

RUNNING FAST AND INJURY FREE



by GORDON PIRIE (Edited by JOHN S GILBODY)

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<http://www.gordonpirie.com>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORDS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREFACES

GORDON PIRIE'S LAWS OF RUNNING

CHAPTER ONE - Introduction

CHAPTER TWO - Why Athletes Fail

CHAPTER THREE - Injuries, Technique and Shoes

CHAPTER FOUR - Training

CHAPTER FIVE - Weight Training

CHAPTER SIX - Diet and Vitamins

REFERENCES

FOREWORD

LETTER PUBLISHED IN *THE TIMES* (THURSDAY MARCH 5, 1992):

PIRIE: FORGOTTEN MAN OF ATHLETICS

Sir, Under the heading "Athletics honours Pirie" (February 26) you report the tributes paid to the late Gordon Pirie at the memorial service in St Bride's Church, Fleet Street. As well as his contemporaries, the athletics establishment, both past and present, and the press were well represented.

It is regrettable that this acclaim and recognition comes now, after he has gone, and was not expressed when he was alive. The country he served so well on the world's running tracks thought him unworthy of an honour, while the establishment found no place for his profound knowledge of the sport and his boundless enthusiasm. It must baffle his many admirers world-wide that Britain offered him no official coaching post.

The argument was put forward in your sports letters (December 26) that the regular award of honours for sporting achievements did not begin until the Sixties, after Pirie's time. This is not correct.

In the Queen's Birthday Honours list of June 1955, Sir Roger Bannister, a contemporary of Pirie, was appointed CBE for his services to amateur athletics, clearly for achieving the first sub-four-minute mile the preceding year. In the same list, George Headley, the West Indian cricketer, was created MBE.

Picking at random, one finds in the New Year's Honours of 1958 a CBE for Dennis Compton (services to sport), a similar honour for Dai Rees (golf) and the MBE for the boxer Hogan "Kid" Bassey (for his services to sport in Eastern Nigeria).

Rather ironically, in the same year, Jack Crump, the secretary of the British Amateur Athletics Board, with whom Pirie was often at loggerheads, was appointed OBE for his services to athletics.

Pirie's services to sport far exceeded those of his British contemporaries; athletes or officials. He was a giant of his time and it was his name that drew crowds to the White City and inspired the later Bedfords and Fosters. One suspects that he ultimately paid the price for speaking out and for being of independent mind without the necessary Oxbridge pedigree. The answers lay among that assembly gathered in St Bride's, and ought to be revealed.

Mrs Jennifer Gilbody

http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport/hi/english/static/in_depth/special_features/sports_personality/54_58.stm:

BBC Sports Personality of the Year 1955

"1955 GORDON PIRIE, ATHLETICS. Pirie, the middle distance running champion, reportedly covered 200 miles a week during training. He clinched the award after setting five world records and beating a string of first class athletes, a feat that won him huge popularity."



The Times
Thursday March 5 1992

Pirie: forgotten man of athletics

From Mrs Jennifer Gilbody

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Yours truly,
JENNIFER GILBODY,
Crombie, 78 Stopples Lane,
Hordle, Lymington, Hampshire.
March 2.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Miss Patricia Charnet, and my mother, Mrs Jennifer Gilbody, for their encouragement during this project. At last I have fulfilled my promise to Gordon to fine-tune, medically validate and publish his work, though I am sure were he here he would have some words to say; probably “about bloody time”!



Purley 2nd XI, 1946 (Gordon on right handside)

<http://www.barris.org>:



PREFACE

Gordon Pirie lived with us for several years up to his death in 1991, and had a profound effect on us all. Of many things about Gordon, what particularly impressed was his physical fitness, and desire for perfection with all things athletic. A good example of this was the time he did some lumber jacking in the New Forest in Hampshire, and proudly boasted how many more trees he cut down than men thirty years his junior. On another occasion, I inadvertently agreed to join Gordon “for a run” on a disused section of railway track, thinking myself moderately fit. Being half Gordon's age, I was somewhat taken aback when, in the time it took me to run one length of track, Gordon had run three! Associated with this, which was humiliation enough, were various comments about my running shoes and running technique (or lack of), as one might imagine.

The original manuscript of this book was written by Gordon, in typical fashion, in 24 hours flat. The 5¼-inch diskette on which the computer file was saved had been tucked away in a sports bag until Gordon rediscovered it, and somehow got folded in half. As a result, it took a full weekend to retrieve the data, and I had to cut out the magnetic media from within the diskette, replace it into a customised new diskette, merge snippets of uncorrupted data into a single ASCII file, and then laboriously convert the file line by line into a recognised wordprocessor format. During this process, Gordon looked on with an enigmatic smile; he always did like to set challenges, however impossible! Revision and editing was started shortly before Gordon's death, and the manuscript transferred to our possession, with Gordon's express desire that the book be published by us in order to assist the training of a new generation of runners. Overall, to get from that early stage to the present book has taken five years of work, and has been a sizeable project for me, albeit one which I was of course determined and happy to achieve.

As you will see, the book is highly controversial, with some radical ideas (one of the reasons it has had to be self-published!), but I believe it is a fitting tribute to Gordon Pirie, which should give an insight into why he was such a successful runner, and perhaps even an opportunity for others to emulate him. The reader may be interested to know of Gordon's two other books – “Running Wild” (published by W H Allen, London, 1961), and “The Challenge of Orienteering” (Pelham Books Limited, 1968). In addition, the writer Dick Booth recently published a detailed biographical account of Gordon's life, entitled: “The Impossible Hero” (Corsica Press, London, 1999), which is available from <http://www.bookshop.co.uk> and <http://www.amazon.co.uk>. I should also mention extensive discussions about Gordon based on interviews (complete chapters) in Alastair Aitken's books “Athletics Enigmas” (The Book Guild Ltd., 2002) and “More Than Winning” (The Book Guild Ltd., 1992).

Finally, I am keen to get your feedback about this book, or any reminiscences about Gordon, and would be delighted to receive comments (john@johngilbody.com). Also, check out my “Gordon Pirie Resource Centre” at <http://www.gordonpirie.com>, where you can download this book for free in Acrobat (pdf) format. The book is also available in Russian at <http://gordonpirie.narod.ru> (site and translation by Andrey Shatalin). Recommended newsgroup: rec.running. You can find free downloadable newsreel footage of Gordon at <http://www.britishpathe.com>; other (purchasable) footage is at <http://www.movietone.com> and <http://www.footage.net>.

Happy reading!

John S Gilbody (last updated 17 March 2007)

PREFACE

In my 45 years of running, world-wide, I am constantly being called upon to cure injured runners and correct their technical errors. This applies across the board - from young to aged, and from champions to novices. It is in response to this overwhelming demand that I decided to write this book.

There is an entire generation of runners who have suffered severely from the mal-information supplied to them by shoe manufacturers, and the pseudo-experts who pass themselves off as knowledgeable authorities in the popular running press. Some of these runners will never run again. Unfortunately, many runners have been led up athletic blind alleys by incorrect information, and have become either too severely injured or too disenchanted with the sport to continue.

This book is an extension of the activities I have been involved in for the last 45 years - namely, curing injured runners and turning slow runners into fast runners. It is also written for the champion athletes, runners who intend to develop their extraordinary abilities to a point where they will be able to win major championship events.

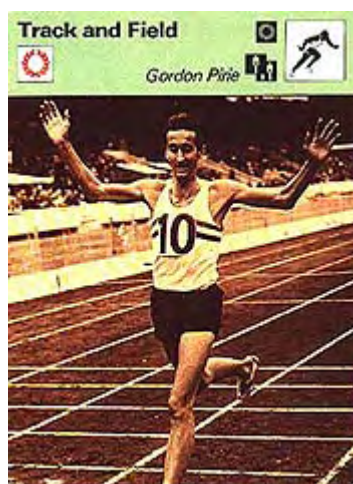
It is a tragedy that so many super-talented runners reach a point just below that of the great champions, without ever breaking through to the very pinnacle of the sport. These talented runners fail either because they lack a knowledge of the tactics necessary to win a race, or because their technique fails them at critical stages during a race; for instance, being unable to apply the “Fini Britannique”, the “Coup-de-Grace”, the hard finishing burst which will carry them past their opponents to the finish line ahead. If you are an athlete who wants to stand on the top step of the victory rostrum, you have to be cleverer than your opponents, train harder, race tougher, and never give up at any stage of your running. This book will start you on the road to being the runner you want to become.

It is my hope that this book will release runners from the incorrect information and false commercialism that has damaged the sport and ruined millions of runners in recent years.

Running is a sport, a game that I love.

Good luck in whatever you achieve. It is all “fun running”.

Gordon Pirie



(Many thanks to RunningPast.com for the photo)

GORDON PIRIE'S LAWS OF RUNNING

- 1 - Running with correct technique (even in prepared bare feet), on any surface, is injury free.
- 2 - Running equals springing through the air, landing elastically on the forefoot with a flexed knee (thus producing quiet feet). On landing, the foot should be directly below the body. (Walking is landing on the heels with a straight leg).
- 3 - Any and all additions to the body damage running skill.
- 4 - Quality beats quantity; the speed at which you practice the most will be your best speed.
- 5 - Walking damages running.
- 6 - The correct running tempo for human beings is between three and five steps per second.
- 7 - Arm power is directly proportional to leg power.
- 8 - Good posture is critical to running. (Don't lean forwards!).
- 9 - Speed kills endurance; endurance kills speed.
- 10 - Each individual can only execute one “Program” at any one time; an individual can be identified by his or her idiosyncrasies (i.e. “Program”). An individual can change his or her “Program” only by a determined, educational effort; each individual's “Program” degenerates unless it is controlled constantly.
- 11 - Static stretching exercises cause injuries!
- 12 - Running equals being out of breath, so breathing through the mouth is obligatory (hence the nickname “Puff Puff Pirie”).



(Many thanks to RunningPast.com for the photo)

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

The primary reason running has become the most popular participant sport in the United States and elsewhere in recent years is its innate simplicity. Running is an activity which comes naturally to all human beings. It is of course true that some people are born with a particular set of physical and psychological characteristics that make them better runners than the rest, but, nevertheless, everyone can run well at some distance. In addition, running requires no particular equipment or infrastructure; only a simple resolve to “get at it”.

Given this innate simplicity, it is maddening for people like myself (I have been in the sport for nearly half a century) to see running become cluttered up with so much bad information - erroneous assumptions ranging from the supposed safest and most efficient way to train, to supposed proper running-shoe design. Much of this information is so distorted and based on so many mistaken principles, that it is impossible for either the serious athlete or the health-conscious jogger to know where to turn for guidance. During my own running career, I have seen the sport mature from the days when it was uncommon for the top runners to train more than three or four times each week, to the present era where sponsorship and product endorsements make it possible for the top athletes to devote virtually all of their time to training and racing.

In the last 45 years, I have participated in three Olympic Games (winning a Silver Medal in the 5,000-metre race at the 1956 Melbourne Games), and have set five official world records (and a dozen or so more unofficial world bests). I have faced and beaten most of the greatest athletes of my time, and have run to date nearly a quarter of a million miles. Along the way, I have coached several of Great Britain and New Zealand's best runners - some of whom have set their own world records. In addition, I aided the late Adolf (Adi) Dassler (founder of Adidas) in developing spiked racing shoes, on which most of today's good designs are based. This brief list of some of my accomplishments is presented in order to lend credibility to what follows.

The information in this book is not based on idle speculations or esoteric theorising, but on more than 45 years of experience as an athlete and coach. I therefore hope that I can now begin to make a rigorous case for the fact that most runners in the world are currently running incorrectly and training inefficiently. This holds true both for people who are running simply to improve the quality of their health, as well as for athletes competing at the upper levels of international competition. Statistics compiled by the American Medical Association indicate that as many as 70 percent of the more than 30 million “serious” runners in the United States can count on being injured every year. This disturbing injury rate is not limited solely to beginners and elite athletes, but applies to runners at every level, across the board.

There are three basic reasons for the injury epidemic currently sweeping the running world, which is making life unpleasant for millions of runners, and destroying many more who are lost to the sport forever. The first is the most basic - very few runners know how to run correctly. Improper technique puts undue strain on the feet, ankles, knees, back and hips, and makes injury inevitable.

The second reason is more subtle than the first, though closely related to it. Most running shoes today are designed and constructed in such a manner as to make correct technique impossible (and therefore cause chronic injuries to the people who wear them). It is a common misconception that a runner should land on his or her heels and then roll forward to the front of the foot with each stride. In designing their shoes, most shoe companies fall prey to this incorrect assumption. The result is that running shoes get

larger and clumsier every year. Far from protecting runners, these shoes actually limit the runner's ability to run properly, and as a result may contribute to the injury epidemic.

The third factor accounting for the current plague of injuries is an over-emphasis on mileage in training, especially "long slow distance" (LSD). Without the constant maintenance of a proper balance in training - including sprinting, interval training, weights, hills and long-running - a runner's body simply will not adapt to the stresses it encounters on a day-to-day basis.

Most runners approach the sport backwards. Initially, they settle into a training regime and go at it. Then, if problems occur, they might think about making changes to the way they run or in the shoes they wear (though few get around to making a constructive change. Most wait for a miracle).

The first thing a runner must know is how to run properly. Everything else follows from there. It is at this fundamental stage that this book shall begin. Before this, however, it might be interesting and helpful for the reader to understand some of my experiences in the sport - something of my roots.

As a small boy in England, I was initiated into the world of long distance running by my father, a competitor in the XC World Championships in 1926, who also ran marathons and served as the race director for a number of 20- and 30-mile road races; the South London Harriers' 30-mile race has been held annually since the 1940s, making it one of the oldest long distance running events. As a result of my father's affliction with the somewhat infinite fascinations of distance running, I was exposed to a constant stream of absolutely mad long distance runners (including a European champion, an Olympic Silver Medalist and a Commonwealth Games winner) at a very early age.

It was my job to take these champion runners around the courses which my father had devised. Since I was unable to run with the men at the age of ten, my only alternative was to guide them around the courses by bicycle. Chief among the lessons I learned from these accomplished (and slightly eccentric) athletes was something of the habits of top-class distance runners. At times they seemed crazy. They were extremely aggressive, and often at war with the world. Remember, this was at a time when it was extremely uncommon to see runners on the streets and roads. I recall particularly the choleric disdain in which they held members of the "civilised world" - a world they seemed not to consider themselves a part. This confrontational attitude would often frighten and embarrass me. I would cycle off ahead of the runners I was guiding in order to avoid finding myself in the middle of an uncomfortable confrontation with an angry motorist, cyclist or pedestrian. The runners, many hardened by the depression, and some products of life in the coal mines, truly believed that the roads belonged to them while they were on a run. If one of these free spirits encountered a sharp bend in the road, they had to run the shortest possible distance around the bend, crossing the road with the result that traffic in both directions screeched to a halt.

They were always spoiling for a fight, and many an angry motorist was ready to oblige. Their aggressiveness increased with the difficulty of the course they were running. An extremely tough one in Surrey had several very big, very steep hills which rose as high as 400 feet. On a run through these chalk hills in the North Downs, it was impossible to detect any of the runners' reputed relish for a tough climb. The hills served only to make them more and more belligerent, and more and more angry.

The late Tom Richards, a Welsh ex-miner, was typical of these runners. He was, until his death in 1985, a real hard bastard on a training run. His intense nature won him a Silver Medal in the 1948 Olympic Marathon. Tom ran the last twenty miles of that race about 100 yards behind the eventual winner, Cabrera of Argentina (in fact, no one told Tom he was in third place most of the way). He was not quite able to make up the deficit in the

BBC Radio 4 "Desert Island Discs"

4 November 1963

679 Joan Bennett

Actress

- ¶ Porter, 'You're the Top' (from *Anything Goes*) (Bing Crosby)
- *¶ Puccini, 'Chi il bel sogno di Sultana' (from *La rondine*) (Leontyne Price/Rome Opera House Orchestra/de Fabritiis)
- ¶ 'The Banana Boat Song' (Harry Belafonte)
- ¶ 'The Road to Morocco' (from film) (Bing Crosby/Bob Hope)
- ¶ Newley, 'Gonna Build a Mountain' (from *Stop the World, I Want to Get Off*) (Anthony Newley)
- ¶ 'My Romance' (from film *Jumbo*) (Dinah Shore/Frank Sinatra)
- ¶ 'Thou Swell' (from film *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*) (Sammy Davis Jr)
- ¶ Rodgers & Hammerstein, 'If I Loved You' (from *Carousel*) (John Raitt)
- ¶ LUXURY: Suntan lotion.
- ¶ BOOK: Gerald Durrell, *My Family and Other Animals*

11 November 1963

680 Stephen Potter

Writer and inventor of One-Upmanship

- ¶ Elgar, *The Wand of Youth Suite No. 2* (march) (LPO/Van Beinum)
- ¶ Gilbert & Sullivan, 'A British Tar is a Soaring Soul' (from *HMS Pinafore*) (Thomas Round/George Cook/Eric Wilson-Hyde/D'Oyly Carte Opera Chorus and Orchestra/Godfrey)
- *¶ Beethoven, String Quartet in C minor (opus 18, no. 4) (Amadeus Quartet)
- ¶ Stravinsky, 'The Shrovetide Fair' (from *Petrushka*) (Columbia Symphony/Stravinsky)
- ¶ Bach, Double Concerto in D minor (Yehudi Menuhin and Christian Ferras violins/Festival Chamber Orchestra)
- ¶ Berlin, 'Top Hat, White Tie and Tails' (from film *Top Hat*) (Fred Astaire)

- ¶ Poulenc, *Les Biches* (finale) (Paris Conservatoire Orchestra/Désormière)
- ¶ LUXURY: A pair of field glasses.
- ¶ BOOK: A book about sea birds and waders.

18 November 1963

681 Gordon Pirie

Athlete

- *¶ 'The Very Thought of You' (Norrie Paramor and his Orchestra)
- ¶ Elgar, 'Pomp and Circumstance' March No. 1 in D major (LSO/Sargent)
- ¶ 'Bei mir bist du Schön' (Nina & Frederick)
- ¶ 'El Cumbanchero' (Caterina Valente)
- ¶ Offenbach, 'Barcarolle' (from *The Tales of Hoffmann*) (Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden/Solti)
- ¶ 'Non, je ne regrette rien' (Edith Piaf)
- ¶ 'Chariot' (Petula Clark)
- ¶ Debussy/Stokowski, 'Clair de lune' (from *Suite bergamasque*) (Stokowski Symphony)
- ¶ LUXURY: A motor car.
- ¶ BOOK: *Gray's Anatomy*

25 November 1963

682 Ron Grainer

Composer

- ¶ *The Play of Daniel* (overture) (New York Pro Musica/Greenberg)
- ¶ Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G major (Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra/Münchinger)
- ¶ Brahms, Piano Quintet in F minor (Sviatoslav Richter/Borodin Quartet)
- ¶ Debussy/Verlaine, 'Green' (Maggie Teyte/Gerald Moore piano)
- ¶ Ravel, 'La flûte enchantée' (from *Scheherazade*) (Suzanne Danco/Orchestre de la Suisse Romande/Ansermet)
- ¶ Stravinsky, Symphonies of Wind Instruments (Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble/Fennell)
- *¶ 'Spring Season' (Ravi Shankar

- ¶ 'Flamenco Sketches' (Miles Davis trumpet)

- ¶ LUXURY: A flame opal.
- ¶ BOOK: Louis Mumford, *Techniques and Civilization*

2 December 1963

683 T. R. Robinson

Expert on clocks

- ¶ Respighi, 'Gagliarda' (from *Ancient Airs and Dances for the Lute, Suite No. 1*) (Philharmonia Orchestra/Dorati)
 - *¶ Haydn, 'Trumpet Concerto in E flat (Harry Mortimer/Philharmonia Orchestra/Weldon)
 - ¶ Dvořák, Symphony No. 9 in E minor (LPO/Rignold)
 - ¶ Schubert, 'Ave Maria' (Clifford E. Ball *carillon*, recorded at the Croydon Bell Foundry)
 - ¶ Handel/Beecham, 'Hornpipe' (from *The Gods Go A'Begging*) (RPO/Beecham)
 - ¶ 'Jack's Maggot' (Country Dance Players)
 - ¶ 'The Infant King' (King's College Chapel Choir/Ord)
 - ¶ 'The Old Clockmaker' (Queen's Hall Light Orchestra/Williams)
 - ¶ LUXURY: A marine chronometer.
 - ¶ BOOK: A volume of illustrations of the English countryside.
- 9 December 1963
- 684 Millicent Martin**
- Actress and singer**
- ¶ 'It Can Happen to You' (Herb Ellis guitar and accompaniment)
 - ¶ Elgar, 'Pomp and Circumstance' March No. 4 in G major (Philharmonia Orchestra/Barbiroli)
 - ¶ Mussorgsky, 'Simpleton's Aria' (from *Boris Godunov*, Act 4) (Kiril Dulguerov/Paris Conservatoire Orchestra and Chorus/Cluytens)
 - ¶ 'Southside' (Wardell Gray *tenor saxophone* and accompaniment)
 - ¶ Puccini, 'In questa reggia' (from *Turandot*) (Amy Shuard/

final miles and finished just 15 seconds behind the Argentinian. Both he and Cabrera overtook Gailly of Belgium inside the stadium.

Tom Richards was one of the athletes with whom I first began to run in the 1940s. Tom and runners like him were always experimenting with special diets or drinks intended to improve their racing performance (some things never change, do they?). They did everything in those days by trial and error - just like today! Nevertheless, they did make mistakes that would seem quite obvious to us now, like taking strong, heavily salted or sugared drinks to keep them going. As a result, it wasn't uncommon then for an exhausted runner to be bent over with stomach or leg cramps at the end of a marathon - a direct consequence of these highly concentrated drinks. It was typical at the finish of such races to see stretchers bearing cramped-up runners being attended to by medical personnel. In fact, the men (there were no women running long distance races in those days) who did not cramp up severely were a rarity. It seemed as if the only reason to run a marathon at all was to enlist sympathy from friends and loved ones, who were sure the runner was breathing his last.

The Coulsdon Marathon finished outside the Tudor Rose, a popular local pub. Consequently, a good, strong, tough Welsh miner could finish the race, be dead on his feet, and still manage to shuffle another 100 yards to the Tudor Rose; there to down a dozen pints of good English beer to prevent his collapse (or, perhaps, to hasten it).

An old runner named Bailey, aged well into his seventies, was a constant bane to race officials who did not particularly want to stand around after dark waiting for him to finish. During one particular event, a race in which the runners had to cover the same loop three times, officials familiar with Bailey's reputation for late night finishes determined to capture him after two laps and physically remove him from the course. They underestimated the tenacity of this stubborn old man, however, and it took half a dozen officials, some only half Bailey's age, to catch him and remove him from the course. As they carried him away, his legs continued running, free-wheeling in mid-air. Old Bailey was determined to get in as much mileage as possible.

Another race, this one around Windsor Castle and the beautiful Windsor Great Park, took place on an extremely hot day. Most of the runners were wiped out by the heat, either because of their various poisonous drinks, old age, or simply because they were unfit. Even the winner, Griffiths of Herne Hill Harriers, struggled across the finish line looking more like a hospital case than a champion runner.

Incidentally, Windsor Castle was the starting line for the 1908 Olympic Marathon, so that King Edward VII could view the start. From there it was 26 miles and 385 yards to the finish line at the site of the ex-White City Stadium - the marathon distance which has survived to this day.

From the above you can see that my attitude to running has been coloured somewhat by being brought up with a generation of running "idiots" - not at all a term I use in a derogatory way. These men exhibited a good deal more courage than common sense or sound training methods, like many runners today, but they did the best that they could. Luckily, in many ways, there wasn't much in terms of scientific data on the effects of different types of training available in the 1940s, but then those early runners were victims of the same type of athletic ignorance which so many runners still suffer from today.

Running ignorance refers to a runner who goes from one frustration to another because he or she knows absolutely nothing about the effects of training on the body. This athlete may be Summa Cum Laude or a world champion. What I learned from those early pioneers was a great deal about the psychological aspects of distance running - chiefly

that if a runner can convince himself or herself that a task is possible, the battle is half won.

On the other hand, an “Athletic Ignoramae” is a runner of a different nature altogether. He is like the great African runners who race without presumptions or preconceived limitations. He has no fear of lap times or of a fast pace. He simply runs his opponents off their feet.

It is amazing to consider that even though US runners have all the scientific help and assistance the modern world can devise, the “Athletic Ignoramae” from Africa regularly beat the hell out of them at the World Championships. It is, tragically, even more amazing when these same “Athletic Ignoramae” are imported into US Colleges and destroyed. They are like flowers - flowers bloom better and for longer when left unpicked!

Even in recent times, there have been runners like Alberto Salazar who believed that he could never develop a sprint finish because of the physiological nonsense scientists fed him. All that was required was for him to identify which aspects of his running character needed to be developed so he could sprint, and then to develop them!

My own journey to the top of the heap in international running began when I saw Emil Zatopek demolish the world's best over 10,000 metres at the 1948 Olympic Games in London. At the time, Zatopek was considered something of a phenomenon. His domination of the sport was attributed to an unnatural level of physical ability. Completely overlooked in the so-called experts' evaluation of Zatopek was his absolutely uninhibited style and the terrific training loads he subjected himself to. Zatopek's performance in 1948 lit a fire in my imagination.

I made up my mind to stop being a spectator. I did not go to another session of the Games. I stayed at home, training hard, from that day on. There are few other athletes in the world who are willing to make that kind of commitment. They want to be spectators too! But for me, it paid off with several world records, an Olympic medal, and, finally, three victories over the great Zatopek himself.



Helsinki 1952. Competitors of the 10,000m in front of the stand: Emil ZATOPEK (CHZ) 1st, Alain MIMOUN O'KACHA (FRA) 2nd and Douglas A. Gordon PIRIE (GBR) 7th.

Credit : IOC/Olympic Museum collections

At a time when traditional wisdom frowned upon young athletes training hard, Zatopek's performance demonstrated that what was needed to reach the top was not more caution,

but more hard work, study, discipline and courage. Zatopek's races in the 1948 and 1952 Olympic Games opened the door for athletes who came after him. He demonstrated that an athlete must train two or three times a day, year in and year out, in order to maximise their ability. With the example of Zatopek before me, I was ready to attack the running world with a vengeance. But before I could fully realise my grand ambitions, I needed to make sure I was spending my training time efficiently - that is, employing the proper activities in the proper amounts in my training.

Following the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games I met the great German coach Waldemar Gerschler. At that time, Gerschler had already spent 20 years working closely with Professor Hans Reindall, a heart specialist, and with psychological experts. His approach to training distance runners was well ahead of its time. He called for a systematic approach to training, which prepared the athlete's body and mind to withstand greater and greater efforts.

Gerschler was the first person I met who suggested it was possible for me to train even more. From Gerschler I learned how to produce an absolutely maximum effort. Prior to meeting him I had been training on my own, but his expertise freed me from that responsibility. I had been training hard prior to meeting Gerschler, but had not really understood what I was doing - nor had I cared much about it, either.

I still employ many of the principles of interval training which I learned from this great German coach during the 1950s. Nearly every top runner in the world today uses Gerschler's interval principles, most without knowing it - a good example was the American Steve Scott.

With Gerschler as my mentor, I was able to lower the world record for 5,000 metres to 13:36.8 in 1956 (Gundar Haegg first broke 14:00 with a 13:58 in 1944). Gerschler's training methods made it possible for me to compete with the world's best for more than 10 years. The example of Zatopek, along with Gerschler's expertise, made it possible for me to become an uninhibited competitor. The crucial point in all this was that I was determined to set aside what was then traditional thinking, in order to do whatever was necessary to eliminate my athletic weaknesses.

The autumn and winter months were spent in cross country racing. I was well known during those years for destroying the competition with insanely fast starts. In 1954, I opened the National Cross Country Championship Race (over a distance of 10 miles) with a 2:03 first half-mile through mud. It was my habit as a cross country runner to attempt to settle the question of who would win as early as possible, leaving everyone else in the field to run for second place.

In the Surrey Senior Cross Country Championships a couple of years earlier, I won the seven and a half miles championships with a time of just over 33:00 in conditions so bad that Chris Chataway (later to become one of the world's best) was able to win the junior five-mile race in only 28:00. In the 1953 Surrey Championships, I broke the course record for five miles en route to winning the seven and a half miles championship, beating Chataway by nearly two minutes.

As early as 1951, just one week after winning the Southern Junior Cross Country title over six miles by a huge two and a half minute margin, I was able to defeat the reigning Senior Southern Cross Country Champion, John Stone, to win the Royal Air Force Championship in Wales. During those years, I ran on the winning team in the Southern Youths (three miles), and Junior (six miles) and Senior (nine miles) divisions - a feat unequalled in English cross country running. In 1955, the late British team manager, Jack Crump, said of my cross country racing successes: "Gordon Pirie is the greatest cross country runner I have seen".



My success was not limited to the winter months or to cross country running, however. I took on a full schedule of international-level track racing during the summer over all distances. Between 1951 and 1961, I faced the world's best at every track distance from 800 metres through to 10,000 metres - and beat many of these "distance specialists".

My training regime made it possible for me to succeed against such runners as Wes Santee (The Kansas Cowboy who set a world record over 1,500 metres) in the famous Emsley Carr Mile in 1953. Michael Jazy (world record holder over one mile) and German star Klaus Richtzenhain (the 1956 Olympic 1,500 metre Silver medalist) were both defeated in 1,500 metre races in 1961 and 1956, respectively, despite the constant claim of the "experts" that I was too slow to succeed at such a short distance. Derek Ibbotson, Vladimir Kuts, Sandor Iharos, István Rózsavölgyi, Laslo Tabori, Peter Snell, Herb Elliott and John Walker, all world record holders, are also amongst my victims.

I did not achieve this unparalleled success due to the possession of any extraordinary physical gifts or a magical training formula. I simply went about my training and racing with a singleness of purpose and determination that was unfashionable at that time, to the point of being downright "un-English". I was able to beat such great runners because I trained myself to be able to withstand incredibly hard races and still sprint the last 220 yards in something near 25 seconds (on heavy cinder track).

To achieve this, I ran 10x220 yards in 24 seconds - not once, but twice in a single day. I could manage 20x440 yards in 59 seconds with only a 30-second jog to recover, or 12x440 yards in 55 or 56 seconds, with a one-minute recovery jog.

In 1954, I was labelled "crazy" when I promised to lower the world record for 5,000 metres to 13:40. The sporting press called me a running "idiot" (hence my affection for the term). Apparently, my candour at suggesting that both the great Haegg's record and the "impossible" 13:40 barrier might be vulnerable to an athlete willing to attack them with unfashionable determination, was viewed by the press as somewhat presumptuous. It was one thing to strive for an achievement that the world at large viewed as impossible, but quite another to be honest about it. Imagine my critics' surprise when, on June 19, 1956, I ran 5,000 metres in 13:36.8 to become the first athlete to break the "impossible" 13:40 barrier, pulling the late and great Vladimir Kuts (13:39.6) under the magical mark with me. My critics in the press and elsewhere were strangely silent after Kuts and I both broke Iharos's recent world record of 13:40.8.

Despite my competitive record, however, my greatest enemy was never the athletes I raced against. My battle was constantly with myself. I was much more interested in overcoming my own limitations than in smashing my opponents. I was never satisfied with my fitness level. I was constantly adding to my workload, and exploring the absolute limits of my body. There were times when I perhaps went too near the edge, but still I was able to avoid serious injury, and improve throughout my international career, even after many years. I tried every type of running imaginable from very fast sprinting up to hard interval training and running ultra-marathon distances. I ran hills and lifted weights. I trained hard, but never in a haphazard manner. I was always pushing, but knew exactly what I was doing. It takes a careful attention to every detail of your lifestyle, and more than just a simple resolve, in order to improve. It takes planning and knowledge. That knowledge is what this book is about.

So, with a background of almost 50 years as a world class athlete and coach, let us begin. The principles outlined and detailed in the following pages will be called revolutionary in many quarters, but they are the same methods which I employed during my own competitive career, and which have been refined by three decades of training athletes such as Anne Smith (Great Britain), Anne Audain (New Zealand), Alison Roe (New Zealand) and Jim Hogan (Ireland) - all world record holders - together with many other

champions. The information conveyed in this book applies equally to the aspiring Olympian, the high school athlete anxious to win a local championship, the recreational marathoner or 10-kilometre runner, and the casual jogger. My intent in writing the book is to provide runners at every level with an understanding of the sport that will make their running safer and more satisfying - not to mention a darn sight faster!



<http://www.yle.fi/elavaarkisto/?s=s&a=542>

Melbourne Olympics 1956 (5,000m, 28th November 1956)

- 1) Vladimir Kuts RUS 13.39,6
- 2) Gordon Pirie GBR 13.50,6
- 3) Derek Ibbotson GBR 13.54,4.

CHAPTER TWO - WHY ATHLETES FAIL

The prevailing attitude amongst runners and those who coach or advise them, is that a failure to attain specific goals is the result of either bad luck, lack of talent, or some form of psychological shortcoming on the part of the athlete. Usually, none of these reasons is true. Athletes fail so often because they are not trained to succeed. Most athletes employ training methods or have lifestyles which make it impossible for them to perform up to their expectations and aspirations. Another important factor is the poor design of most running shoes. The shoe manufacturers have taken on the role of God. They think that He made a mistake in designing man's foot, and that they are going to fix it overnight! I will discuss this latter point in some detail later.

The most common difficulty in the United States (and almost everywhere else in the world) is the obsession people have with measuring everything they do. The object of serious training is to improve racing performance, but to listen to many athletes and coaches one would think that the object is simply to produce impressive numbers for the training diary! Too many athletes get stuck in the notion that the end of training is training; if an athlete cannot string together a certain number of 100-mile weeks or run so many times 400 metres in such and such a time, then he or she becomes discouraged and begins to wonder whether any kind of performance is possible.

Remember, the reason an athlete trains is to *race*.

Set aside right now the idea that impressive training results will automatically translate into successful racing. Progress is not measured on the training track, or by the number of miles logged each week. Progress is determined by what happens when an athlete races.

Training must be adjusted to the athlete's needs on a daily basis. There is no set formula for how often a fit athlete should do his or her hardest training. The athlete and coach must learn to adjust training expectations according to factors in the athlete's life, outside of running. If, for example, the coach wishes an athlete to run 20x200 metres in 30 seconds, but the athlete has had a difficult day at work or school, the coach should reduce the workload accordingly. The athlete may well be able to run 20x200 metres in something slower than 30 seconds (say 33 seconds), or run at 30-second speed ten times, but the effort may set training back as much as a week. They should take an easy day.

Because runners always demonstrate a determination and singleness of purpose rarely encountered in people involved in other sports, they tend to overdo their training when rest is called for (that is, relative rest, not necessarily zero activity). The generally accepted notion is: "The harder I train, the faster I will run". This is not necessarily true. There is nothing wrong with training very hard for a time - even right to the limit - then backing off and having a period of rest. Hard training is very important; but so is rest. Training hard when fatigued is asking for frustration, disappointment, and possibly injury or illness.

A training plan is very important, but it should be infinitely flexible! Too zealous an adherence to a plan can leave a runner flat on his back. In May 1981, I watched Grete Waitz training at Bislet Stadium in Oslo two or three days after a hard race. Her legs were still stiff and sore from the stress of the race, so her training (300-metre sprints) was going badly. I wrote to Arne Haukvik, the Oslo promoter, following that session to ask him to warn Grete that she would soon be injured if she pursued this course of training. Sure enough, Grete suffered a serious foot injury a few weeks later, which caused her to drop out of her world record attempt at 5,000 metres. She lost the rest of the season.

Another common training error is to abandon methods which have worked well only to see racing performance deteriorate. For example, Alberto Salazar was one of the best 5,000 and 10,000 metre runners in the world when he set a world record in the marathon in 1982. Shortly after that success, he changed his training and racing habits in order to “specialise” on road instead of track running, and as a direct consequence of this, he was subsequently unable to match his previous performances at any distance (including the marathon). Salazar had spent many years building himself up into a great track runner, and the speed he developed on the track made him unbeatable in the marathon. Yet, by a very subtle change in his approach to training in favour of the marathon, he lost this speed advantage. The result was disappointment and frustration. Alberto went from being a great runner, who dominated every marathon he entered, to simply being very good. By 1985, he was a slower runner than Mary Decker! Had he maintained the type of training he was doing prior to his great 1982 season, we all know he would have been hard to beat in the 1984 Olympic Marathon. The winner of that race was Carlos Lopes, who just six weeks before had run the second fastest 10,000 metres in history. The two runners close behind him were also seasoned track athletes with the “track advantage”. The marathon “specialists” - Seko, De Castella, Dixon and Salazar - all finished out of the medals.

A further factor contributing to the high failure rate of aspiring athletes is that most do not realise the time it takes to reach their maximum capabilities. It is not uncommon for promising youngsters to train with complete dedication for two or three years with one coach, and then, just as they are about to make a real breakthrough, get discouraged by their undramatic (but steady) progress - usually blaming their coach - and consequently change coaches or even give it all up in frustration.

A distressingly high number of these promising young runners are killed off by too much racing over distances that are too long for them, at too young an age. The best runners in schools frequently run two or even three races in a single track meet. These athletes are being praised in the press and by their coaches for this insanity, while they are destroying not only their ability to run, but also their enthusiasm for the sport.

An extreme example of this was the American Matt Donnelly, a gifted young runner in Washington State. Donnelly ran a 4:06 mile as a 17-year-old high school junior, but in the same meet also ran the 800 metres (with a preliminary heat) and the 3,200 metres. Moreover, he had been required to qualify for the State Championships two weeks earlier by running a similar schedule of races. The result? Eight races in fourteen days. The following year he was able to manage only a 4:14 mile at the same venue, and two years later as a university freshman had improved to only 3:47 for 1,500 metres. This talented youngster should have become one of the best runners in America, but instead is now struggling to perform at the same level he did as a schoolboy.

This is only one aspect of the US sports system as regards running. Another example is the university-level athlete, who is a points winner, a professional employee, a tool of the Colleges. Sadly, most are destroyed by this system. In virtually all such cases, the athlete's frustration is brought about by a lack of knowledge; knowledge of exactly what is required to realise his or her potential. It takes a good deal of know-how to reach the top, which most athletes and coaches simply do not possess.

Many runners never suspect they have the ability to run at championship level. Most of us have the ability to be consistent winners in our club or school. A surprisingly large number even have the capability to win at the regional or national level, or to run minutes and minutes faster on our 10 kms or marathons. To reach the upper levels of our potential, however, takes years of dedication and intense, carefully controlled training. Training involves constantly striving to remove weaknesses that hold us back. All the

Sports
Surrey champs. at
Mottspur Park

Devon 22.5.54
NegNo. I.4975
series I.4974 -7



Sports
British Games at the
White City

Martin 8.8.53
NegNo. H6848
series H6843-H6849



great runners have spent years working their way up through the local and regional levels before achieving true national or world-class status. Results do not come from the previous month's training, but from years of dedicated development. One recent study quantified this, and found that an average of 10.2 years was needed for champions to develop.

Joan Benoit did not become an Olympic Champion because of what she did in the weeks before the Games - she had laid the groundwork for her great run with years of training. I ran the first eight kilometres of the Auckland Marathon with Joan many years ago, a race in which she won in only 2:31. Her "Super Ability" was only hinted at then (she was already a great runner), and has taken years to mature.

The great African runners who came to dominate road racing in the US have been running all their lives. They did not suddenly appear out of nowhere to beat the best runners in the world, but ran for years before reaching championship level. An African youngster runs as a way of life.

Even the short track distances require a level of dedication which people do not normally associate with sprinting. Valery Borzov, the double Olympic Champion from the Soviet Union, had been working his way up through the various levels of local and regional championship running in Russia long before he "burst" upon the world scene in the early 1970s.

Alan Wells, the massive Scot who won the 1980 Olympic 100-metre title, is known to be a prodigious trainer. He had many years of competition behind him before winning Olympic and Commonwealth championships.

Finally, the example I like best is that of British Olympic Marathoner Barry Watson. Barry was just a good club runner in England in 1968 when he ran with our group, and when I left for New Zealand I forgot all about him. At the Montreal Olympic Games while I was training on the golf course near the Olympic Village with New Zealanders Anne Garratt (now Audain) and Tony Goode, however, "Lo and Behold!", there was Barry Watson proudly bearing the Union Jack on his shirt. His first words to me were: "Gordon, you are a liar! You said it takes six years of hard training to become a champion. It took me eight". It had certainly taken Barry a bit longer than some, but he made it just the same. He was British Marathon Champion in 1976. I stick to that kind of yardstick. If you put in many years of hard work (with a little bit of luck and a lot of dedication), you will become a superb runner, but you have to realise it takes this long, and persevere.

It is important to train hard on a consistent basis. You must treat each day in training as if it were your last. You must be very lucky as well - with no major breaks for injury or illness, or to meet the demands of your social life. It is necessary to give something up to make the most of your gifts as a runner. The paradox in all this hard training is that short rests will be required as well. The body is not a machine! It cannot tolerate a never-ending diet of hard work. Hard training, carefully moderated with plenty of planned rest, must go on all year. You cannot afford to commit athletic suicide at the end of each racing season by giving up completely your hard training.

Before you have taught yourself to train properly, you must become conscious of the necessity of running properly and take steps towards developing correct technique. The best training in the world will be worthless if proper technique is not employed. This vital factor in a runner's development is all but ignored by most coaches. There are coaches and athletes who pay lip service to the importance of correct technique, but few make a serious attempt to teach it. When I point out bad technique, the standard response is: "I'm working on it". They are usually still "working on it" years later, but have not

changed at all. If an athlete is not running correctly, they do not just make inefficient use of their training time, but will suffer injury sooner or later.

Athletes who have access only to the volumes of bad information on technique being pedalled by the running magazines and shoe manufacturers, have no way of discovering the benefits of proper running style. Coaches who hold erroneous notions concerning what constitutes correct technique, or who refuse to acknowledge its importance, are short-changing their athletes, severely curtailing their ability, and inviting injury.

The best athletes in the world - those who compete in the Olympic Games and World Championships - share specific technical traits. Developing these traits is as important to an athlete's progress as developing strength, speed and endurance. Specific information on the development of such proper technique is contained in Chapter Three. In this chapter, we shall examine some common technical errors, and look at ways in which the athlete (with the help of a coach) can correct them.

The most common misconception concerning style becomes immediately apparent by looking closely at a typical pair of modern running shoes. I find it impossible to find running shoes today which are not heavily padded at the heel, and which have a relatively small amount of protective material under the ball of the foot - especially under the toes. Any athlete who has grown up wearing these shoes unfortunately comes to the conclusion that it is proper to run by striking the ground with the heel first. This assumption follows from the way the shoes are designed, but is absolutely incorrect. You will not find athletes in the Olympic Games racing on their heels in heavily-padded running "boots".

An entire generation of runners is being destroyed (and/or prevented from achieving their full potential) because of having to run in shoes which make correct technique impossible. This undoubtedly contributes to the millions of injuries which keep millions of runners from training fully every year.

It is important that a runner uses correct technique from the very first to the very last step of every run. The coach must begin teaching proper technique before any hard training is attempted. It is never too late to begin running correctly, no matter how long you have been running improperly. You can change! Running technique must be viewed as a skill and must be practised like any other skill until it is mastered, and becomes second nature. Let us start at the very beginning, with the person standing to attention in bare feet. Raise yourself up onto tiptoes, and overbalance forward. You must take a step forward to keep from falling over. From the position which results (it is impossible to step forward onto the heel), you should begin to run at a slow velocity - but with very light, quick steps - making sure to feel the stress on the toes. The runner's legs should remain flexed at the knees. A feeling of "sitting" with the seat down "like a duck" is employed with the body upright. An athlete who runs correctly will actually appear to be shorter than other runners of the same height who are not running properly. By keeping his knees flexed and by landing on the ball of the foot on each step, and with the foot beneath the body, the runner will spring along very quietly. As the weight of the runner's body rides over the foot, the entire sole will rest flat on the ground - do not remain like a ballet dancer on your toes throughout the weight-bearing phase. Alison Roe did this, and was constantly injured.

The runner will generate more power and cover more ground with each stride by taking advantage of the springiness and power of the muscles in the feet and forelegs as well as the thighs. The runner's tempo should be at least three steps per second. A person running correctly will make virtually no noise as he moves along. A conscious effort must be made to run as lightly as possible. The runner must be aware of what his or her feet and knees are doing at this early stage (I think about my feet and knees, but avoid visual

Sports
British Games at the
White City

Martin 8.8.53
NegNo. H6845
series H6843-H6849



Sports. Athletics
A.A.A v Oxford University
held at Oxford

Webb 3.5.53
NegNo. H4253
series H4250-H4254



checks. Do not glance down constantly like many runners do, seeing if their legs are “looking good”). Try to maintain a quicker tempo than is natural. Don't lean forward.

A runner whose style causes him or her to overstride, striking the ground heel-first with straightened knee joints, is running on a very short road to the doctor's office.

During this initial teaching phase, the runner should hold his arms close to the body without any movement at all, and concentrate exclusively on what his feet and legs are doing. The ankles, calves and quadriceps are going to be working much harder than before. The runner needs to run only about 50 metres in this manner (stressing the balls of the feet, with quick, short steps which utilise all of the muscles in the feet, calves and thighs). Don't lean forward.

The runner must get about 200 steps into these 50-metre jaunts, achieving a tempo of at least three steps per second. The coach must pay close attention to what each runner is doing, and watch each runner's style as they run, making criticisms until proper technique is mastered.

After the runner has become conscious of using the feet and legs, he or she can then add the hands and arms into the running motion. Take everything one step at a time. Make sure the runner understands each aspect of the technique he or she is trying to master before moving on.

At first, the only arm action allowed will be as a direct result of the energy from the feet and legs. The arms should be held with the hands close to the body, and the elbows bent at an acute angle (less than 90 degrees). The exercise described above is then repeated with the arms becoming more and more energetic with each repetition. The forward and backward strokes of the arms should form a quick, sharp, jabbing motion. This is done without excessive sideways movement. By this means, power from the arms will be transferred to the legs. (Note: While it is important that the forearms swing a little across the body, they should not cross the midpoint of the chest, nor should the arms piston in a straight forward and backward direction). The result is increased efficiency and greater speeds, with no relative increase in physical power or energy expenditure. No movement should be made by the trunk! Don't lean forward.

As you run with your hands passing in this arc, at just about the line formed by your lower ribs and up across your breast, carry your hands lightly clenched, with the wrists locked and the palms facing the body. If the palms face the ground, your arms will take up a paddling, flipping action that wastes energy. If your palms are turned up to the heavens, the forearm will work in an exaggerated upper-cutting action which will force your hands too high, lifting the body too much off the ground in a jumping type of action. The object of running is to move forward horizontally at as great a speed as possible. If you keep your palms facing your body with the thumb and index finger lightly clenched, your arms will work in an efficient arc, close to and parallel with the body. The tendency at high speeds is for the arms to swing away from the body out of control. So, keep your hands under control, hooking the hands in close to the body. Your arms should then work in strong, stabbing thrusts. Keep your arm action vigorous and compact, and as tidy as possible. The sharp backward and forward “stabbing” and “jabbing” of the arms will then synchronise with the quick, sharp, vigorous power drive of the feet and legs.

In order to illustrate the power that can be generated by the arms, the coach can have the athlete feel the force that should be applied in the arm movement by driving his fists (in a running action) into the runner's upraised palms. After the athlete gets the feel of the amount of force striking his hands, he can then try the same exercise by driving his fists into the coach's upraised palms. The coach then removes his hands. The athlete must now stop the forward and backward motion of his fists himself, at the same point at which the

coach's palms were before they were removed. This sudden (voluntary) stopping of the forward and backward motion of the hands causes a reaction in the legs (for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction). When the athlete does this in a standing position, he or she will notice a pronounced rotation of the hips and pelvis caused by the sharp, strong "stopping" of the forward and backward motion of the arms. (Note: During running there should be no movement of the trunk. The body should be fixed and motionless, with the hard forward and backward pumping of the arms perfectly balancing the action of the legs. The greater mass of the legs and their powerful action will require a very vigorous action in the lighter, weaker arms for this balance to be maintained. Arms must work hard!).

At this point, the athlete should be able to feel the advantages of: (1) a quick, light step in which he or she lands on the balls of the feet under the body; and (2) an added strong, short and sharp arm motion synchronised with the legs.

Now the athlete is ready to put these two aspects of their running together. The athlete should attempt to run (landing on the balls of the feet) using the same quick, sharp synchronised action in both the arms and legs. If the runner has these two elements in proper synchronisation (accomplished only through practice), they should feel themselves flying along further with each step yet travelling close to the ground (without lifting the knees too high or extending the foreleg too far in front). He or she will look like Lasse Viren! The runner will now feel the power they are able to generate with these strong, yet fluid and controlled body movements. The runner will no longer feel compelled to "stride out" - that is, to throw the feet and legs forward in an exaggerated effort to "bite" more and more ground with each stride. The athlete's stride length will be determined by the amount of force generated by proper use of the feet, legs and arms, and should match the velocity of the running.

Faster speeds will result in a longer stride, but a longer stride will not necessarily result in faster speeds. Don't lean forward.

Overstriding is one of the most common technical afflictions of runners, and one of the most dangerous. The danger in overstriding is that you hit the ground harder and harder with each step, actually jarring yourself to a partial (albeit brief) stop. This constant braking action results in very early fatigue, less than maximum speeds - certainly lower than would otherwise be possible - and bad injuries.

A good example of an athlete whose performances were affected seriously by overstriding was British 400-metre runner Adrian Metcalfe, who in a number of races overstrode terribly for the first 100 metres, before he became exhausted, and his high-jumping, leg-flicking, rope climbing style settled down.

The athlete must constantly pay attention to his tempo, and strive for a quick, smooth, well co-ordinated running action. He must work hard to imprint proper techniques and attitudes onto his mental approach to running. Only by constant attention to the basics of sound technique can the developing athlete hope to make these fundamentals part of his athletic second nature. You have to train yourself to concentrate on every step of every run. The body's centre of movement is located in the centre of the stomach. The arm position relative to this centre of movement decides your tempo. Thus, arms far away, spread out from the body result in a slow tempo, and a close compact posture produces a rapid/fast tempo. A good example is a skater who spins quickly when compact, but slows dramatically when the arms are thrown away from the body. To run faster, therefore, keep tidy and compact.

When the athlete wishes to speed up, he must compact up, quicken his tempo, and try to apply more power within these movements. The result is a running style that belies the amount of effort being utilised.

Sports

Dixon 9.9.53
NegNo.H7386

at the White City
Gordon Pirie winning



Sport. Athletics (floodlit)
at the White City

Martin 23.9.53
NegNo.H7639
series H7637 H7639



Great runners employ an elegance of style which makes them appear as if they are running very easily; observe the running styles of the likes of Joan Benoit, Carlos Lopes or Lasse Viren. These great champions were so efficient they appeared to be running very easily, when in fact they were working very hard and moving extremely fast.

It is important to maximise the power which is applied in the fraction of a second that the foot is in contact with the ground. Following this concentrated power phase is a brief rest; a short holiday from effort until the other foot comes into contact with the ground on the next step.

Percy Cerutti, the great Australian coach of Herb Elliott (1960 Olympic Champion who retired undefeated over 1,500 metres and 1 mile) observed that running is not a natural activity, but an unnatural endeavour which the prospective champion has to learn. It takes enormous concentration during training for an athlete to master the subtleties of correct technique. It is important to remember that the athlete cannot talk if he is running properly. If you are talking you are not breathing correctly, nor are you applying yourself to your running effectively. The runner needs to concentrate on what he or she is doing at all times.

To finish off this introductory training session, the athlete should put on a pair of shoes which do not inhibit proper technique (see Chapter Three for a detailed description of the characteristics of a well-designed running shoe).

It is the coach's job to understand the requirements of proper technique, and to make sure that the athlete is aware of his or her technical errors and the means of correcting them. Coaches must moderate the amount of work they ask their athletes to perform during the first days or weeks after learning proper technique. Like any other aspect of training, the athlete's body must be allowed to adjust to the new experience of running correctly. With proper technique, the muscles of the feet and legs, as well as those of the arms and shoulders, will have to work extremely hard. Soreness and fatigue are the natural result, until muscle strength and fitness develop. The coach and the athlete must continue to proceed with caution and care. Hold back training volume, but maintain the frequency of training sessions. Two sessions a day for as little as 10 or 15 minutes each are adequate until the athlete's muscles can cope with the new demands being made on them.

No athlete should make a commitment to running which is less than that absolutely possible given his or her physical ability. At the same time, however, too many coaches and runners today take it for granted that all that is necessary to succeed is a willingness to work very hard, with miles and miles of training and endless stopwatch smashing, and a positive approach to training and racing. You must also run correctly. You must control every aspect of the act of training and racing. It takes close attention to lifestyle and diet. It takes concentration on correct technique every step of the way. It takes a willingness to moderate all aspects of your daily life which may interfere with training. But, most of all, it takes an understanding of exactly what is required to make the best of your running. The rest of this book covers the steps necessary to succeed - to attain the highest level you can. Failure to understand the means and objectives of correct training and technique will lead only to injury and frustration, and an abandonment of that great gift to man - to run like a deer.

CHAPTER THREE - INJURIES, TECHNIQUE AND SHOES

The three subjects cited in the title of this chapter are closely related, and yet, unfortunately, most athletes take injuries for granted - as going hand in hand with hard training - and usually view them as being the result of mysterious accidents. Injuries seem almost to be considered a matter of fate, utterly out of the athlete's control. Even Grete Waitz had this misconception. Grete said in late 1984 that her body was beginning to break down under the strain of all the miles she had run over the years. If that were true, my body would have come apart in the mid-1950s. It did not. Injuries need not occur at all. Of course, there are times when an unseen stone or tree root might send a runner head-over-heels to the infirmary, but most stress-related injuries keeping runners on the sidelines are preventable. This is not to say that running-related injuries are not a serious problem, however, as evidenced by the rapid growth in recent years of a new medical specialty devoted to the care of injured athletes.

It has become fashionable for so-called fitness experts to suggest that running is not the best way to get fit. These experts even suggest that running is not an activity the body was designed to do. This is rubbish! As long as the runner (whether brand new to the sport or a grizzled veteran) is running correctly and training sensibly, there is little to fear from stress-related injuries.

Let us begin our discussion, therefore, by considering the problem of the perpetually injured runner. A runner trying to solve the injury prevention puzzle must start with the most basic aspect of the activity. A person new to the sport or a much injured veteran will very likely need to start at square one. Most people who begin to run, either competitively or for health reasons, believe that all they need to know is the location of the nearest running shoe store. They dash out, pay a large sum of money for the latest running shoes, and start running. Most - about 70 percent according to medical statistics - will be injured before they have broken in their new high-tech footwear, their legs usually being affected first. This injury cycle will continue unchecked until the runner either quits in frustration, or is forced to do so because he or she is too crippled to continue.

It is absolutely essential that the runner wears shoes which make correct running technique possible, and that he or she is constantly supervised until correct technique is mastered. This is the coach's most important job in the early stages of a runner's development. There is no point in running large distances until the athlete has learned to run correctly. I cannot emphasize this point enough. An athlete who runs correctly can train hard for years without any time lost to stress-related injuries. I have trained very hard for 45 years and have suffered only two or three injuries which have stopped me from training. My longevity is a direct result of paying close attention to the way I run, and what I put on my feet. Shoes which enable correct running technique are essential.

In many cases, it is possible to tell in advance what kind of injury a runner will suffer from, by examining the way he or she runs. I can tell an injured athlete what error in running technique they are making from the particular injury they have. A specific injury may be caused by a particular type of running shoe, or a specific error in running technique. Over 70 percent of the running shoes on the market today are causing injuries by their design. By an amazing coincidence, this 70 percent figure corresponds to the percentage of runners who are injured every year.

It is not only essential to learn correct running technique, but equally vital to find a shoe designed to allow correct technique to develop. It is no coincidence that most runners from developing nations, many of whom grew up never wearing shoes, exhibit the best



Sport. Athletics. G. Britain v Russia at White City.
Dixon. 20/9/61. R6961. R6961-R6965.



Sport. Athletics. Gt Britain v Russia. at White City. R6964.
Dixon. 20/9/61. R6961-R6965.

running technique. We marvel over the incredible fluidity of the great African runners, without ever stopping to consider the source of their grace and efficiency.

Bill Toomey, the 1968 Olympic Decathlon Champion from the United States, made video tapes of 100 champion runners in Montreal in 1976 in order to evaluate their technique. It is common-sense to assume that the best athletes in the world (those who consistently place highly in major championships) share common technical traits. All of the athletes filmed by Toomey used the same basic technique - the same technique I use, and teach to my athletes. The athletes filmed by Toomey all landed on the forefoot. None of the 100 landed heel-first!

While poorly designed shoes and incorrect technique are the most common causes of injuries, however, they are certainly not the only ones. Other causes include: running when ill or before full recovery; poor posture, leading to lower back and hamstring problems; motor vehicles, either knocking a runner off the road or causing injuries by their poor ergonomics, especially after hard running; insufficient rest; poor diet; poisons from various foods; and the environment.

The best way to begin injury prevention is to learn correct technique and practice it constantly. A computer study of pressures on the foot during running indicated that the highest pressure and "wear and tear" zones were at the front and ball of the foot, and beneath the toes. Certainly, when one runs on the beach, one notices that the sand is dug up by the toes. The ball of the foot makes a strong print, while only a soft indentation is made by the heel. Amazingly, despite these straightforward observations, most running shoes are designed with the greatest amount of "protective" material at the heel.

The champion runners, who all have to run correctly, do not make much noise when their foot lands. When the fastest runner runs, he is very quiet on his feet. Excessive foot noise indicates that you are striking the ground instead of caressing it. You are dissipating energy which should be utilised in propelling yourself forward. This shows bad timing. The force to drive you forward should only be applied after the foot has settled on the ground completely. Striking the ground, especially with the heel, causes trauma and makes the runner susceptible to injury.

The nerves conveying tactile sensation from the foot are predominantly located in the forefoot. When the ball of the foot touches the ground, these nerves "alert" the muscles of the legs, which involuntarily react to absorb the shock of landing. If a person hits the ground heel-first, this reaction of the leg muscles will be considerably less, and consequently more shock will be experienced at the point of contact of the foot, and be transmitted to the bones of the leg. This jarring is guaranteed eventually to cause injury to the ankle, knee and/or hip joints.

It is therefore important that a runner lands on the forward portion of the foot, with the knee slightly bent, and with the foot placed beneath the body. By doing so, the runner will make use of the body's own efficient shock absorbers - the arch of the foot, the calf muscles, and the quadriceps muscles in the thighs - and in this way reduce the stress experienced by the heel, shin bone, knee joint, thigh bone and hip joint. It is these areas which are stressed the most when the heel strikes the ground.

An examination of the vast majority of running shoes on the market today reveals that the shoe manufacturers have made the mistaken assumption that runners should strike the ground heel-first. Certainly, their advertising suggests that this is the correct technique.

More and more people are discovering the satisfaction that running provides, and participation in the sport has exploded in the past 15 years. People entering the sport since the mid-1970s, who know nothing but the heavily-built type of running "boot", wrongly assume that it is proper technique to strike the ground heel-first with a straightened knee. They have made the mistaken assumption that the shoe manufacturers

know what they are talking about. They do not! Most of these runners, and many experienced runners, are often injured and constantly fatigued because they have never been exposed to correct technique and footwear. They are being encouraged to run incorrectly by the shoe design.

So, stay off your heels! This rule applies to running on any surface, in any terrain, and at any speed, either up- or downhill - with the exception of running downhill on loose sand or gravel. In the latter case, you should bury your feet heel-first into the ground to stop sliding.

When I run a road race in the US or Europe, in the midst of runners of every age and ability, the noise of their feet crashing to the ground is deafening. This racket is caused by runners slamming their feet into the ground heel-first. A runner must land on the outside portion of the ball of the foot, with the knee slightly flexed. The knee should be flexed so that the large muscles of the thigh can aid in absorbing the shock of landing. The foot must land on the ground directly under the body (not way out in front as is often the case when a runner tries to “stride out”, straightening the knee). When I am running with a group of athletes of my own height, I am lower than the rest in my running stance. My relative height is reduced because I am closer to the ground with my knee flexed during the weight bearing phase of the running stride - when the body is passing over the foot. This “low” running posture allows me to stay in contact with the ground longer, and makes it possible for me to generate more power during each contact power-phase with the ground. If a runner is making full use of his feet and legs as shock absorbers, he will make little if any noise when he runs, even on the steepest downhill stretches, because there is no vertical pounding of the feet and legs into the ground. The body will not crash down on the foot, but will pass smoothly over it. For most runners, the timing of this action does not come naturally and takes a good deal of practice. Close attention needs to be paid to correct technique from the outset. A runner must be as concerned about proper technique as a field-event performer or a hurdler. Hurdlers do not go over the barriers two legs at a time, because that technique is too slow. They work constantly at removing even tiny technical flaws, just as a flat runner must. It may be slow-going at first, but the pay-off will be months and years of injury-free running.

The human foot is the result of millions of years of evolution. The shoe companies want to change the design of the foot straightaway. Running in the cumbersome, orthopaedic boots that jam the display shelves in the typical running shoe store is akin to John McEnroe trying to play tennis with a baseball.

Correct running technique will be prevented if the rear portion of the foot is lifted high off the ground by a running shoe with a larger volume of cushion material at the rear of the foot than at the front (I can always catch a girl in high heels). If the shoe raises the heel above the level of the ball of the foot, then the foot will be prevented from carrying out its full range of movement. In the normal case, you start with a flat foot and the calf muscle group fully stretched - the toe pressed into the ground. Your flexed knee sets the foreleg sloping forward. Then the calf muscles become well stretched, practically to their maximum, so that the full range of contraction can occur as the toes are driven into the ground at the finish of the power phase, and prior to the foot losing contact with the ground.

With improper shoes, the heel is already up, and you lose a large proportion of your propelling capability. The result is reduced power, speed and efficiency. Thus, such shoes make correct technique impossible. A shoe with a wedged heel also causes premature contact with the ground by the heel, even before the full stride is completed. The result is a stubbing gait which is so common amongst joggers. They are nearly tripping themselves up with the heels of their shoes on every step. A high heel is also less

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stable than a flatter-heeled shoe. Ankle sprains are a very common affliction among runners who wear such high-heeled shoes. It is no surprise that the high heel is quickly worn away - because it shouldn't be there!

American tennis player Cathy Jordan, after missing a shot in the US Open, could be heard on television admonishing herself by shouting: "Bend your knees! Get on your toes!". All great athletes get on their toes. If you want to beat someone in any sport, all you have to do is to get them back onto their heels! Good technique requires the runner to caress the ground with his or her feet, and to land with a slightly flexed knee. But what do we see in the majority of cases? Straight-legged "runners" pounding the ground with their heels. They end up crippled.

People are advised not to run because it will ruin their feet and knees. In 45 years, I have run more than 240,000 miles without any major problems, and with more than half that distance covered on so-called hard pavement. Have I been lucky? No. I have merely employed correct technique, as described, and have been careful about the shoes I wear.

There are few accidents in athletics if a runner is successful (whether in terms of Olympic medals or just years of injury-free running), and there is a reason for this success. The most significant element is correct technique (made possible by good shoes). There is a lot more to running correctly than just getting your feet and legs working properly, however. What you do with your hands and arms is equally important. I have heard a number of well-known coaches tell runners that it doesn't matter what they do with their arms. My response is to ask them if it is okay if I run with one arm behind my back and the other between my legs. They look at me as if I've lost my marbles. Then I put both hands over my head and ask: "Is this okay?". Or, I'll put my hands on my ears and ask: "How about this?". If none of these methods of carrying your arms is correct, and if we eliminate all the incorrect ways of using your upper body and arms (*reductio ad absurdum* in mathematics), we logically should arrive at something that works very well indeed. The best way to get a clear idea of how to use your hands and arms is to watch what the best runners in the world are doing with theirs. You will not find sloppy technique among the vast majority of the best runners. In any sport, the athletes we most admire are those who have the capacity to make everything they do look easy. The champions have an appearance of economy of movement which gives an illusion of ease. Those who are at the top are making maximum use of their bodies with powerful action. The way the human body is designed and put together demands that certain criteria be met for it to function the way it is supposed to. While it is important to take into account individual differences, the basic biomechanics required for maximum speed and efficiency will be the same for every runner. All humans have joints which bend the same way, and similar muscle elasticity and blood viscosity.

Most runners reading this book will not use their hands, arms, and feet enough. While we use our hands and arms in many activities on a day-to-day basis, the feet don't do much for most people except to give them something to stand on, and get them from place to place in an upright posture (if we are not too clumsy in the process). The same is true for runners. Most runners only use their feet as a place to land on after each stride. The feet spend the vast majority of the time during training and racing on holiday, doing nothing. If runners will just make the connection between their brains and their feet, they will become very efficient indeed. Speed is initiated by strong feet and calves.

A runner, therefore, has to educate his or her feet to be very energetic, and to take an active role in moving around the track or down the road. The feet need to be used in much the same way as the hands are - with a feeling of control - and in a vigorous action that includes each and every muscle of the foot. The education of the feet is best accomplished by practising exaggerated leg and foot exercises.

My first coach back in 1941 was E.J. Holt. He was a trainer of many champion runners, as well as being one of the organisers of the 1956 Olympic Games. All of his athletes did prancing and bounding exercises initially, to learn to run. We often did this in bare feet, if the weather permitted. We learned to be very conscious of the role our feet could play in improving our running, and inhibited our arm action during this foot-education process so that our minds could focus entirely on what was going on at the end of our legs. Later, as we increased our velocity and skill, we employed more and more hand and arm action. These exercises taught our bodies spatial perception, motor control and the basic “nerve patterns” necessary for correct running technique. You can expect to be very tired and stiff in your feet and legs when you first do this, because the muscles in these areas are simply not up to the demands you are making on them. Keep at it, though, and the soreness and fatigue will pass. (It may help to massage the feet often). In this way, you will become a much better runner.

Correct running should feel like a series of very quick but powerful pulses, with the arms and legs working in unison, followed by a period of relaxed flying between each power phase. Try to take a quicker stride than is natural. Quicken up! Get your feet back onto the ground as quickly as possible. This can be achieved by strong arm-stopping, which causes the foot to land quickly but lightly on the ball/front of the foot. Do not wait for the leg and foot to drift away and land on its own out in front whenever it wants. Make it snappy and quick. Do not float along. Watch runners like Joan Benoit and Carlos Lopes; both employ quick but very powerful running actions.

Breathing should match the quick, sharp rhythm your arms and legs have established. Breathe out with quick, short puffs, almost panting like a dog. Do not breathe in deeply! Like everything else we've dealt with so far, this powerful running action (including proper breathing) takes a great deal of practice. You will hear a lot of runners encouraged to relax in the midst of a very hard training or racing effort. The relaxation should take place during the short passive (stationary) rest period between the power phases of each step of your running. Concentrate very hard on mastering this brief period of relaxation. A lazy, “relaxed” running style will not allow you to run at your best. Running fast (whether a world record or personal best) demands an intensive, concentrated, powerful effort. Breathing as described assists in the physiology of circulation and gaseous exchange.

Let us now take a closer look at correct arm action, firstly by examining examples of poor technique. There are many runners who throw their arms across the body in great sweeping arcs. The result is that the legs swing in wide arcs also, and the runner wastes a lot of energy going from side to side, instead of straight ahead. Leg injuries can result from running in this manner, as it puts a great deal of strain on the knee and hip joints, which are not designed to support a side-to-side and twisting action. Then there are runners who take the arms along for the ride, carrying them uselessly at their side. The result of not using the arms effectively is very slow speed, and an excessive amount of stress put on the legs and mid-section of the body. A “stitch” is often the result of a jerky, twisting motion of the upper body, and stomach muscles trying to balance the powerful leg activity. The job the arms have to do! Back troubles leading to hamstring problems are another result of this “no arms” body twisting.

The hands should swing up and across the body (remember the acute angle of the elbow), not quite reaching the centre line of the chest. When you have this arm action mastered it will cause your footprints to follow a straight line. This type of arm action will make the feet swing in slightly, and the foot land naturally on the extreme outside edge of the ball of the foot. God designed the human foot to work in this way, with a nicely rounded heel, so that the foot can roll gently inwards as it takes and carries the full weight of the body.

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London - Newcastle Relay
Race starting from Hyde
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Sport. Athletics. G. Britain v Russia. at White City. R6962.
Dixon. 20/9/61. R6961-R6965.



An arm action which is too wide and sweeping, or is in any way haphazard, will make it impossible for the feet and arms to work in harmony.

In proper running technique, therefore, the foot should land on its outer front perimeter, such that the footprint follows a straight line. As the weight is borne by the foot, it rolls inwards until flat on the ground. If you run incorrectly, for example by throwing the arms out wide to the sides and all over the place instead of pulling the fist and forearm in and across the body, the legs will also fly out wide of the straight line track of correct running. This makes two distinct lines of footprints, with one for the left foot and the other for the right foot. As a result, the feet will not strike the ground on their outer perimeter, and in the worst case may even land on their inner perimeter. In the latter case, the foot will roll outwards and the shoes will become worn out and collapse on the inner side of the soles. This is what the shoe manufacturers try to counteract by putting all sorts of boot-like structures on the heels of their shoes. If you correct your running technique, however, your shoes should wear properly without such alterations being necessary.

Remember that the arms and fists are punched high and a little across the body, and towards the centre of the chest. The other important factor in proper arm carriage is the position of the elbow when the arm swings back behind the body, with the hand at the side of the ribs. The most effective position is achieved by a closing of the angle of the elbow - a sharpening of the elbow position and a simultaneous controlled, tidy hand location - close to the side of the lower ribs. This is in contradiction to articles I have read in various running magazines. They say that you should throw your hand down, back, and away from the body. You see this exhibited by many runners. One of the worst examples is Lorraine Moller of New Zealand. It is interesting to watch what happens to these loose-armed runners in a tight race. When Moller ran in the Los Angeles Olympic Marathon, she and the rest of the runners were following Joan Benoit up to about 20km. At this point, Rosa Mota and Grete Waitz piled on the pace with their compact and efficient running styles, but Moller could not respond, as her inefficient arm flopping actually prevented her from quickening her pace. Her arms absorbed energy from her legs, instead of adding to the force she was able to generate, and in the space of only two or three kilometres, Moller was left so far behind that she was out of sight on my video film. Moller has been advised by a school of coaching which says: "It doesn't matter how you run, especially with your arms. All you have to do is relax them" - even if this means dangling the arms. This is rubbish. Anne Audain has also degenerated to this arm flopping and dangling technique, and by a remarkable coincidence was also decimated in the Los Angeles marathon after about 20km.

We see sprinters getting away with murder in the 100 metres as far as good arm technique is concerned, and even some of the best sprinters run with bad errors in arm technique. As they go up in distance, however, this "sorts out" many of the bad runners, and they get increasingly injured especially when negotiating bends. Even the 400- and 800-metre events see sloppy runners, but in a Marathon such runners only stay in the lead for a short time, if at all, with the increasing distance eliminating them one by one, until the finish brings the cream to the top.

The ruling principles in correct running technique, therefore, are power and efficiency. It takes endless hours of practice to get it right, and it may be necessary at first to spend several days or weeks practising in bare feet in a nice, safe place such as a running track or strip of smooth grass. Take the development of proper style one step at a time. Be patient. There is no need to move on until you have mastered the skill you are working on. As you develop, continue to keep the skills you have already mastered clearly in mind. It may be helpful to work with a partner or in a small group so that you can help

each other as you go along. A knowledgeable coach is the greatest asset a runner can have.

After you have correct technique mastered, you can then move on to a training programme which will allow you to meet your goals safely, efficiently, and without injuries.

What About Shoes?

Now that we know something about correct technique, let us consider in more detail the type of shoes which will be of greatest benefit, and how to make them from the garbage produced by most shoe manufacturers.

In bare feet, Abebe Bikela won the 1960 Olympic Marathon over the terrible streets of Rome on a course that included stretches of cobblestones. Bruce Tulloh won the 1962 European 5,000-metre championship in his bare feet, running the last three laps in just over three minutes. Similarly, in bare feet, teenager Zola Budd set world records over 2,000 and 5,000 metres, world junior records at 1,500 and 3,000 metres, and ran one mile in 4:17.55; she was also barefoot when she won the 1985 World Cross Country Championships.

Look closely at the footwear worn in major championship events, and you won't see anyone competing in anything except the very lightest racing spikes. No-one in the Olympic Games or World Championships races in the overstuffed, wedge-heeled orthopaedic boots that most joggers wear. This is not surprising, as the difference between running in barefeet and in the typical jogging shoe can be up to 30 seconds a mile, and I therefore advise all my trainees to wear the very lightest shoes they can find for training. These shoes should have the same amount of padding at the front under the toes as at the rear, with no wedged or flared heels. It is essential that the material under the toes of the foot be at least as thick as anywhere else in the sole, because 90 percent of the wear takes place under the toes when correct technique is employed.

Unfortunately, the ideal running shoe is not offered by most major manufacturers. Your best hope is to get the lightest, most economically constructed shoes you can find, then machine them to the correct specifications. The perfect running shoe should be something like a heavy-duty ballet slipper - simply an extra layer of protective material around the foot, like a glove. If you run correctly, you will be able to wear such a shoe and never be injured. I once advised a 58-year-old marathon runner, Ed Schaeffer, whose best time had been 3:28, to change his technique and shoes, with the result that his time immediately dropped to 2:58. He told me later it had been "easy" to run 30 minutes faster! Another example was a 4:12.8 miler I retrained; he dropped his time to 4:02 in just three weeks.

Now that you know what to do with your feet and legs, and understand how poorly designed running shoes contribute to both injury and slower running, how may we produce a shoe to fit your feet?

We shall do this by taking a typical pair of running shoes, and reconstructing them to the correct specifications. Firstly, the shoe should fit properly; the foot will slip and slide in a shoe that is not close-fitting, resulting in a loss of performance as well as friction-related injuries such as blisters, which can lead to subtle changes in the way you run, and predispose to more serious injuries. Ideally, the shoe should fit snugly "like a glove".

Secondly, it is essential to prevent the most common injury directly related to poor shoe design, namely that to the Achilles tendon. A very quick way to guarantee yourself an injury to this very vulnerable part of your body is to allow any part of your shoe to impinge on the tendon - all running shoes have a piece of material (either plastic or



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Gordon Pirie winning the Three Mile
Event

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leather) that jams into the tendon when the foot is plantar-flexed (i.e. the toe is pointed down). Clearly, if you run many miles, you will put a great deal of jabbing pressure on the soft Achilles tendon on every step, mile after mile. With an Achilles “protector” on your shoe, discomfort or injury is guaranteed. The quickest remedy to this problem is to take a knife to the curved piece of shoe material and cut it off, so that the top of the shoe heel is level with the rest of the upper, and below the level of the soft tissue of the Achilles tendon. The top of the shoe heel must not be higher than the bony heel. Runners who come to me limping with very sore Achilles tendons are able to run away with their pain relieved after this surgery is performed on the shoe (with the shoe removed, of course). This “operation” will make the shoe about half a size larger than it was originally, so bear this in mind when purchasing shoes. Thus, if you buy your shoes a bit snug and remove the heel tag before you wear them, Achilles tendon problems should become a thing of the past.

Another problem related to shoe design is the shape of the inside of the heel of the typical running shoe, which is different from that of the normal human heel, such that it only contacts the top of the heel bone. As a result, there is too much empty space around the base of the heel bone. This space needs to be filled in to provide a close fit around the entire heel. If left unfilled, the upper portion of the heel bone will receive excessive pressure because the shoe presses on the foot only on an area directly below the junction of the Achilles tendon with the heel bone. The result is severe blistering in the short term, and heel spurs and Achilles tendonitis in the long term. To make the shoe conform to the shape of your heel, fill in the space with surgical padding, being very careful to ensure that the padding conforms exactly to the shape of your heel.

Clearly, this should be the job of the shoe manufacturers, and I discussed this problem with Adi Dassler, the late founder of Adidas, as early as 1959. He agreed with my evaluation of the shape of running shoe heels (but, sadly, I still find it necessary to customise Adidas shoes).

To summarise, therefore, friction interference of running shoes with the soft tissue of the Achilles tendon and bursae of the heel bone/Achilles tendon junction causes injury. Consequently, all parts of the shoe that impinge on this area should be removed.

Contrary to what the shoe companies would have you believe, the foot is supposed to twist and roll as it goes through each contact phase with the ground, and yet they continue to come up with new ways to prevent the foot from moving in this way. The amount of movement varies from person to person, and depends on the strength and development of the intrinsic muscles of the foot and foreleg, and whether you land correctly with each foot. Putting all sorts of excess materials and supposed clever ideas into running shoes (i.e. soles and uppers) has practically nothing to do with these foot movements. When the shoe is on the ground, it becomes a part of the ground and the foot does its necessary rolling and twisting within the shoe. If a shoe is made to become a straight jacket to prevent the natural movement of the foot - for example a ski boot, or a stiff rubber gumboot - you cannot run, you hobble. You will only be able to carry out part of the physical movements, and apply only a fraction of the physical forces, that are essential to drive yourself forward at a fast running pace. This is easy to prove - go out and run in bare feet, then start adding material onto your feet. You will slow down.

The same applies to shoes which interfere with the undersurface of the foot. Any change in the curvature of the sole of the foot caused by a shoe - for example, nylon pylons across the sole at the rear of the ball of the foot, lifted nylon rings around the spikes, and lumpy soles caused by the cut-away under the toes of most jogger's shoes (thus presenting a ridge under the padded ball of the foot) - will interfere with your ability to run. The rolled up toes common to most jogging shoes are the cause of the sharp pains in

and around the joints between the toes and the metatarsals familiar to most runners. Any departure from the natural shape of the foot will interfere with your ability to run, and lead to injury.

The current infatuation with exotic running shoe design has not always been in effect. When I began running back in 1939, everybody used a “plimsoll” - the English name for a very light canvas tennis shoe, which could be bought from Woolworth's for just a few pennies. Most of the running we did in those days was through the woods and over the downs - those rolling hills so typical of the English countryside. The North Downs Escarpment in Surrey, where a great deal of our training was done, is particularly steep and rugged. There are footpaths through the woods and fields, and the going is beautiful, with reasonable green grass in the spring and summer, and lovely mud in the winter. The woods and fields are interlaced with miles of hedge-lined country lanes, barely wide enough for two cars to pass. The surface of these old roads is not particularly hard, and is smooth and firm. The countryside around our home at Coulsdon stretched out for miles like this in every direction. Access from our street was straight up a 250-foot hill at a gradient of about one in three. Every run we did started up that hill outside our front door - flat-out (with no stretching exercises!).

Our school races from Purley County Grammar School - which is situated on top of one of those rugged hills - started with a three-quarter mile descent, then rose sharply up another hill to the top of the Downs, levelling off for about half a mile along the summit, before descending again into the valley. These races finished with another stiff climb back to the school. We became very skilled at streaking down and smashing up any hill with enough energy left to sprint away at the top. Our “sand shoes”, “plimsolls”, “tennis shoes” - call them what you will - were superb and injury-free equipment.

In later years I got hold of a pair of hand-made leather “G.T. Law” cross country shoes with steel spikes in the soles. They were excellent for cross country racing, but it was not a good idea to run on country lanes with them. Leather shoes like those cost a lot of money, and were something of a luxury. I wore away the steel spikes of this particular pair, and repaired them myself with sail maker's gear - a hard leather thimble and a large needle - replacing the sole after putting new steel spikes in place. Even though I worked at keeping these shoes together, they did not last long enough; not because my skills as a cobbler were particularly lacking, but simply because I ran too many miles in those fine shoes.

Most of the time we trained in our plimsolls. The plimsolls were smooth-soled, so we had to concentrate very hard on staying on our feet when running on slick or muddy ground. We became very strong as a result. The constant hill running, the mud and the smooth-soled shoes meant that we *had* to develop efficient technique!

Cross country racing in England has always been a very tough game. It has absolutely nothing in common with what passes for cross country in the US and in World Cross Country Championships. The courses we ran traversed newly-ploughed fields, swampy areas and very tough hills. The runners had to be strong to run on these courses, which covered distances of up to 10 miles. These races sorted out the men from the boys in a hurry! I believe this tough style of cross country running is a major reason why the British have had so many great runners. The cross country season runs from September to March in England, which is not exactly the dry season, so shoes are very important. I began running with very little appreciation of just how large a part shoes play in an athlete's success, but discovered the hard way that if you wear the wrong shoes, you cannot perform at your best, and you will be beaten.

One year I used a pair of “studded” hockey shoes that were constructed in a similar fashion to high-topped basketball shoes. It was necessary to cut off all the extra ankle



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material to make them flexible enough for running. Another type of shoe I tried was a Canadian-made cushion-soled basketball shoe. These shoes were extremely comfortable, which is why I chose them! However, in hindsight, that was no criterion for judging the suitability of a running shoe. I ran a cross country race of five miles in those shoes, which was a serious mistake. The rest of the field, including my brother Peter, were usually easy to beat by a minute. But with those boots on my feet, they kept up with me. I learned that these heavy-soled “boots” were useless for racing unless I wanted to lose. They were a lot like the orthopaedic running boots most joggers wear today. I did not make the same mistake of wearing those shoes in a race again. Since then, I have learned that even training in shoes like that damages a runner's skill so much that you cannot race effectively. They cause an athlete to run incorrectly, develop improper technique, and become injured.

I had my first pair of track-racing spikes made to measure by Law's of London in 1948. They were much lighter than my other cross country shoes. I raced in them until after the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games. I think I lost a medal in those Games because the spikes in this particular pair of shoes had been worn down from their normal length of 10mm to less than 2mm, rendering them useless - though I was supremely ignorant of that at the time (I came fourth). I think that I might have been in contention in that 5,000-metre race when the sprint started if those shoes had had any steel left in them to grip the track. Their leather soles were scored with long abrasions as the toes of my feet dug away at the cinder track, slipping at every step.

So much for my early ignorance of the importance of proper shoes. Today, I am very particular about the shoes worn by the athletes I train. I teach all my runners to train in the lightest shoes they can find. Anne Audain told a mutual friend in 1982: “Well, at least one good thing Gordon Pirie taught me was to wear lightweight shoes”. In recent times, Anne has run in heavier shoes; and has had a good dose of injury as a result.

In the 1952 Olympics, Bronze Medalist Herbert Schade of West Germany wore a pair of red shoes that caught everyone's eye. The colour was very unusual because all running shoes then were made of black or brown leather. Through Schade at Helsinki, I met Dassler, a stocky, genial man who was never without a cigar in his mouth. He was the man who had made Schade's red shoes, and he offered to give me a pair. Nobody in England had offered me such help. This was a very welcome development, because I had been making my badly worn shoes work for over two years, even after they had become useless.

This brief episode began the “Pirie-Adidas connection”, an association that has lasted for well over 30 years. I have run with Adidas shoes since that first meeting with Dassler, and have found them better than most other brands. From time to time, I lived at Adi Dassler's home, and worked closely with him at the Adidas factory bench in Herzogenaurach. It was we who designed the present day track spike layout in Adidas track shoes. Prior to this time, Adidas track shoes had had a large spiked area well back under the arch of the foot. These rear spikes were not necessary and got in the way. I told Adi to get rid of them. He did. Today, with most track racing done on rubberised surfaces, the track spike layout needs to be changed once again.....

Dassler used many of my ideas when he redesigned his running shoes during the 1950s. The wedged sole for what became the Adidas “Interval” shoe was our design, and was first constructed right there at the Adidas factory bench for Shirley Pirie to sprint in. Today, Adidas has become a huge conglomerate, and no-one seems to be able to get a good idea into its impregnable corporate machinery. The type of close work I did with Adi Dassler has become impossible, and shoe designs have suffered accordingly.

To test the shoes we designed, I ran hundreds of miles in each pair and wrote a log of the mileage on each shoe. I then posted the shoes back to Adi so improvements could be worked out. The biggest breakthrough we made was to find the answer to the problem of worn steel spikes, which had cost me a better result at Helsinki. All racing shoes in those days had fixed spikes. Once the steel had been ground away by the cinders, which I managed to do in about 200 miles of hard running over a week or two, the shoes had to be discarded, even though the upper might still be perfectly good. I discussed this problem with Dassler, and asked why the shoes didn't have steel spikes that could be replaced. I was throwing away shoes by the dozen. The answer was surprising simple: we came up with the idea of screwing the spikes in and out of the shoes so that the steel could be replaced, and, even better, changed to suit different track surfaces. Because Dassler was willing to work closely with an athlete like me to improve the design of his shoes, his company became the first to come out with track shoes with replaceable spikes. Ironically, I nearly lost my amateur status at that time because every box of Adidas shoes contained a picture of me running a world record in Adi Dassler's bright red track shoes! (Although I never made any money out of this - a fact that seems incredible in comparison with today's hyper-commercial world).

I had a difficult time getting Adidas shoes introduced into England. I tried initially in 1953 and 1954 to have the shoes sold in English sports shops, but failed. I took a pair of Adidas shoes into one famous Lower Regent Street shop, Lillywhites, and was told by the buyer there that: "These things will never sell!"

In recent years, I have had ideas about running shoes which are just as revolutionary as those pursued with Adi Dassler in the 1950s, but my ideas are just too radical and advanced for Adidas. Sadly, Adi died a few years ago, and his huge corporation has become completely divorced from the grass roots of the sport. For example, I had a meeting with Horst Dassler (who took over the management of Adidas some time ago), at which I told him I thought that certain Adidas shoes were being constructed according to improper ideas. His answer was that the company had spent a large sum of money on a "motion study" of runners before designing that particular pair of shoes. I laughed, and told him that he could have paid me half that amount, and I would have come up with a better design. I told Horst Dassler that Adidas obtained flawed results in their expensive study because the runners they examined were not running properly. Sadly, he ignored my suggestions, and it seems that running shoes have become little more than an injury-producing, speed-reducing fashion statement.

Finally, I have two brief observations to make concerning the materials with which running shoes are constructed. Firstly, if you are running correctly your shoes will wear out initially at a point directly under your toes. You can prove this by taking off your shoes and going for a short run (on a safe surface, of course) in bare feet. Very quickly you will find you develop blisters on your toes. If you run correctly, the same thing will happen to your shoes; they will wear out under the toes. I can wear out a pair of standard jogging shoes, made with a thin layer of material rolled up under the toe, in just one long hard run on abrasive pavement. It is very important, therefore, for the toe area of your running shoes to be constructed of the toughest possible material, and to be of adequate thickness.

The second point concerns the material that makes up the sole of your shoe, because if the sole is too soft, you will lose stability. Any soft, mushy material between your foot and the ground will decrease the amount of stability the shoe provides, and will also absorb much of the power you should be using to run with (try running on a trampoline or a high jump pad; it is simply not possible). Buy shoes that are not too soft, therefore, and do not under any circumstances put anything soft inside your shoes. You will defeat

the purpose of buying a firm, lightweight shoe in the first place. Instead of looking for padding, learn to run properly, so that you stop punching holes in the ground with your feet.



Purley, 1946 (can you spot Gordon?)

December 5th 1970 Vol. 24 No. 49

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CHAPTER FOUR - TRAINING

In this chapter, we will examine the specifics of how to prepare yourself to compete over the full range of racing distances - from 100 metres up to the marathon. The specifics of training for each group of distances may be different, but the basic principles remain the same, regardless of whether the athlete's race lasts a few seconds or for several hours. The goal of training is to prepare the body to cover a particular distance as quickly as possible. The key to a sound training programme is understanding what is required in order to accomplish that goal.

How To Run A Race

The purpose of training is, of course, to race over your speciality as quickly as possible. In order to understand exactly how to go about training for a race, we must first know what a race is and how to run it.

If you came from outer space, knew nothing at all about running, and I challenged you to a race, how would you go about preparing? Let us say that you have a month to get ready. I have shown you the starting and finishing lines. It is irrelevant what the distance is - you, the Spaceman, have no concept of Earth distances anyway. The answer to my question as to how to train is to stand at the start and run to the finish line as fast as you can. Then you will take a rest, and do it again and again until you have become good at it. On the day of the race, our Spaceman will set off as fast as possible in an attempt to get away from his competitors. He knows from his training what pace he can endure. He knows that if it is difficult for him, it is likely to be difficult for the others, too. The harder he runs, the greater his chances of defeating the others. If another runner hangs on to him, he knows that he either has the other runner at his mercy, because this fellow is hanging on, or, alternatively, the other runner is dangerous because he is attempting to pass and take over the pace himself. If it is a "hanger on" situation the Spaceman will attack, and accelerate in an effort to detach himself. If, on the other hand, it is a "cheeky challenger", the tactics must be different. Let him take the lead for a spell. If the fellow is strong, you must keep up at all costs. Keep up and gather yourself for a finishing sprint. This is the hard part. You must wait and be very alert, for your competitor is going to do the same thing. You have to strike first to get a lead of a few feet or yards, you hope, before he himself attacks. If the other runner gets his sprint in first, you must go with him instantly, striving to wear him down and finally pass him in the last few yards.

Thus, in a race, one must never give a competitor an advantage. A good example of this happening occurred in the World Record Mile of 1985, in which Sebastian Coe allowed Steve Cram to steal a considerable lead in the second lap. Coe then used up his reserves to catch up again in the third lap, and as a result lost the capacity for his legs to sprint, and hence the race. You have to keep in contact with your closest challengers the whole of the distance, Mr Coe!

Interval Training

Let us now look at the fundamentals of Gerschler's classic Interval Training Protocol, in the hope of shedding some light on this clouded subject; and in the process do away with the myths that have grown up around it.

Gerschler's system embraces all distances from 2,000 metres down to 100 metres. His statement that you can achieve full development in winter training through the use of

only the three distances of 100, 200 and 400 metres has led to the popular misconception that Gerschler and his champions only trained in this way. Wrong! Even Rudolf Harbig, World Record Holder for 400 and 800 metres, ran stretches of 2,000 metres in his preparations for races. This is a typical training day taken from Harbig's Diary:

40 mins easy running; 1x2,000m; 20mins jog; 2x1,000m; 12mins jog; 2x600m; 12mins jog; 2x300m; 8mins jog; 1x200m; 6mins jog; 1x100m; 10mins jog.

Interval running, properly applied, is not only scientifically sound, but is also the most efficient and quickest way to bring an athlete up to a high standard. Improperly applied interval training has led to this time-honoured and well-proven system being maligned and blamed for athletes experiencing all kinds of difficulties. This is because careless application of interval running can damage runners. On the other hand, when it is applied intelligently, its results can be nothing short of miraculous. The plain truth about interval running is that it serves the purpose of developing the heart, circulation and muscles better than any other system. Its beauty is that it does so in a fraction of the time required by long slow distance (LSD) training.

The longer stretches of race distance together with middle distance are an indispensable part of Gerschler's system, which is now well over half a century old. It preceded all other such systems of training, and it should be appreciated that Gerschler was the forerunner of a long line of experts who have put forward his ideas as theirs.

Much of the difficulty many athletes have with interval training is that they approach it like a competition. Gerschler's motto for interval running was: "Take it easy". As I started my faster runs in an interval session, he always called to me: "Langersammer (Slower)!". You should take an interval session in your stride, running well within your capabilities. We cruised around the faster sections of our runs with controlled power. As a result, even after 80x200 metres I was still able to go for a run around the forest in Freiburg for another 3 miles or so, and then be ready for more later in the day. It was a very enjoyable way of running, but involved a lot of sweat!

The following factors should be carefully controlled in an interval session:

1. **Speed.** The pace should be such that the athlete is able to complete the whole session without undue difficulty.
2. **Distance.** The distance run in this type of training should not be longer than the athlete can comfortably achieve at the required pace.
3. **Repetitions.** The athlete should not be expected to repeat a distance during a training session more often than he is comfortably able to do.
4. **Continuous motion.** The athlete should run at a comfortable pace between fast runs to assist in the recovery process.
5. **Variation.** Distances and speeds should be varied from session to session to maintain interest.
6. **Technique.** Training sessions should provide the coach with an excellent opportunity to monitor his athlete's technique.



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During an interval session, a given fast stretch should be run at least 10 times, with the interval between runs being determined by the time required for the athlete to recover physiologically. This can be calculated by monitoring the athlete's pulse rate during the recovery interval. The aim is to run with sufficient speed to stimulate a highest pulse at the end of the fast stretch of 180 beats per minute; that is, 18 beats in 6 seconds. Recovery at this top end of the heart's effort occurs so rapidly that the best way to count the pulse rate is electronically. Failing this, measure the pulse rate at the wrist, on the left breast, or on the carotid artery (one only!), using the fingertips. An actual 180 maximum heart rate may be indicated by a 17 count in the first 6 seconds, because of the rapid initial drop of heart rate.

The interval should be run at a continuous trot, and with the same rhythm that is used in the fast run; the breathing rhythm should also be identical. This assists greatly in the recovery process. The interval's length is again decided by the heart's behaviour. When the heart rate has fallen to 120 beats per minute - 12 beats in 6 seconds - the recovery is complete and the next fast stretch can be run. As one might expect, the interval after the first few fast sections will initially be short, and then progressively lengthen to a standard interval as the heart takes on the full workload of the training session. A typical workout, say 20x200 metres, might see a set of intervals as follows (for a particular athlete at one stage of his development):

- No.1 x 200m : 25 secs interval.
- No.2 x 200m : 35 secs interval.
- No.3 x 200m : 45 secs interval.
- No.4 x 200m : 55 secs interval.

The next 14x200m run might require a standard interval of 60 seconds. As fatigue sets in after this, and the "rest" interval required extends to 65 seconds, **stop running!**

Progress is indicated by an improvement in the required rest interval (i.e. it gets shorter), and also by an increase in the number of repetitions which can be run before the onset of fatigue. In addition, progress should be accompanied by an ability to run the fast section at a greater speed without breaking the top pulse rule (i.e. keeping the maximum pulse rate below 180 per minute), which should occur with ease, and without extra effort.

The usual times taken to run 100 metres vary from 20 seconds for the beginner down to 15 seconds for the highly trained athlete. The equivalent figures for 200 metres are 40 and 30 seconds, and for 400 metres 80 and 60 seconds, respectively.

The number of repetitions which can be run varies from 10 up to as many as 40. Even more can be handled by a world record runner. Before the latter state is reached, however, it will be time to progress to other types of training (described later).

Interestingly, during interval training, most development occurs during the interval; this was the conclusion reached by Waldemar Gerschler and Professor Reindel at the Freiburg Sports Institute after many years of research on thousands of subjects. Consider this quote from an article by Gerschler himself, which appeared over thirty years ago in the magazine "World Sports":

"Tips From The Tutors

HEY, NOT SO FAST!

Athletes are often uncertain about what distances they should cover in training, and how fast and how often they should run them. Again and again, **THEY TEND TO GO TOO FAST IN TRAINING**, especially at shorter distances (writes Waldemar Gerschler).

Winter training can be arranged simply yet effectively if two distances are concentrated on - 100 and 200 metres - with jogged intervals between them.

A sprinter capable of running 100m inside 11 secs might reasonably take 12-13 secs for his training runs. A 400m man under 50 secs might cover 100m in 14-15 secs; the 800m man under 1:53 and a 1,500m runner under 3:50 in 14-15 secs; the longer distance runner inside 14:30 or 10,000m inside 31 mins in 16-17 secs. The jogged interval 100m should take 30 secs if the athlete is highly trained, 45 secs if in the intermediate stage and 60 secs if he is a beginner.

These times may seem quite modest but from the training angle they are rather fast - in fact I am sure many will need to make them more modest still. The time of the run is of only secondary importance; more important is the timing of the intervals, and it is vital to adhere to these.

At the beginning of an athlete's training his effort should not be forced; growing fatigue indicates it is time to stop. But after three or four months a good athlete who has been training four or five times a week should cope easily with 40 repetitions. (The sprinter should not aim at 40 repetitions; about 20 will be better for him).

For training at 200 metres, the sprinter might run that distance in 25-26 secs, the quarter miler in 28-30 secs, 800 and 1,500m men in about 30 secs, and long distance runners in 33-34 secs. The intervals between repetitions will, like those for the 100m training, depend on the athlete's ability: if in the intermediate stage, 60 secs; if a beginner, 75 secs. After three or four months, 40 repetitions should be reached.

Cross-country running in the winter provides good training, but the sprinter should not participate. It should be remembered that the athlete himself can find what suits him best, by personal experience and observation.

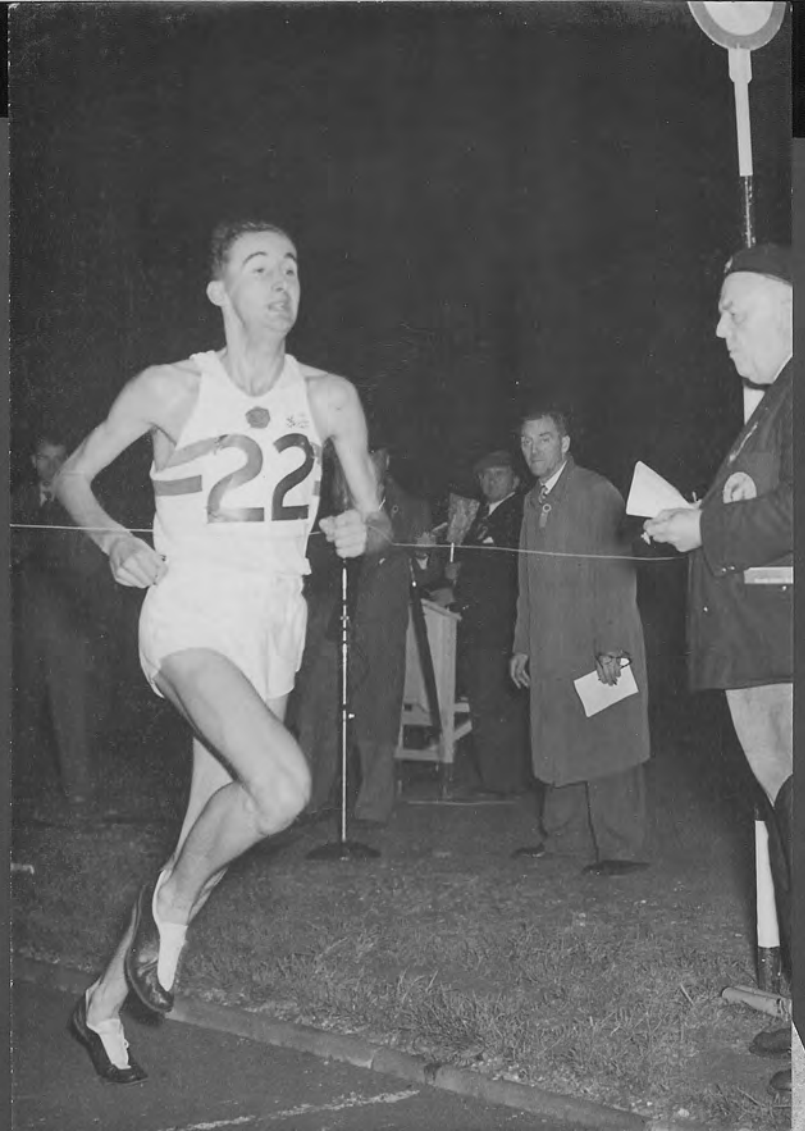
An athlete not being trained by a coach should set himself a long term target. For instance, a middle distance runner over 20 years of age may say to himself that after three or four months of winter training he will (what a significant word, that "will"!) run 40x200m in 29-30 secs without looking particularly strained. Between each 200m he will jog for 60 secs. If he has been building up over a considerable period of time, say four to five years, he can aim at reducing his jogged interval to 45 secs.

Two other sessions he might do are 40x100m in 14.5 secs (or 15 or 16 secs, to be decided by an expert), with a jogged interval of 30 secs, and 30x400m in 70 (or 72) secs, with a jogged interval of 60 (75 or 90) secs.

And, finally, remember that strength is vital in sport. If you think you are insufficiently strong in, say, the chest, arms and legs, train with weights."

Bearing in mind the above quote from Gerschler, here is how to put together a training session which effectively employs interval training. Begin with gentle activity. Since your last training session your body has no doubt drifted into a lazy state. You may be apprehensive about training because you go too hard at it.

Begin by relaxing your mind; go slowly. Even walk to start off with, then run easily but with a quick rhythm, for about 20 minutes. Most athletes do not warm-up enough. If possible, do this warm-up away from the track; in a park, woodland, or anywhere where you can concentrate on your technique and breathing. Never step straight out from cold and do those silly stretching exercises. Don't do static stretching at all; this is associated with injuries. Always run easily for 10 to 15 minutes before any exercises. Then do 5 minutes of exercises, which should mainly be free movements, imitating the actions of



running. These involve a fairly large range of movement, so will allow you to run more freely.

Now you are ready to start the interval running itself. Change into racing shoes. If the session calls for 200m in 32 secs, start easily with, say, 38 secs, using the first few to work down to the required time. The times should go about: 38, 36, 34, 33, and, finally, 32 secs. If you have never done this kind of training before, you will have to establish the interval that is appropriate for your physical condition. Lie down for the intervals and count your pulse as described earlier. The first few rests will be short, but should settle down to a steady length. The pulse rate might be: 17, 17, 16, 16, 16, 15, 15, 15, 15, 14, 14, 14, 13, 13, 13, 12, for the 6 second groups, making a total time for full recovery of 80 seconds. Note that a jogging interval will be longer, by about 10 seconds. Now you can transfer to a jogging interval of 90 seconds, checking the intervals every 5th one. When the standard resting time lengthens beyond 90 seconds, STOP RUNNING. Coincidentally, your body will also tell you to stop at about this point, as you will probably experience extra fatigue.

Note that the maximum pulse rate you will be able to count is only about 170 beats per minute, because the heart rate quickly decreases below these high levels. If you have an electronic pulse monitor, however, you may catch these top pulse levels during the last moments of running hard. If you do count 18 beats in the 6-second measurement periods, slow down your fast run so that the first count is only 17 beats in 6 seconds.

Control the interval at all times by reference to the stopwatch, and not the distance run. Thus, for example, beginners may only need to run 100 metres to raise their pulse to the required level of 180 beats per minute; some may need to run no faster than 20 seconds for their 100-metre repetitions to do this.

Your development can readily be assessed by analysing the changing parameters of your interval training over a period of time. As you progress, you will find that the rest your heart needs between each hard run will shorten dramatically, the number of repetitions (reps) that can be managed easily will increase, and the actual distance you will be able to cover will extend from the starting distance of 100 metres to 200m, 400m and so forth, as laid down in Gerschler's "World Sports" article.

It therefore follows that as you get fitter, the interval sessions will get easier in every way, and you will be able to spend less and less time at your training!

I have run crazy interval sessions, though today I do not think that they were necessary in such prodigious amounts. Here are some examples of those sessions:

100 x 100m 15 secs, jog 20 secs.

80 x 200m 29 secs, jog 30 secs.

54 x 400m 64 secs, jog 45 secs.

These training protocols were complemented by doing a one-hour warm-up, and 20 minutes of easy running afterwards. Some sessions embraced a total running time of over three and a half hours.

Today, however, after years of experience with the interval training technique, we know that it is sufficient to work up to a point where you can run 10 to 20 x 400m in around 60 seconds, with an interval of 25 to 30 seconds. When you reach this point, you are then ready to move on to greater things, and a conversion takes place from interval training to preparation for racing. Racing requires short periods of higher speeds and/or continuous speeds plus "high speed", in order to enable you to win races at the finish.

At this stage of training, you should start race simulation, and fast and hyper-fast training, interspersed from time to time with a session of interval running (but not too close to a race). Race simulation involves the following:

- 1 - Run stretches in which you race hard all the way over 30 to 40 minutes.
- 2 - Run the race distance hard.
- 3 - Run the race speed as far as you can, and repeat it.

These activities should come together over a period of about 6 weeks. For example, a 5,000m runner attempting to run 14 minutes may try to run 68 seconds per lap all the way. This speed will be adequate because the “average” time will be upgraded by a fast final lap. He therefore must practice 68 seconds per lap for the greatest distance he dares and can manage. The next step would be for him to run 14 minutes hard to accustom himself to the duration of the race effort, and then to run 5,000m time trials on the track. Time trials are an indispensable part of training. At the beginning of the season (first time trial), one usually manages to cope with 2 or 3 laps before losing speed and coming apart in every way. On the second time trial, I usually find I have improved, and manage five or six laps before crashing. After half a dozen trials, my psychological attitude has reached the stage where I am thinking: “There’s only 12 laps left, lets go! Speed up! Speed up!” instead of struggling negatively to finish the run. My legs “Speed up!” to run like a well-oiled machine, instead of negatively struggling. Most runners never reach this stage of pure attack even in racing, either because they become discouraged during their early time trials, or because they haven’t done any! Despite running world records, I had to go through this psychological and physiological phase at the beginning of every racing season - and so must you. You must cope with this if you want to win. You must build up your mind along with your body. You forget what hard effort was required last year in order to run super-fast times now.

Keep the notion of continuous motion in mind at all times. Interval training on its own can overtake and even destroy you. It is important to fully utilise all elements of a balanced training programme - interval training, longer stretches, general running and strength training - throughout the year, but to change the emphasis as your condition improves and your racing season approaches. Keep off the energy-absorbing intervals - this is where most athletes make their biggest mistake. As an athlete gets super-fit, the coach makes him run more and more sessions of 200- and 400-metre repetitions in hyper-fast times with shorter and shorter rest intervals. It certainly looks good in the training reports, but doing this sort of training will quickly turn a champ into a chump. Interval training is very destructive unless Gerschler's rules are adhered to.

Thus, take it easy with proper speeds, proper running rest intervals and proper distances. Where high racing speeds are desired, hyper-fast runs are needed, to be followed by a generous period of passive recovery (even as much as 20 minutes). Note that this is not interval running, and a different set of rules apply. An example of this type of training protocol would be:

- 400m (down to 50.0), rest 20 mins, repeat 4-8 times.
- 600m (down to 1:14), rest 20 mins, repeat 4-8 times.
- 800m (down to 1:50), rest 20 mins, repeat 4-8 times.
- 1,000m (down to 2:28), rest 20 mins, repeat 4-8 times.
- 1,200m (down to 2:50), rest 20 mins, repeat 2-6 times.

2,000m (down to 4:58), rest 20 mins, repeat 2-3 times.

The number of fast runs performed is inversely proportional to speed. Thus, the faster you go, the fewer such runs you will be able to manage. In ideal weather conditions, the rests should be passive (stationary) rest, and not running, followed by a mini-warm-up (e.g. one lap of jogging containing three or four accelerations over 10 to 15 metres). Following this, walk around for a minute or two gathering yourself for the fast run.

In order to deal with this type of faster training, we need to add some introductory speedwork to your warm-up. After the easy running and exercises, put on your spiked shoes and run 6x100 metres, beginning lightly and working up to the speed you will employ during your hyper-fast runs (e.g. 16, 15.7, 15.3, 14.9, 14.5, and 14.0 seconds per 100 metres). Between these easy warm-up sprints, jog-walk back to the start line. It is important to measure these speeds carefully because you are trying to develop fine judgement of the exact pace you will utilise in the fast time trials. A feeling of good rhythm and correct effort, plus proper technique, are all reinforced during this introductory warm-up “speed” running.

During your hyper-fast runs you will need to be given appropriate intermediate times, so that you can further develop sound pace judgement. For example, an athlete attempting to run 400 metres in 50 seconds should pass 100 metres in 12.8, 200 metres in 24.5, and 300 metres in 37 seconds. Note that the first 100 metres of each repetition should be slightly slower than the rest of the run (having started from zero speed in the first 100m), so that the athlete is able to finish strongly and fast without an undue feeling of fatigue and loss of form; as experienced in badly judged efforts (e.g. 11 secs, 11.5 secs, 12.75 secs and 14.25 secs, which is devastating physically and psychologically, and not beneficial at all).

In addition to the above, Gerschler taught us to run hard to at least 10 metres beyond the actual finish line. Gerschler was concerned how we drove through the tape in a race. He had nightmares (almost!) seeing Josey Barthel racing the last few steps, looking pleased and slowing up while winning the 1,500m Gold Medal in the Helsinki Olympics - nearly letting Bob McMillen of the USA through to win. So we always trained to run beyond the tape, and not at it!

Training is much more than just running intervals. You must go on to do race practice, together with fast and hyper-fast running. The hyper-fast times shown above are for a world-class athlete in peak form; you will therefore have to adjust your expectations accordingly. For example:

1 - 400m to be run in 60 secs, then 58 etc. down to 52 or even 48 secs over a period of time.

2 - 600m in 1:36, then 1:32, then 1:30, then 1:28, and perhaps even 1:14.

3 - 800m in 2:04, then 1:58, then 1:54, and perhaps even 1:48.

(N.B. Each training session should produce identical times for each run. The improvements quoted occur over a period of time).



Gordon Pirie flanked by Jersey's first-ever athletes to compete at the Empire & Commonwealth Games. The picture was taken at the Games in Cardiff in 1958. The smaller of the two athletes is Mike Stafford (880m & Mile) and the other is Gerald Harrison (Shot). Many thanks to Roy McCarthy (www.athleticsjersey.com) for the photo.

The variations possible in this type of training are infinite. Training becomes a very interesting game of combining all these various elements into your programme in the proper amounts at the proper times. Early in the year, you should be doing a great deal of general running in the forest, including a lot of hills. As you get fitter and fitter, you can then add interval training to your programme, and then hyper-fast running as the racing season approaches. Once you begin racing, intervals will have been phased out altogether in favour of faster and faster hyper-fast running sessions (with fewer repetitions, of course!) and the race practice sessions.

Gerschler stated that maximum speed can be developed by 100-metre sprints. However, you should maintain your overall volume of running throughout the year, and all year you should be doing weight training to assist your running (see Chapter Five).

When I was training at my best, I was able to run from three to six hours a day, taking in interval training, hyper-fast running and race simulation as part of the training “package”. Every day I ran the equivalent of a marathon or more. My body was able to sustain this kind of workload only after many years of continual and consistent hard work. The only problem I had was wearing out a lot of shoes; I did not wear out my body. For interests sake, I am listing an example of several days of training that I did prior to achieving my world record for 5,000 metres (13:36.8) in 1956. (Caution: this is not a schedule to be copied by any athlete or runner without many years of background and with exceptional ability).

Day One

7:30 a.m. - 30 minutes run.

Noon - 4 x alternate 800/1,200m (2:08, 3:11, 2:08, 3:11, 2:09, 3:12, 2:08, 3:13). Total time: three hours.

6 p.m. - 4 x alternate 800/1,200m (2:08, 3:10, 2:09, 3:12, 2:09, 3:12, 2:09, 3:13). Total time: three hours.

Total for the day: six and a half hours running.

Day Two

7 a.m. - 30 minutes run.

Noon - 8 x 800yds (1:58-1:59 followed by a five minute jog). Total running time: two and a half hours.

Evening - 10 x 440yds (57-58 seconds with a four minute jog). Total running time: two and a half hours.

Total for the day: five and a half hours running.

Day Three

7 a.m. - 30 minutes run.

Noon - 12 x 440yds (55-57 secs with a six minute jog). Total running time: two and a half hours.

Evening - 4 x 1 mile (4:11-4:15 with a 10 minute jog). Total running time: two and three-quarter hours.

Total for the day: five and three-quarter hours running.

Nowadays, running on the modern rubber track, and not the cinder track I used to do the above training, means that running times can be greatly lowered by as much as one and a half seconds per lap (taking into account the slightly shorter metric distances). In addition to all this running, I was doing a great deal of weight training!

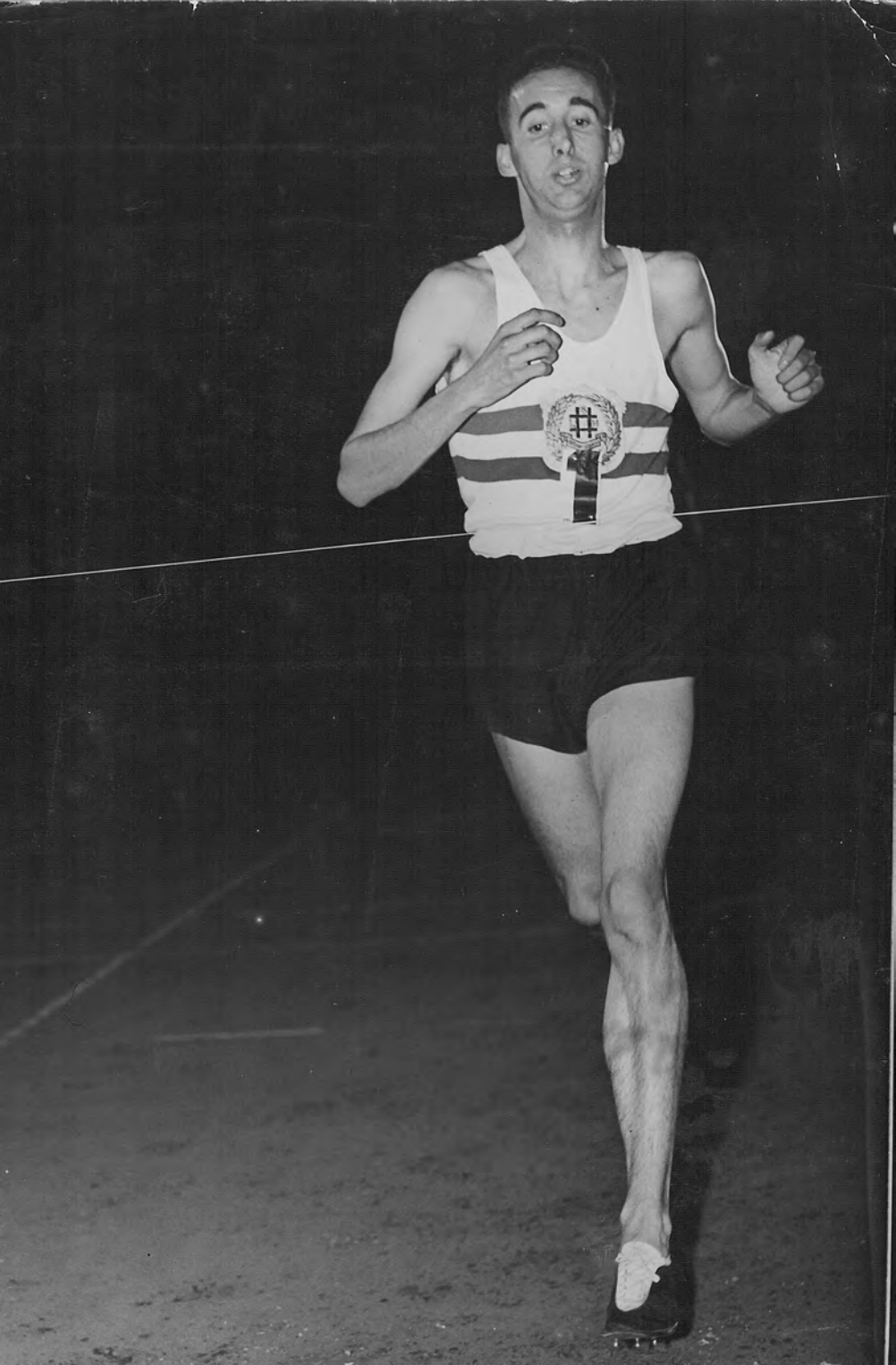
It is important to remember that when you run your race simulations, you must do so in a less stressful manner than when actually racing. Take it easy and forget about sprinting the last lap; just run along at a comfortable pace. The object is to accustom your body and your mind to running the distance. My favourite runs were 2 miles in 8:40 to 9 minutes, four miles in 18:30-19:30, and three miles in 13:30-13:35. I liked to finish these runs quickly, with a last lap of about 60 or 61 seconds, but not flat-out (I have done 53.8 seconds for the last 440 yards of a 5,000m race). You can do the same kind of running, below your maximum ability, over distances ranging from 3,000 metres up to 10,000 metres, although I am sure that very few runners can do the type and volume of very fast running I was doing in the 1950s. Initially, you will have to settle for running well within your capabilities - with times a little more conservative.

But how can you find your particular level? How do you know how fast to run these fast stretches?

You have to seek out an experienced coach to match your training schedule to your ability at any particular moment. A runner cannot do this himself very easily. If you are a coach, you must make sure that you are very careful to gauge the abilities of your athletes correctly. It is important that you do not demand more than the athlete is able to reasonably deliver, whilst still being able to recover for a similar session the next day. I like to set a target time my athletes can easily reach - then they always succeed!

I deal with about 100 different facets of training when trying to produce champion runners. Most coaches I know understand about 20 of these 100 facets, some coaches know 45 or 50, and I have known one or two who know all 100 facets of the art. The point I am making is that: (1) there is no detail of your life or your training which is too minor to be considered in relation to your training schedule; and (2) it is crucial to find yourself as good a coach as possible, because it is not possible to take guidance solely from a piece of paper (like the training schedules you frequently see published in magazines, and the schedules of my own that I have cited here). You really need a mentor to save you from making the 1,001 mistakes that can be made in training and racing. A good doctor is also important (see Chapter Six on diet and vitamins).

Now that you have become very fit after a good solid period of training, and are also very strong, you will want to race. Before a big race your body must be freshened up from all the hard work in order to achieve your top form. I have actually spoken recently to "top" coaches whose policy it is to send athletes into competition tired. This is wrong! Bill Toomey told me he had five days of zero activity before winning the decathlon in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. The high altitude there might have had something to do with this exceptionally long rest before that particular competition. A runner will usually relax his training load for at least three or four days leading up to a competition - but you will need to do something fast the day before and even the morning of the race in



order to “clean out the pipes”, open up your breathing, remind the body about running hard, and reassure yourself that you can still run. I have run two world records in four days, and raced eight times in a week, still running close to my world-record level in the eighth race; racing was resting for me. So it has to be said that rest is a relative thing! Some of my rest days before a world record race would kill a jogger. One man's meat is another man's poison. Everybody is different. A good coach will know what each individual needs in order to do his best racing. If you are racing twice a week there will be no time to do any hard, fast running at all. Just 40 minutes on the forest or golf course twice a day will suffice.

Psychologically, you must take every race seriously. Do not run races for training and do not train through races. Prepare specifically for every race. Always race your best. Do not race if ill, injured or unfit. Build up a good racing record because this is the only way to avoid developing bad racing habits, like dropping out. Either race properly or don't race at all!

People ask me about specific training for the marathon or the 3,000, 5,000, or 10,000m. Basically, the best 5,000-metre runner will be able to run with the very best marathon runners if he wants to, and has trained over a long period. Examples of this include Carlos Lopes (13:16 5,000m, 2:07 marathon), Alberto Salazar (13:11 5,000m, 2:08 marathon), and Ingrid Kristiansen (14:58 5,000m, 2:21:06 marathon). Distance is no problem for the best athletes. Anyone can run a long way if they go slowly enough; however, as soon as you begin cracking on the speed you'll soon crack up if you aren't able to run fast. A runner like Mary Decker ran 1:56.3 for 800 metres and 31:35.3 for 10,000m, and proved herself to be unbeatable at every distance in between. She could run a world record marathon, too. If you have speed (which you are either born with, or work at for years to acquire), you will have all your competitors over a barrel.

The system of training I have outlined in this chapter will make you very fast and strong, and give you the ability to run races over a wide range of distances much faster than you ever suspected possible. All you have to do is decide which distances you want to run - either because you like a particular distance, or because you have a particular aptitude for running that distance (or because you can make the most money by running that distance...). You should make an effort to concentrate to some degree on a particular distance(s), however, as we all know the saying: “A Jack of all trades, but master of none”.

Organising Your Training Programme

Almost every Sunday for the last 40 years I have done an “extra long” run, preferably over very difficult terrain, in the mountains, up and down steep hills, or through forests. The Surrey hills in England were a great place for this type of training. An ideal Sunday session would be a three-hour run in the morning, followed by an easy run of 30 minutes to an hour in the afternoon. We had some really mad Sunday runs in the 1950s. At times we covered as many as 40 miles in a day, just for the hell of it.

How my training is organised during the week is a result of the fact that in the 1950s in London it was only possible to use the track on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Tooting Bec track where we trained was only floodlit on those days during the winter months. So a tradition dating back 40 years, and based on the limitations imposed by the lighting situation at Tooting Bec, has been dictated to the athletes I train, first in England and later in New Zealand. Our hard training days have always been Tuesday and Thursday, with relatively easy running on the days in between. Every champion runner we had in our Otahuhu Club in Auckland, including Anne Audain and Alison Roe, was initiated

into training with this system - with very long runs in the forest by the sea on Sundays. Hard time trials or races were held on Saturday. Some of the champions at Otahuhu would run both a time trial on Saturday morning and a club race on Saturday afternoon. We had early morning runs (before breakfast) of 20 to 30 minutes. The evening runs were between 45 minutes and two hours. On average, the top runners at Otahuhu were running between 70 and 120 miles per week. We did our interval training or hyper-fast running on Tuesdays and Thursdays, depending on the time of the year and the type of races we were preparing for. Monday, Wednesday and Friday were easy "footing" days. This type of schedule provided overwhelming success for the South London Harriers in England, and for the Otahuhu Club in Auckland. Thirty-five years is a pretty solid length of time over which we launched many champions and record breakers; runners over the full range of racing distances from 100-metre sprints up to the marathon. I believe that the success this type of training provided us with is ample justification for me to propose it as the best way to organise your training.

In my pre-Gerschler days, a typical week of training for me when in top form was as follows:

- Sunday:** am - three hours run, Tooting Bec. Flat.
pm - four hours walk. Faster than joggers today!
- Monday:** am - 30 minutes run, Coulsdon Downs. Hilly.
pm - two hours of strong 100 paces, soft 100 paces, Coulsdon. No easy running!
- Tuesday:** am - 30 minutes run, Coulsdon Downs.
pm - three hours track running, Tooting Bec, including Zatopek-style interval training [40x300 jog 100; or 30x400 jog 100; or 60x200 jog 200].
- Wednesday:** am - 30 minutes run, Coulsdon Downs.
pm - same as Monday.
- Thursday:** am - 30 minutes run, Coulsdon Downs.
pm - same as Tuesday.
- Friday:** am - 30 minutes run.
pm - one to one and a half hours, as Monday.
- Saturday:** am - 60 minutes run.
pm - three hours hard cross-country, Coulsdon. Hilly.

The eventual range of my running, despite an initial limitation of raw speed, went from 35.6 seconds for 300 metres, through to international class half-mile races of around 1:52 (though I think I could have run under 1:50.0), to world class 10,000m races, and a listed World Record over 20 miles of 2 hours. I defeated the 1956 Olympic Silver Medalist over 1,500 metres and world record holders Peter Snell and Wes Santee over a mile. I was able to beat the world records for distances ranging from 3,000 metres through to 20 miles. I am one of only three athletes who has held world records and been ranked among the top 10 in the world in the 1,500, 5,000 and 10,000m at the same time. (The other two are Kenyan Kip Keino and Belgium's Gaston Reiff). I was ranked in the top 10 twelve times in 10 years. This is the longest span of time any athlete has been ranked in the top 10.

So, the training programme I followed gave me everything, including the ability to lead a race for the entire distance, or to wait and sprint past everyone at the finish (except Herb Elliott, who was unbeatable at every stage of almost any race). I wasn't a "sitter" by any means, but a Jack-of-all-trades racer who took races anyway they were offered up. I also believe in doing special training to change speeds instantly; this I did during the three

OLYMPIC GAMES 1960



GREAT BRITAIN

hours in the woods of Surrey. I sprinted every 100 metres - especially up hills - throughout the three hours until my mind and body were infinitely strong. As a result, a race of hard surges which was hard on the rest of the guys, was easy for me to handle.

Of course, I am writing here about the very top level of my training and racing capacity. It must be emphasized that it took me many years to get to this level. In order to reach such an incredible capacity yourself, you must be willing to train and race non-stop for six to eight years. I went against all advice except that of Gerschler and Zatopek in those days, for example by running multiple races in major meets - like the hard international 1,500-metre race at Bislet Stadium in Oslo followed by a win in the 5,000 metres a few minutes later against most of the best runners in the world. At the age of 14, I won an Army Cadets' Junior Mile race, then ran a few minutes later to place second in the Senior Race in an identical time. Though now I am against multiple races for young runners, and believe it is important that young runners do not train intensively before 17 or 18 years of age - I did it! Everyone in England, even though they were only aware of half the story, criticised the incredible training and racing I was doing.

I survived against all the ideas of the so-called experts. I had made up my mind to be one of the best racers in the world, and it took me eight years of ultra-volume running to get to the top; I was not a gifted runner. It wasn't uncommon for me to run more than 12,000 miles a year during the 1950s, in training which took more than six hours on some days, and required an incredible effort most mortals would cringe at. The point of all this is that there need be no limits to your achievements, so long as you are willing to keep at it. Limitations are always self-imposed. However, I know now that a runner can get the best results on rather less than the ultra-marathon preparations I made.

On days when you don't feel like running hard, always try to do some running - Gerschler's rules required a minimum of an hour a day of easy "footing" (assuming one bears in mind the safety controls described elsewhere in this book). One day in 1956, at the track in Croydon, England, I felt lethargic but still jogged around for half an hour. I felt better so then did a few 100-metre strides in my spikes and started to get going. Then I decided to run softly a 3/4 mile trial. I chose 69 secs speed, which I considered jogging speed, because I usually ran 3 minutes. Then I ran a 440-yard jog. I felt better and better and finished up by running 8x3/4 miles in averages of 3m 27secs. That was a nice easy day of running with no stress - a total of 2 hrs 35 minutes and a weight training session of 30 minutes. An easy day! A hard day would include the same type of training but much more intense speeds. I want to stress once again that I cannot do such things today, and only runners in super-human condition can get away with this kind of training, and then only after many years of hard effort. The average runner will end up in hospital if he or she attempts this kind of training. Moderate your efforts according to your fitness and ability, and do what you enjoy. I always enjoy my running.

There is another side to the same coin, however. If you never try harder, you will never get better. Jogging, and more jogging, will turn a runner into a walker in short order. Unfortunately, we read of some really good runners who spend a lot of time jogging around with no speed work; but the speed running they get in the many races they run overpowers the jogging and does them good. This type of runner very often starts the season by turning in mediocre times and usually does not come around to running very well until after the major championship events have passed. Their performances improve because of the fast "training" they have achieved in their racing. They do not realise that their actual training is all but useless and it is only their racing programmes which make them perform well. The problem with this approach to training is that there is a limit to how much your body will adapt to the stresses of racing, if it only encounters those stresses every couple of weeks, or, perhaps, only once a month. The result for many very

fine runners (who adopt an LSD approach to training) is a gradual deterioration of racing performance over several years.

Another popular aspect of training which I think is very dangerous is that known as “periodization” - that is, breaking down the training year into various “phases”, each of which is divorced from the others. Thus, the beginning of the year may be devoted to a slow distance “build-up”, the second portion of the year devoted to hill training, a third part devoted to interval work and then speed training, and finally (though most of these runners never get this far) a racing season undertaken. The difficulty with training in this manner is that you go along quite well with one aspect of training (e.g. long distance running), and then suddenly, on a certain day, “Bang!”. You start hill-bounding, or speed-training, or something new, and the body simply is not ready for the change, and invariably, year in and year out, you are more often than not injured. The body should be trained in all aspects of running, all of the time. Only the emphasis should change as you progress through the year; no aspect of training should be entirely given up for any significant length of time. The balance between different types of training (distance running, intervals, hill running and speed training) should be adjusted as the year progresses.

Keep trying to get stronger using weights and gymnastics exercises for all-around fitness. Keep running some hills in every run (i.e. don't run around flat places all the time). Keep some speed training in your programme all year. Basically, keep doing a lot of running. Merely change the stress and balance between the different aspects of your training as you move through the training year. For example, in the weeks immediately prior to the start of a racing season, a lot of speed running (including interval training and hyper-fast running) should be employed, as discussed earlier. During a racing season, like the US High School season (when it is not uncommon for teams to have two meets each week), no interval training or hyper-fast running is necessary. If the high school team must run two meetings in a week, the races provide all the hyper-fast running needed. The other days are necessary for recuperation and freshening up, in preparation for the next race. It is not uncommon, however, for young runners in US high schools to run two or three races in every meeting and then to train hard with intervals or hyper-fast running on the days in between. All these youngsters need is to run easier on the days between meetings. They need rest from the killing races, not persecution!

Ideally, it is best to race every two or three weeks, or to have a group of races scheduled during a week or 10-day period, after which the athlete needs a brief spell to recover, before going back into a period of constructive training. High school track and cross country programmes in the US are decimating many of the best young runners, because they schedule too many races in too short a time. This is a tragedy. In addition to these murderous racing programmes, many coaches employ a “gun-at-the-head, do-it-or-else” psychological approach which destroys many more athletes than it helps. Do I have to attack the adults and media men who constantly praise this sort of stupidity in order to make my point? Many, many young middle and long distance runners run two or even three races in the High School Championships. These youngsters often disappear once their high school careers end.

The best advice I can give to these young runners and their overzealous coaches is to run no more than one, perhaps two races if there is a generous time gap between them. The exception to this rule is sprinters in the 100- and 200-metres. Coaches who consistently require their young runners to run these extraordinary double and triple efforts are killing off much of the incredible talent that exists in the US. Athletes who endure this insanity must accept the fact that they are going to be also-rans once they leave school, because much of their ability will have been eroded. It will take an athlete a season or two to

overcome the effects of his being abused as a schoolboy, but many never recover. If he can survive the years immediately following leaving high school, then he has a chance. The schoolboy phenoms of yesterday get a rude shock when they try to perform at the top of modern track and field.

So what we are talking about is planning a racing and training schedule which makes consistent development (over several years of hard training) possible. A good training programme is one which allows the runner to consistently work hard every day. A programme which overkills a runner one day, so that he has to back off and recover for several days before the next hard day, is too hard. A coach and athlete who plan ahead together, and who have a pretty good idea of how and where and when they will race even before the season starts, will have a reasonable chance of pulling everything together for a successful season. Flexibility is also necessary in case of unforeseeable circumstances, or if the athlete's ability suddenly blossoms into another racing area (for example, an 800-metre runner who suddenly discovers an aptitude for the 400m). When this happens, it is important to concentrate on the athlete's best event. An athlete will pick up a new "favourite" event because he has found he can be more successful in that one. There is nothing like success to breed satisfaction. Many superstars in track and field started off as champions at school in some other, sometimes completely unrelated event. These switches in speciality may be the result of having a very smart coach who saw potential in a new area and channelled the athlete in that direction, or, more often than not, may occur by accident.

When I begin to train an athlete, it takes me six months or more to evaluate the individual's talent and character. During this period, I test the athlete and adjust the emphasis of training in order to find out what his or her strengths and weaknesses are. The coach must learn to capitalise on the athlete's strong points, while subtly removing his weaknesses. An athlete must have no weaknesses at all, but rather be strong in all areas which pertain to his event - both in the mind and in the body. A coach's job is to deal with the best athletes, and athletes with less ability, in the same way. Praise is to be given to all athletes, regardless of their ability. Each is making the same efforts to improve. Even though we are all born equal, some are more equal than others. Encourage everyone who has the gall to get out and have a go. A lot of champions started out as chump runners.

What about a year-round programme? Is it really necessary to rest for two months every year the way some superstars do? Do they really lie around in bed without twitching a muscle for two months?

Of course not. I have not seen one great runner do this. It may be a good idea to switch to different activities for a few months, to get away from the daily regime of your speciality - play a game; go cycling; go swimming; lift weights - but never stop everything completely. I have known very many champion runners who kept at it summer, winter, spring and fall for years and years, beating everyone in the process; and when they take a prolonged break they never get back up to the same level again. At the other end of the spectrum, there are some champion runners who like to devote a part of the year to terrific effort, and then fall back on some other activity for a time - calling that period a "rest". But they still remain very active. Different systems fit different individuals, and the coach and the athlete must work hand-in-hand in order to discover what works best from one year to the next. What is necessary this year may not be exactly what is required in the next. In general, however, a change in programme is as good as a rest.



Pictures Post, July 14, 1956

IN WIND AND RAIN PIRIE ATTACKS THE 10,000m RECORD.



HOPE. AT 3,000m HE'S 9.2 SECS. AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.



34

PIRIE'S GLORIOUS 'FAILURE'

Photographed by JACK ESTEN

*The stride of a man who
runs 175 miles a week.*



DISAPPOINTMENT. AT 7,000m HE'S 5.6 SECS. BEHIND.



THE TAPE. TIME: 29mins. 17.2secs. FASTEST-EVER IN BRITAIN.

Yes, it was a heroic failure on Pirie's part: when on July 4, under poor conditions, and with no help from the other five runners, he didn't beat Zatopek's record for the 10,000 metres, merely putting up an English native record in 29 minutes 17.2 secs. Don't forget that between Tuesday, June 19 and Sunday, June 24, he beat Iharos' world record for 5,000 metres; equalled the world's record for the 3,000 metres; and put up his own best time for the 1,500 metres.

Gordon began as an athlete by going on 18 mile birds' nesting expeditions in Surrey at eight and running six miles across country at ten. He runs 25 miles a day, every day of the year. The turning point in his life was when he went to Freiburg a couple of years ago to put himself in the hands of Woldemar Gerschler, trainer of Barthel and Harbig. Pirie said to me: "Gerschler teaches you your body's capabilities: others train you to run."

Seven months ago Pirie encouraged the experts to wonder whether he would run in the Marathon at Melbourne. Now they are asking themselves if he will not be the Zatopek of this year's Olympic Games.

I have already said that I am against a long period of "build-up". By admitting that a build-up is necessary, an athlete is acknowledging that he has gone downhill. And it often takes an athlete a period of time to recover from a build-up. A build-up usually starts at the end of a hard season when the best thing to do is to go fishing (but not for two months at a time!). Take a short break, then come back fresh, and aim higher for the

next season instead of sliding back down to where you were a year or more ago. Do not start shuffling about, but work for next year. I want my athletes to stay at the top, not to abdicate their excellent fitness and slide down to the pack.

How long, then, does it take to get fit in the first place, if you have never done anything at all, not a single step?

Then you are a special kind of human being, who needs to do a little exercise a couple of times a day (5 to 10 minutes of gentle walking and slow running) until you get your body to acknowledge that there exists something called exercise. This should be preceded by a visit to the doctor.

This initial period of exercise is going to test you out. It is going to be difficult. You will get stiff muscles and get comfortably tired. You will sleep more, and better. So take this preliminary exercise very easily. Don't do much, but keep at it regularly, and, most importantly, do not give up, and don't miss a day. When you have managed this for at least a month you will be on your way. The most difficult thing to establish is the new pattern of living; to allow the body to achieve a basic level of fitness.

You only increase the volume of exercise when it becomes easy to do so. You must pay attention to the technically correct way to run right from the beginning, and ensure that you have the correct equipment to do this, as we have described in this book. You can then start some of the other aspects of training, making things progressively more difficult and strenuous for the body. Find a hillier place to run. Try to run your favourite course in a faster time. You could even try some of the easiest interval sessions a couple of times a week. At the weekend try a longer run of up to half an hour. Remember that these are still early days.

You will have read how champions result from years of hard running, so you yourself have to follow a steady path of improvement, too. Don't rush at running 10 kilometres, let alone a marathon, until you have done two or three years of sensible preparation. A friend of mine in England ran in the London Marathon without adequate preparation, and today is in bad shape, suffering from diabetes.

Lastly, look around for a coach. Join a club. Try Orienteering. These are fine ways to get fit and enjoy running.

Sprinting

To run really fast in a sprint is most often a gift some runners are born with, but others can acquire it through years of hard work. We have all seen the gifted type who ran away from us at school without training and with consummate ease on a 100- or 220-yard sprint. Give these guys and girls a pair of spikes and they go like a rocket for the short sprints, but die a horrible death if they try the same thing for a quarter-mile.

These gifted people are destroyed by over-training and stretching exercises. Their magical ability is eroded away slowly and surely over two or three seasons by the games of hours of exercising, and drills of false technique that are popular today.

Two examples that spring to mind are Houston McTear, a 9.9 second 100-metre man at High School who was worn down to a 10.6 second man, and finally a nothing-at-all man. Or Henley-Smith's New Zealand Schoolboy Champions who ended up injured most of the time, and consequently unable to climb into the top tiers of senior running.

The sprinter is best personified by a fellow who trains only two or three times a week. He spends a lot of time playing other games, like football, basketball or soccer. When he does train, he does very little volume, but a lot of sprinting at high speed, especially out of blocks - this in lightweight racing spikes. He cannot last beyond 200 metres as a rule,

but can hurdle like a champion with a little proper training, and can be champion in the long jump.

Jesse Owens told me many of his secrets at the Tokyo Olympics back in 1964. He always stayed fresh; he never trained too hard; he never jumped into the long jump pit except in a competition. His philosophy was: "If I can hit the board at 10.2 speed then I am going to out-jump all those Turkeys".

The sprinter goes to the track, jogs a lap, does a couple of exercises, puts on his spikes, sprints lightly a few times over 20 to 30 metres. Then he gets down to business with up to half a dozen fullout sprints, and he goes home. He is only at the track for less than an hour altogether. Some days he does one or two dozen starts out of blocks as his training session. This he does about three times a week.

Olympic Champion Alan Wells told me that he didn't jog at all because he didn't believe in training himself to go slowly. He started off with light springing runs on the grass over 20 to 50 metres, with a walk back between them.

Prior to a race, the sprinter begins his warm-up in the mind. He works himself up mentally, and gets full of adrenaline and excitement. If you want to eliminate that super-animal condition innate to all good sprinters, make them warm-up for three quarters of an hour, and fool around doing damaging exercises for another half-hour. He or she will then be guaranteed not to have enough adrenaline or energy left for the race.

It is essential for the sprinter to do all his running in racing shoes. Immediately before the race starts he should not be running fullouts out of the blocks, or sprinting like hell at all. Instead, he must save these maximum efforts for the race alone.

So, sprinters are a breed apart. Keep them fresh, get them twice as strong with weight training. Hold them back so that they can explode in the races. When a sprinter runs a fullout effort, stop him taking a short interval - that would destroy his raw speed and start him on the way to becoming a distance runner, by developing his endurance to the detriment of his speed. A suitable rest associated with a fullout sprint is at least 10 minutes. Following this, a mini-warm-up is required (e.g. run lightly over 100 metres, incorporating 3 or 4 short accelerations). Then he is ready for the next fullout effort.

An exception to this rule is when the sprinter does short starts over 10 to 20 metres. After these, the sprinter should walk back slowly to 20 metres behind the blocks, until the coach calls him to the mark again. In this case, the rest interval would be fairly short, because the coach and runner need to get back to work quickly in order to reinforce the learning process that is going on.

At all times, the sprinter should move lightly on his toes like other runners, with a tempo of at least 3 steps per second. To compete with the world's best, he is going to have to move even faster than this, at up to 5 steps per second. This is where so many sprinters fail to match the champions, as they find it impossible to move their body parts that fast. This is because they never train to move so fast, and for most of their training practice actually do the opposite; performing slow motion drills and activities that destroy what speed they have.

Everything that a sprinter does on the day of the race is of critical importance to his performance, just like any other athlete. In Tokyo, I watched Bob Hayes practising starts on the morning of the 100 metres Final. He ran them in his slacks and racing spikes in a fast and energetic manner. He wasn't sitting around getting lethargic. Before racing, the sprinter has to prepare himself psychologically. He must get worked up. He must think of the race as being a life and death matter. There is a fine line which is not to be crossed here, however. The sprinter has to lift himself to a very high state of physical and emotional preparedness, but he must not do hours and hours of physical activity and thus tire himself out. At the same time, he has to be able to relax, go to sleep, and get his mind

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away from the race; a kind of contradiction. An example of this is how I myself tried to relax before a big race. I liked to get to the Stadium early, and find a nice quiet place to lie down and read a book. Generally I could fall asleep for a while; but don't forget to have an alarm system for this. Mike Larrabee, Tokyo Olympic Champion, fell asleep in the Warsaw Stadium, and only woke up in time to rush out onto the track to go to the mark! He lost the race.

Once again, I will use Alan Wells as an example of the difference in warm-up between winners and losers. Wells warmed up in New Zealand for a sprint race by springing around lightly for about 10 minutes, while the local losers spent an hour doing exercises and excessive sprinting. Wells beat them by a huge margin, mainly because they were so tired when they got onto their blocks, whereas he was as fresh as new paint.

A sprinter must run with the most powerful arm action of all the different runners. He has to use maximum power all of the time in the same mechanical way as all runners.

The popular fallacy that a sprinter, or indeed any runner, should deliberately take bigger steps is a nonsense. If we went in for 3.5-metre steps in a 100-metre race, it would necessitate less than 3 steps per second. To do this, you would have to jump too high in the air. Consequently, you would be slower over the 100 metres because you would be spending too much time going up and down instead of forwards. In fact, on the contrary, a series of shorter, quicker steps is used by the top speedsters. Carl Lewis employs about 50 steps in 10 seconds, while Marlies Gohr of East Germany utilises about 55 steps in her 11-second 100m. This is equivalent to around 5 steps per second.

To be a champion sprinter, you must not fail at the start. By this I mean that you must not get left behind. You must sharpen your wits; you must be able to react very quickly to the starter's gun. However, you should not dissipate all of your energy in an all-out explosion in the first 20 to 30 metres. Accelerating smoothly, staying under control, and going fullout in the final half of the race is the way to run the 100 metres. It is during the last few metres of the race that most sprints are won, and very rarely in the early stages. The most significant exception to this rule was Armin Hary, Olympic Champion of 1960, who won many races from the blocks with his electric starts, which all of the other competitors complained were false starts. The general rule was illustrated by Carl Lewis when he won the 100 metres Olympic Final in Los Angeles. He was left behind at the start, and only grabbed the lead in the last 30 metres or so of the race.

Another important factor is the correct stance on the blocks. The hand support in the set position should be centred on the lead foot as seen from in front of the runner. The body weight should rest on the front foot, ready for the transfer of the weight forward when the first step is taken. If the hands are not centred on the front foot, the sprinter will zig-zag out of the blocks in his initial steps, wasting energy, and so run slower than he could. The lead foot should be two to two and a half hand spans behind the starting line (though individual differences should be observed; the most important aspect of the stance at the start is that the sprinter is comfortable and able to move fast from the position that results). The rear foot should be placed so that the knee of the trailing leg is resting on the track next to or slightly ahead of the lead foot's toes in the "On Your Marks" position. When the set position is called for by the starter, the sprinter should raise his seat up and at the same time rock forward into the balance position. Nearly all of the weight is taken on the hands and the lead foot. The rear foot merely rests lightly on the rear block. Its job will be to move as fast as possible in the first step forward on the "gun" - NOT, AS MANY PEOPLE SAY, TO PUSH OFF THE BACK BLOCK FIRST! If you do that, you will be left behind as the others will be away on their first step! Isometric pressure should be applied to the front block in the set position, and an inhalation made while coming into the set position. When the gun is fired, the runner should exhale explosively as the

back foot makes the first short, sharp step. A synchronised short, sharp arm punch should also be made with that first step (Note: Not a long, slowing arm swing which will delay the athlete). The first quick step with the back foot should accompany the powering off of the front foot. Don't waste time; the next step must come fast after the first one. This should be achieved by strong, short power movements with the arms and legs. You will need a series of short steps to facilitate rapid acceleration (5-10 depending on the individual's strength), before you will be able to get up into the full running stride.

How high should the body be raised in the set position?

The mechanical position of the legs decides this. If the seat is raised too high so that the legs are straight, it will be difficult for the runner to generate much power. Conversely, if the seat is too low, not only will the centre of gravity be too low, leading to a waste of energy after the start because the runner will be forced to lift himself up into the higher normal running level, but also the runner won't be able to propel himself forwards particularly well when sitting on his haunches!

A good test of the starting position is to gently push the runner forwards when he or she is in the set position. If the runner overbalances, the position is fine, but if he does not, he will need to ride forward more in the set position. Too many sprinters lose a lot of ground at the start of a race because they rock forward into the overbalance position **after** the gun has been fired. While they are doing this, the other runners will already have taken their first step.

If a coach asks a runner to do leg speed practice he is leading them up the garden path, because every single step you run must be at racing tempo. If you do not obey this law, you will erode away your running ability. I once heard Rodney Dixon, after losing another race, make the excuse: "I haven't done any leg speed"; the assumption being that when he starts rattling his legs along it will enable him to beat them all tomorrow. Just like that.

It may seem that I have spent a large part of this book giving overly elaborate and detailed explanations and descriptions, but this is essential because of the complexity of the art of running. It has all been done in an effort to make life easier for aspiring champions to succeed. I could quite easily have written much more. So many athletes are out there making silly mistakes that I could have saved them from! Like Greta Waitz, John Treacy and Mamede performing poorly, for them, at the World Cross Country Championships through making simple errors in their training close to the race, all the way down to the schoolboys and joggers doing silly things in their running that either injure them, destroy their best running, or kill them for good as far as running is concerned. The saddest cases of all, however, are those runners who have actually died through making cardinal errors in running, because they assumed they knew all the answers, or thought that because they themselves had written or read some of the books that have been printed, they were right.

Lastly, I want to say that of all the locations where it is possible to run, I prefer to run in wide, open spaces, and to do it with abandon according to, and as an expression of, my moods and feelings. Up hill and down dale, through woods or along beaches -this is truly the most beautiful way to run. The scientific aspects you read about in this book are necessary adjuncts to steer us around and through the pitfalls and dangers that exist in this game.

One other factor which I have found complements the various kinds of controlled training outlined in this book, and has been very important to me as a coach, enabling close evaluation of my runners, is to run with the runners that I train (and beat them if possible!). By this means, I have gained a much greater insight into their performance and potential, and have been able to assess them more completely than the stopwatch

could ever do. If I do my job well my trainees quickly get to beat me; sad, isn't it, that to do my job superlatively means I have to get defeated!
The ultimate achievement would be to run world record times during training. As Aoitia of Morocco said in 1985: "I like to race myself every time that I go for a run!".



Purley (Gordon's signature "D.A.G. Pirie")

CHAPTER FIVE - WEIGHT TRAINING

Objective And System

A race is an all-out effort over a short period of minutes or seconds. The aim of weight training for runners is to simulate as closely as possible the movements used in running their special event, and hence the demands which racing makes on the body. In this way, the body's strength can be developed, with an emphasis on ensuring that the body is balanced in strength, and not lopsided with one side stronger than the other, as commonly occurs because most people are either right- or left-handed. A runner should be equally strong in both sides of the body - left and right - and have balanced strength between the front and back of the body.

Many athletes I treat for injuries are stronger on one side of the body than the other, and it is my belief that injuries are often caused by this imbalance. The weaker side is pushed or pulled by the stronger side until it gives out. The most common injury of this kind is of the hamstrings, resulting from unbalanced back strength. Weights used in training should therefore demand equal efforts from both sides of the body, and to achieve this I have found dumb-bells very useful. Many of the runners who decry the positive effects of weight training have gained their superior strength with the assistance of a good Doctor or Chemist. Others - like Sebastian Coe and Steve Scott - are open about the significant role that weight training has played in their training.

With dumb-bell exercises, you should try to use heavier and heavier weights up to as much as one-third or even one-half of your body weight. This is very difficult. If you are able to easily handle as many as three sets of ten repetitions of a particular weight, then the weight is too light. If you cannot do at least six repetitions, the weight is too heavy. The same rule applies to weights requiring a bar-bell. You should aim to work to at least two-thirds or more of your body weight with bar-bells. The ultimate test is to be able to lift the equivalent of your own body weight over your head. When you can do this, you will be strong enough for running events.

Top field event performers and sprinters can lift weights up to the level of the very best weightlifters. Valery Borzov, 1972 Olympic 100- and 200-metre Champion, was fantastically strong. World record holder Jarmila Kratochvilova became so powerful that her femininity was drawn into question (actually, her fantastic ability was the result of almost 20 years of hard training).

I was first introduced to weight training in 1952 by John Disley, who handed me a bar with 15 pounds of weight on it. I was puny (though already British running champion and record holder at this time). The 15 pounds of weight was almost impossible for me to push over my head. My arms and upper body protested violently against the exercise, and after one session with this "massive" weight my muscles were dead. By the next day, however, I began to feel the positive effects of my efforts, with strength seemingly beginning to flow through my body. In no time at all, I felt my three-hour runs going better. I couldn't afford to buy my own weights or go to a gym, so I found a log of wood and started my weight training at home in the garden, with builder's lead nailed to the ends of the log. I got stronger and stronger and, suddenly, I was stunning people with my sprint finishes, as well as pounding many of my competitors out of sight before the sprint even came round.

In 1953, a generous gentleman from Surrey (whose name I have, regrettably, forgotten) gave me a set of weights after seeing a picture of my training "log" in the newspapers. I did weights in our back garden facing the kitchen window. My mother often pulled faces

through the window as I did the repetitions, grunting and gasping, and I had to beg her not to break my concentration while I was going at it like hell, because it made me laugh! Al Murray, the famous weight lifter, gave me solid advice on what and how to do weights. I went at the weights very hard in 1954, and so started the season in fabulous form. I set a world record for a grass-track mile (4:05.2), then suffered a broken bone in my foot from an accident and missed the rest of the season...

From those early days on, weight training has been a part of my preparation for races, and that of the athletes I train, although I have on occasion been "kind" to many of my trainees in New Zealand, allowing them to get away with only hard running. I will not make that mistake again. From now on, it's weights and running or nothing.

The most astounding thing about weight-trained athletes is that they often don't look the part. It is possible to get very strong without looking like Mr Universe or Rambo. Some very thin-looking individuals can be extremely strong, despite their skinny muscles and frames. Weight training does not go hand-in-hand with muscle bulge, unless you either munch a lot of steroids, or do a lot of slow, easy pumping. When we do maniac, high speed, all-out maximum weights, we get very fast and strong without putting on any bulk at all (you will not begin to bulge all over the place, girls). Most truly super-fit people don't look the part; fitness is a hidden quality. But when they "operate", however, their performances reveal those "hidden" talents. The opposite of this case is The Incredible Hulk, who can't even jog across a room to visit his girlfriend without needing a rest when he arrives.

Before getting onto the specifics of an effective weight-training protocol, here are some general guidelines about fitting weights into your overall programme:

How often should one do weight-training?

Every second or third day is about right, along with a full running programme (curtail your weights several days before a race). Your weight training should also continue through the height of the racing season. Do not give away all the good training you have done just when you need the greatest amount of strength.

How hard should the weight-training be?

There are two types of weight sessions: (1) a full-out session in which you do all and every exercise as hard as you can; and (2) an easier session with half-dosages of fewer exercises. It is not uncommon for a tired runner to feel much fitter after a moderate session with the weights. These sessions seem to flush out your muscles. On the other hand, the full-out, go-for-it, maximum sessions tend to put the body down a bit, and numb it for a while; so those sessions should never be attempted near to a race day (say within six days). The body does cope easily with easy routines, however, and I sometimes even find that a few exercises with strong weights before a three-hour running session can bring fantastic strength into the running, making it feel much easier.

I have always found my best running fitness - when I was able to set world records and finish races in stunning fashion - to be absolutely tied in with my best form with the weights. The stronger I was at grappling with the weights (combined with a lot of hard running), the better I was on race day. It is interesting to note that the New Zealand veteran Derek Turnball, who runs world records in his age group, does weight training nearly every day in the course of his job. He will deny this because he never touches a bar-bell, but he is doing hard physical work all day long on his farm, and is as strong as a horse. He also does his running at an elevated altitude in the mountains around his farm. Derek has three major strength factors at work in his daily life: he goes for long runs; he runs up and down mountain paths; and he does weight-training as a way of life.

If you are an average sedentary person, you are likely to be as weak as a chicken, the very opposite of Derek Turnball. If this is the case, go to a specialist in weight lifting and

20 Beverly Road
Worcester Park.
Surrey.
4.6.52

Dear Gordon

Heartiest congratulations
on breaking my British 3 miles
record on Saturday. Unfortunately I
was not there to see you do it
but it must have been a wonderful
race to watch.

I must say I thought that my
time would have stood for some while,
my other records I fully expect to
go this year.

Best I luck for the AAA
sales for the Olympics

yours sincerely
Sydney Wooderson

have him test you for back, leg and arm strength. You will be shocked by your weakness. Then do weights for a month and go back to be re-tested; this time you will be astounded by your improved strength. Your running will become easier, and you will begin to go faster and faster.

I have a chuckle every time I go into a health club. There are runners and tri-athletes playing silly games with puny weights, instead of getting “stuck in” and doing something that would be really beneficial for them. We go into the gym and smash away for 45 minutes to an hour, breathing like rhinoceroses, and then get out. The average inhabitants of the modern weight room fiddle about looking at themselves in the mirror, and never seem to get going. They are there for hours, sitting on their hands admiring their expensive gear and big muscles in the looking glass.

One example of this was Richard Okesene, who was New Zealand Javelin Champion. Richard had a fantastic body, at least that's what the girls told me, and would play around with huge weights - in fact, some enormous weights, in the 300- to 500-pound range. But his capabilities as an athlete were puny, compared with his apparently tremendous strength. His heart and circulation were so bad that he couldn't last out a dozen reps in a light-weight exercise session. His endurance was nil. By the time he had run up the 30 metres to throw the javelin, he was exhausted. After only three months of our style of weight training, plus some hard running, his best throw in the javelin went from 60 metres to 76 metres. If Richard continued in this style of training, I am sure he would be able to throw 100 metres. Athletes like Richard are to be found everywhere, but like the dinosaurs with their big bodies and little hearts, they are bound for extinction.

Before I began weight training, I was a long distance and cross country runner who could grind it out with anyone, but a constant loser in a sprint. A diet of hard weights, however, turned me into a complete competitor, one who could pour on the pace and still sprint madly at the finish.

Weight Exercises

- 1 - High pull with bar-bell (for warm-up): one-third body weight, repeated 10 times.
- 2 - Rowing exercise with bar-bell: 2/3 body weight, three sets of 6 to 10 repetitions.
- 3 - Dumb-bell press: one-third to one-half body weight, three sets of 6 to 10 repetitions with each arm.
- 4 - Dumb-bell curls (forward and reverse): one-third to one-half body weight, three sets of 6 to 10 repetitions with each arm.
- 5 - Dead-lift with bar-bell: body weight and more, three sets of 6 to 10 repetitions.
- 6 - One-handed swings: one-third to one-half body weight, three sets of 6 to 10 repetitions with each arm.
- 7 - Clean-to-chest: three sets of 6 to 10 repetitions.

Body Resistance Exercises

- 1 - Press-ups: 6 to 60 repetitions.
- 2 - Leg lifts: 6 to 60 repetitions.
- 3 - Chin-ups: 6 to 20 repetitions.
- 4 - Sit-ups: 6 to 100 repetitions.

General Rules

- 1 - When lifting bar-bells, look forward at a fixed point, with no jerky movements, back straight, knees bent, and bottom down. Grasp the bar and lean back, take the weight and lift.
- 2 - Do weight training every two or three days, and continue throughout the height of the racing season (but not within a week of a race).
- 3 - Warm-up with lighter lifts.
- 4 - Free weights are better for runners than universal gym, nautilus, etc.
- 5 - The deadening effect of weights on muscles is normal, but, because of this effect, do not do a full, hard session of weight training before or immediately after a hard track session.



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CHAPTER SIX - DIET AND VITAMINS

Compared to the average, sedentary, civilised person, the highly active, stressed and hard-working runner needs an increased supply of all the essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients. Most athletes pay little or no attention to the food they eat; and some are successful for a time. But it is very difficult to find an athlete who survives at a high level for a significant length of time without paying careful attention to what goes into his body. In “advanced” nations like Britain and the United States, people are fed by giant food corporations which not only monopolize the market, but denutritify the basic foods, reducing their natural ingredients and nutritional qualities to a point where the food is almost useless; and replacing these essential nutrients with a lot of poisonous chemicals and other additives. Many of these food additives are combined in such a manner that they actually destroy vitamins and minerals which are already in the body. If you are an average person, and you eat an average diet, you can bet that you will be suffering from malnutrition, but have been brainwashed by advertising into thinking otherwise.

If you eat nature's foods - fruits, vegetables, whole grains - the only way to get the full value from them is to bend down and eat them off the ground, or reach up and eat them off the tree or plant they are growing on. Every hour and day that passes after a natural food leaves its home decreases its nutritional value. The fresher you can get your food, the better. If you wait long enough (months or years in the case of some foods in cold storage), most of the valuable nutrients will be destroyed. If you eat these stored foods you could get almost nothing in the way of nutritional value from them.

Never eat white flour or its products, nor any sugars, nor any milk that has been homogenised. Scientists can tell you this, unless they are funded by one of the major food companies. Do not believe scientific “facts” that have been purchased on the backs of food packages.

In my nearly 50 years of mixing with outstanding sports performers, I have discovered that it is possible to achieve distinction without proper nutrition, but a malnourished athlete will not stay at the top for very long before degenerating. The most common factor among successful sportsmen and women is that they are health-food and vitamin-supplement conscious. Many are also vegetarians. When you meet these careful and clever eaters later in life (if they have been able to avoid accidents and other acts of fate), they are usually still active, fit and healthy, especially when compared with someone who has lived on the average processed diet.

The volume of food eaten is another factor. Similarly, how food is eaten is important, and, indeed, is just as important as what has been eaten. A meal should be taken in a relaxed, happy and non-stressful atmosphere. Time should be taken to eat your food slowly and thoroughly. The person who gobbles down his food without being relaxed (perhaps he argues, works or watches television during meals) is headed in the wrong direction.

So, if you live in our beautiful “advanced” nations, you need to supplement your nutrition with vitamins and minerals, and to discard those things that represent mal(bad)nutrition. If you are a racing runner, you need even more supplemental help than the average person - and the average person needs plenty. More and more is being discovered about the effects that vitamins have on the body. Hard-training athletes require a lot of extra vitamins and minerals, and must find a clever doctor who can save their lives, and increase their level of performance. It is very easy to go wrong with vitamins. Too much of a vitamin, in some cases, can be as bad as too little. The doctor's job is to evaluate you as an individual, and guide you in your special needs. These needs

will change as your body improves, so it is vital to stay in contact with a doctor who understands the demands of your sport.

I repeat that the requirements of an athlete involved in intensive, energetic training and competition are greatly in excess of those of a sedentary person. Different individuals - especially women - have different requirements. Here is where competent medical advice and supervision comes in. It is nearly impossible for the untrained layman to monitor his or her own body chemistry. In order to avoid nutrition- and vitamin-related mistakes with potentially serious consequences, therefore, consult a competent physician at the outset! This is very important.

Athletes have to deal with three distinct areas that directly or indirectly determine fitness and competence in their sporting activities: (1) the actual training they do; (2) nutrition - how, when, and what they eat and drink; and (3) the amount of rest (including sleep) they allow their bodies to have. If you do not carefully and constantly consider all of these areas, then you will not succeed or continue to succeed as an athlete.

Two people may be given the same food and drink, and yet only one benefit from it. This is partly because how you eat your food affects whether or not your body will assimilate it properly. The digestive process begins with the chewing of the food, and if you swallow food without chewing it thoroughly, its chances of being fully digested are greatly lessened. Saliva is the key to complete and thorough digestion of your food. If food does not stay in the mouth long enough, the digestive process cannot be completed properly and you won't be able to fully utilise your food's nutritional value.

Do not drink when you have a meal. Beverages with a meal interfere with digestion and reduce the nutritional effectiveness of your food. The rule for drinking which we try to observe is: do not drink anything for 10 minutes before you eat, and wait one hour afterwards before drinking again. This regime makes for super workings of the digestive system, and ensures that you get the maximum benefit from your food. This is a most difficult demand to make on athletes, as it is against the "civilised" norm for dining - everybody enjoys a bit of wine or beer with a meal -but you should try to avoid liquids with your meals, especially tea and coffee.

Being overweight is the biggest obstacle many would-be athletes have to overcome. It slows you down. It shortens your life. We derive enjoyment from eating, but you have a choice; either live high and fast for a few years, or take care of your body with a more moderate life-style and enjoy it for a long time.

Just as the timing and the manner in which you eat your food has a direct effect on how much good (or harm) it does you, so it is with vitamins. Certain vitamins work very well together, while others, if taken at the same time, tend to cancel each other out. For example, vitamin E and iron supplements clash. You must therefore take your vitamin E and iron at different times of the day in order to get the maximum benefit from both.

The amount and frequency of taking vitamin supplements follows much the same rules as training. It is better to take your vitamins frequently (with meals) than to take your entire daily dosage in one go. The body is constantly working on the vitamins you put into it, processing them along with other essential nutrients from your food, and absorbing and eliminating them. A frequent constant supply is thus necessary if the body is to take full advantage of the vitamins. This is especially true for the water-soluble vitamins - they are rapidly turned over and flushed from the body.

The amount of each vitamin that is necessary (or safe) remains a matter of considerable debate, but it does appear from the information available, and from my own experience, that large dosages seem to be the best way to help a body which is depleted by poor nutrition recover its health. The American Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) recommended daily allowances (RDAs) for each essential nutrient is probably

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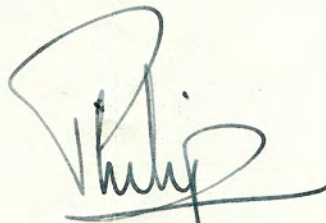
CROWN CHAMBERS
118 CHANCERY LANE
LONDON W.C.2

22nd June, 1952.

Dear Mr. Pirie,

As President of the British Amateur Athletic Board, I am writing to you on its behalf to inform you that you have been selected to represent Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the Olympic Games, Helsinki, in the 5,000 metres, and 10,000 metres.

I send to you my congratulations and best wishes for your personal success and for that of the whole team.



President

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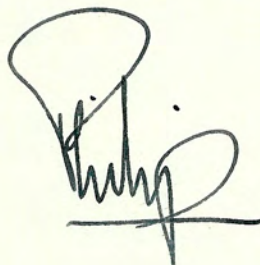
Telephone: LAngham 3498.
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54 TORRINGTON PLACE,
LONDON W.C.1

14th August, 1956.

It gives me much pleasure to invite, on behalf of the British Amateur Athletic Board Gordon Pirie to represent Gt. Britain and Northern Ireland's Track and Field Team in the 5,000 metres and 10,000 metres at the XVith Olympic Games at Melbourne, 1956.

I congratulate you upon your selection and I send you my best wishes for success in your Olympic competition.



inadequate for a training athlete. In many cases, therefore, it would be wise to multiply up the FDA's RDA. It is essential to get expert advice from a doctor or other professional who understands the demands of your sport and event. You will need to be very careful in the selection of a doctor, however, as most physicians in Britain and the US have little or no expertise in nutrition and biochemistry, and even less knowledge of the needs of a highly stressed, hard-working athlete. Look around until you find a doctor with sufficient expertise before you commit your body and your running career to him.

I frequently use two days of my own physical activities to illustrate the manner and effectiveness with which I have supplemented my meals with vitamins in order to improve my physical performance:

First Day

Cycled 230 kilometres from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., covering the first 30 kilometres in one hour, after which I ate a mini-meal with vitamin and mineral supplements. This was repeated eight times throughout the day so I arrived at my destination fresh and ready to run six miles.

Second Day

Cycled 30 kilometres, took a mini-meal and supplements; ran for two and a quarter hours, had a mini-meal with supplements; ran for three and a half hours, had a mini-meal with supplements; and cycled 30 kilometres home.

Following these two days of extraordinary exercise, I continued running for two to three hours each day without any discomfort or fatigue. Despite the massive amount of exercise I put in during those two days, I experienced no need to "recover". In order to do that kind of activity, you must either be crazy or very careful with your nutrition; if you are not careful you will come apart. The mini-meals I ate consisted of one 100mg iron tablet, one gram of vitamin C, four small sweets, half a pint of milk, a slice of black bread, and two ounces of cheese. These meals and supplements were taken every hour on the first day, and between activities on the second day. I drank water as my thirst dictated during the exercise. There are other instances where I was able to continue high levels of vigorous exercise because I was adequately nourished. I did not have any adverse effects from this very strenuous activity. This still applies today, and I find it easy to do many hours of sustained exercise, provided I have good nutrition.

Mistakes Made By Athletes

Diet is not the only area in which athletes can make mistakes. A hard-training athlete must take care to manage every aspect of his life. He must closely monitor his body on a day-to-day basis in order to avoid serious problems.

The worst mistake an athlete can make is one that causes his own death. This is obvious, but not as uncommon as one might think. If an athlete is ill, as a result of malnutrition or any other cause, he must take the necessary steps to remedy it. Apart from the obvious, like not running when ill, there are other rules an athlete must obey. You should take your pulse every morning before you get out of bed. In a short time you will arrive at a base level for your resting pulse. If your pulse has increased by as little as 10 percent above the base level, do not train on that day, and until your pulse has returned to the base level for two consecutive days. A high pulse is a signal from your body that

something is wrong (classically associated with a raised temperature and other symptoms, as in flu). Listen to your body.

An example of a man who did not heed this advice was Mike Wells-Cole, British Orienteering Champion. He ran for two hours on a Sunday morning despite an extremely high pulse - he was suffering from influenza. He was dead by 5 p.m. on the same day. I had offered him advice, but sadly he disregarded it, and tragically paid for it with his life.

The Royal Navy has a similar backward approach to fitness. I recently went aboard a Royal Navy Carrier in Auckland to offer a day of social running to any athletes on board. I was told by the ship's sports officer that there were no runners on board. Sometime previously they had tried a fitness test to see how far each seaman could run in a specified time. Several seamen dropped dead, so the running was stopped. The correct conclusion to be drawn from this catastrophe was that the crew were in a woeful physical condition, and obviously were not fit enough to fight a war. Moreover, the activity chosen to test their fitness was inappropriate, and even stupid. The proper sequence of events should have been to give all the crew (including the officers, who are the worst of the lot as far as fitness is concerned) adequate training before the trial was undertaken, so that they might be brought up to standard. Instead, a silly test was administered, and when the sailors died they simply cancelled all running - creating a Catch 22 situation.

Another example was the late Alan Brown, an intelligent Bank Manager from New Zealand, who was trying very hard to beat me in Orienteering. He started a race shortly after a "civilised" breakfast, but in the forest 200 metres after the start, he became sick, and choked to death. Again I had tried to advise him, but he too would not listen. You must leave at least two hours between finishing a meal and starting a run.

Errors Specific To Diet

ANOREXIA - It is not uncommon for college teams in the US to insist that their girls control their weight by dieting, without correct nutritional guidance; the scales being the only criterion. The result is that some young women stop eating to "make the weight" whenever they are tested. A weakened condition caused by not eating enough nutritious food can lead to many problems, sickness and even broken bones. Female runners should instead aim to get faster by getting stronger and healthier with hard training and eating nutritious foods and taking vitamin supplements.

SPORTS ANAEMIA - This is another common problem amongst athletes who train hard which is likely to be caused by poor nutrition. Without proper nutrition, it is impossible to absorb the amount of iron necessary to carry out hard training day after day. Even if there is an abundance of iron available in the diet, inadequate nutrition may prevent the athlete from getting maximum iron absorption, and the blood count will plummet. Vitamin B₁₂ and folic acid (other haematinics) are also critical in such cases.

Have a regular blood test to establish the level of haemoglobin in your body. Under a doctor's guidance, take iron supplements and improve your nutrition to raise your blood count, if necessary. If you are anaemic, don't look for a miracle cure. It can take as long as six months to improve your blood count - if you take it easy. It may be necessary to take a period of rest while you rebuild your blood. Then resume training as a healthier person. If you continue to train hard you are likely to have a greater set-back.

Once again, it is important to work on this problem with a physician who is aware of the needs of a training athlete. A doctor used to the "average" person will tell you that a blood count (i.e. haemoglobin level) of 12 g/dl is adequate. If you are going to be an

Running and walking

AL HOWIE (GB) RAN 7,295.5 KM THROUGH CANADA IN 1991, TAKING 72 DAYS 10 HR 23 MIN

Marathon

Oldest

The Boston marathon, the oldest major marathon, was first held on 19 April 1897, when it was run over 39 km (24 miles 1,232 yd).

Fastest

It should be noted that courses may vary in severity. The following are the best times recorded, on all courses whose distance has been verified.

The men's world record is 2 hr 6 min 50 sec, by Belayneh Dinsamo (Ethiopia) at Rotterdam, Netherlands, on 17 April 1988.

The women's world record is 2 hr 21 min 6 sec, by Ingrid Kristiansen (Norway) at London on 21 April 1985.

The British men's record is 2 hr 7 min 13 sec, by Stephen Henry Jones at Chicago, Illinois, USA, on 20 Oct 1985.

The British women's record is 2 hr 25 min 56 sec, by Véronique Marot at London, UK, on 23 April 1989.

Most competitors

A record 38,706 runners finished the centennial Boston race on 15 April 1996.

Most run by an individual

Horst Preisler (Germany) has run 631 marathons of 42 km 195 m (26 miles 385 yd) or longer from 1974 to 29 May 1996.

Henri Girault (France) has run 330 races at 100 km (62 miles) from 1979 to June 1996 and completed a run on every continent except Antarctica.

John A. Kelley (USA) finished the Boston Marathon 61 times from 1928 to 1992. He won in 1933 and 1945.

Oldest finishers

The oldest man to run a marathon was Dimitrion Yordanidis (Greece), aged 98, in Athens, Greece on 10 Oct 1976, finishing in 7 hr 33 min.

Thelma Pitt-Turner (New Zealand) set the women's record in Aug 1985, completing the Hastings Marathon in New Zealand in 7 hr 58 min, aged 82.

Half marathon

The world best time on a properly measured course is 59 min 47 sec, by Moses Tanui (Kenya) at Milan, Italy, on 3 April 1993.

The best British time is 60 min 59 sec, by Steve Jones from Newcastle to South Shields, Tyne & Wear, UK, on 8 June 1986.

Paul Evans ran a half marathon in 60 min 9 sec at Marrakech, Morocco, on 15 Jan 1995, and Ingrid Kristiansen

(Norway) ran 66 min 40 sec at Sandnes, Norway on 5 April 1987, but there is uncertainty about the distance of both courses.

Liz McColgan (GB) ran a half marathon in 67 min 11 sec at Tokyo, Japan, on 26 Jan 1992, but the course was 33 m downhill—a little more than the allowable 1 in 1,000 drop. She also ran a British best of 68 min 42 sec at Dundee, UK, on 11 Oct 1992.

Long distance running

Longest running race

The 1929 trans-continental race from New York City to Los Angeles, California, USA, covered 5,898 km (3,665 miles). The Finnish-born Johnny Salo won in 1929 in 79 days. His elapsed time of 525 hr 57 min 20 sec (averaging 11.21 km/h or 6.97 mph) left him only 2 min 47 sec ahead of Englishman Pietro 'Peter' Gavuzzi.

The longest annual race is the New York 1,300 Mile race, held at Ward Island Park, New York, USA. Georg Jermolajevs (Latvia) completed the race in the fastest time of 16 days 14 hr 28 min 19 sec, in Sept 1995.

Longest runs

Robert Sweetgall (USA) ran 17,071 km (10,608 miles) around the edge of the USA, starting and finishing his circuit in Washington DC, from 9 Oct 1982 to 15 July 1983.

In 1983 Ron Grant (Australia) ran around Australia, covering 13,383 km (8,316 miles) in 217 days 3 hr 45 min.

Max Telford (NZ) ran 8,224 km (5,110 miles) from Anchorage, Alaska, USA, to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, in 106 days 18 hr 45 min from 25 July to 9 Nov 1977.

Al Howie (GB) ran across Canada, from St Johns to Victoria, covering 7,295.5 km (4,533.2 miles), in 72 days 10 hr 23 min, in Sept 1991.

Greatest mileage

Douglas Alistair Gordon Pirie (GB), who set five world records in the 1950s, estimated that he had run a total distance of 347,600 km (216,000 miles) in 40 years to 1981.

Dr Ron Hill, the 1969 European and 1970 Commonwealth marathon champion, has trained every day since 20 Dec 1964. His training log book shows a total of 211,765 km (131,585 miles) from 3 Sept 1956 to 20 May 1996. He has finished 115 marathons, all sub 2:52 (except his last) and has raced in 57 countries.

Mass relay records

The 160.9-km (100-mile) record by 100 runners is 7 hr 53 min 52.1 sec

by Baltimore Road Runners Club, Towson, Maryland, USA, in May 1981.

The women's best is 9 hr 49 min 8 sec by the Houston Area Road Runners Association, Texas, USA, in Aug 1996.

The 100 x 100 m record is 19 min 14.19 sec by a team from Antwerp at Merksem, Belgium, on 23 Sept 1989.

The longest relay was 17,391 km (10,806 miles). It was run on Highway No. 1 in Australia by 23 runners of the Melbourne Fire Brigade, in 50 days 43 min from 6 Aug to 25 Sept 1991.

The greatest distance covered in 24 hours by a team of 10 is 487.343 km (302 miles 495 yd) by Puma Tyneside RC at Monkton Stadium, Jarrow, UK, on 10–11 Sept 1994.



Cross-country running

World Championships

The greatest ever margin of victory is 56 seconds or 356 m (390 yd) by John 'Jack' Thomas Holden (England) at Ayr Racecourse, S Ayrshire, Scotland, UK, on 24 March 1934.

Most team wins

The record for most team victories is held by England with 45 for men, 11 for junior men and seven for women.

The USA and USSR each has a record eight women's team victories.

Most individual wins

The greatest number of men's individual victories is five, by John Ngugi (Kenya), from 1986 to 1989 and in 1992.

The women's race has been won five times by Doris Brown-Heritage (USA), from 1967 to 1971; and by Grete Waitz (Norway), from 1978 to 1981 and in 1983.

Most appearances

Marcel van de Wattyne (Belgium) ran in 20 races, from 1946 to 1966.

The women's record is 16 by Jean Lochhead (Wales), from 1967 to 1981 and from 1983 to 1988.

English Championship

The most individual titles is four by Percy Stenning (Thames Hare and Hounds) in 1877–80 and Alfred (South London Harriers) in 1901.

The most successful club in the race has been Birchfield Harriers, Birmingham with 28 wins and 10 between 1880 and 1988.

The most individual wins in the women's championships is six by Styles, 1928–30, 1933–34 and

The most successful team in the women's championship is Birch Harriers with 13 titles.

Largest field

The largest recorded field in an cross-country race was 11,763 starters (10,810 finished) in the (18-mile 1,125-yd) Lidingöloppet, Stockholm, Sweden, on 3 Oct 1974.

Orienteering

Most titles

The men's world relay has been a record seven times by Norway in 1970, 1978, 1981, 1983, 1987, 1989 and 1989.

Sweden have won the women's record 10 times in 1966, 1970, 1976, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1991 and 1993.

The record for the greatest number of women's titles in orienteering is held by Annichen Kringstad (Sweden) in 1981, 1983 and 1985.

Right
Moses Tanui of Kenya winning the 100th Boston marathon (USA), the world's longest-lasting major marathon. Tanui holds the record for the fastest time for a half marathon, at 59 min 47 sec, at Milan, Italy, in 1993.

LONGEST DISTANCE EVER WALKED

athlete, it will need to be at least 14 g/dl! Kip Keino and Jim Ryun had blood counts of over 19 g/dl when they were running at their best.

Training at altitude will stimulate the body to develop a higher blood count due to the lack of oxygen in the air (which increases the secretion of a hormone called erythropoietin, leading to a stimulation of the bone marrow to produce more red blood cells). Athletes training at higher altitudes will therefore need to supplement their diet more, due to the increased demands that this type of training makes on the body. American Bill McChesney told me that he could not run consistently hard at high altitude - he had to resort to swimming and cycling, in lieu of running, to keep his muscles going. If he had improved his nutrition while training at altitude, he would have found he could have trained very effectively, and perhaps would even have regained his position as national champion and record-holder.

Finally, avoid the use of antibiotics. When you put these substances into your body, you destroy many of the good qualities you have built up with proper nutrition and hard training. Antibiotics are a last resort life-and-death treatment. If you take them, rest afterwards. Do not exercise for a week. Anne Audain made a dangerous error on three different occasions, when she attempted to run hard after receiving antibiotic injections. She did not tell me she had received an injection - had I known, I would have stopped her from running for several days. Anne collapsed after a hard training session at the Otahuhu track on that Tuesday, and collapsed again during a major championship race four days later. Subsequently, she was ill for a couple of weeks.

The same rule applies to surgery. The knife is meant to be used in extreme cases. Surgeons are for bed-ridden people on their last legs. Avoid the knife if at all possible.

I have found that the following books contain information you may find useful. You will find contradictions from one book to the next, but each of these publications contains the basics that you will need to know in order to make effective use of diet and vitamin supplementation, and thus maximise your level of health and athletic performance:

Eat To Win, by Dr. Robert Haas.

The Complete Guide to Health and Nutrition, by Gary Null.

A Guide to Vitamins, by John Marks.

The Vitamin Bible, by Earl Mindell.

Eating to Win - Food Psyching for the Athlete, by Francis Sheridan.

Your Personal Vitamin Profile, by Dr. Michael Colgan.

Test Bed



With Allan Haines

E-mail: allan.haines@ecm.emap.com

Exercise for lazy lungs

SOME athletes use only a fraction of their lung capacity by breathing with their chests instead of their diaphragm, writes *Norrie Williamson*.

But there is now the Ultrabreathe, a lightweight mouthpiece with a variable valve that allows the resistance to breathing to be altered to suit the individual.

Just as we use resistance training for legs and arms, it is logical that resistance training should be used to improve our pulmonary efficiency.

Research has proven that six weeks of resistance training in breathing has increased VO_2 max, however what is not clear is whether this was undertaken with previously sedentary people or trained sportspeople. It is recommended that the Ultrabreathe is used twice daily for the first two weeks and thereafter only three days a week to maintain the new level of lung function. Each session is conveniently short, involving only

30 deep sharp breaths, and will take about three minutes. For a six minute and £16.90 investment this seems to be a worthwhile method of gaining an edge.

The Ultrabreathe will soon be sold in some specialist running shops but at present is only available by mail order from Tangent Healthcare on 0870-608-9019.



Lung tuner: The Ultrabreathe

Asics launch track duo

ASICS has recently launched two new track spikes, one for middle distance and one for longer events. The middle distance Kenah has a skeletal upper developed from the shoes worn



Long distance: Asics Effort (top)
Middle distance: Asics Kenah (above)

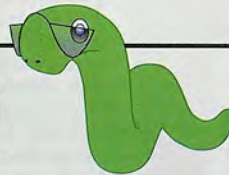
by Iwan Thomas last season. It weighs in at 198g in size eight (our size UK10 $\frac{1}{2}$ test pair weighed 207g).

The external spike plate comes with two permanent steel forefoot pins and is attached to a compression moulded EVA Duosole. Available in sizes 6-12 it sells at £99.99.

For the long distance brigade there's the Effort, a £50 shoe with an external spike plate, full length EVA midsole and a solid rubber heel. The uppers are synthetic with nylon loop lacing. Our size 11 test pair weighed 237g. The Effort is available in sizes 6-12.

We'll be preparing full test reports in due course but first impressions suggest both are set to do well, even though the Kenah's price tag may be a bit off-putting to all but the most serious athletes.

Bookworm



British Junior Athletics Handbook 1998

ANYONE interested in junior athletics can't afford to be without a copy of this latest collection of statistics and information.

The 144 page, A5 handbook is the most comprehensive publication on the subject, listing progressive UK junior best performances (records), UK age bests, all time top 50 junior list, AAA champions and lots more.

Edited superbly by Lionel Peters, the handbook contains easy-to-follow tables and listing, dates, venues, performances... the lot, through to the end of the 1997 season!

Copies, including postage, cost, UK/Europe: £10; outside Europe: £12.

Orders, with cheque or postal order made payable to: *World Junior Athletics News* should be sent to: British Junior Athletics Handbook 1998 (AW), 40 Berkeley Rd, London, NW9 9DG.

Running Fast and Injury Free

by Gordon Pirie (edited by John S Gilbody)

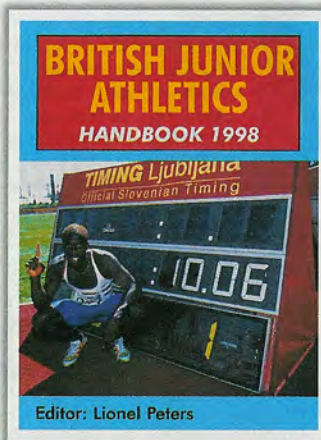
MORE than 70 per cent of running shoes on the market today are causing injuries by their design! A startling statement maybe but one of many the late Gordon Pirie makes in this book.

Pirie, one of the all-time athletics greats, covers just about everything in this amazing book. The original manuscript took him just 24 hours to complete and then a further five years editing with Gilbody. The outward result looks rather unprofessional - it's a simple, A4 ring-bound effort. But the content is well worth the £13 investment (£10 plus £3 p&p). For your money you get 35,500 words covering why athletes fail, injuries, techniques and shoes, training, weight training, diet and vitamins. There's also some interesting stuff in the introduction, along with Pirie's own training methods.

In the 'shoes' chapter Pirie explains how he got a 58-year-old marathon runner to lower his best time from 3:28 to 2:58 just by changing his shoes.

Accept the book for what it is; a simply produced work with no pictures and then enjoy a good read.

Copies are available from: Dr John S Gilbody, 1 Rookwood Close, Hook, Hampshire. RG27 9EU.



Bottle bank

TEAMS wanting to have a supply of liquids handy and neatly stored will find this bottle crate by HighFive very useful. The crate, containing six bottles (500ml or 750ml), is currently on offer only to team managers, at £8.99 plus £3.20 p&p.

Normal price is £26.99 and only 100 sets are available on a first come first served basis. There's a limit of three crates per team.

Managers can order by contacting HighFive on 01332-724-750.



Travel

❑ Place I.D. Tags Inside Your Bags

When traveling by plane, bus or train, most people place their identification tag on the handle of their luggage.

However, the third most common luggage-related problem experienced during air travel involves luggage handles being ripped off by automated conveyors. Of course, if your identification tag is on the handle, the bag becomes unidentifiable.

As a result, it's a good idea to place some identification inside your bag, as well as on the handle. If there's no identification on the outside of a bag, airline officials *will* look inside them.

✍ D.M.



Place a duplicate identification tag inside your bag in case the tag on your luggage handle is torn off.

Reference: Kevin Coffey (Travel Security Consultant), *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, December 2, 1997.

Coaching

❑ Athlete Survey Can Uncover Some Useful Ideas

After each season most coaches evaluate what went wrong and what went right. However, such evaluations are generally single-sided, comprising the opinions of coaches and assistants.

Why not give yourself an entirely new perspective and solicit the opinions of the athletes who were involved. You're sure to hear some information you weren't aware of.

Conducting the Survey

You can solicit this information anonymously, in written form, using the sheet provided on the next page. Ask for information that will improve both team and individual performance (for the latter, athletes can submit a different sheet and sign their name if they wish). You might also ask what your athletes liked and didn't like about the team, its internal dynamics, even your coaching style.

Benefits

This can produce a gold mine of information. For example, in individual performance suggestions, you might find that one player may not loosen up sufficiently using the team warmup routine. It could be to your team's benefit to let this player perform an individual warmup.

You might find that every player on your team is afraid to take a chance because you yell so much from the bench. Painful to hear, but a change in coaching style might produce real benefits in the future. You might also find out about player cliques, alienated athletes and suggestions that will develop the morale and cohesiveness of your group.

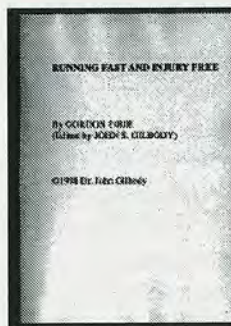
Of course, it's your decision whether to act on student suggestions. But allowing your athletes to provide feedback should produce a greater feeling of empowerment among your players and a greater sense of being part of the team.

✍ D.M.



Running Fast and Injury Free

This self-published manual synthesizes practical wisdom from Gordon Pirie's 45 years of running and coaching experience. Pirie, a three-time Olympian, was one of the greatest athletes in Great Britain's long tradition of distance runners. The manual includes his controversial ideas on shoe design and specific changes in running technique that will lead to years of injury-free running. Also valuable and practical information on training, weight training, diet and vitamins and racing tactics.



\$25.00 U.S. in cheque or International Money Order.
Send to John S. Gilbody,
1 Rookwood Close Hook,
Hampshire, RG27 9EU
ENGLAND
To email for more info:
alltra@globalnet.co.uk

A post-season survey in which you ask for your athletes' suggestions for improving the team.

Reference: Dru Marshall and Robert Schinke, "Assessing team performance to improve results." *Coaches Report*, Summer 1998.

[\$18 Cdn., \$23 U.S., Canadian Professional Coaches Assn., Suite 604, 1600 James Naismith Dr., Gloucester, ON, K1B 5N4, Tel: 613-748-5624, Fax: 613-748-5707].

Resources

❑ **Running Book** **Available for Free on the Web**

In the Fall '98 issue of PE Digest, there was an advertisement for *Running Fast and Injury Free*, a manual that synthesizes the practical wisdom of Gordon Pirie, three-time British Olympian and long-time running coach.

The manual includes his controversial ideas on shoe design and specific changes in running technique—in particular, foot contact—that should reduce the occurrence of running injuries. There are also interesting ideas on training, weight training, diet and vitamins and racing tactics.

Available at no Cost on the WWW

The manual sells for \$25.00 U.S. However, the first four of six chapters are available free of charge on a website called the "Gordon Pirie Resource Center."

It is the intention of John Gilbody, a friend of Gordon Pirie who is the publisher of the book and creator of the site,



to eventually include the entire book on the site and even provide it in a compressed file format for fast downloading. His goal is not to profit from sales of the book, but to expose his friend's ideas to the public.

Website Address

The website address is:

<http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Pressbox/2204>

You can obtain most of the book "Running Fast and Injury Free" at no cost on the World Wide Web.

Dick Moss (Editor), *Physical Education Digest*, 1999.

Training-Room Tips

❑ **Iliotibial Band Massage**

Iliotibial Band Syndrome involves the long fibrous band that runs down the side of the leg, starting at the hip and ending below the side of the knee. If this band is too tight, it rubs over the bony protuberance on the outside of the knee joint (the lateral femoral epicondyle), causing inflammation and pain (see PE Digest, Spring '93).

Stretching, icing, strengthening and minimizing knee-bending movements are effective ways to reduce downtime from IT Band syndrome (see PE Digest, Winter '94). Another effective treatment is massage. Here's how to perform an IT band massage.

IT Band Massage

The purpose of the massage is to relax and physically lengthen the band, and to remove adhesions (scar tissue) that might be limiting its flexibility.

Have your athlete lie on his/her side, then:

1. Using the palms, take a minute or so to perform a gentle massage over the entire IT band, stroking upwards from the knee. This warms up the muscles and IT band.
2. Apply some oil and begin by massaging the top of the band, near the hip. Using your thumbs, knuckles, or side of the forearm, push *deeply* into the tissue, and stroke slowly upward. Start fairly superficially, gradually deepening the strokes. Be warned: the athlete may feel some discomfort from such deep massage—

What Have You Done for Your Mind Lately?



Your Mental Health Association

K A S S A

(adviesprijzen)

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m.v.g. Ysbrand Visser

scheiden van de concurrentie meldt het (voor lopers) nieuwe merk HighFive (of H5) dat 'geknoei met zakjes plakkende vingers oplevert'. Daarom verkoopt deze fabrikant de gel in poedervorm (onder meer in handzame flesjes). U dient het product zelf met water te mengen en kunt de flesjes gemakkelijk in een speciale riem vervoeren. Zo kunt u naar behoefte meer of minder gel bijtanken, altijd wel gevolgd door het drinken van een ruime hoeveelheid water.

De energiegel van H5 - in de smaken aardbei, banaan en citroen - wordt ook verkocht in bussen met een kilo poeder en een bijbehorend flesje. Na bereiding dient de gel binnen een etmaal te worden geconsumeerd. De vanuit Engeland in de triatlon (en later het wielrennen) groot geworden firma is aan een opmars in lopersland begonnen. De importeur belooft lopers komend seizoen een 'gigantische hoeveelheid nieuwe producten'.

Naast de bovengenoemde transfer van Leppin zijn er nog twee opmerkelijke verschuivingen op de markt. Al vanaf de overgang van Karhu naar de grote handelsfirma CTH/Roveco klonken negatieve berichten. De nieuwe importeur, Piri Sport, was tot nu toe slechts op beperkte schaal in de loopwereld actief en zal de hele Benelux gaan bedienen. New Balance is ook al jaren zoekende naar een stevige basis, en heeft die wellicht gevonden bij de Belgische zakenman Peter Callant. Zijn firma, die al New Balance-schoenen in België verkocht, heeft de Nederlandse partner en importeur overgenomen, zodat er vooralsnog weinig verandert voor klanten en winkeliers.

Dubbele surprise

Voor mensen die alles al hebben en absoluut niet weten wat ze voor cadeau moeten vragen (u kent er vast wel enkelen), is er een nieuwe verrassing: de VVV Aktiefon. De surprise in dit geval is bovendien een dubbele, want de deelnemende bedrijven (2300 in Nederland) doen een extra duit in het zakje, ter waarde van het bedrag op de bon. Alle activiteiten die met de Aktiefon binnen bereik komen, staan uitvoerig beschreven in een 64 pagina's tellend tijdschrift, dat gratis bij de bon wordt verstrekt.

In het algemeen zal de bon vooral de kennismaking met een nieuwe activiteit vergemakkelijken. Zo kunt u bij de kanobond al voor 25 gulden een driedaagse introductiecursus voor beginners boeken. Dezelfde bon kan zelfs 75 gulden korting opleveren bij een volledige duikopleiding. Wintersport, bridgen, indoor klimmen, zeilen, inline skaten, skeeleren, peuter gymnastiek, rugby: het kan allemaal met deze bon. Behalve voetbal.

En lopen? Die sportieve activiteit wordt tot onze grote verbazing als *trimmen* bij een beperkt aantal gymnastiekverenigingen on-

dergebracht (tien gulden voor een maand proberen). Ook kunt u bij een lange reeks sportcentra terecht om - onder de noemer 'cardio-sport' - te gaan lopen. Maar voor een potje lopen hoeven we u niet met een bon op pad te sturen, toch?

Sommige lezers vinden de service-artikelen in *Runner's World*, die u op de hoogte houden van de ontwikkelingen op gebied van training en voeding, te kort of te eenvoudig. Zij prefereren echt wetenschappelijke verhandelingen en kunnen zich wel-



Een sportief en activerend cadeau.

licht laven aan het Engelse tijdschrift *Peak Performance*. Lange, diepgaande verhandelingen, zoals recent die van Owen Anderson over melkzuur, verdiepen uw inzicht in de fitness van de fysiologie. Maar ook marktontwikkelingen op fitnessgebied zijn het onderzoeken waard. Vanaf de honderdste uitgave kunt u deze periodiek nu ook in Nederland verkrijgen. Distributeur EMD heeft een kantoor in België, maar daar kent men dit tijdschrift (nog) niet.

Hoe kan een 58-jarige loper zijn marathonrecord van 3.28 uur met een half uur verbeteren door simpelweg van schoenen te veranderen? Dit en veel andere interessante zaken leest u in het boek *Running Fast and Injury Free*. Het door John S. Gilbody bewerkte boek is geschreven door wijlen Gordon Pirie, een legende in Groot-Brittannië. Pirie bezit, aldus het *Guinness Book of Records*, het wereldrecord trainingsomvang, met een totaal afgelegde afstand van 347.600 kilometer in veertig jaar. Voorts vestigde hij wereldrecords op onder meer de 3000 en 5000 meter.

Het eenvoudige boekwerk wordt als een A4-ringband zonder foto's uitgegeven. Kijkt u daardoorheen, dan treft u direct een prikkelende reeks wetten aan, die verderop wordt uitgewerkt. 'Loop op uw voorvoeten', 'Wandelen schaaft het lopen' en 'De meeste loopschoenen veroorzaken door hun ontwerp blessures', zijn enkele van de uitspraken waarmee Pirie zich in de Britse atletiek maar moeizaam populair maakte. Hij schroomde niet keihard de vinger op zwakke plekken te leggen. Daarom ook is de uitgave een mix van eerbetoon aan en eerdere herstel van deze toegewijde loper, en meer dan het lezen waard. Weliswaar is de prijs voor slechts zestig pagina's fors, maar de anekdotes over tal van topatleten vergoeden veel. **R**

Running Writing

[home](#)

No. 14



September 1998

The President's Message

As this is my first message as President of SCTAC I should try to say something inspirational but don't be surprised if it comes out sounding irrational instead.

I confess that I probably don't take my position seriously enough and feel a bit like Zafod Beeblebrox of "Hitch Hikers Guide to The Galaxy" : Merely a buffoon figurehead put there to keep the media entertained while the real leaders operate secretly behind the scenes. And it is these unsung heroes who really keep the club running (to coin a phrase). My hat is raised to Greg Gilbert, Alan Bishop, Lyn Button, Ted Harrison, Ewen Thompson and Michael Ward-Pearson. It is there sterling efforts that make our club as successful as it is.

My first love in athletics is the race. Despite my advancing years I still love to get out there and mix it with the youngsters, striving to remain competitive as long as I possibly can.

Our club is full of such characters of varying levels of ability but all with that unquenchable urge to do the best that we possibly can. We may be a bit short on real star performers (though we do indeed have a few of those), but we make up for it with this sheer determination to do the best we can.

We all should be using this enthusiasm to encourage new members to join us and to inspire existing members to continue with us.

This is what makes ours a great club. We are a very good athletics club, but it is my ambition to steer it towards becoming a better social club as well. Unfortunately, we on the committee tend to be an unimaginative lot and

Select for Large Image



Club President Gordon Nightingale some years back at the Anzac Relays [59k]



Craig Core steeplechase to second place in the 98 Bilga Bash [26k]



Sharing a joke prior to the start of the 98 Rosemary Longstaff Trophy race [52k]



Happy 15th for Erin at the 1998 Bilga Bash cross country race [71k]

Any aficionado of world class running will have heard about the exciting days of the late 1950's and early 1960's. The Melbourne and Rome Olympic Games. Names such as Elliott, Kuts, Snell, Iharos, Santee and Pirie come to mind. A new book by the late Gordon Pirie is now available (Edited by John S Gilbody) - "*Running Fast and Injury Free*".

The book makes for fascinating reading. Gordon Pirie is a three-time Olympian who won silver in the 5,000 metres behind Vladimir Kuts in the 1956 Melbourne Games. He also set five official world records and many more unofficial world bests and "trained very hard for 45 years and only suffered two or three injuries which stopped me from training."

I found the whole book to be entertaining, educational and at times controversial. The training that Pirie undertook to transform himself from a good club runner who couldn't sprint to a world-class athlete with a devastating finish is amazing. It is interesting that his world record from 1956 of 13:36.8 (on a cinders track) is a time superior to the personal bests of most members of Australia's 1998 team for the World Cross Country Championships.

In the book, Gordon Pirie outlines his 'laws of running' and continues with chapters addressing subjects such as 'Why Athletes Fail', 'Injuries, Technique and Shoes', 'Training', 'Weight Training' and 'Diet and Vitamins'. The chapter on 'Injuries, Technique and Shoes' I found to be particularly absorbing from a personal perspective. In the group that I help coach we spend a good deal of time teaching athletes 'how to run'. To do this, we watch them running and incorporate various drills, exercises and hill running into their

would really appreciate input from you. Your constructive ideas on improving our social image would be greatly appreciated. You are welcome to come to the regular club meeting, held the third Monday of each month, to express them.

Perhaps we could arrange group attendances at movies or shows, taking advantage of the cheaper rates for group bookings, or maybe a Sunday BBQ at Pine Island where we could do something different like a game of Touch. It would be good to get a response from some of you on these and other ideas.

The Winter season is in full swing and we are getting a good turn out of members at almost every event. Our Juniors are always competitive; doing very well against the other clubs. We are struggling at the moment with our open women's team though. Fiona and Rosemary do a fantastic job, but we definitely need to recruit a few more girls in the 20 to 35 age group to take the pressure off them. We have been able to field teams through the inclusion of juniors in some cases, and by girls, like Amanda Ozolins, who have performed above the call of duty to ensure that we had enough to earn points. Our senior men are largely old crocks like myself who battle on gamely, watching the more agile runners from other clubs receding into the distance ahead of us. But these old crocks still managed to take the Summer Series men's team title so they can't write us off yet.

I believe that Athletics is losing members to the more with-it sports like Triathlon. It is a time when we should be looking at ways to make our sport more with-it as well. It is a time when we all must apply our collective minds to the problem. We may have to depart from traditional methods and venture into uncharted territory to do this. We could start by looking at what makes a sport popular and applying it

to our own. Success for the rest of the winter.

Gordon Nightingale

July 11 - 1998

training so they can learn the running form of a world-class middle distance athlete. I must say that I don't agree entirely with Pirie's model of good running form, however it is interesting the importance that he gives to running form and it's relevance to injury-free and successful running.

Below are some excerpts from the book. I hope to include some more in future issues of Running Writing. In conclusion, I would recommend the book to all runners - from the absolute beginner to the emerging national-class athlete. ■

Pirie on Why Athletes Fail: "Because runners always demonstrate a determination and singleness of purpose rarely encountered in people involved in other sports, they tend to overdo their training when rest is called for (that is, relative rest, not necessarily zero activity). The generally accepted notion is: 'The harder I train, the faster I will run'. This is not necessarily true. There is nothing wrong with training very hard for a time even right to the limit - then backing off and having a period of rest. Hard training is very important; but so is rest. Training hard when fatigued is asking for frustration, disappointment, and possibly injury or illness.

A training plan is very important, but it should be infinitely flexible! Too zealous an adherence to a plan can leave a runner flat on his back. In May 1981, I watched Grete Waitz training at Bislet Stadium in Oslo two or three days after a hard race. Her legs were still stiff and sore from the stress of the race, so her training (300-metre sprints) was going badly. I wrote to Arne Haukvik, the Oslo promoter, following that session to ask him to warn Grete that she would soon be injured if she pursued this course of training. Sure enough, Grete suffered a serious foot injury a few weeks later, which caused her to drop out of her world record attempt at 5,000 metres. She lost the rest of the season."

Pirie on Training: "It is important to remember that when you run your race simulations, you must do so in a less stressful manner than when actually racing. Take it easy and forget about sprinting the last lap; just run along at a comfortable pace. The object is to accustom your body and your mind to running the distance. My favourite runs were 2 miles in 8:40 to 9 minutes, four miles in 18:30-19:30, and three miles in 13:30-13:35. I liked to finish these runs quickly, with a last lap of about 60 or 61 seconds, but not flat-out (I have done 53.8 seconds for the last 440 yards of a 5,000m race).

You can do the same kind of running, below your maximum ability, over distances ranging from 3,000 metres up to 10,000 metres, although I am sure that very few runners can do the type and volume of very fast running I was doing in the 1950s. Initially, you will have to settle for running well within your capabilities with times a little more conservative.

But how can you find your particular level? How do you know how fast to run these fast stretches? You have to seek out an experienced coach to match your training schedule to your ability at any particular moment. A runner cannot do this himself very easily. If you are a coach, you must make sure that you are very careful to gauge the abilities of your athletes correctly. It is important that you do not demand more than the athlete is able to reasonably deliver, whilst still being able to recover for a similar session the next day. I like to set a target time my athletes can easily reach then they always succeed!

I deal with about 100 different facets of training when trying to produce champion runners. Most coaches I know understand about 20 of these 100 facets, some coaches know 45 or 50, and I have known one or two who know all 100 facets of the art. The point I am making is that: (1) there is no detail of your life or your training which is too minor to be considered in relation to your training schedule; and (2) it is crucial to find yourself as good a coach as possible, because it is not possible to take guidance solely from a piece of paper (like the training schedules you frequently see published in magazines, and the schedules of my own that I have cited here). You really need a mentor to save you from making the 1,001 mistakes that can be made in training and racing. A good doctor is also important (see Chapter Six on diet and vitamins)."

Ordering Details:

'Running Fast and Injury Free' is a simply produced work with no pictures.

Copies are available from: Dr John S Gilbody, One Rookwood Close, Hook, Hampshire RG27 9EU [ENGLAND]".

For US dollar orders, please send a check for \$25 (this price includes airmail postage). For Australia and New Zealand: Aus\$40.00 (cheques accepted) all-inclusive price including airmail postage. I'm sorry for the price, but the exchange rate is currently Aus\$2.56 = UK£1.00 !. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to e-mail me. Note that this is NOT a commercial venture - the photocopying involved, together with card and ring-binder, costs more than the sale price. Also, the book took me five years to produce. However, I promised Gordon before he died that I would publish the book, and so I have!

John S Gilbody (25 July 1998)
One Rookwood Close
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ENGLAND
Fax: +44 (0) 1256 760 100
alltra@globalnet.co.uk

[top](#)

the challenge of **ORIENTEERING**

GORDON PIRIE



The sport of Orienteering is Sweden's gift to all ages. It involves finding the way about the countryside with a map and compass on foot to predetermined points on the map.

Orienteering calls for a quick choice of route to the next control point in wild unknown country. A good Orienteering course generally affords choice of routes: a hard direct one or a longer easier route. Quick decisions and clever thinking, backed by average fitness, are the sole requisites for Orienteering—a weekend hobby in which all ages can be successful. Unlike other sports, Orienteering demands no toil at regimes for physical fitness.

Success in Orienteering is judged by the individuals themselves. Achievement exists as the Orienter finds each red-flagged check point, bringing a moment of elation and relief and a springboard for renewed excitement in the search for the next checkpoint.

In Sweden—where it originated—events attract thousands of competitors of all ages for relay races, night events and novelty Orienteering. The greatest asset of Orienteering is that a lack of or surfeit of age is no bar to participation and enjoyment. For schoolteachers, Orienteering offers the perfect answer for outdoor extra-curricula activities—but remember the accent is on not losing pupils!

How to Orienteer? When to—? Where to—? How it is organised. This book gives a clear and concise answer to all the questions. Taking bearings and back-bearings, route-finding—the organisation of events—all are covered in this book by England's first Orienteering Champion, Gordon Pirie, who outlines the excitement and amusement of Orienteering with his own personal experiences and anecdotes. He confirmed his position as Britain's leading orienteer by winning his second consecutive Championship in June 1968.

First published in Great Britain by
PELHAM BOOKS LTD
26 Bloomsbury Street
London, W.C.1
1968

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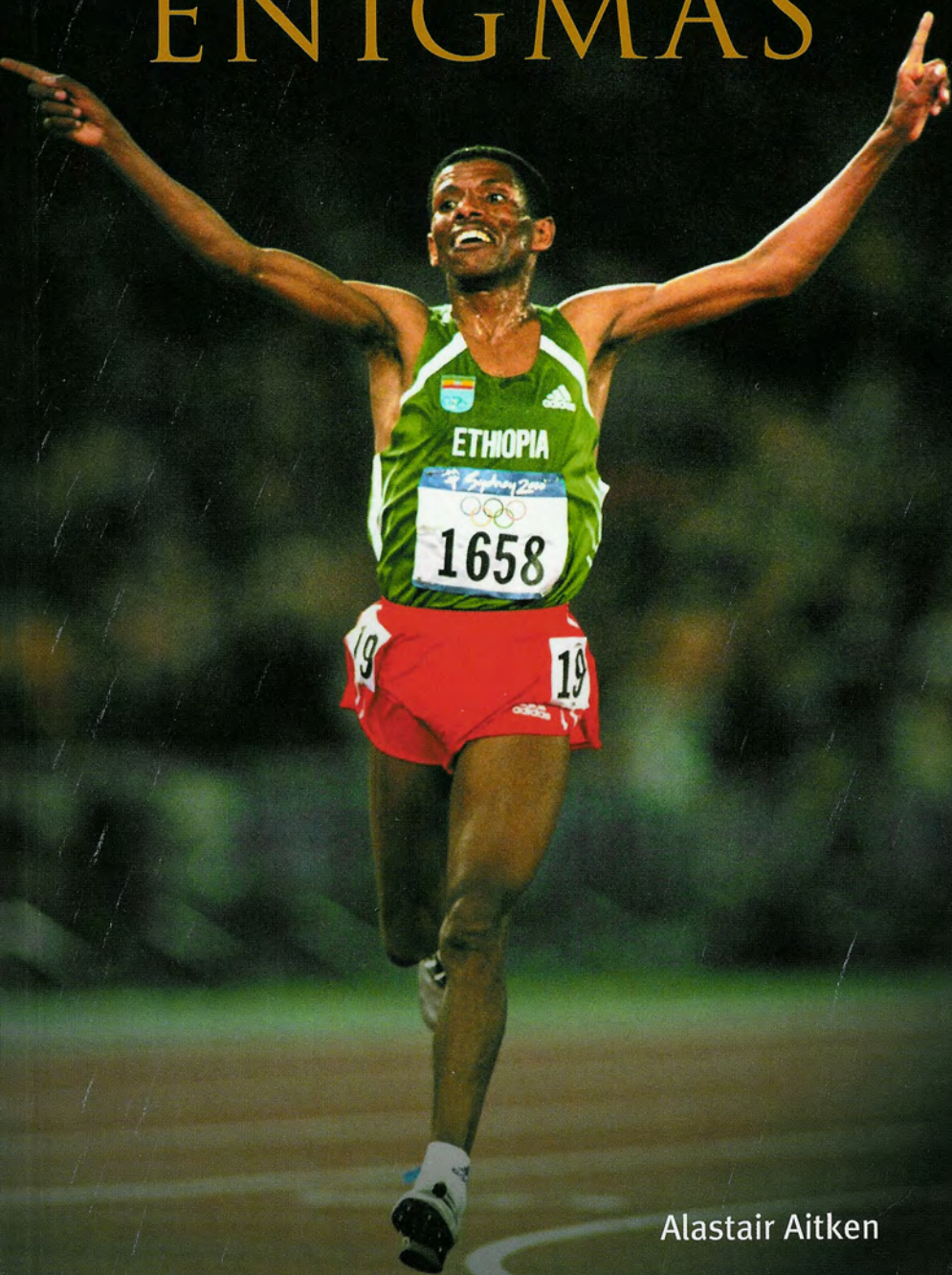
7207 0167 8

Set and printed in Great Britain by
Tonbridge Printers Ltd, Peach Hall Works, Tonbridge, Kent,
in Times ten on twelve point, and bound by
James Burn at Esher, Surrey

CONTENTS

Foreword by Baron Gösta 'Rak' Lagerfelt	9
1 What is Orienteering?	17
2 Types of Races	26
3 How to run Orienteering Races – for Competitors and Officials	39
4 The Compass	61
5 Maps	79
6 Orienteering Equipment and Training	87
7 A Champion's Route, by Halvard Nilsson	91
8 The Course-Setter's Handbook	97
Appendix I – Orienteering Associations	101
Appendix II – The Country Code	108
Appendix III – Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme	109
Appendix IV – Map Reproduction	111
Appendix V – British Orienteering Federation	119
Appendix VI – The National Badge Scheme	115
Index	117

ATHLETICS ENIGMAS



Alastair Aitken

First published in Great Britain in 2002 by
The Book Guild Ltd
25 High Street,
Lewes, East Sussex
BN7 2LU

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Typesetting in Times by
Keyboard Services, Luton, Bedfordshire

Printed in Great Britain by
Athenaeum Press Ltd, Gateshead

A catalogue record for this book is available from
The British Library

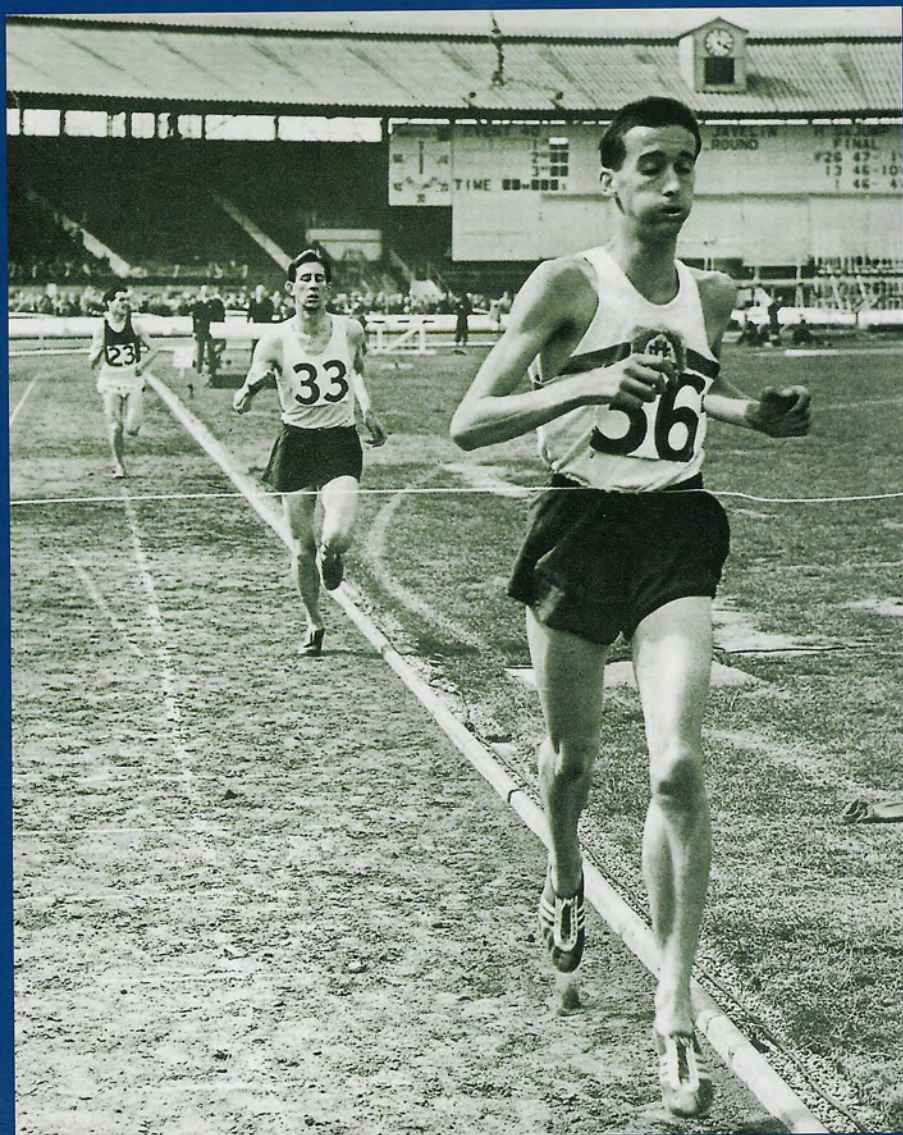
ISBN 1 85776 603 2

CONTENTS

1. GORDON PIRIE IN RETROSPECT with Dick Booth, Chris Chataway, Desmond Hackett, Neil Allen, George Smith, Peter Driver, John Macnamara, Bill Nankeville, Pete Mulholland, Tom Richards, Don Turner, Rod Turney, Peter Hamilton, Robin Firth, Jason Henderson, Barry Attwell, Frank Sando, George Rhodes, Roy Fowler, Bruce Tulloh, Peter Hildreth, Joe Binks 1
2. 3000M STEEPLECHASE with Bob Sparkes, Mel Watman, Tim Johnston, Gaston Roelants, John Disley, Chris Brasher, Eric Shirley, Dave Chapman, Dennis Coates, Bronislaw Malinowski, Alex Mineyko 17
3. GREAT CHARACTERS with Jim Hogan, John Downes, Harry Mathews, Mike Beevor, John Atkinson, Martin Howard, Jack Heywood, Mick Firth, Mike Marlowe, Maureen Smith, Pam Jones, Mike Barratt, Andy Ferguson, Peter Hildreth, Geoff Harrold, Ken Norris, Jim Peters, Norris McWhirter, Barrie Saunders, Alf Mignot, George Harrison, Arthur Keily, Alison Wyeth, John Dorgan, Terry Driscoll, John Davies (NZ), Jack Fitzgerald, Joyce Smith, Mike Puddifoot, Adrian Stewart, Eric Nash, Phil Hernon, Martin Cadwallder, Nigel Gates, Dave Moorcroft, George Richardson, Tony Edwards, Tim Morphy, 24

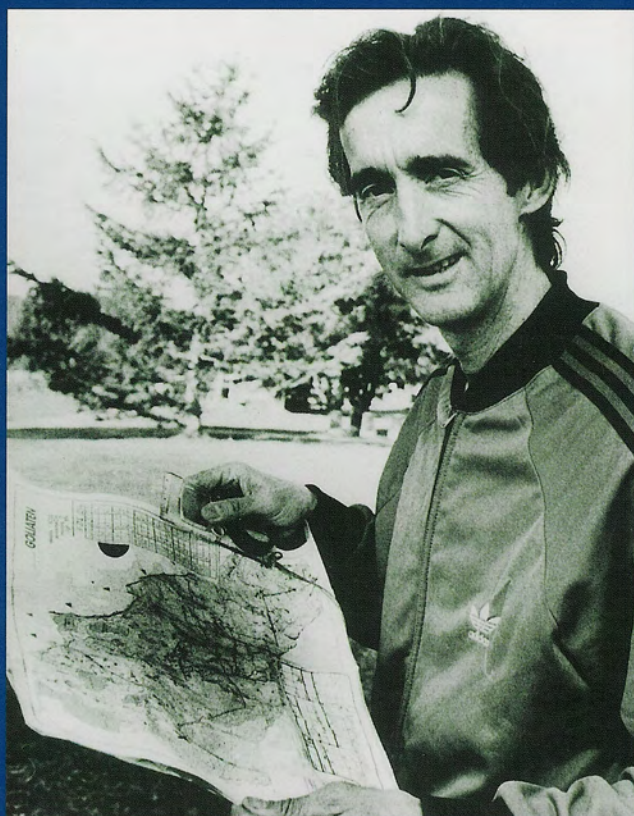
The Impossible Hero

A biography of Gordon 'Puff Puff' Pirie



DICK BOOTH

'He was a hero – the man who broke through barriers, a man dedicated to proving that the impossible was possible' – Chris Brasher CBE



ISBN 0-9536671-0-3



9 780953 667109

First published in the UK in 1999 by
Corsica Press
PO Box 29444
London NW1 7GW

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 9536671 0 3

Designed by Merriton Sharp, London
Printed by Acorn Press Swindon Ltd

Book Detail Display 29 December 1999

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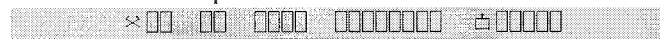
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Author Booth, Dick

Price Normal Price £16.50 10%
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Biblio 24; ClothBinding ClothPublished 8 November 1999Publisher Corsica P

Normally available for dispatch from 1 to 2 weeks



Customer Reviews

John Gilbody john@johngilbody.com. Score: (4 / 5)

Dick Booth's autobiography of Gordon Pirie went on sale in the UK on 18 Nov 1999 (book launch was at the Royal Society of Arts, London, on 22 Nov). It is a very detailed, well researched and professionally produced book with ample b&w photos. Gordon lived with us for the last few years of his life and we were given 3 draft chapters to review. Pleasingly, most of the mistakes we found have been corrected. I was worried from the title that the book would be negative about Gordon, but this does not seem to be the case. Overall: if you're interested in this subject and athletics era, you won't be disappointed, but don't expect running tips. For additional information about Gordon, please check out my "Gordon Pirie Resource Center" at <http://www.gordonpirie.com>.

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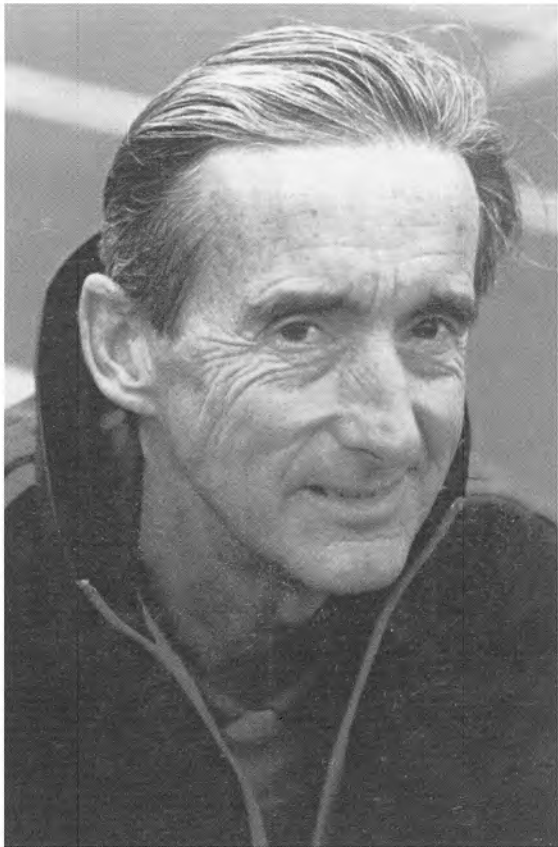
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Gordon Pirie





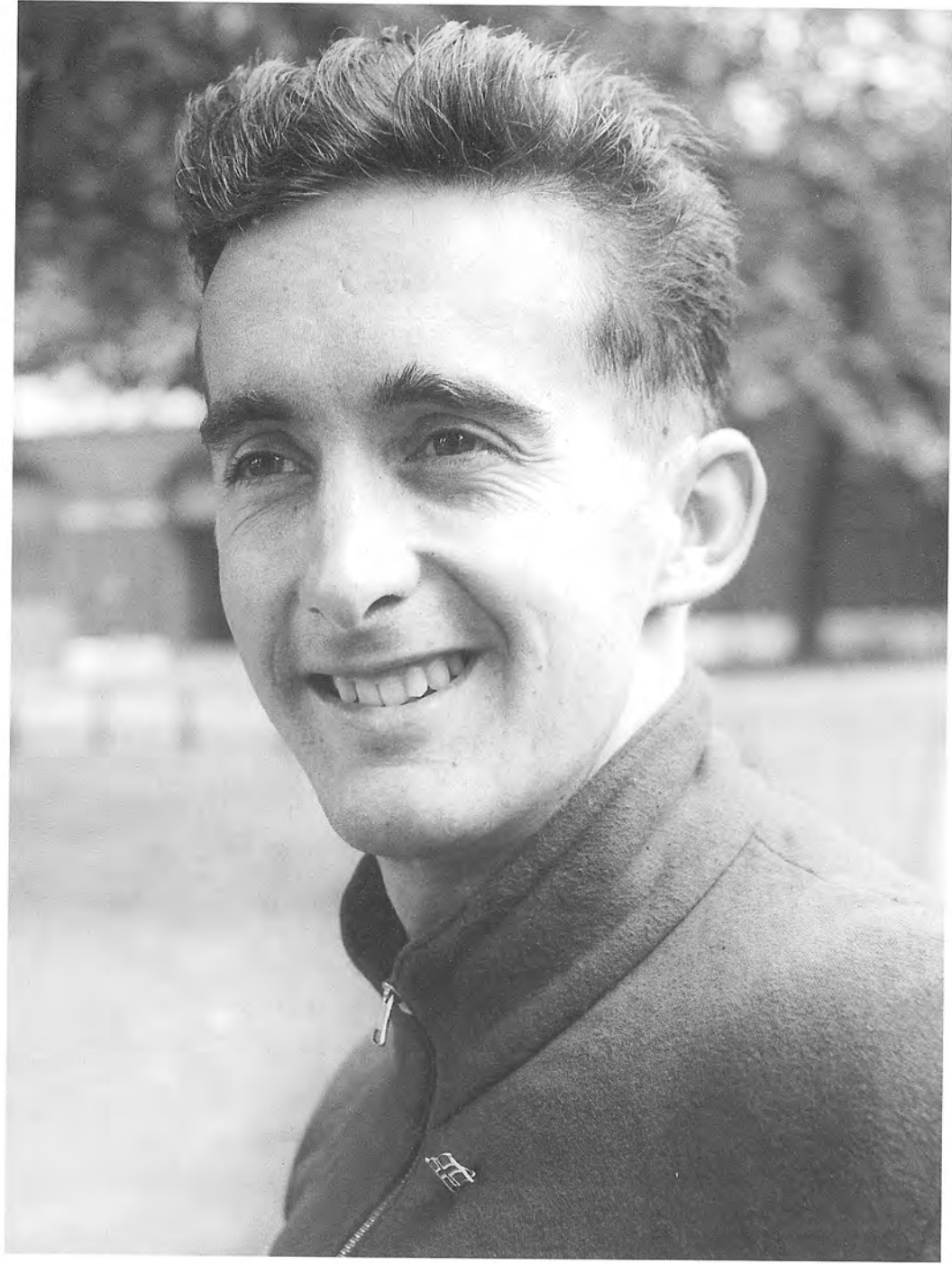
The author: first English Orienteering Champion, 1966; first British Orienteering Champion, 1967, and Champion again in 1968



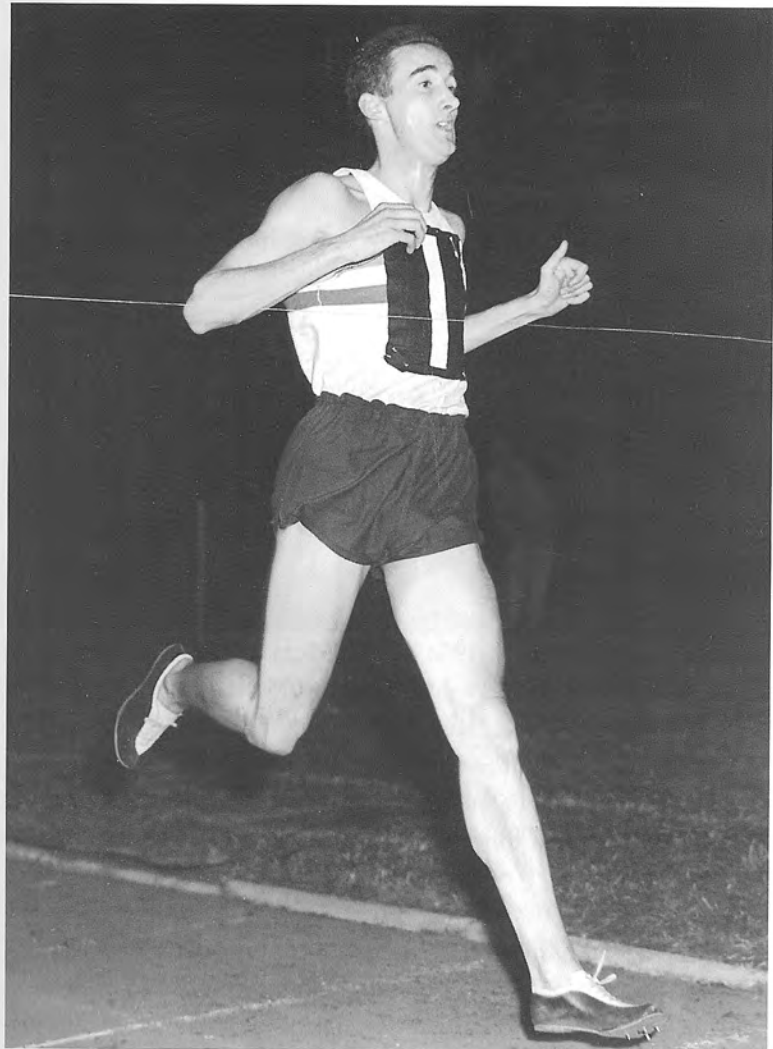
'At the top of the cliff'. Controls should be chosen carefully, with clear and concise definitions



(Left) Euro Meeting, Gothenburg 1966. Gordon Pirie finishes second in the first competition. *(Below)* Euro Meeting 1966. Chris Brasher finishes



Gordon Pirie (1956). Jane Bown for *The Observer*.



Pirie wins an international race in 1955.
Ken Finding



Training at the Skansemyren track two or three days before the race.

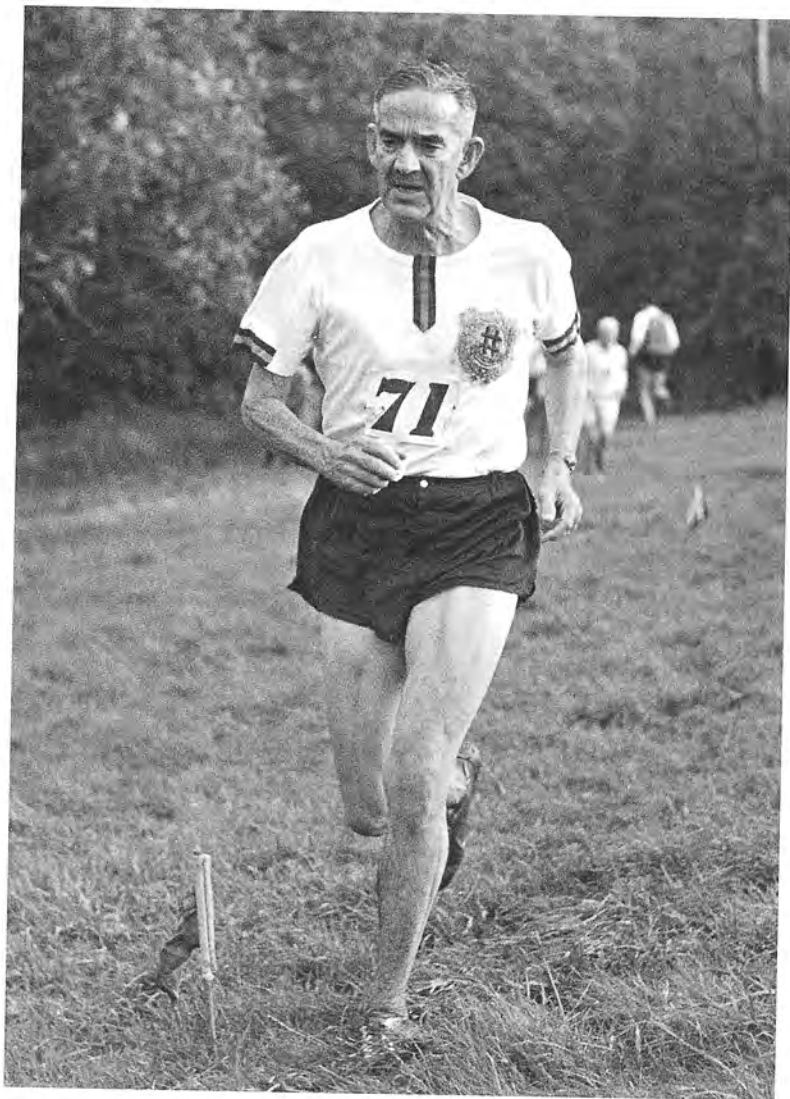
Bergens Tidende



waited, half wanting to run home at 5,000 metre record pace to tell his parents what had happened.

Pirie stood, hands on hips to help himself recover, only now the sweat breaking out on him. He walked this way and that, waiting for the time. There were three watches to be examined. If it was a record

Pirie and Kuts
photographed a few
minutes after Pirie broke
the world record for
5,000 metres.
Bergens Tidende



Alick Pirie running in a club event on Farthing Downs in his sixties.
Susan Prout



Gordon Pirie timing his father while training on the downs.

SLH



Gordon (left) at home
with Peter Pirie and
their parents.

SLH

Gordon Pirie at 14
(1945) before one of
his first competitive
races.

SLH





Aylesford, Kent, 1948.
The SLH Youths' team
in the Southern Cross-
Country Champion-
ships. Gordon Pirie,
second from right, back
row.

SLH



Surrey championships,
1952.

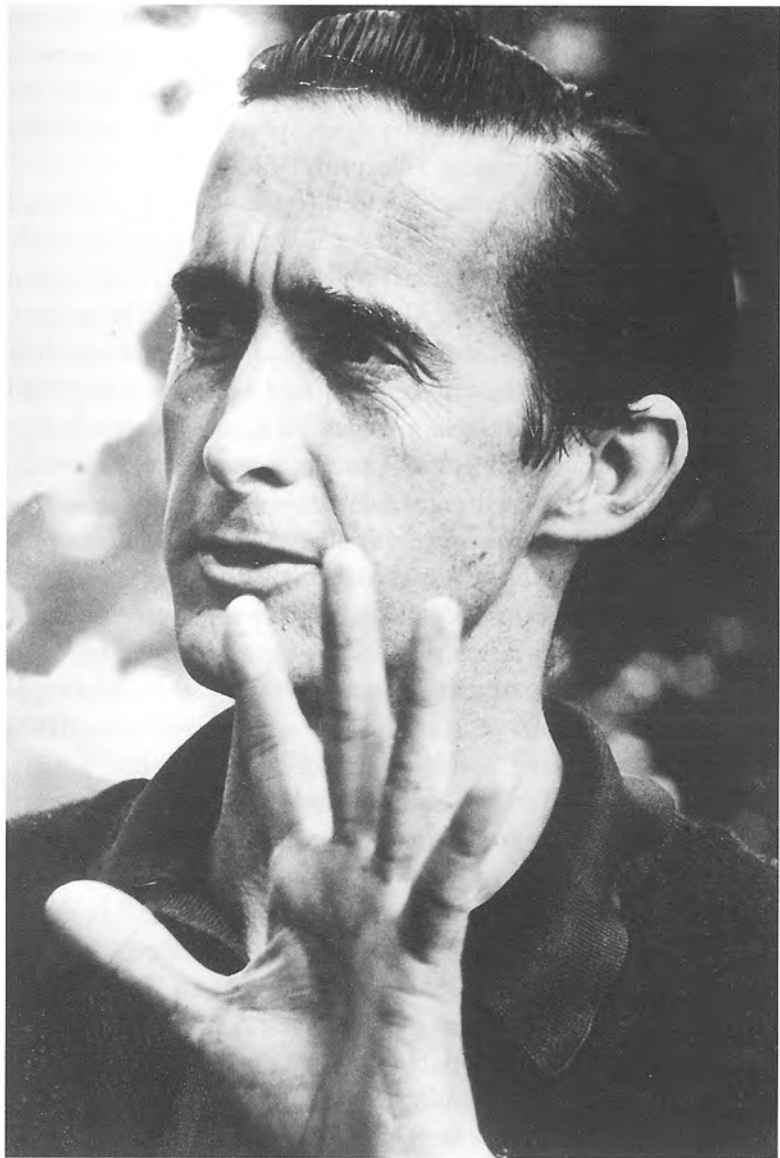
David Thurlow

May 1991. Reception
with the Princess Royal
(back to camera) before
the Diet Coke Great Run
for Children.

Left: Derek Ibbotson.
Peter Pirie







Pirie the coach.
News Media (Auckland)



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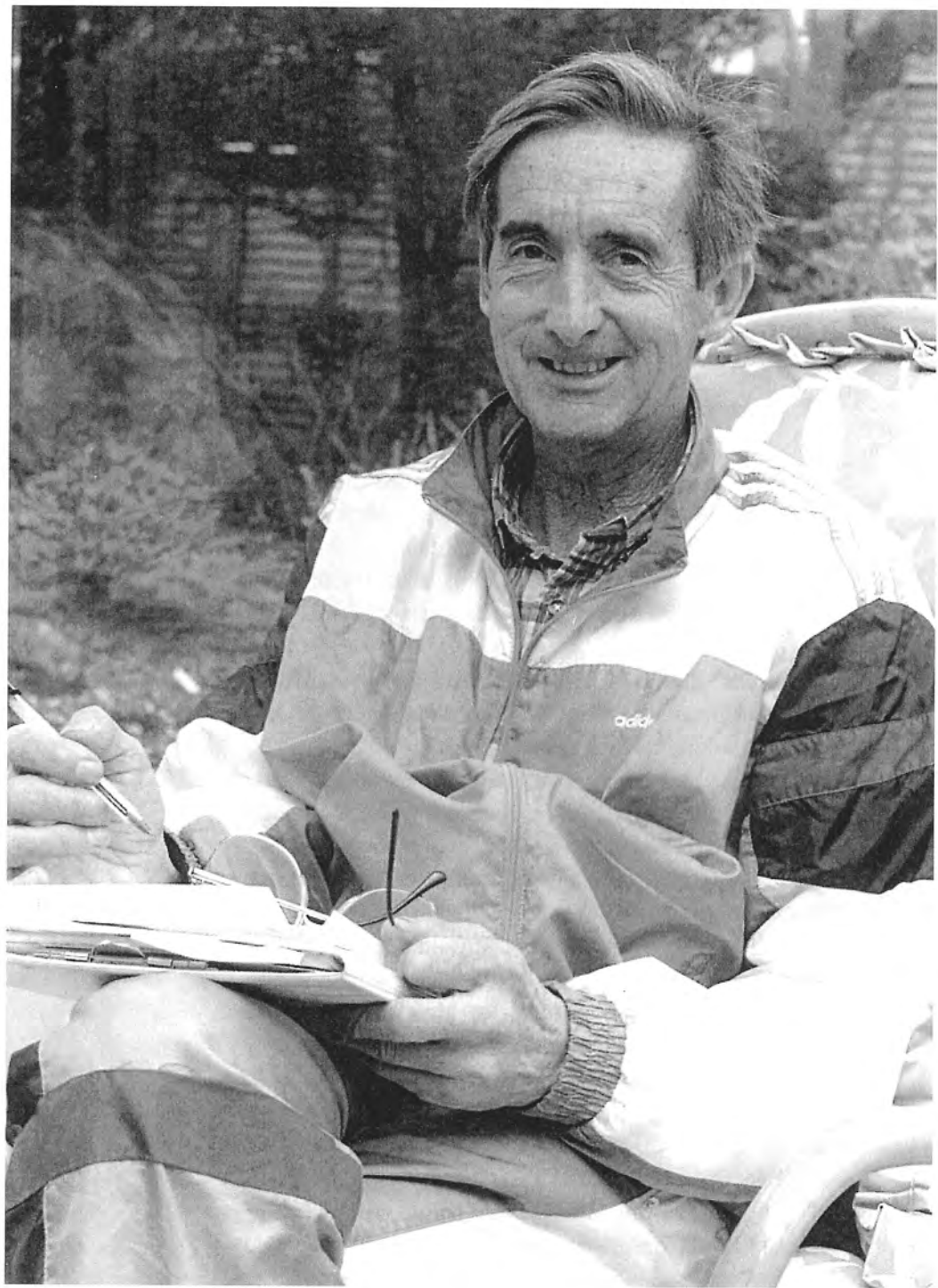
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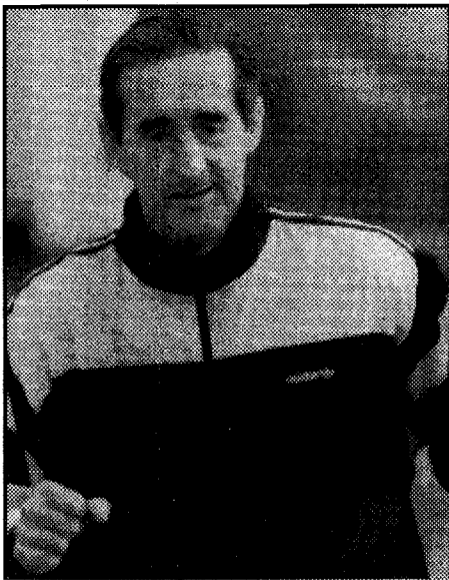












Gordon Pirie . . . still running today

Gordon Pirie comes to heal

By CHRISTOPHER HILTON

THE kitchen window shelf of a house down a lane near the New Forest is like a seed bed. Small plastic tubs and jars are full of strange greenery in various states of propagation.

Gordon Pirie moves restlessly towards them, describes the properties of each of them, believes in them, lives on them.

Then equally restlessly he moves towards me. "I can cure injuries, which people tell me is impossible."

Suppose, he says, you were a cricketer and you couldn't use your arm. He cocks his elbow and drills the point of it into the muscle linking my arm and chest.

I think he expects me to scream because a lot of people do and gen-

erally he takes them out of earshot for the treatment.

He nods to himself as if to demonstrate that if I'd had trouble with my arm I wouldn't have it now. Later he pulled my hair to demonstrate something else.

He volunteered to treat Nick Faldo's troublesome wrist.

"I reckon I could cure him in one go. I went to Wentworth and spoke to him and offered to help him. He refused and almost pushed me in the face."

Pirie was 60 a few days ago, a face still recognisable from 30 years ago when he ran famously and gloriously. He is a conservationist, impromptu social poet, man of

fierce opinions and cancer sufferer. So much so he was in San Diego last week for treatment.

"It is just one of those things."

Self-pity is remote from him even if it has occurred to him at all. He's always been the same and it's been a long strange journey across the decades. "I've run about 265,000 miles over 50 years. I used to run 12,000 a year.

"I wasn't gifted. I was good enough to be able to smell success but not quite get it (silver medal in the 5,000 metres at the Melbourne Olympics, '56).

"I retired from track running at 30 and went to live in New Zealand, a lovely place. I came back to Bri-

tain because I bust up my marriage like many, many champions.

"I started training people here, boys and adults, I worked in the forestry and I cure people.

"What I do is like opening the bonnet of a car and fixing the wiring."

Pirie is just out of hospital. "In December I was felling trees and I collapsed. I'd got a blocked bile duct. In hospital they said I'd got some cancerous material there. So I'm going to San Diego for three weeks for treatment."

Just for a moment he examines himself, might be finding solace in doing that. "What I've been doing in my life is getting out and going.

"A lot of people don't like me because I have this drive and go over the top of everything."



SPORT

loses
cool
a title

RT suffered a 4-6, 6-4 defeat by Warren Cahill in a Francisco tournament final. His temper with

Gilbert, the No. 3 ranked 10th in the and furiously served was called out of set of his Cahill. had won a set 4-5 down in lost his cool at serve was called

by screaming an and then et with his the umpire e call would

No. 6 seed who h in the world, at on the second serve ched victory ve rally.

country
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which had to last weekend, moved forward writes Neil

ation of the y commission, y vote, to the teur Athletic

date is

will mean that s, senior and s for both men will be held ight before the country tips in Antwerp.

chs ready

ONARCHS will pick of the

liable for the son of the World American Football wo-week player amp got

in Orlando, eigh-Durham drew first choice designed to alent fairly to the teams.

Whatever happened to



GORDON PIRIE, the former bank clerk from Leeds who became one of Britain's greatest post-war athletes, was 60 yesterday. After 20 years based in New Zealand he now lives quietly on the edge of the New Forest in Hampshire, keeps the silver medal he won at the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956 in a Sainsbury's carrier bag under his bed and works as a lumberjack. He still runs, does

some coaching and treats injury-prone sportsmen—his patients include Ian Woosnam—in his spare time. But he has not got much to celebrate this year, as he told **GRAHAM BRIDGSTOCK**. After a recent bile-duct operation doctors told Pirie the biopsy had revealed cancerous cells. . .

PEOPLE in athletics have been terrific. Chris Chataway and Chris Brasher both sent get-well cards. So did many others when they heard I'd been in hospital though I don't think they know the latest diagnosis yet (says 6ft 1in Gordon, now half a stone lighter than his usual 10st 8lbs, who represented Britain at three Olympics, smashed five world records and estimates he has clocked more than 260,000 miles in his size 9½ Adidas trainers in the last 50 years).

Naturally I told my ex-wife (former international sprinter Shirley Hampton) and my daughters (Sara, 26, and Joanne, 28) the full story and they are all cheering me on.

Shirley and I are friends again now. In fact, when I'm in New Zealand I stay with Shirley and Paul who lives with her these days. He's an athlete I used to coach, 20 years younger than her and they're very happy. There's no bitterness, no hard feelings.

What I'm really trying to do at present is to lift the spirits of everyone around me who's upset.

When they cut me open (he pulls up his T-shirt to reveal the tell-tale scars as he tucks into a pub lunch of vegetarian chilli) they took out cysts the size of your thumb.

Now the doctors want to insert a little piece of radioactive metal which would hopefully kill off the cells affected.

I haven't had much to do with doctors in the past because I suspect they gave me steroids for medicinal purposes in the 1970s though I didn't realise what they were at the time and I believe they may be the cause of what I have now.

This is probably the longest lay-off I've had. But I feel all right, no pain or discomfort.

Actually I feel much the same as I did when I was 30 though inevitably I can't run so fast. But I take it for granted I'll run again.

In the meantime, I just live life as it comes, a day at a time.

The biggest enemy in my view is pollutants. When I worked for Lloyds Bank in London we had these massive pea-souper fogs and when I went home I'd spit in the basin and it was solid black soot.

For some time now I've purified all the water I put into my body. I also sent away samples of my hair for

One race I shall fight to the finish

analysis to find out what minerals and vitamins I'm short of and adjusted my diet accordingly.

The people I follow are into cleansing the body of toxins by raw food—sprouted seeds and grains and so on—and colonic irrigation. I've tried that, too, and felt the better for it.

Some days I'd run for three hours and you can quite easily do 20 miles in that time.

So instead of the radioactive treatment I plan to undergo a month's wheatjuice therapy at the Hippocrates Institute in San Diego.

According to documented case histories this has cured all sorts of things including cancer. So who knows?

The trouble is when I came back to

Living life a day at a time

GORDON PIRIE?



Gordon Pirie writes his replies to the many well wishers from his New Forest home

England a couple of years ago to establish myself as a specialist in injury diagnosis and treatment I invested all the money I had in it but haven't had anything back yet.

And now that I can't work in the forest and I've lost that source of income for the time being anyway I'm in a financial corner, nearly bankrupt, although friends are supporting me. So I'm going to blow what I have left on this trip to America.

Of course you have to be pretty strong to be a lumberjack. Sometimes I'd stack between 30 or 40 tons of timber a day which is like doing three Olympic training stints in one day.

A lot of the distance runners today are cissies, take part in the London

Marathon, then can't run for two months because they haven't recovered. What incenses me, too, is that any inferior Tom, Dick or Harry can pick up a knighthood or some such thing now, yet I received nothing, not even an MBE.

Someone said to me once: 'You should go on the Wogan Show.' So I rang the BBC. 'Gordon Pirie?' said the girl who took the call. 'Who are you?'

I explained that I'd run more miles than any other human being in the world. 'Well, have you been INVITED on the programme?' she said.

Unfortunately there are some situations where you just can't win! I only hope this cancer isn't one of them.

PUTTING TIPS ON THE CARPET PAY OFF . . .

JACK NEWTON, beaten in a play-off in the Open Championship in 1987

Grateful

instantly discarded. "It never even left Augustal," said Grady.



WORLD LEAGUE
AMERICAN FOOTBALL

A Service of Thanksgiving
and Celebration for the Life of

D. A. GORDON PIRIE

1931 - 1991

Tuesday 25th February 1992

ST. BRIDE'S CHURCH, FLEET STREET
in the City of London

Rector
Canon John Oates

Director of Music
Robert Jones

Organist
Matthew Morley

ORDER OF SERVICE

Finlandia

Sibelius

Chariots of Fire

As the choir enters, the Congregation shall stand

Choir

INTROIT

J. S. Bach

“Jesu joy of man’s desiring”

Remain standing for

BIDDING PRAYER

We meet today in St. Bride’s Church to give thanks for the life of Gordon Pirie and for all he meant as a father, grandfather and friend. We give thanks above all for his vision and tenacity as an athlete, for his encouragement by example and inspiration to many athletes throughout the world.

We pray for all those whom he loved that they may be comforted in their sadness by the true friendship and support of every person here today.

For all who learned from him and for all the memories precious to each one of us, we commend him Lord to you in our prayers and praise.

All

HYMN

1

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,
To his feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me his praise should sing?
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King.

2

Praise him for his grace and favour
To our fathers in distress;
Praise him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

3

Father-like, he tends and spares us,
Well our feeble frame he knows;
In his hands he gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Widely as his mercy flows.

4

Angels, help us to adore him;
Ye behold him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before him,
Dwellers all in time and space:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace.

H. F. LYTE (1793-1847)
Psalm 103

1ST READING

Read by Mike Farrell, Olympic Athlete.

"Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I, and you are you: Whatever we were to each other that we are still. Call me by the old familiar name, speak of me in the easy way which you always used. Put no difference into your tone; wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together. Play, smile, think of me, pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow on it. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was; there is absolute and unbroken continuity. What is this death but a negligible accident? I am but waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just round the corner. All is well."

Canon Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918)

Choir

MAGNIFICAT

Stanford in G

2ND READING

"RUNNING WILD"

by D. A. Gordon Pirie

Read by Jennifer Gilbody

All

HYMN

We plough the fields, and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's almighty hand;
He sends the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
And soft refreshing rain:
*All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above,
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
For all his love.*

2 He only is the Maker
Of all things near and far.
He paints the wayside flower,
He lights the evening star,
The winds and waves obey him,
By him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, his children,
He gives our daily bread.
*All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above,
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
For all his love.*

3 We thank thee then, O Father,
For all things bright and good;
The seed-time and the harvest,
Our life, our health, our food.
Accepts the gifts we offer
For all thy love imparts,
And what thou most desirest,
Our humble, thankful hearts:
*All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above,
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
For all his love.*

3RD READING

Read by Harry Hicks

Southern C Cross Country Association and English Cross Country Union

You know (do you not?) that at the sports all the runners run the race, though only one wins the prize. Like them, run to win! But every athlete goes into strict training. They do it to win a fading wreath; we, a wreath that never fades. For my part, I run with a clear goal before me; I am like a boxer who does not beat the air; I bruise my own body and make it know its master, for fear that after preaching to others I should find myself rejected.

I Corinthians 9 vs 24-27

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want,
 He makes me down to lie
 In pastures green. He leadeth me
 The quiet waters by.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 2 | My soul he doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for his own name's sake. | 4 | My table thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes,
My head with oil thou dost anoint,
and my cup overflows. |
| 3 | Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet I will fear none ill.
For thou art with me, and thy rod
And staff me comfort still. | 5 | Goodness and mercy all my life
Will surely follow me.
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be. |

ADDRESS

By Chris Brasher and Mick Firth.

All shall kneel

PRAYERS

Lead by The Revd. Philip Morgan

All

HYMN

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
 Pilgrim through this barren land;
 I am weak, but thou art mighty;
 Hold me with thy powerful hand.
 Bread of heaven,
 Feed me now and evermore.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield. | 3 | When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs and praises
I will ever give to thee. |
|---|---|---|---|

W. WILLIAMS (1717-91)
 tr. P. and W. WILLIAMS *

All shall kneel

BLESSING

Canon John Oates

All

JERUSALEM

William Blake 1757 - 1827

And did those feet in ancient time
 Walk upon England's mountain's green?
 And was the holy Lamb of God
 On England's pleasant pastures seen?
 And did the countenance divine
 Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
 And was Jerusalem builded here
 Among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold
 Bring me my arrows of desire
 Bring me my spear O clouds, unfold
 Bring me my chariot of fire
 I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
 Till we have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land.

TRIBUTES TO GORDON PIRIE

IT'S RARE to leave a funeral without platitudes peeling in your ears like the clunk of a cracked bell. But Gordon Pirie was no ordinary man.

There were floral tributes from Emil Zatopek, Pyotr Bolotnikov and Zdzislaw Krzyszkowiak, other track giants of the 50's. But Ron Clarke, perhaps the track giant of all time, put it into perspective, "He rang me in September to say he was ill, but I didn't know whether to believe it. You know what Gordon was like."

Nobody minded, because everybody knew Gordon. He was one of that rare species, who woke every morning with an urge to reinvent himself. And if what other people called "truth" or "reality" got left behind in the process, then that was their problem.

To those raised on a post-war diet of pride and social welfare, the White City heroes like Roger Bannister, Chris Brasher and Chris Chataway stood as high as Everest in the mid-50's. But the man of the earth was Pirie.

Farthing Down in Kent was his particular mud patch. The billowing cheeks that gave him his trade mark of "puff-puff" Pirie, he reputedly got while cross country running there in summer, and blowing the flies away.

As we approach a media-saturated millenium, a skein of recent successes by Seb Coe, Steve Ovett, Daley Thompson et al have served to obscure the feats of Pirie – the world records, the epic races with the Russian hard-man, Vladimir Kuts, the fights with intransigent "amateur" administrators, whom he justly reviled.

Never tempted by smoke or hard drink, he succumbed last week to cancer at the age of 60. A frost-bright Bournemouth Crematorium consigned him to ashes, then later the greatest selection of British distance runners (plus Aussie, Clarke) ever to cross the portals of the Sports Centre provided the diamonds of recall.

When Pam Davies, who took turns with Shirley Pirie to ride on Gordon's back while he trained round the cinder track at Chelsea Barracks, said, "it was easy to get into an argument with Gordon," you could be sure it was Gordon who began the argument.

Derek Johnson, dispossessed on the line of Olympic 800 metres gold in 1956, bought a scooter from Pirie. "It had 2000 miles on the clock. When I sold it two years later, it was still on 2000."

Pirie turned up at Bruce Tulloh's late one night, and demanded a bed. "He brought in his alfalfa grass, his latest fad. He harvested it in the morning, put it through the blender, and spent the rest of the day trying to convince me it could solve the world's food problems. Then he saw me cooking something like garlic sausages for dinner. He said, "that looks good," and he sat down and tucked into them. My kids said, "Dad, you've got some weird friends!"

His training could be as faddish as his diets. He had Anne Smith, his first coaching success, running seven times a day at one period. "Another time, we went for what was supposed



GORDON PIRIE: unforgettable

to be a ten mile run. We got to the last turn, and he said, "let's go right instead." We ended up running thirty miles."

Tim Johnston, Mexico Olympic marathoner, and a world itinerant like Pirie, saw him as, "an essentially Greek figure, containing the seeds of his own destruction. He stood for something, some sort of freedom that everybody aspires to. He had lots of friends, but he always succeeded in rubbing them up the wrong way. But then, he could be so kind."

Pirie was employed by Michael Winner, as technical advisor on *The Games*. According to Johnston, "He didn't want to do it, so he asked for some ridiculous sum. As is the way in movies, Winner paid it, but felt he'd been taken for a ride. Gordon made some good suggestions, but Winner, on principle would do the opposite; perhaps that's why it was such a bad film."

Dave "Bootsie" Bedford, with his world records, arguments with officialdom and magnificent failures in the early Seventies, is perhaps Pirie's closest avatar. Bedford has no illusions about Pirie's place in history. "He brought British athletics into the modern age. He taught us how to train properly."

Bedford too had heard the tales of Pirie sharing lunch-time training at Chelsea with Bannister, Brasher and Chataway – "the Royal Family," as the university trio was known with affectionate derision.

But what they didn't know was that Pirie had run ten miles in the morning, and then would do the same lunch-time session on his home track in the evening. No one knew how to overdo it like Gordon Pirie.

Bedford also made many mistakes in his career. But he never made the mistake of not drinking. We boarded the train for London, and sure enough, Bedford provided the final farewell. There was a leaflet on each table advertising Gin. "Oh yes, we've just got to have one of these." "Why?" "It's Gordon's"

Pat Butcher

I'M MISSING Gordon Pirie already. And however much space is open to me to remember the man who was an inspiration to me and countless others both in word and deed it would never be enough.

When I joined Thurrock Harriers as a 13 year-old in 1953 Gordon was my hero. Who could forget watching him win the AAA six mile championship on the Friday night and less than 24 hours later take the three mile title.

He dominated the National Cross Country Championship in the 1950's. He was outstanding for South London Harriers in the famous London-Brighton Road Relay and of course he broke world records on the track as well as winning an Olympic silver medal at 5000m.

Gordon's training had a deep influence on the thinking of Britain's distance coaching which helped create such great runners as Tulloh, North, Hill, Bullivant, Hyman, Bedford, Stewart and Foster. They all owe him a great debt.

I know Colin Young, my coach, sought and was given information from Gordon which helped me reach international standard. I'm still passing Gordon's ideas on to Eamonn Martin.

Gordon was a true harrier, inspiring SLH to many national club championships and though he spoke frequently against the establishment, he was always on hand to help anybody who needed it.

I will always remember actually running against him in the Southern three mile championship in 1960 and breaking 14:00 for the first time. Will we see his like again?

On the same day Gordon lost his fight against cancer, a friend and Thurrock Harrier colleague Derek Cording died, aged 52, of the same illness.

Derek was a valued member of the Harriers' cross country team in the late 1950s and early Sixties. My thoughts are with both families.

Mel Batty

IN 1974 a gangly, pigtailed schoolgirl plucked the courage to ask a world class coach to train her.

I really didn't expect the Englishman on the other end of the telephone to say yes. But he did. I did not realise how much his answer would change my life. For the next 14 years Gordon Pirie did everything conceivable to turn me into a champion. He would stand by the track in rain, hail or shine to time my workout and holler at me every 100 metres. He would drive his old Mercedes up and down the hills of the Waitakere's outside Auckland to follow me on a training run.

I remember watching the Commonwealth Games in 1974. I never dreamed 12 years later I would be a part of those Games. But there I was in Edinburgh, toeing the line. I had reached my potential and without Gordon I would never have become close.

Debbie Lautenslager
New Zealand

Why the sorrow at Pirie's passing is guilt-

REPUTATIONS fade cruelly as the generations come and go. The death of Cliff Bastin will mean more to my father than it does to me, though I pay due reverence to a man (this is Bastin, not Dad) who had won an England cap, an FA Cup winners' medal and a League Championship gong before he even turned 21. To me, Bastin is a great reputation—perhaps half a great reputation, along with his Arsenal partner, Alex James—but not really a being or a style of play.

Similarly, my own son hasn't the foggiest who Gordon Pirie was, and will no doubt think it quaint of me to feel vaguely sorrowful that the death of Pirie was received in some quarters last week with no more than a dutiful nod. The same newspapers who saluted him curtly on his passing used to spend pages wailing and gnashing their teeth over him—and quite frequently at him.

Thirty-five years ago Pirie was thought of as a highly

controversial figure, and so he was by the standards of the day. Nobody in those times imagined that sportsmen like John McEnroe or Alex Higgins were ever going to exist outside a school playground.

Nothing Pirie did seems so very terrible now. He was no doubt a prickly personality, but then his life and his athletic ambitions were in many ways incompatible. Some of the outstanding runners of his generation were smooth varsity men, destined to become mandarins like Dr Roger Bannister, or communicators like Chris Brasher and Chris Chataway.

Pirie, by contrast, was a London bank clerk, and his time was not his own. Banks had the obliging habit of remaining open for normal business on Saturday mornings then, so Pirie was often obliged to rush from the workplace straight to a running track to compete.

He made sure that the absurdity of this was not lost on his fans, and before long

the offer of an athletics scholarship (the very idea of which seemed immoral in those days) came in from the University of Oklahoma, where the wind comes whistling down the plain.

The idea of Pirie whistling down with it was not completely uncongenial to administrators with whom he had already clashed, but ultimately the fear that America might steal him proved stronger, and so a more relaxed, flexi-time job was found for him with a firm of paint manufacturers. According to the memoirs of the sports writer, Peter Wilson, it was he who set this up.

Pirie's problem, however, was never really solved. He felt that to achieve his best he needed to be running almost without interruption, as a way of life. His imperatives came from his ambition, and his body, not from the amateur ethos and its arbiters.

Pirie was ahead of his time, and everybody really knew it but didn't want to say so; and consequently, he was

despised. It was no surprise to anyone when, towards the end of his career, he took up running for money. But nobody knew what to do with a professional runner at that time. He was a sort of shabby novelty, like the disgraced Rector of Stiffkey who exhibited himself in a cage of lions. It all came to nothing.

Pirie had been the prototype of the great runner whose times are better than his races. He was a world record-holder but the big day apparently found him wanting. At the 1956 Olympics, he was demolished in the 10,000 metres by the Soviet athlete, Kuts, and did not recover in time to prevail in the 5,000, his better event.

Four years later he catastrophically failed to make it through the heats. But, given



RUSSELL DAVIES

less time to think about things, he could run like a maniac—or so we were led to believe by news reports. One such appeared in the Daily Telegraph in June 1956 under the byline of Jack Crump and now pops up again in a fascinating book called *The Fifties*, fashioned by David Holloway out of the paper's front pages and inside news cuttings.

"Pirie smashes world 5,000 metres record", ran the headline over Crump's report, which informed us that "A G Pirie of South London Harriers" had been spending a holiday with friends in Norway. "Before he left England he sought and received official permission to compete in Norway if the opportunity should present itself."

Lo and behold, a fine opportunity magically arose

for the Soviet touring team just happened to be running in Bergen at that moment. "Pirie, who has long cherished the hope of meeting Kuts over 5,000 metres, seized the chance." He certainly did. Kuts was beaten by 20 yards and the world record, remarkably, by nearly four seconds, and that on a wet and spongy track in a steady drizzle.

Crump's report emphasises that "Pirie's participation in the race was an almost casual, last-minute affair", but I doubt it. To me it has all the hallmarks of a carefully planned raid, designed to catch Kuts in an under-prepared condition—psychologically, of course, but also perhaps medicinally.

Pirie made it plain later in life that he felt Soviet track athletes were boosted by drugs, and this might have been a way to judge how Kuts would perform in an unprimed state. A few months later, at the Melbourne Olympics in November, Kuts's performance was

transformed, and Pirie humiliated, which might seem to go some way toward validating this depressive theory.

I suppose I harbour some small sense of guilt about Pirie because we punter were always encouraged to dislike him—to see him as rude, unsporting whinger and he may not have deserved it. Two gold medals at Melbourne, or even one might have transformed his notion of himself, and it may be that he was deprived them only by cheating.

He somehow missed every chance to endear himself to the public—at the 1954 British and Commonwealth Games, for example, when Bannister famously won a mile in another sub-four minute time and Jim Peters was the tragic hero of a marathon, tottering into a stadium about a quarter of an hour ahead of the field, then collapsing, twice, and failing to finish.

The British people suddenly all agog for an

ing is guilt-edged

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The British people were suddenly all agog for athlet-

ics; but Pirie had had an accident and missed most of that season. For one reason or another, he seemed always to be away somewhere on this own.

His spiritual descendants have been David Bedford, certainly, and to some extent Steve Ovett, grandly talented runners with a faulty spark plug somewhere in the temperament. In motion Pirie was as memorable as any of them, though worrying too, for he seemed undernourished in his upper body to a degree that reminded one uncomfortably of the starvation so recently imposed on their victims by Germany and Japan.

It was rather as if the tubercular George Orwell had come to life again, bizarrely bursting with energy. Some runners, even then, looked as though they were made of muscles. Pirie was unmistakably a collection of bones, an emblem of mortality—or perhaps one only thinks so, now that he is gone.

Peter Hildreth offers his assessment of one of the great British

Maverick who beat the best of his day

GORDON PIRIE, who has died, aged 60, after a long battle against cancer, was among the first to give expression to the view that the specialised nature of modern international athletics could not be reconciled with what he saw as an outdated amateur framework. His disputes with officialdom earned him a reputation as a maverick.

In his book, *Running Wild*, he confessed: "I have often trodden a lone path and so have been called conceited, awkward, self-opinionated, rebellious — even a bad sport." These characteristics, he later admitted, may have helped to win races. But as his friends noted, he often found time to share his track experience with younger athletes, and this was to yield results when he took up coaching.

Pirie was one of the outstanding British distance runners and track personalities of the post-war era.

Between 1951 and 1961 he broke five world and 23 national records at distances ranging from 2,000 metres to 10,000m and could count among his victims the greatest runners of his day, including Emil Zatopek, Vladimir Kuts and Chris Chataway.

Born in Yorkshire, the son of a Scottish international athlete, Pirie rose from desk-bound obscurity as a £3-a-week bank clerk by way of an unusually severe training

programme. This entailed running up to 20 miles a day, sometimes wearing Army boots. At a time when the amateur code was strict, it was not uncommon for him to leave his London office at lunchtime on Saturday to take part in a competition that afternoon.

At the Olympic Games at Helsinki in 1952, his fourth place in the 5,000m final behind Zatopek was a foretaste of a potential recognised by the German coach, Woldemar Gerschler, who became his adviser. A year later, Pirie broke the world six miles record with a time of 28min 19.4sec, shared in the world 4x1,500m relay record, and captured six other British records.

Lanky and almost emaciated in physique, Pirie was a striking figure on the tracks of Europe, and his appetite for records established him as one of the biggest crowd-pullers in British sport.

His versatility was exceptional. He ran the mile in under four minutes when that was still a rare feat and was at home over much longer distances. He won the English cross-country title over nine miles for the third time in 1955, and also that year was inside the British record for two hours when he covered 22 miles, 278 yards to finish second to Joe Lancaster.

Perhaps his greatest competitive *tour de force* was in



Gordon Pirie in his heyday, winning over two miles at the Wh

1956. After an anticipated duel with Kuts in the GB v USSR match in London had been cancelled owing to a diplomatic incident, Pirie, who had peaked for the occasion, wanted a high-profile race.

He found it in Malmo where the Hungarian trio, Sandor Iharos, Laszlo Tabori and Istvan Rozsavolgyi teamed up against him over 3,000m in an attempt on the

world record, held by Iharos. Pirie had equalled the record that summer, doing so only three days after taking sole possession of the 5,000m record.

The Englishman overwhelmed each of the Hungarians in turn to shatter the record by nearly three seconds with a time of 7 min 52.8 sec. His lap of honour was greeted with almost hysterical fervour by the crowd.

Later the same attempt to emulate Zatopek, Pirie's Olympic double-bourne. His world record of 13 min when he beat that summer, a prior finishing speed him favourite. But in which came first which he was prepared, he

'Lanky, almost emaciated... a striking figure on the track'

SPORT 4

the great British runners, Gordon Pirie, who died at the weekend



winning over two miles at the White City, London, in 1958 from Miklos Szabo, of Hungary (No 5) and Derek Ibbotson (19)

record, held by Iharos. He equalled the record in 1958, doing so only 11 days after taking sole possession of the 5,000m

Englishman overtook each of the Hungarians to shatter the record by nearly three minutes with a time of 7 min 11.2 sec. His lap of honour was greeted with almost hysterical fervour by the crowd.

Later the same year, in an attempt to emulate his idol, Zatopek, Pirie attempted an Olympic double at Melbourne. His world 5,000m record of 13 min 36.8 sec, set when he beat Kuts earlier that summer, and his superior finishing speed had made him favourite for that distance. But in the 10,000m, which came first and for which he was inadequately prepared, he suffered a

crushing defeat by Kuts after hanging on for 20 laps. This sapped Pirie's stamina and he was forced to accept a silver medal behind the Russian in the 5,000m.

Pirie always maintained that Soviet athletes were even then using drugs in training, an opinion since confirmed by news stories. Kuts was to die, broken in health, at the age of 48 in 1975.

After a brief professional career featuring an offbeat race round a bullring in Spain, Pirie emigrated to New Zealand with his wife, the former international sprinter, Shirley Hampton, whom he later divorced.

He coached a number of prominent New Zealand runners and returned to Europe several times on coaching assignments. His reinstatement as an amateur in 1980

enabled him to compete in the veteran ranks and make his marathon debut at 49.

In 1987 he spent a season as director of the running school at Davos in Switzerland, before returning to settle in Hampshire.

Pirie did not stop running until his final illness, and estimated he had covered a total of over 200,000 miles afoot, a claim few runners could ever hope to emulate.



Gordon Pirie in his heyday, winning over two miles at the White City, London, in 1958 from Miklos Szabo, of Hungary (No 5) and Derek Ibbotson (19)

DEATH OF GORDON PIRIE

(Continued from Front page)

Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, with crossings on the paddle steamers from Lymington.

Gordon was called up for National Service with the R.A.F., where golfer Peter Alliss was in the same intake, before being stationed at Watchett in Somerset. On demobilisation Gordon entered Lloyd's Bank for three years as a £3 a week clerk at Croydon, where he was "adopted" by the market stall traders. He then became a salesman with a paint company.

Gordon was a star performer with the South London Harriers, with a training programme of 20 miles a day, and between 1951 and 1961 he broke five world records and 23 national records between distances of 2,000 and 10,000 metres. His victims included the greatest runners of the day, amongst them Emil Zatopek, Vladimir Kuts and Chris Chatway. He appeared in three Olympics, winning a silver medal at Melbourne in 1956, the same year that he married international sprinter Shirley Hampton from the Phoenix Harriers.

Such was his dedication that race preparations were planned

with meticulous care, and twice he was the British orienteering champion, a sport he gave up only four years ago.

Since appearing at the Melbourne Olympics, Gordon made several stays in New Zealand, where he taught physical education and maths, and undertook coaching contracts in the United States and Switzerland. Two years ago he and his wife were divorced, and she continues to live in New Zealand, along with daughter Sara; the other daughter, Mrs. Joanne Carlsson, resides in Sweden.

Retiring to Hordle, Gordon took up work with the Forestry Commission, which enabled him to keep fit felling trees and at the same time enjoy his love for wildlife. He took part in the Town Council's plans for Fawcett's Field, where he advised that, rather than incur the expense of removing tons of soil, a high bank be constructed along the Christchurch Road edge to form a windbreak; he also advocated a grass track rather than a tartan track.

He helped coach athletes from this area and afar, especially at the Bournemouth Sports Club. He also tried his hand at golf, at Bashley Park and in the grounds

of Arnewood School, New Milton — he realised his limitations at this sport, but it did result in striking up a friendship with Arnewood deputy-head, widow Mrs. Jennifer Gibbody.

Gordon became ill with jaundice in December last year, and on learning he was suffering from cancer had been supported by Macmillan nurses since September. Such was his ability to tolerate pain, Gordon refused conventional medicines until the Friday before he died, when he was given a pain-killer. He was admitted to Oakhaven three days before he died. Since then 'phone calls from as far away as India have been received at his home, from athletes asking for advice and inspiration.

Cremation took place at Bournemouth on Thursday, after which sportsmen of varying skills, from the record holders to the weekend jaunters, met at Bournemouth Sports Club for a farewell gathering. Gordon is also survived by sister Mrs. Pamela Mundy, of Herne Bay, Kent, and brother Peter, now living in Ontario — whom Gordon rated a better runner than he, having been the English and R.A.F. cross-country champion; another brother, Ian, died in British Honduras of a heart attack in 1969.

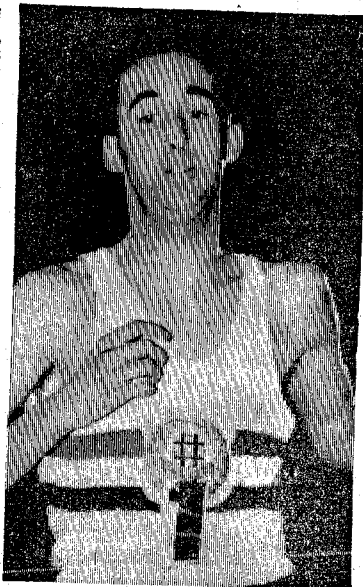
Country's top runner dies aged 60

ONE of Britain's greatest middle-distance runners, Gordon Pirie died at the Oakhaven Hospice in Lymington at the weekend, aged 60. Recognising that the world of amateur athletics was coming to an end, his phenomenal contribution to the sport went without acknowledgement to a considerable degree, as his ideas and demands upset the governing bodies. He had lived in Stopples Lane, Hordle, for the past 2½ years, where he continued to coach and inspire runners from all over the world, and made valuable contributions towards the design of New Milton Town Council's new sports ground facilities in Fawcett's Field, due to be opened next year.

Born in Leeds, the youngest of four children of Alexander Pirie, a cable operator, Gordon was three years old when the family moved to Coulsdon, Surrey. There his father ran for the South London Harriers, and represented Scotland.

Each Sunday the whole family, mother included, and with Gordon from the age of three, set off on a walk of at least ten miles, which all considered a joy rather than a chore, especially when calling in at a pub for refreshments. Gordon became interested in athletics whilst attending Purley School for Boys, where he learnt to speak Spanish, German, French and Russian.

He often got into trouble getting up to various escapades, and he spent much of his time amongst the animals at a nearby farm, invariably arriving home after dark. And there were enjoyable family holiday trips to visit grandfather James Pirie, a retired Gunner Captain, who lived at Cranmore, near



(Continued on Page 6).

GORDON PIRIE

Gordon Pirie, who set five athletics world records between 1953 and 1956, died in a Bournemouth hospital on December 7 aged 60. He was born on February 10, 1931.

AS MUCH for his arrogance as his bravado on the track, Gordon Pirie was a magnetic sports figure of the 1950s, when his world record-breaking exploits put him at the head of Britain's resurgence in world distance running. Britain had not enjoyed a hero such as Pirie since the best days of Sydney Wooderson in the 1930s.

Like Wooderson and David Bedford in the 1970s, Pirie broke record after record but never won an Olympic gold medal. As he admitted later in life, he had probably trained too hard for his own good: when he needed to be at his best he was tired from his colossal running schedules and Christopher Chataway, one of his predecessors as 5,000 metres world record holder, used to say that track running would lose its appeal

for him if he attempted only a fraction of what Pirie did. In March this year Pirie reckoned to have run 265,000 miles in 50 years, more than 100 miles a week.

His 22 British records, from 1952 to 1961, ranged in distance from 2,000 metres to 10,000 metres. In 1956 he defeated Vladimir Kuts over 5,000 metres in Bergen in world record time, but five months later the Soviet reversed the result at the Melbourne Olympics: Pirie's silver medal was the closest he came to gold in any of his three Olympics.

In the 1952 Helsinki Olympics he was fourth in the 5,000 metres and seventh in the 10,000 metres; in 1956 his Olympic silver medal was accompanied by eighth place in the 10,000 metres; in the 1960 Rome Olympics he was tenth in the 10,000 metres and failed to qualify for the final of the 5,000 metres.

Pirie and Kuts had been close rivals since the day that Pirie claimed he would eventually run 5,000 metres inside 13 min 40 sec, a



seemingly outrageous prediction given that the record at the time was almost 20 seconds slower; the statement infuriated his detractors. But, in Bergen, Pirie fulfilled his promise, beating Kuts in the process.

The filiform Pirie stayed in the wake of the stocky ex-marine throughout and used his finishing kick to sprint away to the record. Three days later, in Trondheim, he equalled the 3,000 metres

world record. But, come Melbourne, he found Kuts too strong and, after 21 laps of a classic 10,000 metres duel between them, the South London Harrier was broken and fell back down the field.

Douglas Alistair Gordon Pirie was born in Leeds. He came to be known as "puff-puff" Pirie. His exaggerated breathing technique was picked up on Farthing Downs, Coulsdon, where he found himself swallowing flies in training and worked on blowing while running so as to keep the insects away from his mouth.

Pirie's most successful years were 1953 and 1956. In 1953 he set a six miles world record, was a member of the British team which set a four by 1500 metres world record, won the first Emsley Carr Mile at White City and took the first of his three successive English cross country titles. In 1956 he followed his 5,000 metres world record and equalling of the 3,000 metres world record by taking single ownership of the 3,000 metres

mark. Typical of his brashness, he had forecast 24 hours earlier that the record would go.

Pirie was voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year in 1955 but struck a discordant note on screen by using the occasion to accuse the written media of doing immeasurable damage to British sport. He was widely criticised for being ungracious to the occasion, but he was used to being at the centre of controversy.

In 1961 he was dropped from the British team for the match against West Germany for failing to report on time; then, when he declined to explain his lateness to officials, he was omitted from a subsequent fixture against Poland. His personality was as spiky as his haircut. "I am a ball of fire as a character and you have to have that to win," he said.

In 1962, while bound for Australia to commentate for television on the Empire Games, he accepted an official MCC invitation to put England's cricketers through a tough physical training

course while sailing to Fremantle. In Australia he received money from a newspaper to describe the MCC cricketers as "an unfit, paunchy bunch of barflies," which prompted the Duke of Norfolk, the MCC tour manager, to say that his team would have no more dealings with him. The athletics team manager ostracised him, too, forbidding members of the squad to talk to him after he offered a young high-jumper money to appear on television, which was against the strictly enforced regulations to protect amateur status.

Bank clerk, paint salesman and lumberjack at various times in his life, Pirie emigrated to New Zealand in 1956 claiming that taxation in Britain was too high. He returned to spend the last few years of his life in Fordle, near Lymington, having found work in the New Forest, clearing up after the hurricane of 1987.

His marriage to the international sprinter Shirley Hampton ended in divorce. He leaves two daughters.

One of Britain's great athletes

PIRIE DIES

By FRANK WIECHULA

GORDON PIRIE, one of Great Britain's finest distance runners, has died. He was 60, and had been ill for some time.

He was nicknamed Puff-Puff Pirie for his habit of blowing out his cheeks in rhythm with his running stride, and he held world records at six miles, 3,000 metres and 5,000 metres during the 1950s.

He won a silver medal in the 5,000 metres at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne - but ironically he never won a major title.

Besides being an outstanding athlete, he was also one of the most controversial.

The man who reckoned to have run more than 250,000 miles was outspoken and often clashed with the athletics authorities, whom he regarded as amateurish and out-of-touch.

On the track the £3-a-week former bank clerk from Leeds showed his tremendous courage during the 10,000 metres final at the Melbourne

**Olympic
battler**

Olympics. But he was destroyed by Vladimir Kuts, the legendary Russian, who won the gold while Pirie trailed in eighth.

Pirie, a gaunt and gangling 6ft lin, was an unlikely looking sporting idol but he took on, and beat, some of the sport's finest. These included Emil Zatopek, Peter Snell and Kuts.

He represented Britain at three Olympics, retiring from the track in 1961 and returning to New Zealand, to where he had emigrated in 1957. But he came back four years ago, living near Lymington, Hampshire.

British Athletic Board spokesman Tony Ward said: "Gordon was one of the great figures of British distance running."

PIRIE in action
- his long
stride and
puffing cheeks
were a familiar
sight in the
1950's



BRAVE FIGHT IS OVER

"I CAN see the light much more clearly now," said Gordon Pirie to me only a week before he died.

The great athlete, historic pioneer for the sport in Britain in the Fifties, was not talking about the weather. After fighting so bravely against cancer for many months, there was a poignant note of acceptance in his voice.

He struggled so hard but sadly, it was not enough.

However, Jennifer Gilbody, the schoolteacher who gave the Thin Man of athletics so much loving care in the last weeks of his life says: "He kept in touch with his friends in athletics to the last, suffered no pain and died peacefully."

'Puff Puff' Pirie, who could have ended up a wealthy man if he had competed in modern track and field, was born on 10 February 1931.

His first major track title was the AAA six miles championship of 1951. Later he set a world record for this distance and for 3,000 and 5,000 metres.

More than 6ft. tall, almost emaciated in build, he partially modelled his incredibly hard training programme on the preparation of Czechoslovakia's Emil Zatopek but never came close to winning a single Olympic gold medal let alone Zatopek's bag of four.

The South London Harrier, who earned his nickname from the way he visibly exhaled as his head wobbled from side to side, finished fourth in the Olympic 5,000 metres of 1956 in Melbourne. He also had a titanic but unavailing battle over 10,000 metres with double winner Vladimir Kuts, of the Soviet Union.

Yet earlier that year Pirie had set a world record of 13 min.36.8sec. in beating Kuts over 5,000 metres. He also defeated the highly-regarded Hungarians Istvan Rozsavolgyi, Sandor Iharos and Laszlo Tabori in

Pirie, a pioneer born too soon

by Neil Allen

another world record race (7min.52.8sec.) at 3,000 metres.

These remarkable victories indicated Pirie's talent as well as his gritty determination. But then so did his defeat, over four laps, of the then world's best miler, the America's Wes Santee, at the White City in 1953.

Pirie could be stubborn, whimsical, and consequently controversial in an age when athletes were expected to do what they were told by officials.

As a veteran, in 1984, he ran the marathon in 2 hours 49 minutes but his life after top amateur athletics finished was very much an anti-climax, scurrying here and there for sports linked jobs. He finally ended up as a tree feller in the New Forest in 1990.

A great athlete, sadly born just a few years too early to reap any lasting reward, he said last year: "I've got to find something to keep working at during my sixties because I've only a tiny pension. I still believe I've got a lot to offer in advice to the modern athlete."

In the end, Douglas Alastair Gordon Pirie, Mr Perpetual Motion of those golden White City years, ran out of time.

The funeral service, a public one, will take place at Bournemouth Crematorium next Thursday at 10.45 a.m. Donations may be made to the Oakhaven Hospice, Lymington, Hants.



Gordon Pirie

GORDON PIRIE, one of the great middle-distance athletes of the 1950s, was born into a running family. His father Alick was a Scottish cross-country international and his brother Peter one of Britain's leading runners of the early Fifties. Gordon Pirie first experienced the taste of big-time athletics in 1948 when at the age of 17 he ran with his father on the relay carrying the Olympic torch to Wembley Stadium. During the same Games he was inspired by the exploits of the Czechoslovakian runner Emil Zatopek to reach such heights himself and to beat the man who had become his idol.

Despite his pedigree, Pirie did not possess quite the natural ability to match his ambition and decided that the only route to the top was to train harder than his contemporaries. This was at a time when British athletics was dominated by the true blue amateurs of Oxford and Cambridge universities, whose Corinthian approach to the sport was shared by officials and journalists alike. Pirie was castigated for his single-minded approach and professional attitude and it was widely forecast that he would burn himself out before he was much older. He proved his critics wrong and for more than 10 years was the favourite of the White City crowds who loved to cheer the tall lanky figure with his head rolling and cheeks puffing as he strove to burn off the opposition.

Pirie's first major victory was in the 1951 AAA six miles championship when he set a new English record of 29 min 32 sec. The following year he broke the British record for three miles in 13:44.8 seconds and retained his AAA six miles title before being selected to run both the 5,000m and 10,000m in the Olympic Games in Helsinki. These games are best remembered for the triple success of Zatopek in the 5,000m, 10,000m and marathon, a feat never before or since accomplished. The 21-year-old Pirie ran creditably to finish seventh in the 10,000m and fourth in the 5,000m just ahead of his team mate Chris Chataway who fell on the final bend as he was about to challenge for the lead.

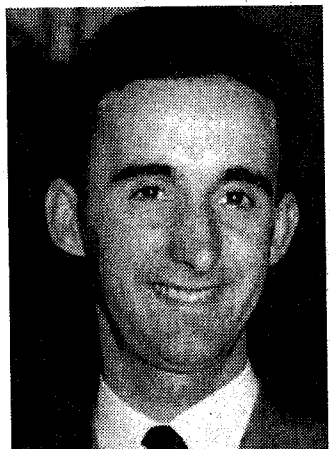
In 1952 Pirie came under the influence of the German coach Waldemar Gerschler who was his inspiration and mentor for the remainder of his career, introducing him to a more psychological and systematic approach to training that enabled him to discover his ultimate potential.

The following year Pirie was es-

ambition by beating his great friend and idol Emil Zatopek for the first time, in a match against Czechoslovakia when he won the 5,000m with Zatopek second.

Although now clearly established as a winner it is probably for a race that he lost that Pirie will be best remembered. He went to the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne on the crest of a wave having recently set new world records for 5,000m in 13:36.8secs — beating Vladimir Kuts in the process and fulfilling his prophecy of three years earlier — and 3,000m in 7:52.8.

Kuts was the clear favourite at Melbourne for the 10,000m and early in the final made his intentions clear by going into the lead and setting a fast pace. The Russian ran at his usual erratic pace, mixing fast and slow bursts to break up the opposing runners' rhythm and concentration. Pirie followed, hanging on as if attached by a piece of elastic and the race developed into a battle of wills. The pair went through 5,000m in 14:6.8, just one fifth of a second outside Zatopek's Olympic record for that distance, with the rest of the field 100m in arrears. The relentless pace continued until the twenty-first lap, when Kuts put in another punishing burst which finally broke Pirie



and caused him to lose ground. Kuts admitted afterwards that he would have dropped out of the race if Pirie had responded to that final effort. The battle had taken its toll on both the runners but Kuts managed to hold on for victory. Pirie lost 46 seconds and dropped to eighth place over the closing four laps. But it had been a heroic run which typified his overwhelming will to win. Had he been content to run for second place there is no doubt that the silver medal would have been his for the taking. As if to prove this he ran a

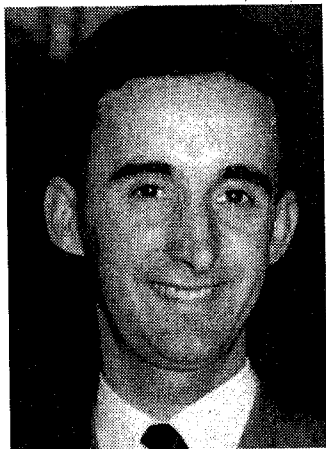
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The following year Pirie was established in the forefront of world athletics. After a successful cross-country season in which he won the first of three successive national titles he set new British records for six miles in April and three miles in June before winning the AAA six miles championship in a new world record of 28:19.4secs. Less than 24 hours later he won the three miles title in a new championship record. Despite his many successes Pirie was ridiculed and labelled as a big-head for stating that he would reduce the world 5,000m record then standing at 13:58.2 to under 13:40.

A serious foot injury caused Pirie to miss the European Championships and the London v Moscow match in 1954. The latter will be remembered for the clash between Chataway and the Russian runner Vladimir Kuts over 5,000m which produced a new world record for Chataway of 13:51.4. In 1955, Pirie achieved his long-held



and caused him to lose ground. Kuts admitted afterwards that he would have dropped out of the race if Pirie had responded to that final effort. The battle had taken its toll on both the runners but Kuts managed to hold on for victory. Pirie lost 46 seconds and dropped to eighth place over the closing four laps. But it had been a heroic run which typified his overwhelming will to win. Had he been content to run for second place there is no doubt that the silver medal would have been his for the taking. As if to prove this he ran a more tactical race in the 5,000m some days later and finished runner-up to Kuts.

Pirie continued to race at international level for several years after the 1956 Olympics and competed at the 1960 Olympics. This time he failed to qualify for the 5,000m final and, whilst only tenth in the 10,000m, set a personal best time for the distance, proving that he was far from being burnt out. At the end of his competitive career Pirie and his wife, the ex-international sprinter Shirley Hampton, settled in New Zealand for a time before returning to Britain. Gordon Pirie was a successful competitor in orienteering events for a number of years and also devoted a great deal of his time to coaching and advising other athletes.

Joe Brett

Gordon Pirie athlete, born Leeds 10 February 1931, married Shirley Hampton, died c7 December 1991.



Pirie: record-breaker

Athletics hero Pirie dies, 60

GORDON PIRIE, who succumbed to cancer over the weekend at the age of 60, captured how he saw his life in a single sentence: "I was good enough to be able to smell success but not quite get it."

It was an incredibly harsh self-judgment. It was also typical of the man. Pirie, a South London Harrier, was one of Britain's great athletics figures of the mid-Fifties and a world record-holder at two distances.

He achieved that in an era of truly great runners, the Czech Emil Zatopek, the Soviet Vladimir Kuts, and a clutch of Hungarians.

The judgment refers to the Olympics. At the 1948 Games, Pirie, a young spectator, was inspired by the sight of Zatopek to become a runner himself.

In the 1952 Helsinki Games, Pirie just managed to qualify for the 5,000 metres final which Zatopek won. Pirie was fourth but 11 seconds behind.

Soon enough, those long lean legs and that fluid, urgent style with the puffed-out cheeks would become famous throughout the land.

He worked himself hard, running alone through the woodlands of Surrey and could be a hard, awkward man. Once, a courting couple lay in his path. He jumped over them, continued, and jumped over them again on his way back.

"You're just here for a moment, but I'll be here tomorrow and the day after, and the day after that," he said.

In June 1956, he predicted he would run the 5,000 in under 13 minutes 40 seconds. Within five days, he did, 13 minutes 36.8 seconds in Bergen, a world record.

Three days later, he equalled the 3,000 record and at Malmo in September, he broke it. But in the Olympic Games in Melbourne in November he lost to Kuts in the 5,000 and 10,000. He didn't get near a medal in the Rome Games of 1960 and retired from competitive running in 1961.

The funeral will be at Bournemouth Crematorium on Thursday at 10.45am.

CHRISTOPHER HILTON

OBITUARY

Pirie the prince of the track

By Peter Hildreth

GORDON PIRIE, the former Olympic runner, died on Saturday at his home in Hampshire after a long battle against cancer. He was 60.

One of the most colourful and controversial figures in post-war British sport, Pirie held five world records, including the 3,000 metres twice, the 5,000m and the six miles, in an international career spanning 10 years.

A competitor in three Olympic Games, Pirie won a silver medal over 5,000m at Melbourne in 1956.

Acknowledged as the man who revolutionised British track distance running in the 1950s, his punishing training methods were an example to many of his contemporaries.

Ken Norris, a former Olympic team-mate, said last night: "Gordon was an inspiration to me when I was growing up. He was the man at the top and I set my sights on him.

"My training was geared to trying to beat him over the country and on the track. A lot of us looked up to him. He was a great, great runner."

He caught the imagination during the 10,000m final at the Melbourne Olympics when he and Vladimir Kuts were involved in one of the greatest races ever seen before the legendary Russian destroyed his rival to win the gold.

After his retirement in 1961, a year after he had failed to qualify for the final of the 5,000m at the Rome Olympics, Pirie emigrated to New Zealand, where he divided his time between coaching and working in the logging industry.

However, he returned to England from New Zealand four years ago, and settled in a village near Lymington, Hampshire.

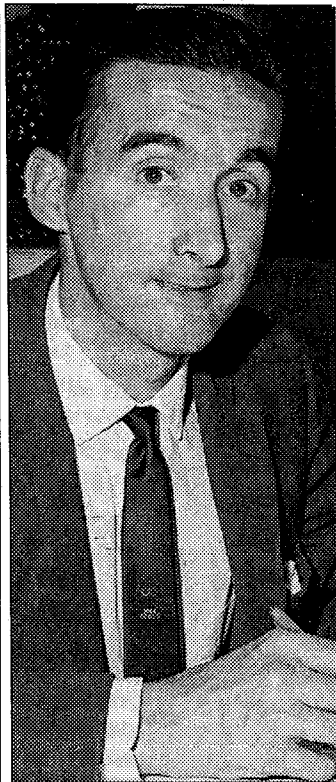
British Athletic Board spokesman Tony Ward said last night: "Gordon was one of the great figures of British distance running."

He remained active as a coach following his return to England in 1987 and was often a spectator at local and national meetings.

He is survived by two daughters.

Peter Hildreth assesses Gordon Pirie's achievements in athletics in tomorrow's Daily Telegraph

Dedicated pioneer of the art of the po



Pirie: professional

Gordon Pirie was a man who broke barriers, a man who dedicated himself to proving that the impossible was possible, a man who scorned the conventional wisdom of his time. And so, inevitably, he was unpopular with the Establishment.

But he was a delightful, if sometimes an infuriating companion. Even in this last year of his life, when he was being devoured by cancer, he retained his sense of humour and never showed any bitterness at the terrible card that life had dealt him.

In the age of the amateur, he was a professional — professional in the sense that he was totally dedicated to becoming a great champion, that rare breed whose minds will not accept that there are any limits to human accomplishments.

Even though he was totally professional in outlook, he made little money from his sport (indeed, he died a pauper) despite the fact that “for a full decade, 1951-61, this controversial figure held captive the imagination of British athletics fans”. Those are the words of Mel Watman, Britain’s foremost athletics historian.

The height of his career was in 1956, a year that ended with the greatest race I have ever seen, a duel for Olympic gold between Vladimir Kuts, the stocky Russian, and Pirie, the beanpole Brit.

During that cold winter of 1955-6, Gordon became a member of our lunchtime training group known as the Chelsonian Furlined Jockstrap Company. One weekly session was to run a quarter mile ten times with a short jog between each effort. Gordon turned every one of those quarters into a race and we constantly had to remind him that the purpose of training was to build up the body, not to destroy it in competition.

He trained more intensely and more often than any of his contemporaries and it paid off. In that summer of 1956, he went to Scandinavia, where athletes are understood and respected far more than in Britain. He waited in Bergen for Kuts, the greatest Russian athlete of the 1950s, a man who had broken the 5,000 metres world record three times. As was his habit, Kuts led from the gun of the 5,000 metres, surging on each lap, a punishing way



Chris Brasher pays tribute to the late Gordon Pirie, who provided a challenge and stimulus to British athletics during the 1950s

of destroying the opposition. Pirie matched each surge and then, 200 metres from the tape, sprinted to a new world record of 13min 36.8sec, thus fulfilling a prophecy he had made three years earlier, when the world record stood at 13min 58.2sec — that he, Pirie, then only 22, would break 13min 40sec.

But that victory over Kuts was fatal for Gordon’s Olympic ambitions. Kuts, the most competitive man I have ever met, was beaten only twice in international competition at his chosen distances, 5,000 metres and 10,000 metres, and on both occasions the man who beat him had also to break the world record. The first was Chris Chataway in an historic race under floodlights at the White City in 1954. Ten days

later, Kuts proved to himself that he was better than Chataway by regaining the world record.

In 1956, Kuts had to wait longer to gain his revenge over Gordon — from June in Bergen to November in the Olympic stadium in Melbourne.

The highlight of the first day of competition was the 10,000 metres final: Kuts, the world record-holder (set only two months earlier) versus Pirie, the 5,000 metres world record-holder (set five months earlier in Bergen). Within a few laps — and there are 25 laps in a 10,000 metres race — there were only two men with a chance of the gold medal.

For lap after lap Kuts tortured himself with surge after surge and

Pirie absorbed the torture. In the evening and the sun was low down the back straight Gordon’s shadow was etched on the tarmac, reaching out for two to three metres beyond Kuts, the leader.

Many years later, in Moscow, Kuts told me: “I had done everything I had could to shake off his shadow. I was desperately tired and ready to surrender and to think that before I did, I had seen his face, not his shadow. I moved out into the second lap offering him the lead, and I looked into his face. If I had a flicker of triumph, the world would have been his, but I saw only pain and I knew that the world was mine.”

And so it was. One more surge and Gordon was broken. Leaders passed him and he finished eighth.

That, for me, was his most memorable race, the most memorable race I have ever seen. In the evening of this last summer of his life, when we were sitting in the garden of his favourite tea house in the New Forest, I asked what he considered to be his most memorable race. “Just a race at school — the day I broke

r of the art of the possible



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And so it was. One more surge and Gordon was broken. Lesser men passed him and he finished eighth.

That, for me, was his most memorable race, the most memorable race I have ever seen. During this last summer of his life when we were sitting in the garden of his favourite tea house in the New Forest, I asked him what he considered to be his most memorable race. "Just a race at school — the day I broke five

minutes for a mile," he said. Later in his career, he averaged 4min 43sec for each mile of a six-mile race at the White City — the first of his five world records.

There are enough good stories about Gordon — some of which he told against himself — to fill this page. But there is just one more that, to me, illustrates his professionalism. In the middle of the 1960s, John Disley organised one of the first big orienteering competitions in Britain. Gordon, accompanied by a gaggle of good athletes whom he trained, took part and was lost for hours in the Surrey woods. Next day, he borrowed Disley's book on orienteering from a public library, devoured every word and then came out to compete the following Sunday and beat us all.

He was only 60 when he died last Saturday. His brain was still sharp until near the end and his memory was phenomenal. So too, I hope, will our memories of Gordon remain — the man who challenged our thinking and stimulated our days.

Farewell you old hero, your place in athletics history is assured.

Rebel on the run

GORDON PIRIE'S phenomenal contribution to British athletics went largely unacknowledged because he ruffled the establishment with ideas and demands which seemed out of place in the cosy world of amateurism which Pirie could see was coming to an end. He above all signalled, by his performances and attitude, the changes in the sport which the leading competitors now enjoy.

During a period of Oxbridge excellence from Roger Bannister, Chris Chataway and Chris Brasher, Pirie was the shire horse, the athlete's athlete who never quite achieved the authority for wresting change, through an Olympic gold medal or a European title. Yet across the decade he pounded out the miles like no British runner before him, bumping into plenty of officials on the way.

He was inspired by Emil Zatopek, whose pictures covered the walls of his bedroom in Coulsdon. "He's the man I'm going to beat," he would tell visitors; he did, but in a race of no great significance.

He held world records at 3,000 and 5,000 metres and six miles, but his greatest performance was a losing one. At the 1956 Melbourne Olympics he faced the barrel-chested Soviet champion Vladimir Kuts over the 10,000 metres; he matched his surges across 21 of the 25 laps before falling back to eighth position utterly drained. In the 5,000 metres which followed he reverted to his own tactics of steady uniform laps, and took the silver medal behind Kuts.

He treated race preparation like a full-time job, and while Bannister was training three afternoons a week, Pirie was training three hours a day. He ran over his beloved Farthing Downs (where his ashes will be scattered) — rarely on the road — and to get in night sessions in winter he and his brother Peter marked out a course with lime blobs, which they then ran in heavy boots for greater strength.

Pirie was not a talented athlete, just a dedicated one who sought a scientific approach. His first achievement startled the British establishment when he won the Amateur Athletic Association six miles title in 1951, aged 20, in an English record of 29min 32sec. He ran in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics and there linked up with the German coach Waldemar Gerschler. Pirie wanted to race abroad, where promoters took a laxer view of the amateur code, and there were many rows when permission was refused. He could not understand how

puffed-up cheeks he provided material for the cartoonists; yet if controversy prevented Pirie finding greatness, the attempts inspired so many.

His greatest golden patch came in June 1956 when within the space of five days he broke the world 5,000 metres record with 13 min 36.8 sec and then equalled the 3,000 metres time of 7 min 55.6 sec. He broke that record three months later with 7 min 52.8 sec, which stood for six years.

Three years before that he showed phenomenal range. Having won his first English cross country title over nine miles, he set a world six-mile record (28 min 19.4 sec), helped Britain take the world 4 by 1500 metres relay record and also defeated Wes Santee, the leading US miler.

He did in fact become a four-minute miler before, on a very emotional night at the White City Stadium London in 1961, he took his leave of amateur international running. Away from the sport, he lost his way. He became a PE teacher, emigrated to New Zealand, but was soon back in Europe trying to put down roots; either the man's individualism was too difficult to set down with any permanency, or society did not have the nous to use a man of such dedication.

John Rodda

Gordon Pirie, born February 10, 1931; died December 7, 1991.

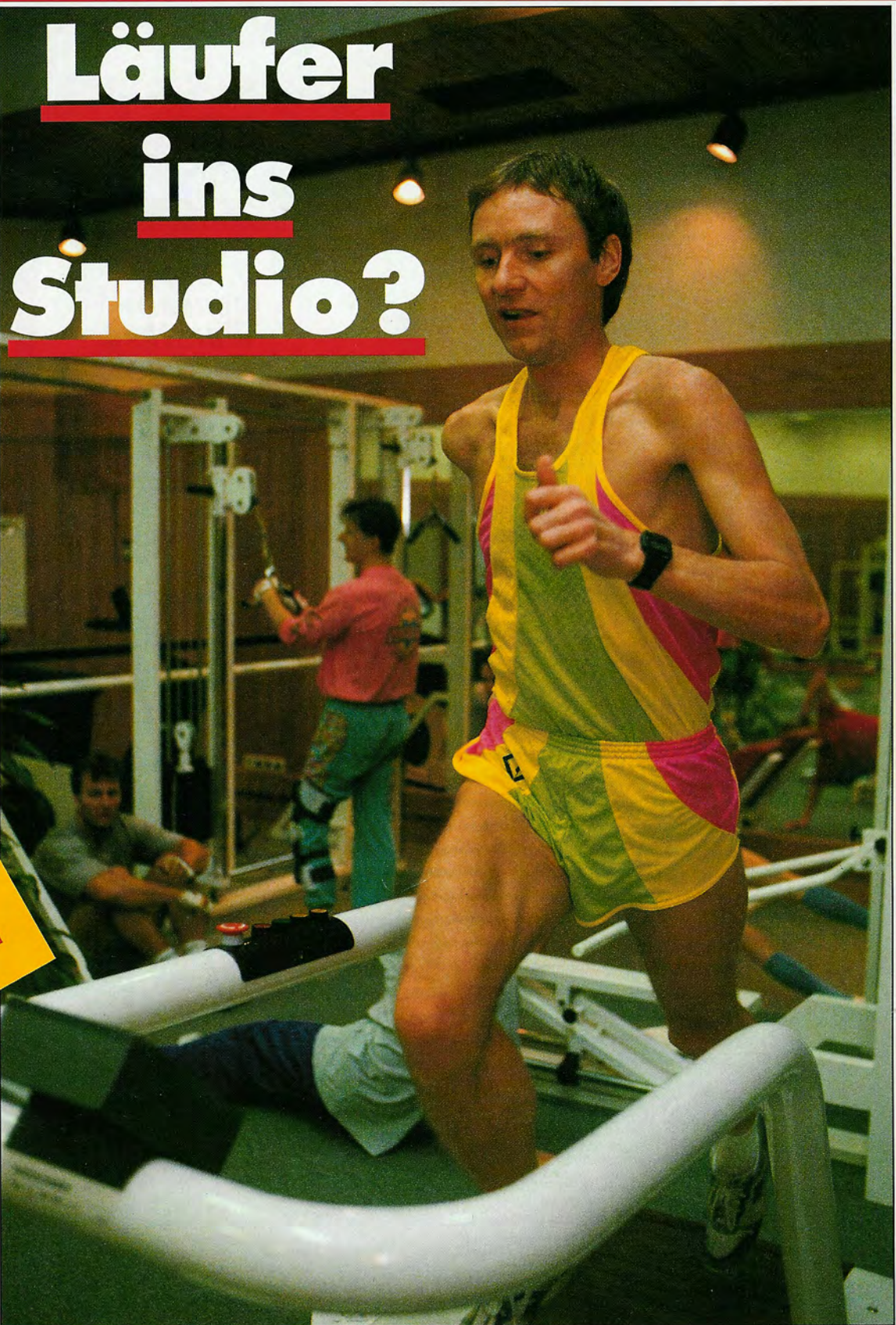
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With that sort of attitude, "Pirie Row" became over-worked headline words, and with his gangling style and

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Adieu, Gordon Pirie!

Eine Würdigung des verstorbenen großen Langstrecklers aus England

Von Michael Colemann

Gordon Pirie, der den Langstreckenlauf in den 50er Jahren im Sturm genommen hat, starb am 7. Dezember in Südengland an den Folgen eines Krebsleidens. Er war 60 Jahre alt geworden, schien aber zeitlos zu sein. Zur Beisetzung schickte ihm Emil Zatopek einen letzten Gruß: "Gordon, warte auf mich, und wir werden wieder gemeinsam laufen."

Es war im Jahr 1948 bei den Olympischen Spielen in London, als Zatopek, der sowohl die Gold- als auch die Silbermedaille gewann, den jungen Londoner inspirierte, dem Beispiel des unsterblichen Tschechen zu folgen und sein Leben dem Laufsport zu widmen. Obgleich er aus einer Läufer-Familie kam, trat er seine athletische Reise ganz auf seine ihm eigene Art an.

Zu jener Zeit war es üblich, dreimal in der Woche zu laufen und am Sonntag einen Spaziergang einzulegen. Pirie fing damit an, täglich zu trainieren - und gleich zweimal am Tag. Statt Laufschuhe zog er sich Stiefel an und lief in ihnen über frisch gepflügte Felder. Nach Dienstschluß bei der Bank, bei der er angestellt war, trainierte er abends auf der "Farthing Downs", einer ausgedehnten Heidelandschaft unweit seiner Südlondoner Wohnung. Zusammen mit Bruder Peter bestrich er Steine, um sich mit Taschenlampen im Dunkeln orientieren zu können. Er entwickelte ebenfalls eine besondere Atemtechnik. Er atmete die verbrauchte Luft kräftig nach jedem Schritt aus. Es dauerte auch nicht lange, bis die populären Zeitungen ihn den "Puff-Puff-Pirie" taufte.

Es war das Jahr 1951, als der 20jährige begann, alle britischen Trackrekorde zu brechen. Seine langen Beine verhalten ihm beim Cross, alle weit hinter sich zu lassend, zu drei Landestiteln.

1952 trat er bei den Olympischen Spielen in Helsinki gegen den von ihm verehrten Zatopek an und kam auf Platz vier über 5000 m und Platz sieben über 10000 m und staunte gewaltig darüber, daß der berühmte Tscheche auch noch den Marathonlauf gewann. In den Jahren, die danach folgten, liefen die beiden noch oft gegeneinander.

Die Welt erschloß sich für Pirie,

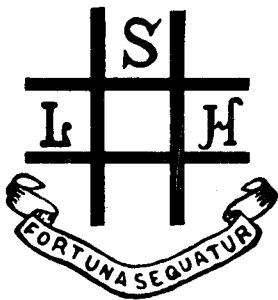


und in den folgenden Jahren forderte er jeden Läufer von Bedeutung heraus. Er stellte Weltrekorde über 3000 m (7:52,8), über 5000 m (13:36,8) sowie über sechs Meilen (28:19,4) auf. Stets darauf bedacht, seine Leistungen zu verbessern, ging er zu Waldemar Gerschler nach Freiburg und wurde dort dessen eifriger Schüler

im Intervalltraining. Er gab seine Stellung bei der Bank auf und wurde Farbenvertreter, ein Job, der ihm viel freie Zeit ließ. Seine "Amateur"-Feinde verspöttelten den Ganzzeit-"Professionellen". Bei der Olympiade in Melbourne gab es einen Mann, der ihm einen Doppelsieg hätte streitig machen können: Wladimir Kutz. Pirie hatte Kutz über 5000 m im

Juni 1956 in Bergen geschlagen, es war ein Weltrekord für ihn gewesen. Er war sich nun sicher, daß er dem Russen gewachsen war. Aber während Pirie vor den Spielen in allen Distanzen gelaufen war, hatte Kutz seine Kräfte geschont. Bei den 10000 m lieferten sich die beiden Rivalen über 22 Runden ein hartes Duell, als der Russe plötzlich zu einem Endspurt ausholte und den Willen des Engländers brach. Völlig erledigt hinkte er als Achter durch das Ziel. Einige Tage später gewann Pirie über 5000 m die Silbermedaille, allerdings war das nur ein geringer Trost. Das Unglück ereilte ihn bei den Olympischen Spielen 1960 in Rom. Das britische Team-Management hatte die äußerst heißen Wetterbedingungen in der italienischen Hauptstadt nicht einkalkuliert und flog die Athleten zu spät ein. Pirie schied in der Vorrunde der 5000 m aus, und über 10000 m kam er lediglich auf Platz zehn. Seine Kritiker führten sein Versagen auf das anstrengende Trainingsprogramm zurück, das Gerschler ihm auferlegt hatte. Ein wöchentliches Pensum von 200 Meilen (360 km) war durchaus die Norm.

Anstatt, wie erwartet wurde, sich aus der Laufszene zurückzuziehen, lief Pirie im selben Jahr eine 3:59,9-Meile (in Dublin, wo Elliott siegte). 1961 hatte er noch seine letzten Erfolge. Danach wurde er Berufssportler, wanderte nach Neuseeland aus und wurde ein erfolgreicher Trainer. Zu seinen Zöglingen zählte er Jim Hogan, Anne Audain und Alison Roe. Nach seiner Scheidung reiste er in der Welt herum, ehe er sich vor zwei Jahren wieder in England niederließ, wo er von Zeit zu Zeit als Trainer tätig war. Er starb völlig verarmt. Das Land, für das er in den 50er Jahren das Banner trug, ließ ihm keine Ehre zuteil werden. Er besaß eben nicht einen Oxford/Cambridge-Stammbaum, etwas, was ihm nie verziehen worden war. Aus dem Gedächtnis der Sportler ist er nicht gelöscht worden. Auch die heutige Generation zollte ihm mit folgenden Worten zu seiner Beerdigung Anerkennung: "Gordon Pirie, einem der Großen aller Zeiten. Wir danken Dir für die Inspiration, für die Du nie vergessen sein wirst."



FOUNDED 1871.

THE SOUTH LONDON HARRIERS' GAZETTE

and
Club Chronicle.

No. 1 Vol. 110Edited under the sanction of the committee and published by,
W.D. THOMAS 14 St. Barnabas Road, Mitcham, Surrey.**Jan/Mar. 1994**

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MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Change of address with Post Code and Telephone Number (home and business), applications for membership and all other matters relating to membership should be sent to the Membership Secretary:

A.J. Evans, 3 Falcon Court, Dagnall Park, South Norwood, London, SE25 5PN. (Tel: 081-689 7219).

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Application for Membership must be made on the appropriate printed form, completed in ink by the applicant, proposed and seconded by Club members, and accompanied by the appropriate Subscription.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE YEAR 1st OCTOBER 1993/94

Subscriptions for Men and Women are at the same rates:

Aged 20 or over on 1/10/93	£21.00
Aged 18 or 19 years on 1/10/93	£10.00
Aged under 18 years on 1/10/93	£10.00
Full Time Students	£10.00
Non-Active	£5.00
Life Membership	£125.00

Subscriptions of New Members paid after 30th June will carry over to 30th September the following year.

Subscription Secretary is:

P.J. Williams, 28 Oval Road, East Croydon, Surrey CR0 6BJ.

Club Kit should be purchased (see below) as soon as possible after election, so that there will be no delay in representing the Club in Competition.

CLUB KIT

Our Official Club Kit is: "White Vest with a vertical maroon band on the left hand side (back and front) with a break in the front for the Club Badge, and maroon shorts".

BAF Rule 17 (2) "When competing in any team or relay competition, competitors must wear the registered colours of the team they are representing". Breach of this rule may result in disqualification.

Stocks of kit are held by the following:

Men's Kit: Richard Carter, 37a The Chase, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 2EJ. (Tel: 081 660 4477)

Shorts-from £8.00	Vests-(Mesh) £10.50
T Shirts £5.00	Sweat Shirts £10.00
Club Ties £2.50	

Women's Kit: Mrs Christine Hartnett, 78 Sydenham Park Road, London SE26 4LH. (081 699 0763) to whom all enquiries should be addressed.

NOTE: On several occasions recently Rule 17 (2) has been invoked to disqualify competitors NOT wearing their Club Kit, which results in their team being disqualified. Team managers should ensure that all team members wear correct Club Kit.

MEMBERSHIP LIST**Changes in Membership from 26th November, 1993 to 2nd March, 1994**

ELECTIONS: M. Freeman, A.M. Martins, L.S. Ojerinola, M/s D. Ridings, M/s V.F. Mitchell, M/s S.V. Whittaker, K.E. Jackson, P. Burr, J. Mitchell, G.B. Crease, G. Quarton, T.C.R. Forage, M/s L.M. Prosser, L. Wilson, J. Traill.

RESIGNATIONS: G.G. Harrower, S.J. Edgington, M.R. Foster, N.A. Cook, T.S.N. Moorhead, S.G. Gordon.

DELETIONS 1992/93: A. Adedoyin, N.A. Kutu, J.E.S.J. Aldridge, J.R.C. Austin, T.J. Bailey, K. Barwise, E.L. Blacker, L.P. Blay, N. Brown, M.G. Burbridge, J.D. Cabrera, R.A. Carne, J. Carter, P.A. Chrysostomou, D.C. Claxton, J.A. Clibbon, D.A.H. Davies, C.T. Dean, C. Ebun-Amu, B.S. Everitt, B.J. Fish, P. Foster, C.J. France, J.L. Glover, M/s K. Goulden, M/s K.E.M. Harding, J.A. Hayward, J.J. Hoad, M.J. Hobbs, K.A. Holroyd, G. Huntington, S.M. Hussey, J.D. Jennings, M/s A.E. King, A. Leslie, R.C. Lines, M/s A.S.A. Manning, Jason Mark, Jeffrey Mark, M.C. Michael, C.A. Mongan, C.N. Mulford, R.S. Owen, M/s H.A. Parkinson, M.D. Perrott, D.J. Pollard, P. Prince, K.B. Razzell, M.J. Rochford, M/s S. Roden, A.S. Rogers, J. Scarborough, A.M. Seaforth, T.E.H. Servant, P. Smart, C. Smith, M/s A. Taylor, D.G. Terrell, R.L. Toyer, M/s A.M. Vallins, R.H. Vickers, R. Wadmore, J.D. Wilmhurst, N. Wright, D.J. Young, P.J. Young, K.L.D. Speed,

1993/94: A.S. Kamara, A.T.E. Banks, G.W. Coote, B.K. Gadd.
Total Membership at 30/9/93: 640 At 2/3/94: 666.

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION FOR 1993/94 WAS DUE ON 1st OCTOBER

Increasing costs of administration and the need for funds to finance the re-building work at our Coulsdon HQ, have made it necessary to increase income from members' Subscriptions. The new rates for 1993/94 are shown on the front page of this "Gazette".

It will greatly assist the work of the Hon. Treasurer if your Subscription is paid promptly. Late payments mean extra expense in sending reminders.

SO PLEASE PAY UP NOW! IF POSSIBLE ADD A DONATION.

The Subscriptions Secretary is P.J. Williams, 28 Oval Road, East Croydon, Surrey CR0 2BJ.

SUMMER FIXTURES 1994

The Fixtures Card is enclosed with this "Gazette". If you do not receive your copy, or lose it, apply to W.D. Thomas, 14, St. Barnabas Rd, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 2DU for a copy.

There are several changes received after the card was printed:

Front Page — T&F Team Manager & Captain (Men)

A. David (071-652 2216 instead of 071-924 1721)

Inside Page 3

ROAD RUNNING FIXTURES 1994

4/5/94 T.H. & H. Richmond Pk. CC Relay, 7pm, Roehampton

THE "GORDON PIRIE" MEMORIAL SEAT



THE "GORDON PIRIE" MEMORIAL SEAT

On the sad occasion of the funeral of Gordon Pirie, the idea of a lasting tribute to Gordon was conceived with the approval of his family, including sister Pamela and brother Peter. It was agreed that it should be a seat on Farthing Down.

Farthing Down is where Gordon started running and where he was to cover many miles—carving his own track—before and during his illustrious career, and where as a loyal and committed member of S.L.H. he ran many races, failing only once to finish when racing for the Club. Where more appropriate then, than a site on his "home Down"?

With the approval of the Club Committee, the City of London Corporation was approached and agreed to the proposal, with the London Borough of Croydon to instal the seat.

After careful consideration of the siting, it was agreed that the seat should be placed adjacent to the start of our Club races. We are pleased to report that it is being used both prior to our races and by the public in general.

We hope that it will revive pleasant memories and be an inspiration to runners of today and in the future.

We thank all those involved from the concept to its final placing, a memorial to a great athlete and fine Irrepressible.

The cost was borne by the Club.

M. W. Firth (Past-President)

run for each Club, the course was to be "as near 10 Miles as possible", and Championships were to be held in rotation — Midland, North and South. From 1955, the Eastern Counties CCA was formed and the rotation became East, Midland, South and North.

A Youths Championship was instituted in 1946 over 3 Miles, increased to 4 Miles in 1969. A Junior Championship over 6 Miles was added in 1948 (though a Junior race had been held in 1941)

13th March Belgrave Half-Marathon **Wimbledon**
4. E.J. Thomas (Met. Police) 1h16m07s; 6. M.I. Wood 1h18m18s.

13th March Southern Veterans Indoor Championships **Crystal Palace**
69m. (Men 0/65) 1. D. Adair 8.7s.

19th March Inter-Schools Cross-Country Races **Coulsdon**
Our Schools races began in 1936, when our former Hon. Sec. D.T.P. Pain, who later became Hon. Sec. of the International Athletic Federation, the governing body in World Athletics (1952/71), thought it a good idea to promote a cross-country race for local Schools. J.B. Densham (an Old Whitgiftian) presented a Cup, which was named after him, for award to the winning School. He had competed in the 1908 Olympics in the 400m. Hurdles and was an all-round sportsman. This year's race was the 58th, no race having been held in 1941, as it was thought that the course was tough enough without the extra hazards of bombs and bomb craters, since the "Luftwaffe" had begun daylight air-raids. Skinners have been the most successful School, winning 11 times between 1972 and 1990.

In 1970 the "Lemon-Norris" for an Under-16s race was added and in 1990 the "Hampshire" Cup for an Under-14s race was presented by an anonymous donor from Winchester College. This year, as an experiment, races for Boys and Girls from Primary Schools were held.

A total of 223 Boys and 4 Girls, competed from 28 Schools all over the South East of England. Winchester College won all three Trophies. Francis Upcott and Paul Mongan, assisted by other members as time-keepers, recorders and course marshalls, made it a very successful afternoon's sport. Our usual team provided refreshments for the unusually large numbers. After time-keeping and helping with teas, President Bill Long presented the awards.

Mr. Grundy, team manager of Trinity School retiring after many years, was accorded a special round of applause. One of his charges was Andy Evans, now our Club Captain, who was 5th in the 1977 "Densham", helping Trinity to 2nd team medals.

"Hampshire" Cup Race 2 Miles for Under 14s. (68 finished in 6 Teams)

Scoring 4: 1. Winchester 23; 2. Wilson's 41; 3. Lancing 42;
4. Trinity 75; 5. John Fisher 79; 6. St. Mary's 147.

1. E. Cornish	(Lancing)	12m01s
2. -. Windheuser	(Trinity)	12m02s
3. T. Arnold	(Lancing)	12m04s
4. R. Price	(Winchester)	12m06s
5. P. Kinlingley	(Winchester)	12m07s
6. B. Way	(Winchester)	12m16s
7. A. Mancey	(Wilsons/SLH)	12m23s
14. T.J. Webb	(Wilsons/SLH)	12m40s
15. K.J. Wickenden	SLH	12m54s
27. M.De Ioia	SLH	13m26s
60. J.S. Young	(St. Mary's)	15m48s

"Lemon-Norris" Cup Race — 2½ Miles for Under 16 (72 finished)

Scoring 4: 1. Winchester 17; 2. Trinity 54; 3. Ardingly 76;
4. Wilsons 78; 5. Epsom 92; 6. Cranleigh 117;
8. Hurstpierpoint 129; 9. Judd 146.

1. E. Matthews	(Winchester)	14m55s
2. E. Barnett	(Winchester)	15m17s
3. -. Newman	(Trinity)	15m28s
4. J. Kidger	(Ardingly)	15m47s
5. C. Price	(Winchester)	15m58s
6. S. Alexander	(Wilsons)	15m59s
7. S. Bayliss	(Caterham)	16m01s
8. T.J. Pitt	(Wilsons/SLH)	16m03s
15. C.S. Lagden	SLH	16m26s
39. T. Casserley	(Caterham/SLH)	17m31s
41. J.N. Young	(Caterham/SLH)	17m41s
46. C.D. Desbrow	SLH	17m55s

"Densham Cup Race 3½ Miles for Over 16s (61 finished in 9 teams)

Scoring 4: 1. Winchester 22; 2. Ardingly 49; 3. Epsom 55; 4. Trinity 59;
5. Judd 83; 6. Lancing 99; 7. Skinners 121; 8. St. John's 148;
9. Caterham 168.

1. A. Whitman	(Judd)	19m14s
2. K. Tuke	(Winchester)	19m47s
3. A. McNeilly	(Winchester)	20m00s
4. J. McCullum	(Trinity)	20m14s
5. -. Robertsn	(Trinity)	20m18s
6. M. Lee	(Lancing)	20m29s
7. A. Sarkar	(Winchester/SLH)	20m37s
8. B. Whitaker	(Ardingly)	20m40s
9. -. Brierly	(Epsom)	20m44s
10. A. Lynch	(Winchester)	20m47s
52. B.E. Clarke	(Caterham/SLH)	24m48s

Primary Schools Races 1.2 Miles Boys (22 finished from 4 Schools)

1. C.D. Papworth	(Attwood/SLH)	6m53s
2. A. Newman	(St. Mary's)	7m15s
3. I. Wallace	(Attwood)	7m16s
4. S. Edgerton	(Park Hill)	7m29s
5. J. Swift	SLH	7m41s
6. P. Rogers	(St. Mary's)	7m44s
7. A. Mendes	(St. Mary's)	7m48s
8. W. Watts	(St. Mary's)	7m50s
19. A. Wilde	(SLH)	8m29s

Girls (4 finished, all from Park Hill)

1. A. Poole 8m48s; 2. V. Bovingdon 8m49; 3. L. Shears 9m21s;
4. K. Collins 9m27s.

19th March Table-Tennis and Darts Tournaments

Coulsdon HQ

This year's tournaments attracted ten entries, which, although not overwhelming, was up on recent years. For both Table-Tennis and Darts, two groups of five played a 'round robin', each player meeting each other in his or her group. This worked fine in the Table-Tennis groups, but the finishing double in the Darts proved a bit of a problem.

After missing last year, the winner in 1990 and 1992, Roy Southgate, saw off all the opposition in his group. New member Mark Johnson comfortably won the other group, but proved no match for Southgate in the Final, Roy winning 21-15, 21-14, to take the "Densham" Cup for the third time.



REMEMBERED IN PRINT: Bournemouth-based distance legend Gordon Pirie

The enigma of a great runner

Make a date with quay tunes

LIVE music and quality entertainment hits Poole Quay tonight with Oysters Live on the Quay.

The lively Latin and Samba sounds of Mango Santa Maria outside the Thistle

Hotel will be supplemented by a delicious barbecue and action from the Quayside Cloggies.

At the Fish Shambles bands will be playing a selection of original songs provided by Solid Air Entertainment Company.



If jazz is your bag then the place to be is opposite the Oyster Quay bar with funky music provided by Groove O Matic Delux and there will be more music and another tasty barbecue at the Custom House.

This T2F with 2CR summer of fun event starts from 7pm with fireworks at 10pm.

On Friday Mini Magic takes over Poole Quay in Quay for My Car with the Daily Echo promising a fine selection of old and new models from 6pm to 10pm.

One shot could win new Merc

YOU could drive away with a Mercedes if you make a hole in one at the second annual Wessex Autistic Society Golf Day.

Teams of four are being invited to enter the event which takes place at the Canford Magna Golf Club on September 4.

The event is raising money for the Echo-backed Domino Appeal which is helping to fund the country's first purpose school for children with autism at Parley Lane, Hurn.



As well as being in with a chance of winning the Mercedes, a first prize of dinner, bed and breakfast and two rounds of golf at the legendary St Pierre Golf and County Club at Chepstow is also up for grabs.

Entry fee for a team of four is £165. Hole sponsorship is also available to local businesses at £50 per hole

For more information contact the Wessex Autistic Society on 01202 483360 or visit the website /www.thedominoappeal.com

JULY SPECIALS



2 BRAND NEW TYRES FOR £34

OR

4 FOR £60

- 135TR13
- 145TR13
- 145/70TR13

2 BRAND NEW TYRES FOR £38

OR

4 FOR £70

- 155TR13
- 165TR13
- 165/70TR13
- 175/70TR13

2 BRAND NEW TYRES FOR £44

OR

The enigma of a great runner

HE is regarded as the greatest British distance runner of all time - and only 12 years ago he could still be seen training in Bournemouth's parks.

A new book on athletics enigmas has given Gordon Pirie pride of place in its opening chapter with the author declaring him the sport's greatest character.

Before his untimely death Pirie fought to prevent one of the biggest sports complexes in the south being built in the heart of Bournemouth's Meyrick Park.

It was there that the unmistakable eight-footed runner, who set two track world records in the space of 47 days, was often seen training along the forest trails.

Pirie spent the last years of his life in Lymington and helped Bournemouth Athletic Club and other local athletes achieve their potential.

He died at the age of 60 in December 1991 after being ill for some time.

Many in the Bournemouth and New Forest athletics fraternity will still remember Pirie's undiminished passion for the sport after moving to the area.

Alastair Aitken, who has written the book *Athletics Enigmas* places Pirie at the top of his list of greats.

Mr Aitken was given a short tour of Dorset when he interviewed the man who set 3,000m, 5,000m and 10,000m world records and took a silver medal in the 1956 Olympics at 5,000m.

By Scott Neil

"I had the privilege of spending quite a bit of time with Gordon, which I don't think many others had. He was a true athletics enigma," Mr Aitken told the *Echo*.

"His first book was entitled *Running Wild* and that just about sums him up. He did not always win but he was totally inspiring to athletes.

"He wanted to do a lot for Bournemouth and the Bournemouth athletes. There was this infectious excitement of life."

Pirie's often uncompromising characteristics often made him unpopular with sports writers of the day.

Competing at his peak in the 1950s and many years before the riches today enjoyed by sportspeople, Pirie recalls in the book how his wife Shirley would eat only a half meal because they did not have enough money for them both to eat properly.

One runner who complained he could not do any hill training

because central London was too flat was bluntly told by Pirie: "Listen, you can run up and down this road 1000 times. Don't give me excuses."

Mr Aitken added: "Gordon was probably the greatest character in athletics. He was so genuine and utterly open."

● *Athletics Enigmas* is published by the Book Guild priced £9.99.



OLYMPIC MEDALLIST: Gordon Pirie won Silver in Melbourne 1956

Got a story? Tell the Echo on 01202 411293/411294