kansas. While training, Cunningham works hard, but never more than two or three times a week. The work is varied with three objectives in view - speed, knowledge of pace, and ease of effort and improvement of form or style.

A typical mid-season training week is as follows: Sunday, long walk. Monday, rope skipping, shadow boxing, bag punching and calisthenics. Tuesday, two 660's with fifteen minutes' rest between. Wednesday, judgment of pace work, about four 440's in sixty-two, sixty-three, sixty-one, and fifty-eight seconds respectively. At the conclusion of each lap he swings into a fast walk for 440 yards. Then, with one minute rest, swings into the next running 440 yards. This work is done in sweat suit and heavy basketball shoes.

Thursday, work is done for ease of form, work is light and occasionally wears spikes. Friday, rest. Saturday, races.

This program cannot be followed by all intended mile runners, but it is undoubtedly a good training program.

"If it is possible for a human being to run a mile in four minutes - I believe the man living today to accomplish that feat is Glenn Cunningham."(1)

(1) Hargiss, H. W.: Glenn Cunningham Trains.

Worlds distance running records are:

1,500 Meters - Bill Bonthron, United States
3m.48.8s.

One Mile - Glenn Cunningham, United States
4m.6.7s.

3,000 Meters - Henry Nielsen, Denmark
8m.18.4s.

Two Mile - Edvin Wide, Sweden
9m.1.4s.

5,000 Meters - Lauri Lehtinen, Finland
14m.17s.

10,000 Meters - Paavo Nurmi, Finland
30m.6.2s.

Marathon - Juan Zabala, Argentine
2hr.31m.36s.

OLYMPIC RECORDS - 1896 to 1935

Athens - 1896

1,500 Meters - Flack, England - 4m.11s.

Marathon - Loues, Greece - 2hr.55m.20s.

Paris - 1900

1,500 Meters - Bennett, England - 4m.6s.

Marathon - Teato, France - 2hrs. 59min.

St. Louis - 1904

1,500 Meters - Lightbody, United States - 4m.5.4s.

Marathon - Hicks, United States - 3hrs. 28m. 53s.

Athenian - Olympian Games Cycle - 1906

1,500 Meters - J. D. Lightbody, United States - 4m.12s.

Five Mile - H. C. Hawtry, England - 26m.26.5s.

Marathon - W. J. Sherring, Canada - 2hrs51m.23.6s.

London - 1908

1,500 Meters - M. W. Sheppard, United States - 4m.2.6s.

Five Mile - E. R. Voight, England - 25m.11.2s.

Marathon - J. J. Hayes, United States - 2hrs.55m.18.4s.

Stockholm - 1912

1,500 Meters - A. N. S. Jackson, England - 3m56.8s.

5,000 Meters - H. Kolehmainen, Finland - 14m.36.6s.

10,000 Meters - H. Kolehmainen, Finland - 31m.20s.

Marathon - K. K. M'Arthur, South Africa - 2hrs.36m.54s.

Antwerp - 1920

1,500 Meters - A. G. Hill, England - 4m.1.8s.

5,000 Meters - J. Guillemot, France - 14m.55.6s.

10,000 Meters - Paavo Nurmi, Finland - 27m.15s.

Marathon - H. Kolehmainen, Finland - 2hrs.32m.35.8s.

Paris - 1924

1,500 Meters - Paavo Nurmi, Finland - 3m.53.6s.

5,000 Meters - Paavo Nurmi, Finland - 14m.31.2s.

10,000 Meters - Paavo Nurmi, Finland - 32m.54.8s.

Marathon - A. O. Stenroos, Finland - 2hrs.41m.22.6s.

Amsterdam - 1928

1,500 Meters - H.E. Larva, Finland - 3m.53.2s.

5,000 Meters - Willie Ritola, Finland - 14m38s.

10,000 Meters - Paavo Nurmi, Finland - 30m.18.8s.

Marathon - El Ouafi, France - 2hrs.32m.57s.

Los Angeles - 1932

1,500 Meters - L. Becalia, Italy - 3m.51.2s.

5,000 Meters - Lauri Lehtinen, Finland - 14m.38s.

10,000 Meters - L. Kusocinski, Poland - 30m.11.4s.

Marathon - Juan Zabala, Argentina - 2hr.31m36s.

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