

## McQuaid coach Bradley:

# 'Wider base . . . higher achievement'

There's a lot more to developing young runners than laying out a training schedule for them, as Gary Thompson of Victor High School made clear last month.

To continue our series on young runners, Carol Cloos put some specific questions to Bob Bradley of McQuaid Jesuit High School, one of the most experienced and widely respected coaches in the country.

These are his answers:

### Q: Did you run in high school?

A: In my last two years at St. Peter's Prep in Jersey City I ran all three seasons. Best times were 2:07 (880) and 4:42 (mile). They didn't run the two-mile in those days. I don't remember any cross country times, but I think I was a little better there than in track.

### Q: What inspired you to become a coach?

A: Nothing, really, unless you count the Holy Spirit. The X-C job was still open in September and they needed someone, so I had a crack at it despite not having run in 15 years. What's inspired me to stay with it since 1962? Mostly the tremendous young men I've been lucky enough to coach. The excitement of the meets, of course. I love to watch those long starting lines take off at a cross country meet. Plus the nature of the sport itself, kind of primitive and clean and spiritual. And fall days in Rochester are the best time of the year for running. It's great to be part of it.

### Q: How have X-C training methods changed over the last 10 years?

A: In the last 10, not all that much. But since 1962, quite a bit. Back in the 60s, very few runners trained over the summer, and there was no indoor program in the winter. So the idea of training year-round and building from peak to peak was unknown. Since the early 70s, though, summer running has caught on and most of the good distance runners run a lot of miles. Usually, the wider the mileage base the higher the achievement. Plus, when runners come into September with that base, more of their season can be spent preparing them for racing instead of just building their endurance. It changes the coach's approach to workouts if he knows his runners are already in good shape.

### Q: Have you been influenced by these changes?

A: Looking back, I'm sure I have. I think I'm tougher on my runners now because I feel they can handle it. I used to do a lot of short interval work; now our basic interval distance is 800 meters. We do more distance repeats and straight O. D. (over-distance), too, because the 5K distance calls for that more than the shorter courses we ran in the 60s.

### Q: Can you predict in the earlier grades which runners have the most promise? Are you ever surprised?

A: Gary Jones, who does a super job coaching our junior high team, tells me it's easy to pick out the blue-chippers just by looking at them in competition. But he likes to see two other qualities to go with their talent: 1. They like to run; 2. They have a lot of self-motivation. Lacking either one, a talented 8th or 9th grader might not be running as a senior.

Beyond that, though, it's hard to predict because so much comes from inside. Our good runners have come in all shapes and sizes, so it's not a matter of physique. What you look for, I guess, is that competitive fire, the desire to pass instead of follow. The ability to run even pace is a sign, too, because it indicates a man who doesn't let fatigue master him; who can be tough in the last part of a race.

Surprises? Oh, sure. We have one or two almost every year. Usually it's somebody who's just absolutely determined to improve and who runs a lot of miles, so that, in effect, he becomes a different runner. Roy Smith, who died so tragically last summer, was like that. Peter Glavin, the best distance man we've had at McQuaid, was such a peanut in the 8th grade that there was no way I could have expected him to develop the way he did. But that's what makes coaching cross country so special — there's just no telling what surprises await you each fall. Last year, Steve Rapp was like a new runner for us and made the difference between a good team and a great one.

### Q: What elements of character do you try to develop in your runners and how do you go about it?

A: I don't consciously set out to develop character. Young men who stick with X-C have plenty of character to begin with (I'm sure this applies to young women as well, but we don't have any

## High school runners

# Parents have important role to play

of those delightful creatures at McQuaid.) I think that the sport itself — the competitive and social experience, the hard practices — almost automatically develops character.

Probably more than character, I consciously try to work on my runners' psychology. They need to be mentally tough; to have a doggedness that keeps them at it even when they're not running well or have other problems. They need confidence, too, to walk up to that line and know they're ready to compete. Those are the main things my coaching aims at.

To achieve that, I make my practices demanding enough to put the runners into the psychological situations they'll face in competition. Then, as the practice gets progressively tougher, I keep reminding and encouraging them to stay on top of it mentally. Our stock sayings are: "The first part of practice is just to tire you out for the second part," and "The real practice begins when you get tired." Nothing fancy or inspirational — just plain hard work.

To build confidence, we use our two-varsity system to get our runners into as much quality experience as possible. We may get hammered once in a while, but in the long run it works.

In practice, I like to use relays to put runners out in the open and let them see how they can do. And handicap races are great to give the runner that sweet sensation of passing a whole bunch of people.

### Q: How do you minimize the pressure of competition?

A: First I try not to be hyper myself. Then, aside from kidding or talking times and strategy, I try to hit three points: 1. Never be afraid to lose. 2. Treat the race not as a Burden, but as an Opportunity. (My nickname is "Bo," so they find that idea easy to remember.) 3. In cross country you draw a lot of strength from the other six men on your team, so you're not all alone out there. And by the same token, you give them some of your strength. When seven men can run together and make that happen, it's a joy to watch.

### Q: What role can parents play in the development of a good runner?

A: First, realize that X-C is a tough sport and makes great demands on a young runner. He'll need a lot of encouragement when he's tired and

*'I love . . . the nature of the sport itself, kind of primitive and clean and spiritual. And fall days in Rochester are the best time of the year for running.'*

—Coach Bradley

still has homework or when he's down after a bad race or practice. Second, by supporting the school's X-C program in every way possible to show that they think it's as important as the sports that get more hype. Get to the meets. Many parents have only a vague idea what X-C is about until they see the stampede at an invitational. Our McQuaid parents have been tremendously supportive. When we won the States at Saratoga last year, every runner's parents were there, and that means a lot. Same with Brighton's girls team at the States.

### Q: Do you ever make suggestions about diet to your runners?

A: I discourage eggs, milk and fried foods before competition, but other than that I leave it up to their mothers (excuse my male chauvinism!) and to their own personal tastes. I don't think diet makes that much difference when you're talking about a 5K race. This year, though, thanks to several mothers, we are going to distribute some sheets on nutrition.

### Q: How do you work with the less talented or less motivated runners?

A: Since I was no star myself, I find it easy to identify with the guys back in the pack. In practice, we break our squad into three or four groups according to ability, so every man has a chance of being fairly close to the leader. We also use handicap runs to give our slower men a chance to run in front. In races, I do a lot of yelling at the back men to let them know they count even if they aren't scoring. I usually have the previous meet's times on my clipboard so I can congratulate them on a P.R. no matter where they've finished. It's important that every runner have a personal goal for each race and for the whole season. For the best, it might be a school record or Top 10 in Sectionals, but for many others it might be as modest as breaking 18 minutes at Cobbs Hill. Give any coach 30 goal-oriented runners, and he'll have a winner.



## High school running

# Team goals help build motivation

(from previous page)

they'll be a great bunch to work with.

Team goals, reinforcing personal ones, work well with many runners who have talent but lack motivation. Winning the Sectionals is a goal that seven runners, or even five, can get excited about. It's something that none of them may do by himself but that all seven can do as a team. We have two varsities at McQuaid, and being on Var-1 instead of Var-2 can provide a lot of motivation, especially if it involves an overnight trip to Providence or New York City. In a less tangible way, team pride and a winning tradition are powerful motivators, and I try to emphasize that at the start of the season. If you can convince runners that they're capable of doing great things, you've done a good job of motivating.

**Q. About how many boys are in the 500 Club and how does it work?**

**A.** Usually about 25 start out and eight to 10 actually reach the 500. Our best summer had 14 and our lowest just four. The format is very simple: 50 miles a week for 10 weeks beginning the day after graduation. We throw in a bonus week before graduation to help them get going. The reporting is done by sending postcards to my home every two or three weeks, and I send out progress reports twice during the 10 weeks. The awards are log books, T-shirts, windbreakers, or sweat hoods, depending on how many years a man hits 500.

**Q. How many boys signed up for cross country at McQuaid; how many got to compete in meets?**

**A.** We had 35 sophomores, juniors and seniors and almost 40 eighth and ninth graders. Only a handful of them didn't stick it out until the first meet, and by the end of the season we still had 62 of the original 75 in action. Our various teams are made up according to performances in the last scrimmage or meet, so some runners will flip-flop between Var-1 and Var-2 or Var-2 and J.V. If an established runner has a bad day, he doesn't lose his spot, though, and when two runners are about even, seniority prevails. For the most part, though, it's survival of the fittest.



**Joe George at the Michigan Bluff 63-mile checkpoint, recovering from mild dehydration. Just 37 miles left to go!**

**BOB BRADLEY** has been a member of the English faculty at McQuaid Jesuit High School since 1962 and has sent six teams to the state meet representing Section 5, last year producing his first state championship. Several years ago the National Coaches Association voted him Coach of the Year in District 1 (the Northeast).

## **WHAT MAKES A MAN RUN?**

**People can't understand why a man runs.**

**They don't see any sport in it, argue that  
it lacks the sight and thrill of body contact.**

**Yet, the conflict is there, more raw and  
challenging than any man vs. man competition.**

**In running, it is man against himself, the cruelest  
of opponents. The other runners are not the real  
enemies. His adversary lies within himself, in his  
ability, with brain and heart, to control and master  
himself and his emotions.**

**Glenn Cunningham, America's  
first great miler and holder of  
the world's record in the late '30's.**

# What It Takes To Be Number One

You've got to pay the price. Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all-the-time thing. You don't win once in a while; you don't do things right once in a while; you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.

There is no room for second place. There is only one place in my game and that is first place. I have finished second twice in my time at Green Bay and I don't ever want to finish second again. There is a second place bowl game, but it is a game for losers played by losers. It is and always has been an American zeal to be first in anything we do and to win and to win and to win.

Every time a football player goes out to ply his trade, he's got to play from the ground up—from the soles of his feet right up to his head. Every inch of him has to play. Some guys play with their heads. That's O. K. You've got to be smart to be number one in any business. But more important, you've got to play with your heart—with every fiber of your body. If you're lucky enough to find a guy with a lot of head and a lot of heart, he's never going to come off the field second.

Running a football team is no different from running any other kind of organization—an army, a political party, a business. The principles are the same. The object is to win—to beat the other guy. Maybe that sounds hard or cruel. I don't think it is.

It's a reality of life that men are competitive and the most competitive games draw the most competitive men. That's why they're there—to compete. They know the rules and the objectives when they get in the game. The objective is to win—fairly, squarely, decently, by the rules—but to win.

And in truth, I've never known a man worth his salt who in the long run, deep down in his heart, didn't appreciate the grind, the discipline. There is something in good men that really yearns for the discipline and the harsh reality of head-to-head combat.

I don't say these things because I believe in the brute nature of man or that men must be brutalized to be combative. I believe in God, and I believe in human decency. But I firmly believe that any man's finest hour—his greatest fulfillment to all he holds dear—is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle—victorious.

**THERE IS NO ROOM FOR SECOND PLACE**

**THE OBJECTIVE IS TO WIN**

**FIRST PLACE IS OUR OBJECTIVE**

VINCE LOMBARDI

NFL Coach



"Do the thing you fear and the death of fear is certain."

Two great forces work in the human mind--fear and faith. While one destroys, the other--faith--is creative. Fear is strong but faith can be just as strong or stronger. Runners must stand up to fear; they must be bigger than their fears.

#### WHY MEN RUN

I have heard many and varied reasons for the above statement but somehow, for me, Brutus Hamilton, head coach of the University of California and the 1948 Olympic team, said it best of all:

People may wonder why young men like to run distance races. What fun it is? Why all that hard, exhausting work? Where does it get you? Where's the good of it? It is one of the strange ironies of this strange life that those who work the hardest, who subject themselves to the strictest discipline, who give up certain pleasurable things in order to achieve a goal, are the happiest men. When you see 20 or 30 men line up for a distance race in some meet, don't pity them, don't feel sorry for them. Better envy them instead. You are probably looking at the 20 or 30 best "bon vivants" in the world. They are completely and joyously happy in their simple tastes, their strong and well-conditioned bodies, and with the thrill of wholesome competition before them. These are the days of their youth, when they can run without weariness; these are their buoyant, golden days, and they are running because they love it. Their lives are fuller because of this competition and their memories will be far richer. That's why men love to run. That's why men do run. There is something clean and noble about it.

"All life is based on the fact that anything worth getting is hard to get. There is a price to be paid for anything. Scholarship can only be bought at the price of study, skill in any craft or technique can only be bought at the price of practice, eminence in any sport can only be bought at the price of training and discipline. The world is full of people who have missed their destiny because they would not pay the price. No one can take the easy way and enter into any kind of glory or greatness."

William Barclay

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those timid souls who know neither victory or defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt



# Pure Sport

Cross-country is, and always has been, competitive running at its best

You don't run cross-country for flat, fast courses accurate to the inch, or to set PRs that mean anything, except when you race that same course again. You don't run cross-country to have every step watched, as in a track race, or to mix with the masses, as on the roads. You don't run cross-country for the glory, since in U.S. high schools "XC" shares the season with King Football.

You run cross-country for the purest of reasons. You run to test yourself against other runners on whatever surface and terrain nature provides, where coaches and spectators can catch glimpses of you only if they sprint willy-nilly to strategic places on the course.

Once you've had a taste of the fall running sport, usually as a teenager on a school team, you never stop loving it.

Decades of autumns have passed since I last ran a full cross-country season. My final race for Drake University was terrible. In the snowbound NCAA meet, I trailed all but 10 of the finishers.

However, the pain of that race—of failing the team and ending a college career this way—eventually eased. What remains are the fond memories of those seasons: fall colors, running to exhaustion and loving it, bonding with XC teammates in ways that only we could really understand. Each fall I eagerly refresh these memories at Oregon's state high school championships, my very favorite running event of the year.

RUNNER'S WORLD senior writer Marc Bloom wrote in his newsletter, *The Harrier*, after last year's exciting but overcharged Olympics: "At least we've got the warm and cuddly cross-country season ahead to make us feel better."

I share Bloom's love of cross-country, and I always look forward to the first Saturday in November—the best day of the year to

be a running fan in Oregon. On this day, all sizes of high schools, both boys' and girls' teams, gather to run their state meet on the same course, in six separate 5-K races.

Oregon's state-meet crowd is large by cross-country standards. Family members and friends turn out in force. After the start of each race—a near-dead sprint for some distant flag—parents and others dash about the course to grab fleeting views of their special harrier or to cheer on teammates.

As in any sporting event, not every moment is uplifting. Last November, I watched a favored girl fall back through the field and wind up in an ambulance. In a boys' race, one of the early leaders was reduced to walking. The daughter and son of parents I've known since their own teen years also suffered. The girl had been injured all season and finished in midpack; the boy was expected to win, but his kick failed him and he placed a dejected third.

Standing close enough to the course to see the competitors sweat and hear them pant, you feel some of what they feel. I hurt for those who feel they'll never recover from the anguish of failing to do what they set out to do. And I celebrate with the winning individuals and teams, who feel they've conquered the world. Feelings run to extremes at their age.

If you ran cross-country and want to renew your memories as a harrier—or want to see all the healthy fun you missed out on if you didn't run—go to a high school or college meet this fall. The kids you see on the course will leave you feeling good about running's future as well as their own. They'll show you that competitive running in its purest form is going strong. **R**

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