

GLAD TO BE AN EARLY MORNING RUNNER

Despite 5:30 a.m. daily workouts in all kinds of Pacific Northwest weather, Bill Glad of Bellevue, Washington says he's now taking cross country running easy and enjoying it more—especially his dramatic improvements.

by Jack Pfeifer

At 5:30 a.m. the cool of nearby Lake Washington tempts Bill Glad with nature's best incentive to stay in bed, but as he does each day, Bill responds to his alarm with a smile. Standing at his bedroom window absorbing the morning's first warmth, he looks through the forest surrounding house and lawn, over Lake Washington and lush, green Mercer Island and beyond sees Seattle, seaport of the Pacific Northwest.

The beauty of the scene doesn't hold Glad, though. He quickly dons the light training uniform Bellevue High School runners wear and slips from his handsome natural-wood room into the surrounding greenery.

Bill's strides, a daily morning run he has learned to love, take him through a living forest. Only blocks from home he reaches Killarney Park, a sudden opening in the trees where the natural calm is broken only by two paved tennis courts and modern playground equipment—wild configurations of logs and man-made serpents.

Bill lives in such great beauty and accepts it easily, but he has made his more than an easy life. He is part of a big, healthy, active family appropriate to this robust territory. The family includes a world record-holder, but Bill is its athlete. He runs every morning, waking in the gray of 5:30 to alternate long distance and two or three mile runs every other day, adding a 16-mile circuit each Sunday.

He calls this cross country training easy and relaxed, for Bill Glad is a young man who likes to run. He is devoted to the notion that running must remain a thing of pleasure, not pain, and that success is secondary.

"The most important thing I've learned about running," Bill says, "is that it can be fun. You don't have to kill yourself to be a good runner. If you had to, I don't really know how long I'd keep at it. If you're sensible, your training can be easy."

It was a year ago Bill challenged the adage 'the more you practice the more you'll improve.' Until he adopted his sensible training schedule, he believed improvement came only through hard work and that the harder you worked the better.

"I changed my whole training routine," he said. "Instead of running harder and longer in workouts, I actually cut down on my overall running and changed to a more sensible training schedule. And it's worked. I'm a case for it."

Bill's career as an athlete began quietly in a San Francisco area junior high school in Tiburon. ("I still go down there every summer for about a week to mooch off my buddies," he says.) Bill was then a swimmer and he still has ribbons on his bedroom wall. It wasn't until the eighth grade that he joined the school's track team.

Bill's now devoted interest in distance running came from a physical education class. "One day we were supposed to run laps with the last one after each lap pulled out," he said. "We had run the 50-yard dash the day before, so I figured the guys who won that were the ones to beat. After a few laps I ran past them and wound up running the whole hour. I was getting pretty tired at the end, but no one else was running any faster, so I figured right then distance running was for me."

Bill began serious running as a freshman at Bellevue High School. He turned out for cross country that autumn and just made Bellevue's top seven runners.

"That spring I ran the two-mile in track every week," he recalled. "Week after week after week and I ran 10:20 every time. I had a different excuse to myself every week: first it would be blisters, then a bad cramp, then something else. I ran the two-mile in our conference meet that year and finished last."

That's when Bill started rethinking his training. "A guy who lived just down the street had broken our school record in the two-mile at 9:38. 'He had been running only 5 to 10 miles a day in practice, so I figured if he could do it, I could do it.'"

Bill and another Bellevue runner, Scott Daggatt, then sought help from Bob Williams, an ex-collegiate runner training with the Oregon Track Club (old Oregon runners never die, they just join the Oregon Track Club).

"Bob set out a whole new schedule for us," Bill said. "It was built around the idea that you should

follow a simple, easy schedule of running hard only every other day—not every day—and that in time you would get good results."

The summer after his sophomore year Bill continued with his more sensible system. He ran the two-mile in 10:11.5 and the steeplechase in 10:18. "I was relaxed in my training, and it was enjoyable to run," he said. "And that's the way it still is. I run every day. It's just that on the off days I run only a couple miles." The effects of his new training method didn't show up until last fall when he was No. 2 man on his team and finished 36th in the state meet.

Bill is the only one who calls his training easy. He runs every morning without fail, regardless of the weather. But Bill says of his 5:30 a.m. runs: "It's not really as bad as it sounds. Once you get used to it, it's good to get up that early. You come to look forward to running. Our weather got pretty bad in the winter—did you know we had 42 consecutive days without sun in January and February?—but I never missed a morning."

Each day after his regular workout comes his reward—for Bill is something of an oatmeal freak. "He eats so much oatmeal our bowls are too small," says his mother. "We'd have to leave some in the pan, and it would burn by the time he could get it into his bowl." So a friend at school, a pottery nut, created a special extra-large oatmeal bowl just for Bill. Now it's a proud possession, splotchy blue bottom and all.

The morning run also makes school pleasant for Bill. "By the time I get to school I've already been up for three hours and had a good run. I'm ready to do things. School isn't a drag for me. I was taking some of my toughest classes last year, and now I have a 3.0 grade point average and classes I enjoy this year." College and running are in the future, but "I don't want to go to college just to get a degree. I want to go to think and to learn."

Not only was school more enjoyable last year; so was running. Bill opened the indoor season with a 9:53.6 two-mile victory that quali-

fied him for the Seattle Indoor meet a week later, a race that changed his style and proved his system.

"I ran along with everybody else. When they called the time for the first mile, I was shocked; it was the fastest mile I had ever run. But the pace felt good, and the crowd was loud. With the runners and yelling I just had to keep going. With one lap to go I did something I had never done before—I kicked. I started to run faster and passed people thinking, 'Boy, this is a fun way to run.' It's encouraging when you're passing people late in a race. I've run that way ever since."

Glad took a second in that high school race with a 9:34.5—a 40-second improvement in six months. A week later he ran six miles in 31:27. By the district meet he was even stronger. A sprint from sixth to second on the last two laps brought him home happy in 9:18. "It was a lot faster than I hoped to run all year," he said.

In the state meet, in wretched weather, he was seventh after seven laps but sprinted out the final 440 and finished second in 9:23.8. "One day early in the year when I ran badly I blamed the weather," he explained. "I figured it was a good excuse. But I was keeping a diary so I started putting down what the weather was each day, and actually it's no excuse. It's a pain in the neck, but that's all. I get rid of a lot of my anger about the weather in the diary. I'll print RAIN!! with big exclamation points and usually wind up breaking my pencil on the dots."

Bill's family includes Helen, who lives across Lake Washington this year at the University of Washington, Eric and Ed, step-brothers born just three days apart 15 years ago, Lori, 14, and 13-year-old John. Bill's father owns a local construction company, and he helped design and build their fashionable house. Bill's mother belongs in the commercials where you can't tell the mother from her daughters. Running out the clan are three dogs, Robbie, Biemba and Socks.

The present star of the family is

(COVER)

John, dubbed John-the-world-record-holder by Bill. Last summer as a seventh grader John was a shot-putter, but he ran a 59-second 440 when asked by his coach to substitute in the event. He was 12 at the time, and just John. The 59-second time turned out to be the fastest ever run by a 12 year old, and introductions changed to "this is John (pause) the world record holder." Bill's reputation at school changed from Bill Glad, the distance runner, to Bill Glad, the brother of world record-holder John Glad.

John doesn't think much of it. He's run only two races and may be the only world record-holder ever to have won only one race. "The worst of it is that I probably can't even beat my little brother in the 440," says Bill. "Heck, I've never broken 60 seconds for one lap."

Bill feels he is a long way from his best times, but he doesn't plan to rush them. "I hear runners today say they don't want something tomorrow, they want it yesterday. But I figure you've got to have patience to be a good distance runner. I used to think the only way to be a good runner was to go out and bash yourself. I'll bet I could start running 100 miles a week and maybe I would even run 8:40 next year. But to do that means making sacrifices, and as soon as I start doing that running becomes a job. When that happens, I won't like it anymore."

"I read stories about high school distance runners who push themselves during their training by thinking about the tough opponent they're going to run against next. That's crazy. There's no reason to push yourself like that."

"People always ask me what I think about in my training runs. They tell me I'll go crazy if I don't get my mind off running and think about something else. Well, sometimes I think about other things, but usually I do think about running. I like to run and that's what I think about. Some guys punish themselves during workouts, but not me. I like it. When I take a morning run, I'm enthusiastic."

Bill hasn't set too many goals for the coming season. This summer he improved his bests in the mile (4:23.2), the six-mile (30:48.0) and the steeplechase (9:42.4). He doesn't think much of the mile ("I'm just getting started when we

get to the last lap"), but he has a special hankering for the steeplechase. "When I was a sophomore, our school was invited to a special meet. The qualifying time for the two-mile was 10:15, but I hadn't run that fast. They also had a steeplechase, and the qualifying time was a 10:20 two-mile. I had run that fast, so I asked the coach to enter me. I practiced a little on a makeshift barrier (three inches too low) and finished fifth. I've been a steeplechaser ever since and I haven't finished behind another high school runner in a steeplechase since that race." This summer, in 100-degree heat, he ran his 9:42.4, just four seconds off the American record for 16-year-olds.

One of Bill's aspirations is to grow a little. ("I weigh less than what I weighed in ninth grade.") He's 5-8 and 119 pounds, a frame that doesn't exactly make the girls go wild. "That's OK though," he said. "My brother Ed is the ladies' man in the family. That's a little galling, too, because he's younger than I am."

Bill is now in a cross country training program and plans training year around with indoor running in the winter and the regular track season in the spring. "I like cross country because I like running hills, I guess. I think I should do all right this year, although winning state isn't easy in our state." He'll keep running the two-mile, but says he'll be satisfied simply with natural improvement based on his "easy" training.

"I can't say enough," he said, "about not making sacrifices in training. It's so much easier this way. Why, I used to feel guilty if I hadn't run a hundred miles each week. Now I run half that, enjoy it and keep improving."

Bill's 'nonsacrifices' of 5:30 a.m. workouts, running every day in the rain, cold and gloom of Seattle winters, eating only sensible foods, going to bed each night at nine o'clock and giving up every weekend for Saturday meets and his 16-mile Sunday run, would make most athletes shudder. But he accepts the demands of his sport as easily as the natural beauty of his surroundings. Like all distance runners, the purity of nature's beauty is the purity of their sport. Bill Glad has an abundance of both. ■