

800m Training

A 365 Day Approach for the 800m Specialist:

Training to Maximize the High School Athletes Potential and distance training for track.

Claud Spinks

Cspinks@henry.k12.ga.us

@coachspinks

coachspinks.com

Former Track & Field & Cross Country Coach at Eagle's Landing High School
McDonough, Ga



Claud Spinks

- **17 Years** as a Track & Field and Cross Country Coach at Eagle's Landing High School
- **6 years** as Athletic Director
- **9 state champions** in the 800m in an 8 year period

This program was developed for the **high school athlete** with all of the accompanying complications. The calendar is based on the Georgia High School Association calendar which means **no indoor track**.



State of the 800m

- Georgia now has THE 4 X 800M RELAY!
 - Georgia is becoming stronger in the 800
 - 3 of the top 4 Ga All-time girls and the #1 Ga All-time boy times were set in the last 2 seasons
 - The U.S. women have become world leaders in the 800
 - The impact of the 4 x 800 on Georgia...



A good example of moving up

Devonna

Freshman year: 100/200 12.25/25.5

Sophomore year: 100/200 12/25

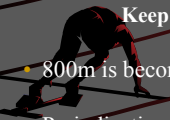
Junior year: ran XC/200/400 (6th and 4th at the state meet)

Senior year: RACED XC/400/800 (dropped the 400 at state, state 800m champ)



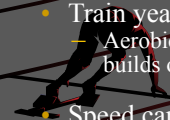
Some Things I Believe

- The 800m race is a sprint with a significant aerobic component
 - foot speed determines an athlete's ceiling, aerobic development is the elevator that takes them there
- 800m athletes must think speed in some fashion almost daily
 - Speed does NOT mean sprint repeats every day
 - Off season is when the greatest gains can be made
 - **Keep their legs fresh!**
- 800m is becoming a specialized event
- Periodization is key for 800m specialists
- Training aerobically will not make an athlete slower, although training aerobically in the absence of any other training practices will not make them faster.



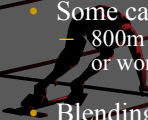
Some Things I Believe

- Foot speed is the ultimate determinant of how fast an athlete can run the 800m, but aerobic training is essential to get there
 - 45% - 55% - Anaerobic?
 - 45% - 55% - Aerobic?
- Train year round - ideally run XC
 - Aerobic development continues year round and each builds on the previous years and seasons
- Speed can be developed, even while developing aerobically



Things to Consider When Planning

- Create separate training groups for 800m runners
 - Different warm-ups for each group
 - Warm-ups for 800m specialists is similar to a sprint warm-up
 - Different training paces and workouts
- Some can float in and out of different groups
 - 800m runners love joining their XC friends when they can or working out with the long sprinters
- Blending 800m and 1600m training is difficult
 - There are multiple ways to train for the 800m, but this is what worked for us
- Summer track and indoor track??



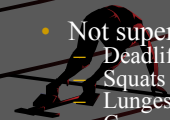
The Training Calendar

- **Summer** - much like XC training
 - Improve aerobic capacity
 - Increased strength training component vs. most distance runners. "Speed base"
- **Fall** - much like XC season
 - Continue strength training component
- **Winter** - similar to summer
 - Continue building aerobic capacity and strength
- **Spring** - specialized 800m training
 - Early season
 - Midseason
 - Late season - peaking



General Strength Training for the 800m Runner - Off Season

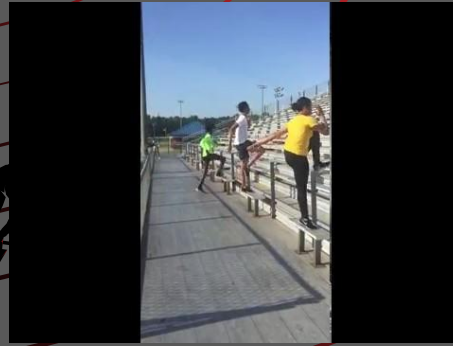
- Time to build strength in the weightroom. I always supervise this myself. Mainly summer and the winter.
- Morning lifts, afternoon runs
- Not super heavy lifts - mostly higher repetitions
 - Deadlifts
 - Squats
 - Lunges
 - Core and pushups for balance



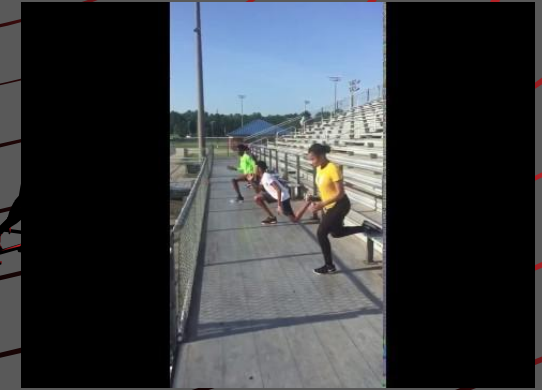
Strength Training for the 800m Runner - In Season

- Transition to body weight exercises
- Normally completed after hard workouts in the stadium as you may be working with other event groups
 - Bench squats
 - Bench step-ups
 - Lunges
 - Core and pushups
 - Bounding for height and distance

Bench Step ups



Bench Squats



Lunges



Summer/Fall/Winter periods



Summer 800m Training

- Similar to XC training
- Add some strength training
 - Lunges, bench step ups, deadlifts, squats and bench squats
 - Core work
 - 800m runners lifted while my xc/distance athletes strength trained
- Strides after each run
 - Falling starts are great for getting up on your midfoot

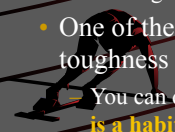


800m Summer Training - Example Average Week

- Weekend long run
- Tuesday/Thursday
 - Normal run followed by strides, falling starts, and strength training
 - 800m athletes head to weight room while rest of XC team do body weight strength training
- Rest of week is normal summer running

XC Season 800m Training

- Very traditional for the XC runner
 - Tempo running is important for the 800m runner
 - Hills? Yes!
 - Continued aerobic development with body weight strength training
- One of the keys to running the 800m is mental toughness
 - You can develop this in XC. However, **lack of best effort is a habit as well.**
 - Compete at XC, it isn't just conditioning!



Post XC/Winter 800m Training

- Take a short break after XC
- Very similar to the summer program
 - Maintain or increase mileage while improving strength and foot speed
 - Back in weight room for 800m specialists
 - Aerobic development and strength are the foundation needed to run a good 800m in the spring
- Hills should be a part of your off-season training program
 - Ideally, 6-12 x 200-300m on grass or soft surface, jog down recovery. The effort is moderate but under control
 - Finish with 6 x 8-10 sec hill sprints, almost all out



Falling Starts



- We do falling starts year round - after runs.
- Good form is essential to running fast.
- We normally do 6 x 50-100m
- On the track or in the grass

Racing the 800m

Much of in-season training is based on racing the 800m:

- In order to race the 800m well your body has to adapt to what it will feel like in the race
- 800m training paces are closely related to race paces
- **You have to spend time at that pace in practice. You need to understand the race to understand your workouts.**
- Early season is “current pace”
- Transition to “goal pace” midseason
- An athlete’s 400m speed is what workouts are based on

Racing the 800m

- Each 800m is scripted. Break the race into segments and take splits at the 100m, 200m, 400m, 600m, and the finish.
- Practice the script during the workouts
- First 60-70m is free. Go out and get position but settle into the first 400 pace.
- Early in the season judge their 600m time, not their 800m time. The last 200m can be ugly if the first 600m is run correctly.

Racing the 800m: Race Plan

- Best 400m + 5 seconds = first lap
- First lap + 5 seconds = second lap
- Example: 50.0 400m boy would be **55 + 60 = 1:55**
- The 800m athlete has to spend time running at 55 seconds per 400m pace in practice
- Early in the season, a 50.0 may not be possible, so workouts are based off current 400m pace. This is just a best guess or you can do some form of assessment.
 - ex. 50 second run

Racing the 800m

- Example of girl trying to run 2:10. The goal is a 63/67:
 - First 100m – 15 seconds
 - The second 100m/first 200m – 16 seconds (31)
 - The second 200 – 32 seconds (63)
 - The third 200 – 33 seconds (1:36)
- 800m runners “pull” the third 200m of the race. We call it “running harder to run the same” Don’t surge though.
- The 4th 200m – often depends on the competition
- This last 200 will suffer early in the season, they have to trust they will finish the race in April/May
- Early season race paces are adjusted slightly

Early Season 800m Training

- **Sunday** – long run (45 to 60 min)
- **Monday** – 8-15 min tempo (an uncomfortably fast pace) run followed by 4 x 200m at current first lap 800m race pace (30 per for a 60/400) followed by lunges/bench step ups/bench squats, stretch (more experienced athletes can still go in the weight room)
- **Tuesday** – easy 20-40 min run (conversational pace) followed by falling starts and bounding for height/distance, stretch
- **Wed** – easy day, 20 min jog, stretch (active rest day)
- **Thursday** – 500m, 400m, 300m and 200m based on current race pace followed by Monday’s strength routine, stretch
- **Friday** – easy 20-30 min run followed by falling starts
- **Saturday** – race or off

Early Season 800m Training

- Once racing begins, a weeknight meet replaces the Monday or Thursday workout and move the other days around accordingly
 - Go easy the day after races. Running fast, in races or workouts, takes a toll on their legs. Dead legs do not make for good races or good workouts. **Recovery is key.**
 - Slowly transition into using spikes during workouts. This can easily be overdone.
- **Thursday’s workout** - 500m, 400m, 300m and 200m based on current pace for an athlete that plans on running a 60 second first lap
 - 500m @ 75 with a 5 min rest (I prefer walking)
 - 400m @ 60 with a 5 min rest
 - 300m @ 45 with a 5 min rest
 - 200m @ 30
 - If they struggle (ex. are several seconds off) reduce the distance of the next repeat by 100m but do not slow the pace
 - This is a tough workout; avoid before a Saturday meet and move to Monday if necessary

Early Season 800m Training

- Tempo day can be a broken tempo run for those athletes who are building up to continuous tempo running
- Tempo for 800m specialists is not quite the same as for your distance runners - run faster than is comfortable
- A good workout example:
 - 6 x 800m at faster than training run pace (not scientific, the pace is uncomfortable) 1-2 min rest
 - Work up to 1600m repeats and finally continuous tempo running
- The Thursday cut down workout can be adapted to different levels of athlete or conditions
 - Shorten the distance but keep the same paces, keep the rest full
 - Later in the season you can use similar workouts but the pace will be quicker (goal race pace based on end of the season 400m speed)

Early Season Meets

- 400m – great training for the 800m runner
 - Creates aggressive approach to races and helps the body adapt to the stresses of the 800m
 - If there is enough time, run the 400m and 800m
- 4 x 400m relay – same as the 400m
- 400m/800m/4x400m is a tough night but is a good workout

Mid to late Season 800m Training

- Transition to goal pace - March?
 - Predict your athlete's realistic 800m and 400m best race and base workouts on that pace
 - The volume is less but the speeds are faster
 - Maintain the weekend long run but shorten it
 - If they are running the 400m/800m often in the same meets it is time to drop the 400m and run quality 800's. These must be scripted with a good race plan.
 - Spikes are allowed for most workouts. Be careful in the larger volume workouts.

Mid to Late Season 800m Training

- **Sunday** – long run but shorter
- **Monday** – 4-5 x 300m at goal pace. For a 55 first lap 38 seconds per 300. Allow 4-6 min rest between. Finish with lunges and stretch. This is a one of our key workouts.
- **Tuesday** – easy 20-30 min. bounding for height and distance
- **Wed** – 400m, 300m, 200m, 4 x 60-80m falling starts (focus on very good form); finish with lunges and stretches
- **Thursday** – 20-30 min easy run, bounding for height and distance, and stretches
- **Friday** – easy run, race prep, pacing
 - I like to "practice" the first 200m of the race
 - 4 x 400m handoffs

Peaking

- We do **A LOT** of 200m repeats late in the season
 - 10-16 x 200m repeats at goal pace with 200m jog rest. Pace is their opening 400m pace. If that is a 55, the 200's are 27.5. **This becomes our Monday/Wed workouts**
- We also do 4-6 x 200m repeats with 200m jog rest at the end of training runs.
 - Upon completing a training run, athletes go straight onto the track without stopping.
- About 7-10 days before the big meet - 300m time trial.
 - Keep records. Give awards.
 - Boys record - 32.9(ht), girls 36.8 (ht)

Final Thoughts

- Experiment with workouts but keep them based on race pace (this is current or goal, depending on where you are in the season)
- Move days around but avoid back to back hard workouts
- Keep in mind the total volume of the session
- Stress the need for injury prevention
- **Racing**
 - Every 800m race is a chance to get better
 - Have a plan for each one
 - In the very early season don't judge the entire 800, be sure to hit the splits but the last 200 WILL suffer
- Script those races and practice those paces

Distance Training

Claud Spinks
Cspinks@henry.k12.ga.us
@coachspinks
coachspinks.com

Former Track & Field & Cross Country Coach at
Eagle's Landing High School
McDonough, Ga 30253

First - finding distance runners

The 4 x 800m relay can be a key to developing a distance program
An example of a successful distance athlete is your best
Make it fun
Running distance is hard..

Running distance is hard

- There is a lot of competition for athletes
 - The stick and ball sports
 - Specialization
 - We tend to run the shortest distance our footspeed allows
 - Distance is other sports punishment
- There are no shortcuts

Recruiting athletes

- Evidence, proof that distance is successful.
 - Find that example
 - Sell them on the benefits
 - Appreciate them
 - Ask each athlete to bring a friend
 - Make friends with other coaches
 - Some of my best runners have been cut from other sports
- Make cuts??

Training

- Make sure that running does not scare away new runners.
- Start slow
- Use minutes, not miles
- Go slow, jog, set goals
 - Jog 5 minutes, walk 1 minute, jog another 5 minutes. Build on this
- Use this during the winter, early track season
 - Use strides/short repeats as speed
 - Include strength training

Keys to Training

Consistency - run often, consistency leads to volume which leads to fitness which leads to success.

Train/run almost every day.

Sample week

Saturday/Sunday - race and long

Monday - aerobic run/strides

Tuesday - workout/strength training

Wed - aerobic run/strides

Thursday - workout/strength training

Friday - easy run

Sample workouts

"Tempo"

- 1) 800m/1200m/1600m repeats - 3 to 5 total depending on the athlete. Pace - fast enough so that talking is hard but the workout can be completed. Rest is 2 - 3 minutes
- 2) 800, rest, 1200, rest, 800, rest, 1200
- 3) Continuous uncomfortable running for 12-20 minutes. Normally around campus

Sample Workouts

Speed workouts

- 1) Hills - same as earlier in the presentation
- 2) Late season 200's, similar to 800m peaking workouts
- 3) 400m repeats, 5-8, 3-4 minutes rest at 10 - 20 seconds per 400 slower than 1600m race pace

Do one tempo workout and one of the speed workouts per week.

For newer runners, decrease volume. Increase volume for more experienced runners

Questions?

Email Me Anytime

cspinks@henry.k12.ga.us

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coachspinks.com