

TRAINING CYCLES FOR HIGH SCHOOL MIDDLE TO LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS

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Nebraska Coaches Association

Winter Track & Field Clinic

Background

- Coached in high school by Ed Gaffigan
 - 2-time Illinois High School Coach of the Year
 - 3 individual State Track & Field Championships
 - 1 individual Cross Country State Championship
 - 2 team Cross Country State Championships
- Coached in college and professionally by Jay Dirksen
 - 28 years at University of Nebraska
 - 39 Track & Field All-Americans
 - 14 Cross-Country All-Americans
 - 45 Track and Field Conference Champions
 - 3 NCAA Champions
- Nebraska Cross-Country/Track & Field Alum
- 2004 All-American, 3000m Steeplechase
- 2004 U.S. Olympic Trials Champion
- Former American Record Holder, 2000m & 3000m steeplechase

A Year of Training Phases

- **SUMMER: Base Training Phase I**
 - Approximately 12 weeks
 - Focus on Endurance, volume, workouts that are “portable”
- **FALL: Cross Country Competition Phase**
 - Approximately 8 weeks
 - Focus on Speed Endurance
- **WINTER: Base Training Phase II**
 - Approximately 12 weeks
 - Focus on Endurance, volume, workouts that are “portable”
- **WINTER/SPRING: Pre-Competition Phase**
 - Approximately 9 weeks
 - Focus on Speed Endurance
- **SPRING: Track & Field Competition Phase**
 - Approximately 8 weeks
 - Focus on Speed Endurance and Speed

Determining Pace for each Athlete

1 mile time trial + 33 sec = **5K PACE**

5K time trial pace/mile - 33 sec = **MILE PACE**

5K PACE + 30-40 sec = **TEMPO RUN PACE**

Basic Philosophy

- Workouts and mileage should always be tailored to the athlete's experience, durability and commitment
- A week typically consists of:
 - 2 hard workouts (counting a competition as a hard workout)
 - 2 easy/recovery days + core
 - 1 medium day
 - 1 long run day
 - 1 day off or very easy recovery day
- Always include stretching after each run
- Core and running drills are important throughout the year
- Athletes should be encouraged to “listen to their body” and let the coach know if more recovery is needed

Summer Base Training (June – Aug)

- Start at a low level of mileage and work up no more than 10% a week to 40-60 miles, depending on the athlete's **experience**, **durability** and **commitment**.
- Have a “down week” every 4th week, with final down week coming before official practice starts
- Sample mileage starting at 20, 25 or 30 miles (12 weeks):
 - **20** - 22 - 24 - **20** - 26 - 29 - 32 - **20** - 35 - 39 - **43** - **20**
 - **25** - 28 - 31 - **25** - 34 - 37 - 41 - **25** - 45 - 50 - **55** - **25**
 - **30** - 33 - 34 - **30** - 37 - 41 - 45 - **30** - 50 - 55 - **61** - **30**

Base Training: Sample Week

Monday:

Core + 3 mile easy run + a few strides during or after

Tuesday:

1 mi warmup jog (or 10 minutes)

25 minutes of running uphill hard and jogging down

1 mi cooldown jog (or 10 minutes)

Mileage: ~ 5 miles

Wednesday:

6 mile run “as you feel” – medium distance day

Thursday:

Core + 3 mile easy run + a few strides during or after

Friday:

1 mi warmup jog (or 10 minutes)

3 mile tempo run at Tempo Pace

OR 20 minutes at “tempo run effort”

1 mi cooldown jog (or 10 minutes)

Mileage: ~ 5 miles

Saturday/Sunday:

Long Run - 8 miles (20%) and Rest Day

Total Mileage: **30**

Base Training Notes:

- When increasing mileage each week, alternate between increasing the mileage on easy days/long run day with increasing the mileage on workout days
- High mileage runners can do 2-mile warm up and cool down jogs and/or 3 mile easy morning jogs
- Mix up the Tuesday/Friday workouts:
 - Progression runs (get faster each mile or half mile)
 - Fartleks: rest is always shorter than hard rep
 - Alternate 3 min hard/2 min easy for 25-35 minutes
 - DOWN LADDER: 6 min-5 min-4 min-3 min-2 min-1 min hard with 1 min easy between
 - UP/DOWN LADDER: 1 min-2 min-3 min-4 min-4 min-3 min-2 min-1 min w/ 1 min easy between

Cross Country Competition (Aug-Oct)

- Approximately 8 weeks
- Major Emphasis: Speed-Endurance, Flexibility, Recovery
- Secondary Emphasis: Endurance, Core
- Come down from height of summer weekly mileage about 20%.
- Each week, if there is a meet, that counts as one of two “hard days” for the week. So each week will include a hard workout, a meet, a long run, 3 easy/medium days and a day off

Cross Country: Sample Week

Monday:

Long Run (especially if you had a meet Saturday)

Tuesday: Hard workout focusing on speed endurance, for example:

3-5 x 1000m w/ 3 min rest on grass (preferably hilly)

OR

3-4 x 1 mile repeats w/ 3 min rest on grass (preferably hilly)

OR

4-6 x 800m w/ 3 min rest on grass

Wednesday: 5-6 miles as you feel – medium distance day

Thursday: Core, drills/strides, 4 mi easy

Friday: Pre-race day (easy jog, a few strides)

Saturday: Cross Country Meet!

Sunday: Rest Day or easy 20 min jog

Cross Country: Sample Week

Monday: Pre-race day (easy jog, a few strides)

Tuesday: Cross Country Meet!

Wednesday: 5-6 miles as you feel – medium distance day

Thursday: Core, drills/strides, 4 mi easy

Friday: Hard workout focusing on speed endurance, for example:

3-5 x 1000m w/ 3 min rest on grass (preferably hilly)

OR

3-4 x 1 mile repeats w/ 3 min rest on grass (preferably hilly)

OR

4-6 x 800m w/ 3 min rest on grass

Saturday/Sunday: Long Run and Rest Day

Cross Country: October

As you move into October, cut down the mileage another 20% and decrease it a bit each week until State. The long run can start decreasing by a mile each week.

The workouts can also become shorter and faster, with the rest becoming longer, such as:

3-5 x 800m w/ 4 min rest

3 x 1 mile w/ 4 min rest

3-4 x 1000m w/ 4 min rest

8-12 x 400m w/ 2 min rest

These can all be on grass but start to avoid hills when possible to save the legs

Cross Country: Districts/State

The week of Districts and State, the hard workout on Tuesday should contain no more than 2 miles worth of hard reps and should include plenty of rest and *speed at the end*, such as:

- 8 x 400m w/ 2 min rest – last one fast
- 1 mile, 4 min rest
 - 800m, 2 min rest
 - 400m, 1 min rest
 - 200m fast
- 3 x 1000m w/ 4 min rest, finish with 2 fast 100m strides

Winter Base Training (Nov – Jan)

(Please see Summer Base Training)

Pre-Competition Phase (Feb-Mar)

- Approximately 8 weeks
- Major Emphasis: Speed-Endurance, Core Development, Flexibility
- Secondary Emphasis: Endurance
- Weekly Mileage: Come down 15% from height of base training.
- Each week, 1 hard workout is on the track, 1 is a tempo run on the roads/trail

Pre-Competition: Sample Week

Monday: Core, Drills, 3-5 miles easy recovery

Tuesday:

1 mile warmup jog

1600m at 5K pace (could skip this repeat for some runners) - jog 800m

1200m at 2 sec/400 faster - jog 600m

800m at 2 sec/400 faster – jog 400m

400m at 2 sec/400 faster (getting moving now!) - 200m jog

200m all out – FINISH FAST

1 mile cooldown

(5-6 miles)

Wednesday: 4-6 miles as you feel (medium distance day)

Thursday: Core, Drills, 3-5 recovery

Friday: 1 mi warmup

2-4 miles at Tempo Pace

1 mi cooldown

(4-6 miles)

Saturday/Sunday: Long Run ~ 20% of weekly total (6-10 miles) / Rest Day

Pre-Competition: More Workouts

More ideas for Tuesday Track Workouts:

- **3-5 x 800m** at 5K pace with 200m jog rest between; then *finish fast* with 2 x 200m “all out” with 200m jog rest
- **Mile repeats:** 2-4 x 1 mile at 5K pace + 10-15 sec/mile w/ 400 jog rest between
- **3-5 x 1000m** at 5K pace with 200m walk rest
- **Up/Down Ladder:**
 - 200m – 400m – 800m – 1000m – 800m – 400m – 200m
 - Rest between: jog half of what you just ran
 - Pacing: 1000m should be mile pace + 10 sec

Track & Field Competition (Apr-May)

- Approximately 8 weeks
- Major Emphasis: Speed, Speed-Endurance, Flexibility, Recovery
- Secondary Emphasis: Endurance, Core
- Come down from pre-competition phase mileage ~15%.
- Each week, if there is a meet, that counts as one of two “hard days” for the week. So each week will include a hard workout, a meet, a long run, 3 easy/medium days and a day off (just like cross country). If there are 2 meets – those are the hard workouts for the week.

Track & Field: Sample Week

Monday: Long Run (20% of weekly mileage)

Tuesday: Hard track workout focusing on speed endurance, for example:

2-3 sets of 4x400m at mile pace – 2 sec (if mile pace is 5:00 – 73 seconds)

- 2 min rest between 400's, 400m walk between sets

8-12 x 400m at mile pace, 1 min rest (no sets, just straight through)

2-3 sets of 400m-600m-400m-200m

- Paces: mile pace – 2 sec; mi pace; mi pace – 2 sec, “all out”

- Rest: 2 min rest between 4-6-4-2, 400m walk rest between sets

1200m-800m-600m-400m-200m-100m

- Paces: Start a little faster than 5K pace, get faster each one, all out at end

- Rest: jog half the distance between

3 x 1000m or 800m w/ 3 min rest, finish with 3 x 100m all out with 30 sec rest

Wednesday: 5-6 miles as you feel – medium distance day

Thursday: Core, drills/strides, 4 mi easy

Friday: Pre-race day (easy jog, a few strides)

Saturday/Sunday: Track Meet/Rest Day

Track & Field: May

As you move into May, cut down the mileage another 15% and decrease it a bit each week until State. The long run can start decreasing by a mile each week.

The workouts can also become shorter and faster, with the rest becoming longer, such as:

2 sets of 4x400m

- Pace: Start at mile pace – 2 sec, get faster each set
- Rest : 3 min rest between 400's, 400m walk between sets

2 sets of 400-600-400-200

- Pace: mi pace - 3 sec; faster than mi pace; mi pace - 3 sec, all out
- Rest: 3 min rest between, 400m walk rest between sets

800-600-400-200-100

- Pace: Start at little slower than mile pace, get faster
- Rest: jog half the distance you just ran

Track & Field: Districts/State

The week of Districts and State, the hard workout on Tuesday should contain no more than 2 miles worth of hard reps and should include plenty of rest and *speed at the end*, such as:

5-6 x 400m “cutdowns”

- Start at mile pace, get at least 1 sec faster per 400m (never same or slower) until “all out” for final one
- 200m walk rest between

6-8 x 200m with 200m walk rest - under 800m pace.

QUESTIONS:

Ask now or feel free to contact me at
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