

that those who could run forever, but could not run fast, were not going to be competitive in races. Remember, the winner is the person who can maintain the highest percentage of their maximum speed for the duration of the race. If you have speed and you want to be successful, then you must learn how to use your speed. The only way you learn to use it, is to run fast—train speed in, don't train speed out. Some fast running must be included during all phases of the training year.

Isn't this all about preparing the athletes to race? In my opinion there is too much emphasis on pace. Pace is a misleading term. It is not pace, it is distribution of effort. Distribution is what allows you to use the highest percentage of maximum speed for the duration of the race. Good distribution demands great and efficient running mechanics and the ability to change tempos (shift gears) in one stride. To learn race distribution you need to know your strengths and weaknesses and how you can run your race. You must become race hardened. That is a key element that is missing today. Without dual meets and smaller meets the young, developing runner is denied the opportunity to learn how to race and become race hardened.

Good running mechanics don't come from drills. Drills are part of the picture. Greater improvement in running mechanics comes from proper strength training. You must strengthen the legs and hips; this is neglected in most middle- and long-distance training programs. Strength is the basis for speed and good running mechanics.

Training or Coaching?

Are you training your athletes or coaching your athletes? There is a clear distinction. Unfortunately, today I see much more training than coaching. Here are some distinctions between coaching and training, as I see them:

TRAINING—Focused on the result. Just get it done.
COACHING—Focused on the process, how it is done, making sure it is repeatable.

TRAINING—Self-centered, all about the trainer, the athlete can't do it without the trainer.
COACHING—All about empowering and teaching the athlete. Creating self-sufficiency rather than dependence.

TRAINING—Trainer has all the answers.
COACHING—Always gathering data from the training, fine-tuning and learning.

TRAINING—Lots of screaming, yelling, and "motivating."
COACHING—Purposeful, meaningful feedback and cues, communicating and teaching.

TRAINING—Focused on equipment; needs machines and apparatus to train.
COACHING—Focused on the athlete and the sport they are preparing for, and coaches accordingly. Uses what is needed and necessary, not bells and whistles.

TRAINING—Scattered, all over the place.
COACHING—Focused on the task at hand. No cell phone!

TRAINING—Follows the latest fads, listens to gurus.
COACHING—Knows best practice and follows it. Stands on the shoulders of giants. Has a mentor.

I think this gives you the idea. Which are you? Look at yourself and look at your colleagues. If you are a trainer, become a coach. Coaching is much more satisfying and rewarding.

More Thoughts on Coaching and Training

Training contains a fair amount of redundancy. Use that to your advantage as a consistent means to compare and track progress. I know for years I have used a consistent pattern of warm-up that provides instant feedback for the athletes' training readiness for that day. The same goes for certain drills and workouts that I place simultaneously in a training cycle. As the athlete gains training age, this information becomes increasingly more valuable.

The best basis for future planning is careful contextual analysis of prior training. Therefore, it is very important to keep detailed training records and logs.

Don't always look for cause and effect; look for connections.

Use Foster's RPE rating. Wait for 30 minutes after the workout, then have the athlete rate the session on a 1-to-10 scale. Multiply that score by the minutes in the workout.

Talk less, listen more. Speak with meaning. The power in verbal communication often is not the words; it is the space between the words. The rhythm and pacing—how you say things—goes a long way to determine how and if the message is received.

As Martha Graham said, "Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance. Great dancers are not great because of their technique, they are great because of their passion." So let that passion flow through everything you do and say.

Role of Sport Science and Sports Medicine

Sport science is important in advancing our knowledge of training. I am a huge supporter of sport science, and during my career I have had the opportunity to work with some of the best practitioners. But sport science and the sport scientist do not captain the ship, the coach does. The same with sport medicine. Under that term I put the physio (ATC—Certified Athletic Trainer), physical therapist, chiropractor and doctor. They are important, but they should not captain the ship.

The captain of the ship should be the coach. The coach is the ultimate authority on what needs to be done to get his individual or team into the performance arena in optimum condition to perform. This means the coach must be a great communicator and organizer. The coach must be knowledgeable enough in sport science and sport medicine to be able to direct, detect, and ask the correct questions. I have seen first hand what happens when sport science or sport medicine runs amok and it is not pretty. The athlete suffers, the coach loses games and matches, the athletes underperform and no one is willing or able to take responsibility.

The performance team is the team behind the team. They should be invisible. There are no super-star sport scientists, or sport medicine practitioners. There are only star athletes and great teams. The spotlight should be on the athlete, not the support team. Let's just make sure that we have the horse before the cart, and the coach is driving the cart.

Creativity and Coaching

I view coaching as a very creative process. It would be interesting to see scientists study coaching as a creative process. In a trite manner we talk about the art and science of coaching, and then lean toward the science. I love the science of coaching, but I absolutely embrace the art. That is where the passion is, the fire in the belly, that joy of enhancing the dance of athletic movement. Too much science and we begin to view movement too mechanistically. We lock ourselves into artificial methods, modes and prescriptions unrelated to the big dance—the game, the match, the race. The creative coach will look at the same movement and see it with different eyes.

I will never forget presenting a movement analysis of the javelin in one of my graduate classes at Stanford. I presented the analysis in a very segmented, mechanistic manner, broken into parts, with a detailed analysis of each segment. I analyzed the film frame by frame, with no connection of one frame to the next. That is how I coached, frame by frame. When I finished, the graduate dance students in the class asked me to play the film loop again without stopping. I did. They asked me to play it again and then another time. On the fourth time I played it, they started clapping the rhythm. They saw the throw as a dance. What an aha moment! I honestly have to say a whole new world opened up for me that day. Movement is a dance, a jazz riff, and coaches are creative artists. It changed the way I looked at movement, and it changed the way I coached.

Opening the Door

In 1954, Roger Bannister broke the four-minute barrier in the mile. Bannister happens to be one of my sporting heroes. I think it is amazing that he did this while he was a full-time medical

student. Because of his studies, he could only train for one hour a day. I read his book, *The Four-Minute Mile* when I first started coaching. That was when everyone was espousing super-high mileage, 150 miles a week plus. Bannister and his coach/advisor Franz Stampfl (read his book *Franz Stampfl on Running*—a coaching classic) had a program that nailed it. They trained for the race. I think there are many lessons we can learn from Bannister.

Lesson One: Have a life. If you just train, it is easy to take every little setback and blow it out of proportion.

Lesson Two: Train for your race—not only the race, but *your* race. Learn how you need to run or swim the distance based on your physical qualities.

Lesson Three: Stress quality. Any stumblebum can run miles or swim yardage. It is what you put into the miles that count—be efficient, do not waste steps.

Lesson Four: There are no barriers, just bigger targets to aim for. Four minutes proved to be a mental, not a physical barrier.

Lesson Five: Forget facilities and ideal training environments. Get out there and go for it. Train where you can. Create your own environment of excellence. The track where Bannister trained and set the record was far from an ideal training venue.

Lesson Six: Believe in yourself and know yourself. Have a coach/advisor and a support group you trust.

Lesson Seven: Don't listen to naysayers. Follow the path you choose and do not let anyone discourage you.

Turning Potential into Performance and Identifying Talent

Dan Coyle, author of *Talent Code*, writes:

... We fail at talent identification because we're looking in the wrong place. We instinctively look at performance (which is visual, measurable) instead of mindset and identity, which are what really matter, because they create the energy that fuels the engine of skill acquisition. They are the nuclear power-plant for the 10,000 hours of deep practice. They are the ghosts in the machine.

The bottom line is: Look for that growth mindset—the little, scrawny kid who refuses to give up, who keeps coming back for more. Early in my coaching career a wise old coach told me that many are called and few are chosen.

In my years of coaching I have seen so many athletes with potential that has been unfulfilled. They were labeled early on as the next great ones. What happens? How can we get the athlete to realize their potential? In so many cases, potential, especially being identified as a prodigy early, can be a curse. But isn't it our jobs as coaches to help athletes understand and reach their potential? We can do this by focusing on the process rather than the outcome. We are better off praising effort rather than results, which is right out of Carol Dweck's book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*.

I know I struggle with athletes who have been identified early as the next great one. I guess I identify more with the average athlete who has to fight and claw their way for everything they get. Potential seems to dull persistence. I saw this in the last couple of years with a team I was coaching. The player with the most potential did not achieve at the same level as her less talented teammates; in fact they began to pass her. I am not sure what the answer is here. I do know

that it is a major part of my job as a coach to help translate potential into performance.

Fear Of Success

Everyone talks about fear of failure. I really do not think that is what it is. It is really fear of success. I am convinced that coaches and athletes fear success more than they fear failure. With success comes pressure. The more success you achieve, the more you are expected to succeed and the more pressure there is. Successful people do not fear failure. They use it to learn, and view it as a growth opportunity. They internalize it and use it to improve.

Unsuccessful people avoid succeeding like the plague. They know that by succeeding, expectations for success will rise. They are comfortable being mediocre. If you listen to their self-talk and chatter you will hear it. They usually have every excuse in the book why they can't be better. They also can tell you a million reasons why others who are succeeding are doing things they can't or won't do. These are the people that Carol Dweck has identified as those with a fixed mindset. Successful people have a growth mindset. They embrace challenges, and look at failure as a growth opportunity. They understand there will be missteps, but each of those is a learning opportunity. Embrace the pursuit of excellence; don't be afraid of it. To be the best is not comfortable. Everyday you have to go where few others dare to venture.

There is an American Dream

I just finished reading *American Victory—Wrestling, Dreams, and A Journey Toward Home* by Henry Cejudo with Bill Plaschke. I love stories like this. To me it proves there is an American dream. Henry's mother and father were illegal immigrants. His father abandoned the family when he was five-