

Coaching Youth Distance Runners

Running is a form of expression, of play. It's an art. It's music, passion, love, emotional, difficult, and rewarding.



Background

- B.S. Exercise Science
- M.S. Sport Psychology
- Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialist w/NSCA
- Taught at SCC, MHCC, Clark College 1997-2009
- Teach Health & Wellness at Clark College presently
- Collegiate Coach 1997-2009
- Youth Coach 2010-2015
- Owner/Coach Whisper Running 2015 to Present



Katie Miller, NWAC Heptathlon Record Holder (4988)

Where do you go when you run?

- Callen, Kenneth. "Mental & Emotional aspects of long-distance running." *Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine*, vol. 24, no 2, 1 Feb. 1983, pp. 133-151.
- Ordinary nonprofessional runners surveyed:
 - 96% report emotional & mental benefits
 - Think more clearly
 - Improved self-image
 - Improved outlook
 - Running promotes:
 - Creative thinking
 - Problem solving
 - Highly complicated theoretical & philosophical insights.
 - Artistic thinking
 - Antidepressant effect
 - Euphoria
 - Flow states



Why do runners run?

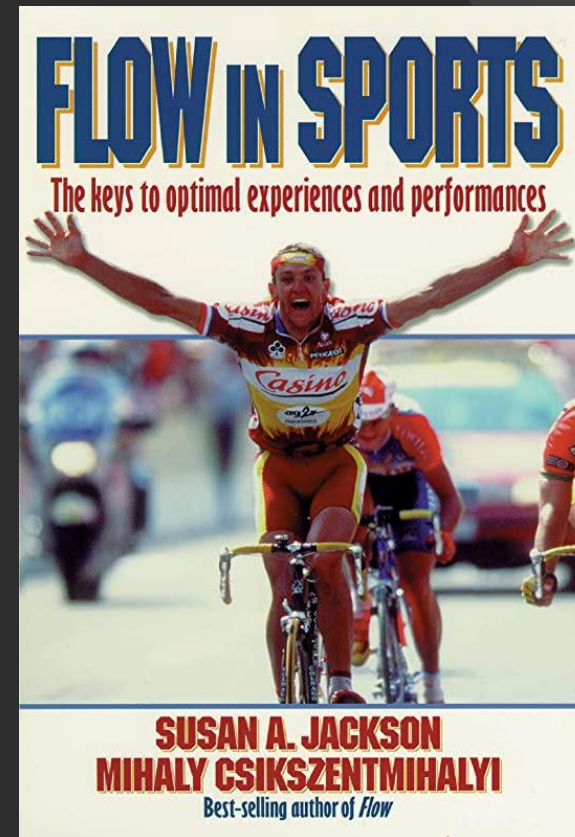
- *A study of 8-16yo's from Whisper*
 - Meet new people
 - Challenge myself
 - Fun
 - For soccer
 - To be a better athlete
 - I love it
 - I enjoy it
 - Get in shape
 - I like to gain drive and do things
 - It's simple
 - It's awesome
 - So that I'm not super hyperactive

- The community
- It feels good
- Makes me feel accomplished
- Wanting to be better
- Clear my mind
- College
- Friends
- Goals to achieve as a team
- The people
- Run w/friends
- Perfect attendance



What is Flow?

- “A state of consciousness where one becomes totally absorbed in what one is doing, to the exclusion of all other thoughts and emotions.”
 - Challenge-Skill balance
- Times in flow:
 - Recreation/Sport: Prolonged work, such as running, swimming, biking.
 - Other times of Flow: Gardening, reading, playing music, things w/a steady consistent rhythm.



This is the stuff I want my runners to experience.

Sport Psych Curriculum

- Goal setting
 - Runners' goals dictate the prescribed pace in workouts. 1.1-1.05 x GP
- Self-talk
 - How runners talk when learning
- Concentration/Focus
 - Activities & rhythm
- Anxiety Management
 - Challenge-Skill Balance, preparedness
- Energy Management
 - Consistency in training, rehearsal
- Visualization (Process)
 - Breathing Control – Nasal, belly breathing
 - Biofeedback – body scan
 - Progressive Relaxation Training – finding, relaxing the stress
 - Mantra, cue word
 - Imagery/Visualization

This is the stuff I want my runners to experience.

Coaches: Understand Intrinsic Motivation

- Keep in mind: Running is HARD and the positive feedback loop may take longer to produce and replicate than in other activities and recreations.
 - Pavlov's Dog
 - Basketball v Running feedback loop
 - Help the athletes find their intrinsic loop.



This is what works for us.

Education Included

- Seminars – Focus on the runner's well-being
 - i.e., sports medicine, nutrition, sleep, social media, college admissions, guest speakers

Cross-Training

- Yoga, mobility, agility, flexibility, resistance, aqua-jogging, barefoot running, etc.



Running Training (Load)

- Hippocratic Oath
 - Do no harm
- Training with a plan
 - Goals provide direction



- Volume
 - WU, 3-4k of work, CD
 - Intervals include prescribed recovery intervals (RI's)
- Running Training (Load)
 - Intentional work:
 - We meet 2-4 times each week (depending on time of year)
 - 1-2 interval-based workouts
 - Keeps the kids nearby, working together, towards a goal, and feeling challenged.
 - Floor to Ceiling training load
 - Cross-training promotes healing
 - One longer run or tempo

Running Training (Load)

Middle School (w/lots of kids)

- WU 1-4 laps, minimal walking
- Simple and few drills
- Volume 2-3k of interval work 1-2x/wk
- Vary training distances & races!
- Perform field events

Club (or MS w/few kids)

- WU 1-1.5 miles
- Simple to complex drills
- Volume 3-4k of interval work 1-2x/wk
- Vary training distances & races!
- Perform field events
- Perform longer runs OYO
 - Varies by grade level

Teach the controllables

- Breathing
- Posture & how it connects to the real world
- Perfect the WU/CD (*more to reduce pre-race anxiety than the execution of perfection*)
- Perfect the drills
 - Eyes closed drills – teaches proprioception
 - Easy to more technical/challenging
- Go barefoot – it's fun & prevents injury
- **Stability ball exercises, challenging the drills you already know, being creative*
- Pacing – w/ & w/o the watch. Every 100m during intervals, or each lap during tempos.

Keep the program fun!

- Creatively design your program and designed workouts. Include components in your program that provide a challenge and reward simultaneously, something they can walk away from, or at least a few practices each week, feel proud and excited about their accomplishment(s).
- Chatter is awesome!
- Kids want to be part of something – we are social beings.
- “Happy runners run fast!” – Owen Frasier, Clark College
- Team building activities
- Education
- Cross-Training



Finally...

- Always keep in mind that we are working beside future leaders, educators, politicians, grocery clerks, janitors, servers, pilots, engineers, ect. Treat them like adults, because one day they could be hiring you for a job!
- If the runners in my program are living an active lifestyle 10 years from now, then I have succeeded at my job as a coach.
- Your/My athletes are celebrities!
- Running is a party at the track!

