Festivus for the Rest of Us

Coaching the Average Distance Runner

(and maybe making them really good)
Social and Personal Differences

- Socio Economic and Cultural Background
- Running IQ
- Coaching background
Socio Economic

• Low income athlete may not have proper equipment - lack of shoes or not enough clothing
• May not ask for shoes if available or having run in shoes for a long period may not be used to the idea of rotating shoes
• May never have travelled to many competitions and have a very narrow world view of running
Running IQ and Coaching

• May not be aware of running terms like “tempo” or interval
• May not know how to work a watch or how to pace or do splits
• May be very low mileage
• Often very young training age – younger even then would be expected
Nutritional Deficiencies

- When recruiting have two factors checked
- Serum Ferritin
- Vitamin D
Physical Differences

- Running Mechanics
- VO2 & vVO2
- Economy
- Strength & Coordination
- Body composition
Body Composition

• This is the last thing you should be concerned with
• Actual measure of % BF is not really useful as performance predictor
• Will change to appropriate levels through training and healthy eating
VO2, vVO2 & Economy

• Actual VO2 is going to be lower ml/kg – this improved through a combination of better body composition and increased volume
• More importantly velocity @VO2 will be slower
• Economy will be lower so anaerobic threshold, aerobic threshold paces will be at a lower percentage of vVO2
Running Mechanics

- Teach a midfoot strike as early as possible
- First 3 opportunities to correct mechanics
- June: before summer base the drawback is you are not there to supervise so if the change can’t be made
- August: is the next best time but, you have to be prepared to sacrifice volume for about three weeks
- November works very well – they have made an adaptation to training in college, maybe more fit, and the volume is typically lower and post XC season pressure to race is down.
Teaching Mid Foot Strike

• Start with walking or marching on toes
• Support activity with weighted toe walks, walk up hill on toes
• Move to high knee drills – emphasize multi lateral movements
• Run mid foot at easy pace on track controlled - may have to limit running to 1 to a few laps before needing break
• Reduce volume expectations during this time
Jess Scordino First Indoor Meet
We weren’t able to fix this during the XC season
Jess Scordino

Contrast two athletes Kait and Jess. Both had = PR’s in high school. Kait, a junior here never made the adjustment. Jess made the change in 2 months.
Jess in her Senior year

Change was complete 19:33 to 16:56 & 4 time All American
Training Considerations

• Volume is going to need to stay low until lower leg muscles and tendons adapts to new technique
• May need to stay low for several months
• Need to really emphasize self care, rolling, stretching, ice and massage to avoid achilles issues
• Remember economy differences: AT may be at 88% of vVO2 for typical but it may be at 84-86% for less talented runners
• Huge Benefits from alternative and strength training
Strength and Coordination

- The “average” or undertrained athlete is going to have a greater positive response to strength training than the more elite runners.
- Female athletes may have an even better response.
- Strength training does not have to be complicated.
- Basic Movements will have a profound affect.
- Do not shy away from using machines if that is what you have.
Keep it Simple

• Keep training simple
• Work one system at a time
• Volume of weekly long run should probably be closer to 20% of total volume not 25
• More frequent and shorter runs
• Don’t underestimate the value of cross training in particular the elliptical
Keep to the fundamentals

• Easy runs 75% or slower if necessary
• 80% Aerobic Ceiling 30-60 minutes
• 88% Anaerobic Threshold 2.5-4 miles Interspersed with Lactate drainage work at 92% (2*2400, 3X2k)
• vVO2 97-101% 3-4 minutes long = rest 5*X800 up to 4X1500
• 110% Economy/Lactate Tolerance
• Hill repeats/Hilly long runs
Questions

• That are not about racewalking
• Or that time I swam into the wall here in the lazy river