

BEACON HILL STRIDERS:

Performance Running Newsletter

Newsletter No. 2

Autumn / Winter 2015



Welcome to the second edition of the Beacon Hill Striders **Performance Running Newsletter**.

The aims of our performance newsletters are to offer:

- ♦ An update on the achievements of our leading group members
- ♦ Profiles of current and former top runners
- ♦ Themed articles focusing on key training concepts
- ♦ Ideas to improve your training and racing performances
- ♦ A look at the athletes who might be making the news in the near future

Alan Maddocks (Founder & Group Leader)

<http://beaconhillstriders.co.uk/about>

An **Update** on the leading performances by our group members over the past six months (May 2014 to October 2015):

- ♦ **Ben Dijkstra** continued to add national & international titles to his list of achievements. Despite just entering the Junior division at Triathlon, Ben took individual bronze at the European Junior Triathlon Championships, and in October added the World Junior Duathlon title to his list of achievements. On the track in 2015 Ben won the England Athletics U17M 1500m title, and ran the fastest ever 5000m by a UK U17M with a time of 14 minutes & 28.03 seconds.
- ♦ **Alfie Thompson** ran impressive personal bests of 4-05 (1500m) & 8-49 (3000m) on the track, and in September - representing England - won the Home Countries' U17M International Mountain Running title by a convincing margin.
- ♦ **Alice Daniel** recorded a number of wins in local (East Midlands) road races throughout the Summer, recording times that are ranked amongst the best for her age group (U17W) in the UK Run-Britain Rankings, including a 37-40 10K time.

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Training Concepts: Specific Endurance Interval Training

Interval Training is a staple feature of the training programme for the vast majority of middle and long distance runners. But, how much careful thought is put into the type and nature of the training done? If we accept that not all runners will benefit equally from the same Interval session (say: 10 x 400m @ 1500m race pace), then we need a concept of Interval Training that ensures a runner gets the greatest possible benefit for the energy expended.

That concept is “**specific endurance**” interval training.

Specific Endurance Interval Training involves running relatively long intervals at or very near to goal race pace. So, for instance, someone looking to run a 10K in 31 minutes (5 minute a mile pace) would look to run 4-5 x 2000m @ this specific pace. The total volume of the efforts reflects the race distance, so the specificity of the training is related to both pace and distance. Other examples of such sessions might be:

- ◆ 1500m runner: 3-4 x 800m @ target race pace (8-10 minutes recovery)
- ◆ 5000m runner: 4-5 x 1200m @ target race pace (3-4 minutes recovery)
- ◆ Half-Marathon Runner: 5-6 x 3K @ target race pace (2-3 minutes recovery)
- ◆ Marathon Runner: 4 x 6K @ target race pace (2-3 minutes recovery)

The primary advantage of this type of interval training is that the runner becomes accustomed to both the target race pace and the demands of the event; developing movement and breathing patterns that are very similar to those required in competition. In addition, the runner becomes more accustomed to running with higher lactic concentrations for a sustained period of time, and therefore more able to use the lactic system as a fuelling source.

Specific Endurance Interval Training sessions can be very demanding. As a result it is best to develop the ability to perform longer intervals at race pace. So, for instance, an 800m runner might over a period of many weeks build the specific session up from 6 x 200m - to 4 x 300m - to 3 x 400m - to 2 x 600m nearer to the key race targeted. In addition, for these types of training sessions to be effective care must be taken to ensure that there are enough easier training days beforehand and sufficient recovery days after. One final caveat: as a general rule, the recoveries between efforts are longer the faster the race pace e.g. for the 800m runner doing 2 x 600m @ race pace, the recovery may well be 15 minutes between efforts, whilst for the marathon runner doing 4 x 6K (or similar) the recovery may be as little as 2 minutes.

This type of Interval Training has been used very successfully by European athletes, notably Italian and Spanish athletes in the 1980s & 1990s, and more recently by Kenyan runners, training under the guidance of experienced European coaches such as Renato Canova. The following article gives a glimpse into Canova's application of Specific Endurance principles:

<http://www.runnersworld.com/race-training/canova-101>



Case Study: Ben Dijkstra

With Beacon Hill Striders we incorporate Specific Endurance Interval Training Sessions carefully within each athlete's individual training programme. Prior to Ben's first English Schools track title (Junior Boys 1500m, 2013) Ben did the following session 7 days prior to Ben's final warm-up race, and 17 days before his English Schools final.

The session was: 4 x 1200m -starting each effort 6 minutes apart (i.e. 2-3 minutes recovery between efforts) - on an undulating off-road path.

Each 1200m repetition was paced as follows to mimic the anticipated flow of the race that Ben was preparing for:

Rep 1: 1200m: 3-50

Rep 2: 1200m: 4-00

Rep 3: 1200m: 3-50

Rep 4: 1200m: 3-40 (Ben actually ran the last rep in 3-32!)

Ben won the English Schools JB 1500m in 4-09, with a sub 60 second last lap!



Image: Beacon Hill Striders group members - **Alfie Lowe, Pascal Bouttier-Butler, Alfie Thompson, & Ben Dijkstra** - receiving last minute advice prior to competing at a BMC meeting at Tipton, West Midlands

Video Corner:

A blast from the past:

Kip Keino (Kenya)

Mexico City - 1968 Olympics:

1500m Final

Kip Keino takes on WR holder Jim Ryun in the heat & altitude of the Mexico City Olympic Games.

The **race video** & 4 other iconic 1500m races can be found on this link:

<http://beaconhillstriders.co.uk/resource-centre/race-videos/>

Make your Training more effective

When it comes to training practice, aspiring runners - competing in events of 5K and above - tend to make one or more training errors that limit the effectiveness of what they do, and as a result leads to performances that are short of what they are potentially capable of achieving. Some of the most common mistakes include:

- ♦ **Not running enough:** The most effective way of boosting performance is to increase the volume of easy/steady running. For adult runners, anything below 50 miles a week of aerobic running is short of what's needed.
- ♦ **Running too many hard sessions:** Hard/intensive running is only effective if the runner has the opportunity to adequately recover from (or more precisely, adapt to) the training stimulus. Pushing the pace on three or more occasions per week is often too much. Elite runners do 75-80% of their training volume at low intensity (slower than the lactate/anaerobic threshold).
- ♦ **Running the wrong kind of "speed" sessions:** The most effective training is that done at a similar pace and intensity to target race pace. For instance, runners specializing in 10K & above, gain little value from short (e.g. 400m) repetitions run at or near their mile race pace. Longer repetitions run at or near race pace are a far more effective means of preparing for competition. (See: page 2)
- ♦ **Not doing 'real' speed work:** 'Real' speed work - that fully activates the fast-twitch muscle fibres - is often lacking in many runners' training programmes. Alactic speed-work (e.g. fast strides & hill sprints) helps to develop and maintain basic speed and running cadence.
- ♦ **Racing too often:** Training is the means, and racing is the goal. Racing too frequently (e.g. every/most weeks) limits the opportunity to build a balanced training programme that covers all the bases. Elite distance runners focus more on thorough preparation and rarely compete more than about twenty times a year.

Elite athletes tend to have a "balanced" training programme that avoids these mistakes. For advice/guidance on developing such a programme, please feel free to contact me. (See page 4)

The Crystal Ball: Potential 2015-16 Headline Makers

Which athletes will be making the news headlines this autumn/winter?

Our "crystal ball" proved somewhat cloudy in our opening Newsletter, though **Laura Muir** (1500m), **Caleb Ndiku** (5000m), & **Geoffrey Komworwar** (10000m) lived up to expectations.

Predicting the stars of the upcoming winter XC Season can be a somewhat precarious activity. Who would have foreseen that **Charlie Hulson** & **Lily Partridge** would have been the stars of last winter's season?

So, with the usual caveats that surround such a risky enterprise, here are our "ones to watch" this winter:

- ♦ **Juniors:** Our own **Ben Dijkstra** (despite officially still an U17) steps up to challenge for Junior Men's honours in this winter's British XC Challenge. His challengers will include fellow triathlete, **Alex Yee**. Another young prodigy, **Harriet Knowles-Jones** - along with Loughborough University's **Bobby Clay** - should be a force in the Junior Women's division.
- ♦ **Seniors:** **Kate Avery**, **Emelia Gorecka**, & **Jennifer Nesbitt** should feature prominently amongst the Senior women. Senior Men challengers may well include: **Richard Goodman**; **Jonathan Davies**; & **Andy Vernon**.
- ♦ **Long Shots:** Our 'long shots' for honours include two athletes - **Ben Connor** & **Sam Stabler** - returning from US collegiate scholarships; St. Mary's University student **Jacob Allen**; & three US-based athletes: **Alice Wright**; **Marc Scott**; & **Michael Vennard**.

Group Presentations / Quiz Nights: Book Now!

If you are looking to offer your club/group members an intellectually stimulating and fun athletics focused evening, Beacon Hill Striders offers - at a very affordable cost/fee - Group Presentations and Quiz Nights. Themed presentations include:

- ♦ ***Developing Young Endurance Athletes (The Beacon Hill Striders Training Model)***
- ♦ ***Balanced Training: How Elite Endurance Athlete's Train***
- ♦ ***Marathon Training Revolution: Why do the Kenyans Run so Quickly?***

For further information go to: <http://beaconhillstriders.co.uk/performance-services/clubs-groups/>

For news, views, and information on road running in your area go to **runABC**: <http://runabc.co.uk/>

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