

Racing -Track vs XC differences

When we think about general race strategies, it's usually putting yourself out there but preserving energy for the rest of the race. Track is a little different because you can see your entire race in front of you. This is a double edged sword because on one hand, it is really helpful when visualizing your race because it is a lot more predictable than for example a hilly xc course. You can be meticulous and plan out every 200m. On the other hand, once you have experience in running these races the challenge becomes pushing yourself to do more than what you think you can. Because you can plan, you also know how painful it will be. All of my best races in track I went out faster than I thought I could handle and my training carried me through. (I talk about training below) But... some of my worst races is me dying out half way through. (Again look at my training tips)

“Don't go out too fast” is a phrase we hear a lot. In track, the field size is a lot smaller and more variable than in xc, meaning it is not (in my opinion) as reliable when we are looking for personal bests. Some meets you will be with people within seconds of your PR and others minutes. This means you need to have an idea of who you are racing and where you are seated. But back to going out too fast, I want you to imagine the last set of a hard workout. You are lowkey dying, your legs feel like they are full of lead, and you can't breathe. That is how you will be feeling in a race. Do you want to be passing a bunch of runners in the 2nd lane feeling like that? No. You need to find the balance of being smart with your energy by not sabotaging yourself in the first half but also not making it harder for you later to pass people or to get faster. If you want to win, you need to be in the front group (even if that means going faster than you want in the beginning) because those are the people who will help pace you in the middle of the race. Always remember that you have more to give than you think.

Races:

1600m- The PERFECT race! This is wonderfully cut up into 4 sections for you. First lap you need to put yourself out there (go fast). Second lap you need to not slow down (stay fast). Third lap you need to put SO much effort into or else you will slow down without realizing it (HARD effort). Last lap you need to SEND IT! Everything you have needs to be left on the track. Dig deep. Be pushing hard into the ground. (as fast as humanly possible).

Tips- Always know what your intentions are, don't forget your goals or race plan. “Holding your hand in the fire” is a phrase Avery Peck uses to describe racing. If you don't think racing is that intense, it's time for that to change. Plus you can do anything for 6ish minutes.

800m- The actual same as the 1600 in terms of plan except switch 2nd and 3rd quarter advice. Cut it up into 4 200m, (1st) get out fast, (2nd) hard effort, (3rd) hard effort/stay fast, (4th) everything you have left. Only thing is that this is a much shorter race meaning you have less time to make a move and less time to make up for mistakes. You should consider this to be a

sprint race: don't think just run. Always try to pass people, this is less than 3 min!!! You only have to do this for less than 3 min!!! You honestly just need to go go go.

Tips- Make sure your warmup is good. DO NOT get cold! Stay loose and spend extra time on drills. You can do anything for 3 min. Seriously. It will be over so fast, you don't want to regret what you did not give. Your lungs and legs should be on fire the whole time.

3200m- My favorite race as a freshman, my least favorite race as a senior. The most similar to a xc race. It's hard to stay focused on a single plan for 800m so the previous plans don't apply. I would divide by 8, so by lap. I am not as passionate about the 32 so I have less to say, but it's kinda similar to a tempo. You want to keep the same pace for the middle 6 laps which means you should be slowly upping your effort. The first lap just get settled. Middle try to hang on to the people in front of you. I have noticed that when you let go and there are no longer people in front of you it is way harder to stay focused so it is worth the extra effort to stay with the pack.

Tips- Be mentally prepared for a long fight. This will take a while and is a lot of laps. That is not an excuse to slack off, but rather a requirement to stay focused.

Workouts: For all of my workouts before I begin I have a goal (# of reps, min of tempo, effort, etc) that I don't compromise on. If I tell myself I am going to do 5 reps, no matter how terrible I feel on rep 4, I will be doing rep 5 (as long as quality is still there). Basically I set my minimum so I can't change my mind when I am weak. I also keep an open mind to do more 'extra' reps because I will always say yes to my group if they are doing more.

Interval- Just because you feel tired during strides does not mean your workout is doomed. You should always have a goal number of reps and speed of reps. This is because you will be slowly chipping off pieces until you finish. During a rep NEVER think about how much left of the workout you have. You are only allowed to think about how much left in the rep you have. This is for multiple reasons; a) during a race you should be thinking about the specific section you are in and workout is race practice b) You have more than you think you do, so focus on the now to prevent psyching yourself out. This way you can actually hit what you need to hit on the singular rep. c) Thinking of the entire workout at once is hard. It's too much to grasp and your quality will just go down as your focus goes down.

Tempo- The main goal should be not to get slower. That is bad. Try to get faster or stay the same over time, effort should slowly ramp up. Kinda the same advice as strides in the fact that you should just do more. Another minute will not break you. That extra time is nothing compared to a race which should motivate you to go harder and longer near the end of your tempo. Those extra seconds are a fraction of your day but can mean a lot in your training. You are going to feel tired regardless.

Sprint/Strides- Just do more. I'm not kidding. What is the difference between 6 and 8? The difference is how you will feel at the end of your race. The difference is how well you can deal with pain. The difference is 3 min of your time. You are going to feel tired regardless. Sprints encapsulate that lactic burning you get when you are racing so the hill sprints or strides in training are what will push you through the finish line. They are what give you your speed especially in the finish.

Warm up/ Cool down- Track is a longer season than xc. We have more meets and more hard training blocs. That means it is easier to get injured so warmup is sooo important. That also means that if you don't want to feel terrible the next day, you can not cut cooldown. Leaving your muscles to just tighten and lactic in your system will feel awful later and guess what? You don't have days to feel awful but you do have 15 min to cooldown.

Recovery- One thing that I only realized this year was that electrolytes are game changers. Salt, magnesium, potassium, chloride, calcium.... All of these work to regulate nerve and muscle function, hydrate the body, and help rebuild damaged tissue. You will feel the difference in your athleticism from when you are hydrated and when you aren't. Sleep is the single best thing you can do to recover. Be consistent with when you go to bed and when you wakeup to feel your best. If you are extra tight, roll out your legs or stretch. Getting too tight is just uncomfortable and makes you high risk for injury. Last but not least, food. Yall need to eat. Gains don't make themselves.

General Products I recommend:



Anti-Chafe balm [Anti-Chafe balm](#)



Hair wax to keep flyaways gone [Hair wax](#)



Any roller ever



My Favorite electrolytes (watermelon is best)
Warning they are salty! [LMNT electrolytes](#)



You will want cough drops.. Trust.



Maybe some herbal tea.
Your throat might suffer