TRAINING CYCLES FOR HIGH SCHOOL MIDDLE TO LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS

Ann Gaffigan
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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):
  • 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*
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
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 agaffigan@gazelleincorporated.com