

LONG DISTANCE RUNNING

Nick and Tom and I are fortunate enough to have had some good boys. The reason we have had good boys is not because they receive good coaching, but because we have boys who want to run. That is the first requisite. You have got to find boys who really want to run, and like and love to run. When these boys are little fellows, oftentimes they get a foundation that should be credited to the parents and environment and will make some coach famous. Boys who get out and run, and run in their playing, until they are tired and then rest awhile, and then run and rest and run again are building an excellent background for running in high school and college. And we have the little boy who refuses to be licked, except temporarily. That competitive spirit continues as he grows older and reaches the high school and college age. In my work with boys, the most interesting thing to me has been the development of them. I find real satisfaction in guiding a boy who has an ambition to do something and really enjoys it. There is no satisfaction in coaching boys who want to compete when they are not ready for competition.

I like to think of the development of these boys on a sound basis so that the boy is acquiring a foundation of health, which involves strength, vitality and endurance, and which will enable him to go through competition on his natural vitality and have the power to recuperate quickly from his effort. Well prepared contestants often feel better in the second race than they do in the first, and after they have run two races they are not worn out. The results of my experience convince me that it is an entirely individual problem. I try to learn as much as I can about the boy, his background and home life and opportunity for play. It helps to learn what his hobbies are and why he came to college. We must safely guide him.

Work should be given in easy stages. Alternate running and walking is a sound basis to build up cross-county running. It involves every kind of form used in running and I have found it more successful in developing strength, vitality and endurance than to just keep pouring the work to the boy on the track. He has more interest in his work. Up and down hill work is very important as a background for distance running. You cannot overlook this monotony that comes from sustained effort. If you have a scenic course, that breaks the monotony, it will encourage greater effort. For instance, Tom Jones has a very fine cross-county course around the shores of a lake. It is not monotonous. Nick's course is not so good in that respect as Tom's course. Our course is up and down hill. We change courses. We have three or four that we run so that I do not let a boy feel that there is the grind of that same old course day after day and I find that he has more interest in his work. This preliminary work of building up by means of cross-county goes through the walking and running stages, and you reduce the walking and increase the running.

You have your upgrade work which of course is slow but the principle I use on uphill work is making the boy realize that a hill or an upgrade is a challenge to him. When he comes to an upgrade, instead of beginning to give up on it and slowing down, we have the boy accept the hill as a challenge, just like the hill were another important competitor, and a serious one. He must pay attention to his form in running uphill and when he reaches the top of the hill or the grade or whatever it happens to be in degree he does not slow up. He comes to the level and his form changes, then he tries to go out and run a good pace. Eventually he will