

Fall 2015 Cross Country Newsletter



What's below:

Athlete Spotlight:

Molly Huddle
Gerry Lindgren
Lynn Jennings

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Doubled

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The Track & Field World Championships will be held August 22-30 in Beijing, China. Watch the meet on TV and see the exciting and inspirational competition as the world's best athletes compete. One of the top distance athletes competing will be Molly Huddle, the American record holder at 5,000 meters, competing in the 10,000 meters. Read the inspirational story of how Molly used cross country to develop into one of the top runners in the world.



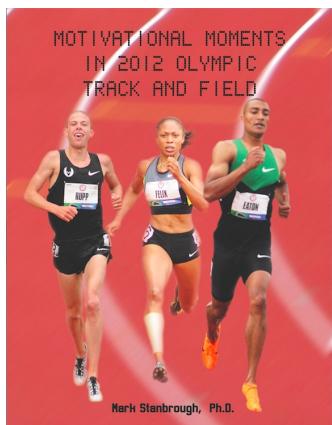
Med School Can Wait: Molly Huddle

Molly Huddle attended Notre Dame High School in Elmira, New York. Her school did not have a cross country program, so Molly did not run cross country until her senior year, when her father coached her as a one-person team. She went undefeated and finished fourth in the Foot Locker Nationals.

At the University of Notre Dame, she was a 10-time All-American. Molly began establishing herself as one of the top talents in collegiate distance running by finishing seventh in the 5000 meters at the 2004 U.S. Olympic Trials.

After graduating from Notre Dame in pre-medicine, Molly considered medical school but decided to pursue her running career further. With a new coach and training program, success didn't come immediately, as she struggled with the increased training load and intensity. But Molly gradually adapted and continued to improve, dreaming of making an Olympic team. After qualifying for the 2008 Olympic Trials, a nagging calf injury held her to a ninth place finish in the 10,000 meters and a 10th place finish in the 5000 meters. As the pain worsened, it was diagnosed as a torn soleus and discovered that she had one leg longer than the other. She was unable to run for three months and was fitted for a small lift in her left shoe.

The steady improvement continued as she focused on cross country, making four U.S. cross country teams and placing 17th in 2011 in the World Cross Country Championships. Back on the track, she won a U.S. national championship and set the American record in the 5000 meters, in 14:44.76.



Excerpt from:
*Motivational Moments in
2012 Olympic Track and
Field*

In the 2012 Olympic Trials, she ran a controlled race in the 5000 meters to finish as the runner-up. In London, she qualified for the finals of the 5000 meters, finishing 11th with a time of 15:20.29. Molly Huddle gave up medical school and fought through three Olympic Trials to realize a lifelong dream of becoming an Olympian.

In 2013, she finished 6th in the women's 5,000 meter in the 2013 World Championships in Moscow, the highest American female finish ever in that event at the World Championships.

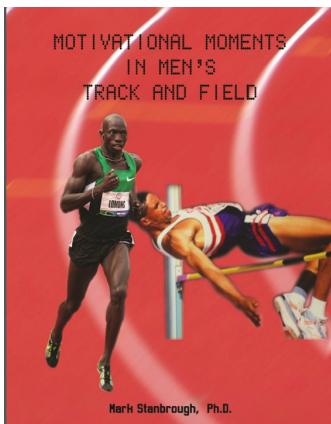
In 2014, Huddle ran a personal best of 14:42.64 to set a U.S. 5,000 meter record.

On June 25, Huddle won the 10,000 meters at the 2015 USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Eugene, Oregon, her first USA 10k title.

Question for Thought:

1. Molly was a one-person high school cross country team. How difficult would it be to be a one- person team? What are the advantages of being surrounded by a team?

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Excerpt from:
*Motivational Moments in
Men's Track and Field*

Young Phenom: Gerry Lindgren

Gerry Lindgren loved to run. During high school he ran twice a day, up to 110 to 120 miles a week. He knocked an astonishing 46 seconds off the high school two mile record to 8:40.0. Later that spring, he set a prep record (13:44.0) for 5000 meters. The 18-year-old stunned the track world with an inspiring 10,000-meter victory in the 1964 USA-USSR meet in Los Angeles. In the six-year history of the meet, the Americans had never won the 10,000. The two Soviets led early in the race, but Gerry ran close to them. Approaching the four-mile mark, he was barely hanging on when U.S coach Sam Bell called out for him to lead. The youthful Gerry Lindgren, fighting off fatigue, summoned up the courage to pass the veteran Soviet Union runners by sprinting for an entire lap to open up a 15-meter lead. In the back of his mind, Gerry questioned his own move. "Was it too early? Will I pay the price later?" The crowd, surprised to see him in the lead, cheered so loud that Gerry thought the Russians were gaining. Without letting up, Gerry crossed the finish line and turned to see the Russians 150 meters behind.

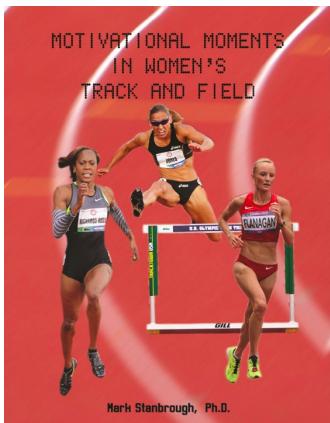
Gerry enrolled at Washington State in 1965 and won 11 NCAA championships in cross country and indoor and outdoor track, breaking the record of eight championships set by Jesse Owens at Ohio State. He was one of only two people to ever defeat Steve Prefontaine in an NCAA Championship. As he prepared for the 1968 Olympics, disaster struck in the form of a strained Achilles tendon. He finished fifth in the 10,000 meters and fourth in the 5000 meters at the trials, barely missing the team. Gerry trained hard with the 1972 Olympics in Munich as the goal. He ran a staggering 50 miles a day during one training stretch. But two weeks before the Olympic Trials, he injured his knee when he had a collision with a car. Later that year, Gerry joined the pro track tour, the International Track Association, but the association folded in 1976. Although Olympic glory passed him by, Gerry Lindgren is

still remembered as one of the greatest U.S. distance runners.

Questions for Thought:

1. Gerry Lindgren had trouble making the high school cross country team until he made a commitment to increase his mileage. What type of commitment are you willing to make?
2. Gerry ran a staggering 50 miles a day for one training stretch. However, he also had a history of injuries, perhaps overuse injuries from overtraining. What does it mean to train hard, but train smart?

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Excerpt from:
*Motivational Moments in
Women's Track and Field*

Lynn Jennings: Drive Ambition

When Lynn Jennings attended Bromfield High School in Massachusetts, she ran on the boys' cross country team because there was no girls' team. Her first year as a freshman, she was last in every race and at all of the practices. That humbling experience helped develop her competitive will and mental discipline, skills that would serve her well in her successful career. Her competitive nature propelled her to improve to become one of the best high school runners in the country.

She went to Princeton University and earned All-American honors and set several school records and had a mixture of success and setbacks. The setbacks only seemed to fire up her determination. As she turned professional, her discipline in training and racing became legendary.

Lynn thrived in cross country, training through brutal winters in New Hampshire. She won three straight world cross country titles from 1990 to 1992. She made the U.S. Olympic team in 1988 and competed in the Olympic 10,000 meters, finishing in sixth place.

As a world cross country champion, Olympian, and American record holder, Lynn Jennings ran all the way to the history books as one of the greatest distance runners the U.S. has ever produced.

Questions for Thought:

1. Lynn finished last in every practice and race her first year of running cross country. Would you have continued in that situation?
2. What toughness did Lynn develop from having to compete on the boys' team?

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Patience in Training

Cross country training is all about having patience and working hard over time. Runners want to run harder, faster and farther before they are physiologically and psychologically ready. Use the story below to help convince athletes that these results don't occur overnight and to show them how their hard work adds up over time.

"Power of a Penny Doubled"

One day, a rich merchant said to his young son, "Son, I have an important question to ask you. I will give you the total amount of one penny doubled each day for one month or a million dollars cash right now. Which will you choose?" The son answered without hesitation, "The million dollars of course father."

Faced with the same question, which would you choose? The million dollars cash or the total amount of a single penny doubled each day for 30 days?

The wise father looks at the boy and with a knowing smile takes out paper and pen. "Son," he said quietly, "Come sit next to me and learn."

Let's study the power of a penny doubled. Follow how the money accumulates if that one shinny penny is doubled each day for 30 days in a lesson about wealth and patience. Believe it or not, you will end up with much more than a million dollars. The power of a single penny doubled is amazing isn't it?

The next time you see a penny on the street, make time to bend down and pick it up.

Affirmation: Hard work pays off.

To think about:

1. Do you have the patience to stick to your plan and gradually build yourself?
2. Think of a time where you struggled to get things going and eventually you reached a point where it just took off.
3. Starting with a penny is not much, but you have to start somewhere. What are the first steps in getting started towards your goals?

True progress quietly and persistently moves along without notice. -St. Francis of Assisi

Day 1: \$0.01

Day 2: \$0.02

Day 3: \$0.04

Day 4: \$0.08

Day 5: \$0.16

Day 6: \$0.32

Day 7: \$0.64

Day 8: \$1.28

Day 9: \$2.56

Day 10: \$5.12

Day 11: \$10.24

Day 12: \$20.48

Day 13: \$40.96

Day 14: \$81.92

Day 15: \$163.84

Day 16: \$327.68

Day 17: \$655.36

Day 18: \$1,310.72

Day 19: \$2,621.44

Day 20: \$5,242.88

Day 21: \$10,485.76

Day 22: \$20,971.52

Day 23: \$41,943.04

Day 24: \$83,886.08

Day 25: \$167,772.16

Day 26: \$335,544.32

Day 27: \$671,088.64

Day 28: \$1,342,177.28

Day 29: \$2,684,354.56

Day 30: \$5,368,709.12



Excerpt from:

Developing Character through Motivational Fables

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Convincing Athletes of the Mind-Body Connection

What percentage of cross country performance is mental?

What percentage of your time do you spend training the mental side?

Although it is hard to place an exact percentage that the mental part plays in cross country, we can agree that it is an extremely important part of the sport. Would you take a week of practice off and show up on the day of the race without any physical practice? Sounds funny doesn't it? However, many

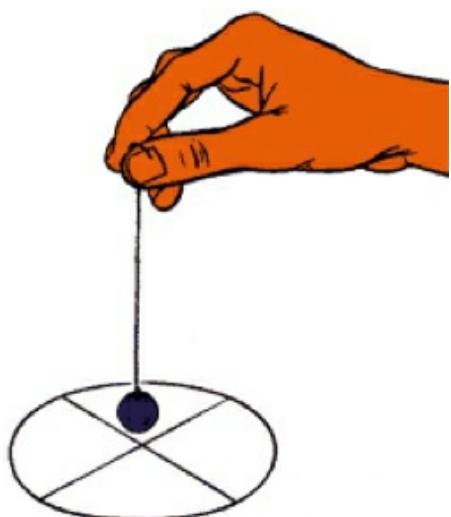
athletes are told to get psyched up and be mentally tough for the big competition, yet the athlete may not have the training tools to accomplish that task, because they have not practiced it.

How ironic that both athletes and coaches consider mental skills to be an extremely important part of high performance, but yet do not take the time to learn and develop a systematic program to develop the mental skills.

Evidence that Mental Skills Training Works

Implementing an effective mental skills training program can be a very challenging task. Athletes and coaches who consider using a mental training program often have questions such as, "How do I convince athletes that mental training is worthwhile?" "What elements do I include in the program?" "How do I encourage and support athletes as they develop their mental skills?" As an athlete, you may not believe in the importance of mental skills training and may need to be convinced of its importance. Mental skills training is most effective when there is a commitment and belief on the part of the athlete, and a commitment to practice to apply the mental skills, and the belief that the mental skills and drills will contribute to development and enhanced performance.

My favorite activity for demonstrating evidence of the mind-body connection for mental skills is an amazing demonstration of Chevreul's Pendulum.



Excerpt from upcoming book:
Mental Skills and Drills for Track and Field, available this fall from Roho Publishing

Chevreul's Pendulum

Objective: To demonstrate the link between the body and the mind.

Directions:

Take a 6" piece of string and tie a small weight on it. It can be something like a key or a nail. Hold the string between your forefinger and thumb with the elbow supported on the table. The weight should be steadied to be motionless with your other hand. Hold the string so the key is a couple of inches above the table. Now remove your hand that is steadyng the weight. Focus on the weight and see it going back and forth, sideways. See the weight move from one side of the table to the other side, back and forth. Then, see the weight stop and move toward you and away from you. See it as it comes toward you and then away from you, toward you and away from you.

Questions: What happened? You may be surprised to see the weight actually moving. Did the weight move back and forth when you visualized that? Did the weight move toward you and away from you when you visualized that? What was happening?

Just by thinking about it, the mind is sending the message through the nerves for the muscle to contract. The muscles are contracting by the contraction is so small that the string and weight have to be used to magnify the movement so that it can be visually seen. When you actually see the movements occur it is a strong visual of the mind body connection where just thinking about the movement causes muscle contraction.

Although it is easy to touch your muscles that move, as hard as we may try, it is impossible to touch the thoughts in your mind. The Chevereul's pendulum activity is a powerful demonstration of a mind-body connection.

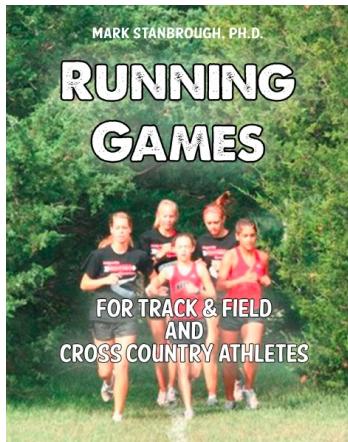
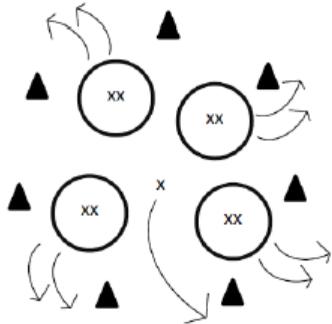
The mind controls the body, and as an athlete you want control over what your physical energy can create. Only when you have a fully prepared mind can you reach your full potential and perform at your peak. Like physical training, mental training must be practiced on a consistent basis. Practicing mental skills and drills allows you to develop your mental skills and become a better athlete. Only you can

make the decision to commit to the mental program to improve.

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Running Games

The Run is On!



Objective: To learn more about group members while performing an activity similar to musical chairs.

Description: Form a large playing circle marked by cones. Distribute hula hoops randomly within the playing circle. Runners pair up and sit back to back inside a hoop with their partners. One runner does not pair up and is designated to be the standing runner and stand in the middle of the playing circle, but not in a hoop. The standing runner begins the game by saying, "The run is on for..." and finishes this sentence by saying something that is true about them. For example, they can say the "The run is on for anyone who has a pet dog." If anyone has a pet dog, they must get up and run. Everyone on the team that matches this statement must get up and run (including the runner who called out the statement) one complete revolution around the circle in a clockwise direction and then fill an open position by sitting within a hoop (two people back-to-back in a hoop) that has been vacated by someone for whom the "the run is on." The last runner standing without a hoop must go to the middle and become the new standing runner.

Variations: (1) Use a different number of runners within the hoop.

Equipment: Hula hoops, cones

Excerpt from:
Running Games for Track & Field and Cross Country Athletes

Whistle Mixer

Objective: While running, gather in groups based upon the number of times the whistle is blown.

Description: Designate a running area. The runners should spread throughout the designated running area and start running at an easy pace. When the coach blows a whistle a certain number of times, the runners get into groups that match the number of times the whistle has blown. The runners must keep running while they form groups. For example, if the coach blows the whistle five times, the runners form a group of five. Anyone not in a group consisting of the correct number within 10 seconds must report to the coach to do an exercise. Continue playing for a designated time period.

Variations: (1) When the whistle is blown, the coach points a direction and all runners run in that direction without getting in groups. (2) When the whistle is blown once, everybody runs north, when the whistle is blown twice everyone runs east, when the whistle is blown three times, everyone runs south, when the whistle is blown four times everybody runs west.

Equipment: Whistle

Excerpt from:
Running Games for Track & Field and Cross Country Athletes

Shutter Spot

Objective: To run to a location and take a picture with a group and challenge other groups to guess the spot the picture was taken.

Description: Form groups with four to six runners in each group. Designate the running boundaries. The runners in each group must stay together on the run. Each group has a digital camera or a cell phone camera. Designate a certain time period for groups to take pictures on the list and get back. Each team member must take at least one of the pictures. On the run, the group will take five to ten photographs. At the end of time period, all groups will come together and look at each group's photographs. The challenge is to guess the spot that the photograph was taken.

Variations: (1) Narrow down the number of photos to share with other groups from one to three.

Equipment: Digital camera for each group and paper to write down answers for guesses.

Excerpt from:

Running Games for Track & Field and Cross Country Athletes

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Take the ROHO 60 Challenge! (3-day challenge)

SWIM: 60 laps of a 25 meter pool **BIKE:** 60 miles **WALK or RUN:** 60 laps on a 400 m track

The ROHO 60 Challenge will take place in Emporia, KS on Sept. 18, 19, 20. But you can do the challenge from wherever you are and report what you achieved! You don't have to do all the events or complete the entire distance. Set a challenging goal specific to you.

Sign up for the free event no matter where you are!

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