

Training the 800m runner

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Context:

Assumption High School is an all-girls Catholic school in the suburbs of Louisville

Typical students are upper-middle class and above

Most of our athletes have access to crosstraining equipment (elliptical, stationary bike)

Lots of variation with training/history and racing background

We use the following progression with the majority of our athletes

Freshmen: 800, 1600 if able

Sophomores: 800, 1600, targeted 3200 if able

Juniors: 800, 1600, targeted 3200

Seniors: 800, 1600, targeted 3200

All of our Varsity athletes run at least a few 400s/4 x 400s, and 200s

We impose volume limits on training – typically based on grade level

How the 800 fits within the goals of our program:

(1) We use the 800 as a teaching tool, a condensed version of every race

First 1/4: get out

Second 1/4: settle in

Third 1/4: big decisions (don't fall asleep)

Last 1/4: close

(2) We seek to develop racing range with as many of our Varsity athletes as possible, and seek not to peg athletes into longer races

- Typical race progression over time is shorter to longer
- Easier to add strength/endurance to speed than speed to strength/endurance

Types of runners we get in the 800:

- Long Sprinters who step up (400/800)
- ✓ Distance runners who step down (800/1600/3200)

Other points of emphasis:

- Recognize that the typical race involves positive splits
- Understand how to compete with people, not focusing on time/splits
- Ability to respond/adapt quickly is critical in the 800

Training format

A standard periodization approach is as follows:

General Preparation phase – introduction of aerobic training

Specific Preparation phase – introduction of anaerobic work

Pre-Competition phase – continued application of all elements of training

Competition phase – transition to higher quality workouts with longer rest

Some terminology:

Macrocycle: season-long training plan

e.g. Cross Country season training plan

Mesocycle: training block with a specific developmental goal

e.g. General Prep

Microcycle: period of training that contains the elements you use to achieve a developmental goal (e.g. if the developmental goal is developing anaerobic ability, the microcycle may include anaerobic workouts at various paces, recovery runs, sprint work). These elements are then effectively repeated in a way that helps us achieve the developmental goal of a particular phase.

Aerobic training

Training:	Pace	Workout Distance
Recovery run	60-65% of VO2 max pace	30-50 min
Long runs	70% of VO2 max pace	50 min - 2 hrs
Tempo runs	80-88% of VO2 max pace	20-30 min
VO2 max runs	97-101% of VO2 max pace	600-3200m

Speed training

Training:	Pace	Workout Distance
Max Speed	~114% of 400m race pace	30-70m (6-10 sec)
Speed Endurance	~105% of 400m race pace	60-150m (10-25 sec)
Special Endurance 1	95-100% of 400m race pace	150-300m (25-50 sec)
Special Endurance 2	95-100% of 800m race pace	300-600m (45 sec - 2 min)

Energy system contributions by race distance

Race distance	% VO2 max	% Aerobic	% Anaerobic
400m	130-140%	40-45	55-60
800m	115-130%	60-70	30-40
1500m	105-115%	80-85	15-20
3000m	~100%	85-90	10-15
5000m	~97%	90-95	5-19

General Prep phase

6-7 week training period, consists of 6-7 x 7 day microcycles

Primary emphasis: aerobic development

Secondary emphasis: prepare for transition to anaerobic work

Training modalities: hills, tempo runs, VO2 max pace workouts, max speed

Specific Prep phase

6-7 week training period, consists of 4 x 12 day microcycles

Primary emphasis: anaerobic development

Secondary emphasis: introduction of racing and developing long sprinting ability

Training modalities:

- Continue with: hills, VO2 max pace workouts, max speed
 - De-emphasize tempo-paced running
- New stuff: Special Endurance 2, Special Endurance 1, Speed Endurance
 - Interval training w/ incomplete rest
 - SE-1 & Speed Endurance: run as both interval training and fast reps
- Races: indoor meets

Pre-Competition phase

5 week training period, consists of 3 x 12 day microcycles

Primary emphasis: balancing the various facets of training

Secondary emphasis: feeling confident at fast reps, developing a competitive race mentality

Training modalities:

- Continue with: VO2 max pace workouts, max speed, SE-1, SE-2, Speed Endurance
 - Eliminate hills, low emphasis on tempo-paced running
 - Interval training w/ incomplete rest
 - SE-1 & Speed Endurance: run as both interval training and fast reps
- Races: increasingly important outdoor meets (e.g. Eastern Relays, Sundown)

Competition phase

3 week training period, consists of 2 x 12 day microcycles

Primary emphasis: maintaining quality with more complete recovery

Secondary emphasis: preparation for big races

Training modalities:

- Continue with: VO2 max pace workouts, max speed, SE-1, SE-2, Speed Endurance
 - Eliminate tempo-paced running
 - Interval training emphasis shifts to faster pace w/ more complete rest
- Races: most important outdoor meets (e.g. Regional, State)

Training concerns

Overall training plans are determined by where your 800m athletes are coming from, and in understanding their various strengths and weaknesses. Training age may also determine volume of the workout.

Long sprinters

Training expectations: lower distance expectation
split time with the sprinters and distance runners

Race distances: 200, 400, 800

Concerns: problems with speed reserve on the high end (vVO2 max)
long sprinters will struggle more with SE-2, VO2 max
** consider shorter reps w/ similar volume (see below)

Example 1: 8 x 400m workout at 95% of 800m race pace (200m jog rest)

Adapted versions:

- 2 x 4 x 400 workout @ same pace, 200m jog between reps, 400m jog between sets
- 16 x 200m workout @ same pace, 100m jog between reps
- 2 x 8 x 200m workout @ same pace, 100m jog between reps, 400m jog between sets

Example 2: 6 x 800m workout at VO2 max pace (3 min rest)

Adapted versions:

- 2 x 3 x 800 workout @ same pace, 3 min rest between reps, 6 min rest between sets
- 12 x 400m workout @ same pace, 90 sec rest between reps

Middle distance runners

Training expectations: higher distance expectation
General Prep w/ distance runners
start separating into their own group in Specific Prep

Race distances: 800, 1600 (occasional 4 x 400, possible 3200)

Concerns: problems with speed reserve on the low end (slow max speed)
understanding the importance of fast reps
** timing all fast reps and reporting results

Speed Training

Some workout examples from our practices

Speed Training	Examples	Recovery
Speed*		
Fast 40s	2 x 40m @ 100%	slow walk back to start
60m sprints	2 x 60m @ 95-100%	slow walk back to start
Speed Endurance		
90m sprints	1 x 90m @ 95-100%	8-10 minutes
Fast 150s	2 x 150m @ 100%	10-12 minutes
150m reps	6 x 150m @ 95%	3-4 minutes
Special Endurance I		
Fast 200s	2 x 200m @ 100%	12-15 minutes
300m reps	5-6 x 300m @ 90-95%	3-4 minutes
Fast 300s	1-3 x 300m @ 100%	12-15 minutes
Split 400s (200/200)	1-2 split 400s @ 100%	4 minutes/10 minutes
Special Endurance II		
Pairs of 300s	2-3 x 2 x 300 @ goal 800 pace	1 minute/10-15 minutes
400m reps	8 x 400 @ 95% of 800m pace	2-3 minutes

* *not a stand-alone workout*

Race specific training

Training designed to prepare athletes for the specific demands of an important race

Example 1: 3-4 x 2 x 300

This workout is run as pairs of 300s, designed to replicate the demands of a typical 800m race. The basic race format is 1 min rest between reps, with fuller recovery between sets (6-10 min)

Variations on this workout:

300 #1: faster than race pace

300 #2: hang on for dear life

300 #1: average race pace

300 #2: below race pace

Example 2: 2-3 x 300-300-200

This workout is run as race-pace 300s, followed by a finishing 200 at below race pace

The basic race format is 90 sec rest between reps, with fuller recovery between sets (6-10 min)

Example 3: 200m buildups

This workout is broken down into segments: first 50m, second 50m, final 100m

Group runners as slower runners in front of faster runners

Runners run increasingly faster over each segment and use the segments to replicate positioning in the final 200m of a race