

## ALTERNATIVE WORKOUTS

**Marker Workout** – Place eight cones at various places on the school grounds with a different color magic marker under each cone. Each runner gets an index card with the eight colors on it in random order. They must look under the cones until they find their first color, then make a mark through the color on their card. Then they must return to a coach to have them initial the mark before they can go and do the same with their second color. When they have found all eight colors in order, they have the coach write their time on the card. Awards are given to the top fr, soph, jr, sr, and junior high boy and girl. Also the team is divided into six even teams, ability wise, and awards are given out to the top teams. They do not know who is on their team until the awards so they must keep working until they are done. Seniors have a nacho bar after the workout for everyone. Girls make it and boys clean up.

**Follow The Arrow** – Divide the team into ability groups. Have the top group be chased by the 2<sup>nd</sup> group and the 3<sup>rd</sup> group be chased by the 4<sup>th</sup> group. The first groups to go, get a 5 minute head start into town. They have colored sidewalk chalk and at the end of each block they draw an arrow to indicate if they went straight, turned left, or turned right. They run through town for about 15-20 minutes looking for a place to hide. When they come to the block where they are going to hide, they put a circle around that arrow and the chasing team then knows that they are hiding somewhere in that block. There are certain rules such as they can't hide in someone's house or closed shed. After the chasing team finds the team that went first, then the chasing team takes off from that place and the new chasing team gives them a 5 minute head start and then goes after them. Each team has a different colored piece of chalk. If one team can't find the team that is hidden in a reasonable amount of time then the hiding team has to come out so the workout can go on.

**Mental Workout** – The runners do an exercise such as jumping jacks for 30 seconds, then they sprint to the baseball fence which is 90 yards away and sprint back and then they do a wheelbarrow up and down a hill with a partner. We do exercises such as mountain climber, clap under your hand, twisters, windmills, pushups, sit ups, planks, high knee run in place, butt kicks in place, and we have one 30 second period where they just stand there while I talk. When we go through a whole set of this I tell them they are half done and they get to jog around the baseball field for a recovery. Then we start all over again for one or two more exercises and then I tell them they are done. The veterans know that we are really almost done when we go for our jog, but the first year kids are in a panic as they take their recovery jog, wondering how they are going to make it through another set. When we are done we talk about what went through their head as they did their jog and how they do that in races and how counterproductive it is. This is a VERY intense workout and I am on them like a drill sergeant challenging their effort and their teamwork and their mindset and commitment. It gets mentioned in many end of the season questionnaires as the most memorable workout.

**Unknown Fartlek** – Divide the team into ability groups. Have each group run together on the course. Secretly give each runner the name of the person whose turn they will follow, so there

is an order, but no one knows it. They begin running the course and the person who is first in the order picks up the pace for as fast and as far as they want to go and everyone in the group must stay with them. When that person is done, the person that goes next takes off whenever they want to for as long as they want to. They continue through the order until everyone has had a chance to lead. There is a great deal of interesting challenging going on through this workout.

**Tour De Darlington** – During the second week of practice, before school has begun, everyone brings a functioning bike to practice and we go for a long bike ride. We go out and back and when we get to the turnaround point everyone gets off the bike and goes for a short run to get the kinks out. It is a nice break after a week and a half of running at the beginning of the season. It also is a little crazy with 45 bikes going down the road together.

**Horny workout** – An interval workout on a big loop on our course where the guys run 3 minutes on and 2.5 minutes off and the girls run 2.5 minutes on and 3 minutes off alternating so that they guys are on when the girls are off and the girls are on when the guys are off. I use a blow horn to signal the changes – thus the evolution of the “Horny” workout, but the jokes that we come up with every year makes for an interesting night.

**Camera Workout** – Divide the team into ability groups with each group having a portable camera or cell phone. Give each group an index card with a list of things to take a picture of – such as a married couple, a bank teller, a frozen chicken, a furniture salesman, a police officer, a blue car, a certain street sign, a person getting their hair done, a dog, a grandmother etc, etc. Everyone in the group must be in the picture except for the person taking the picture. I make the faster runners go to places farther away from main street so that all of the groups finish at the court house steps at about the same time. There have been some VERY fun pictures taken over the years which we use in our end of the season highlight DVD. This also gets the community members involved as the runners come into their place of business for a picture. The people in town look forward to this and enjoy it.

**Pursuit** – This workout is done on the baseball field. Each class of runners takes a turn tagging the rest of the team and getting them out. We start with the freshmen and end with the seniors. The class that is tagging meets on the pitcher’s mound and everyone else on the team is roaming around on the outfield. They can go down the base paths and around behind the plate, but they cannot go in the infield and must stay within the “in play” boundaries of the field. We time how long it takes each class to tag all of the team out so this becomes a prideful competition. It is the most speed work they will ever do without realizing they are doing it.

**Water fight** – On a night at the beginning of the season, when it’s too hot to get any kind of workout in, we run a mile and a half to our county fairgrounds and have a wild water fight and then run back. I provide the ice cream buckets, 5 gallon buckets, and cups and they go at it. They chase down the person who has been bugging them, or who they have a crush on, or who their coach and the water flies. They have a blast and get some great running done in the process.