

MARATHON AND DISTANCE RUNNING

Top coach Barry Magee's training for Legend.doc

Well, The Legend half and full have come and gone and what a great day it was . The weather man was kind, the stewarding was superb and the runners did their stuff .

Congratulations to all who competed -- who conquered --who finished.

Special congrats to my team who did me proud on the day . I think Arthur would be pleased . Well done to Sam Wreford, who won the Legend full in race record time and, in my opinion, with one of the best marathon performances I have seen in recent years .

Debbie Fillery and Leslie Turner-Hall took 2nd & 3rd places in the full marathon and, in Arthur's half, Ewa Wysteppek, Libby --, Maria Kroonenberg and Kristen Baker were 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 6th .

Congrats also to Jono Jackson, who won the NZ M19 road title in Dunedin recently. And in the NZ road relays on the Takahe-Akaroa course, our two ACA junior teams cleaned up. Seven of the 12 runners were from my stable. The boys won by two minutes in the M19 and broke the race record by one minute and the girls won the W19 won by eight minutes – and broke the race record by eight minutes.

The following weekend, Jono Jackson won the junior men's section of the Sir Barry Curtis 10k road race in Auckland and Breanne Potter won the junior women's section.

All of these results show the excellence of the Lydiard Way.

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Now, down to business:

Training and the Lydiard secrets of success .

For many, the challenge of full or half marathons is a huge thing in their life --and indeed it is . Perhaps nothing else quite gets runners so excited as the thought of doing marathons and accomplishing them. Perhaps the same goes for some with the half ---but that event was not around much in our day and I didn't run my first one until I was 48 years old. It was the Pukekohe 1/2 and I won the thing in about 71.46, surprising a few of the younger entries and adding another feather to Arthur Lydiard's cap by proving yet again that, despite what many critics might say, his system does not wear you out.

So – let's look at what you need to conquer half and full marathons and, if possible, finish with dignity . Of all normal running events, the one you cannot get away with not doing the work is the marathon. It takes NO prisoners. Either you kill it or it will kill you!

Most runners can do 20-30k without too many problems --so it all boils down to what we need to do that extra 12k .

In my opinion, the FIRST SECRET of the Lydiard Way is CONDITIONING.. How did Arthur use conditioning to infuse into his boys the training ingredients that brought so much success to him, to us and to NZ?.

He always required 10 weeks for marathoners -- 8 weeks for lesser distances -- of true aerobic conditioning, a period in which, if possible, NO anaerobic work went in because it would break down and spoil the conditioning process.

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He also said that, if you conditioned properly, you were achieving a level of fitness that took you to 80% of your goal of being 100% on the day of your big race. It was only the first level of four his runners had to move through to reach that peak but it was vital, the key that unlocked the whole system.

Conditioning needs to be different for men and women because they are structured differently .

Men are 13% fat and 23% muscle and women the opposite, with 23% fat and 13% muscle.

It took me years to dig all this info out of Arthur about how and why it all works for both sexes --- but, after much trial and error, I found that it worked exactly as he said it would.

When I talk to runners who have been training for years and ask them how many Lydiard buildups they have done, they ask me for the specifics of it and when I explain their response is, "If you put it that way, I have never done one". Oh dear.

Think about this: The results of Snell, Halberg, Davies, Julian, Baillie, Taylor, Moller, Audain, Thompson and Co. all boil down to correct conditioning .

Let's take one example: Peter Snell. Seven weeks before his 3 world records in 1961, he ran the Owairaka Marathon in 2.41. Not bad for an 800mt runner. I watched the race and even saw him walking at about the 24-25 mile mark . This marathon was the finish of his conditioning for the summer track period.. I think he got it pretty right .

This is the conditioning schedule that WE did.

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MEN

MON: A -- 1hr steady - about 80% aerobic

TUE: A/W – 1hr 30min at easy pace - 60-70%

WED: B -- 1hr 15min with light fartlek - over hilly course

THU: A/W – 2hrs --easy pace - 60-70%

FRI: A -- 1hr steady - 80-90%

SAT: A/W - 1hr 30min easy - 60-70%

SUN: A/W -- 2hrs 30min/3.00hrs easy - 60-70%

That is 10 -11 hours a week, a lot different from Nurmi and Zatopek, who trained 6 hours a day for their success. Lydiard men broke all their records on fewer hours but with a better structured balance of efforts.

WOMEN

MON: A -- 1hr steady tempo-- 80% aerobic

TUE: B -- 45/60mins with light fartlek

WED: A/W -- 1hr 30mins easy --60-70%

THU: A -- 1hr steady tempo 80%

FRI: B - 45-60mins with light fartlek

SAT: A/W – 1hr easy -- 60-70%

SUN: A/W -- 2/2hrs 30min easy 60-70%

Key:

A = Steady tempo aerobic 80-90%

A/W = Easy aerobic 60-70%

B = Light fartlek speed play over varying distances --up and down hills ok. 20sec to 3min periods.

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SO REMEMBER -- Conditioning is the most important part of all the four Lydiard phases in running to the top. Many runners do PBs just off the build-up alone. It transforms runners.

I remember well Lydiard's comments to reporters after Snell's double Olympic Golds in 1964: " I did not make Snell the fastest man in the world over middle distances . I made him the strongest with fine endurance training that allowed him to use his natural speed at the finish of his races."

Get the idea --- The Lydiard type speed was in Arthur's runners because they all had the endurance factor caused mainly by great conditioning .

SO -- WHY NOT GIVE IT A GO AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO .

Kindest regards ,

Barry Magee,