

The Accidental Runner

For a year and a half running was my life. Athletic memories from my earlier life float through my mind. The heat and the smell of grass at the baseball field when I was eight years old. I struck out, dropped the ball in the outfield, and never went back. I remember desperately hoping not to be picked last in flag football when I was twelve, and in basketball when I was fourteen. I was always disappointed..

My dream sport was basketball. True, I'm short, and I can't shoot, jump,

dribble, pass, or rebound, but I love it all the same. When I entered high school I thought maybe I could be a bench warmer on the bottom level team. Sadly I also needed to study Russian - a precaution against the day when the Soviet Union invaded. I couldn't do both.

In high school they have sports teams, and for the non-athletes, they have gym classes. I liked gym class. With all the athletes gone, it was my time to shine, or at least not be too terrible.

Gym class was organized into blocks of different sports. Two weeks of basketball, two weeks of volleyball,

two weeks of gymnastics...two weeks of track and field. There were two track and field events: the mile run and the hurdles.

I'm not at all sure who dreams these things up. To train to run the six minute mile, the first day we were supposed to run a lap, a quarter mile, in a minute and a half. The second day, two laps, the half mile, in three minutes, the third, the three laps, three quarters of a mile, the 1320 (yards), in four and a half minutes. You get the idea. Imagine if you managed to run a half mile in two minutes, and two days later you were supposed to break the four minute mile.

Okay, yes, I did it: the six minute mile. I was the best of the worst. How fast is the six minute mile? Let me put it this way. If you ran a typical high school two mile race at that speed, so you ran the two mile in twelve minutes, then, when the leaders finished, you'd find yourself half a lap behind with a few laggards, so far back, you wouldn't even be able to see the finish. The real problem, though, is that when you and the laggards reached the finish line, you'd discover that they were finished, and you still had a full lap, a quarter of a mile, left to run.

Still, my gym teacher was impressed. He insistently wanted me to join the cross country and track teams. Now, I had zero interest in running: if not Russian, it would be basketball. Since I have a hard time saying no, I took to avoiding him.

So, the hurdles. They say it never rains in Southern California, but it rained that day. The track was too muddy for running, so we set up the hurdles on the grass. I was the great star runner, so I went first. Three strides, then leap over the hurdle. Or find out why the hurdles are not ordinarily run on wet grass. I slid along the grass, smashed into the hurdle,

knocked it over, fell backwards into the metal base, broke a rib, and had the wind knocked out of me.

Immobilized as I was, I couldn't easily avoid my gym teacher, who took the opportunity to again insist I run track. So, entirely against sense and desire, I became a runner.

I joined the track team only in a manner of speaking. I was still preparing for the Soviet invasion, so I showed up for practice an hour late. My first day, the entire team had all gone off on a six mile run to the beach and back. There wasn't any hope of catching up, and anyway I had no idea

how to get to the beach. So I ran 24 laps on the track, a feat of unimaginable boredom, and a personal record that stands until this day,

Despite the poor start, I enjoyed my first season. Not the training, I hated that. But the older kids had cars, we went to fast food places for lunch (can you say “Taco Bell?”), and we generally hung out together and had a good time. Fast times at University High School.

I even had some success. There were two big milestones for the high school athlete. The first was traveling with the

team. At the home meets we all got to run, but only the select got to ride the bus to the away meets. The other is getting your letter. I'll come to that.

Being select means scoring points, being in the top three in a race. My event was the three quarters mile, the 1320. In my second race I ran 3:45 and nabbed third place. Podium finish! Not good enough for the bus, but I was proud.

In my third race I ran 3:29, managed second place, good enough for the bus. Now, to give an idea how good a time 3:29 is in the three quarters mile, my school had a history of very good

distance runners. That year, there were two stars that the rest of us watched with awe. There was the sleek miler, Lonnie Hanlon, who ran 4:25 and was all-city, meaning he finished in the top six. There was the intensely strong two miler, Tom Dettmer, a junior, who ran 9:28 and was second all-city. Looking over their shoulders was the blast from several years past, Steve Baum, city cross country champion, and the school record holder in cross country, the mile, and the two mile. So, if, after my three quarters of a mile run, I somehow managed to keep running the same speed for another mile and a

quarter, I would have lost the two mile to Steve.

As I said, it wasn't a bad season. The most important thing is, I got my letter. You must have seen this in the movies: the obnoxious athlete with the blue sweater with a big cloth letter sewn on the front, or the cool football player with the jacket and the letter. Well, I wanted to be cool, so I got the jacket. Honestly, for the kid who was always picked last, it was cool.

So came the summer, then after the summer, the cross country season. We were given an entire printed program of summer workouts to

prepare us for cross country. I am sorry to report that the only running I did that summer was running to catch the bus to the beach.

Fall of my junior year I no longer dreamed of basketball - amazing what a letter will do - and decided the Soviets could look after themselves, so I was a real member of the team.

Working out was never really my thing, but there was one drill I liked. We'd run around the perimeter of a grass field in single file, and our coach would blow a whistle and call a name, and the person called had to go to the front and set the pace. After that, there

was a time trial to sort out who was varsity and who was junior varsity. I must have done okay, because I got to be on varsity.

My first meet was a good one. We ran a two mile course at an agricultural college, Pierce College, in the San Fernando valley. The highlights of the course were the evil smelling pig-pens, and two steep hills called puke and hernia.

If you ran under 11 minutes on that course, you were good. Under 10, you were a star. Steve Baum ran 9:51 and Tom Dettmer 9:56. I broke 11 in my first race. I was only the second

person in school history to do that, the other was a legendary figure, Peter Marks, Peter Rabbit, coach called him. It's a fraud of course, pretty much everyone, including Peter Rabbit, was in 10th grade when they first ran the course, and I was in 11th. Still, we take what victories we can.

I wish I could say that this was the start of a spectacular running career, but it was the start of a spectacular career as a spectator. Before I ran another race I broke my leg, and missed the rest of the season.

Eventually my leg healed, the track season started, and I was running

again. I was a distance runner, but we often started in the shorter distances and moved up. I started by running the half mile. I ran 2:10. Do that for a second half mile and you are Steve Baum. The truth is, I was pleased. Not so much so my coach.

There is a lot of luck involved in high school athletics, well, in anything. If you have the misfortune, as Tom Dettmer did, to be the same age as Jose Amaya, one of the finest distance runners in the history of Los Angeles City, you have no chance of being a city champion. If a high school produces top distance runners year after year after year it is because the

coach is good, and if you are lucky, you go to a school like that. I did.

Richard Kampmann was a great coach. There are two elements of coaching. One is the technical side. You have to assign your runners workouts: how many repeat quarters to run, how fast, how many pace miles, and what pace, what to run over the summer. Coach K had this part down. Decades later, when I coached girls soccer I had the technical part down pretty well, too. I could run drills, teach skills, and so forth. The other half of being a coach is motivational. This I never mastered.

Coach K was a brilliant motivator. He believed in positive reinforcement, and he valued anyone who worked hard. Some of it seems a bit like cheap tricks, but it worked. During cross-country there was the runner of the week, a picture and a paragraph on a bulletin board in the gym. Runner of the week didn't mean you were the fastest that week, it meant you did something special that week. Maybe you weren't the top runner, but you had a big improvement in your time, or you edged out a rival that put the team over the top for a victory, or you achieved some other milestone: these were things that made you runner of the week. We gathered avidly each

week to read the bulletin board, see who was runner of the week, and why.

There were legends and traditions. Why do I know who Steve Baum is and what he did? We got history lessons, school records were posted, along with lists and stories of great runners of the past. People to look up to, to admire, to emulate. Like I said, a lot of positive reinforcement.



Richard Kampmann
Coach K

Well, mostly positive reinforcement. After my fabulous 2:10 half mile, coach pulled me aside. He wasn't harsh with me, he didn't scream at me, he was just disappointed in me. He didn't think I was living up to my

potential, he didn't think I was being serious.

The next day was the day running took over my life. I started running two-a-days. This is considered the mark of being serious. In addition to training with the team in the afternoon, you wake up at six in the morning, and run four to six miles before school. Other than the girls I was sweet on, I don't remember much about my last year and a half in high school, besides running. I kept notebooks, I planned runs, I read books, I skipped family vacations.

So it was that I went from being a not so bad runner to being a fairly decent runner.

I remember sitting on the grass field where we ate lunch, chatting with the girlfriend of the team captain because he was occupied psyching himself up to win the mile race.

I was running the same race, and we had a tough opponent, Crawford from Crenshaw. I remember that race, although not particularly Captain King. What I remember was hanging tough with Crawford. He wouldn't let me pass him until I swung wide on the final stretch, turned on the

afterburners, and won my first race ever. Well, it was the only race I won that season.

I'm not that fast, the fastest quarter mile I ever ran was 57, but I had good closing speed - I could pretty much run my fastest quarter at the end of a race. That day I ran 4:33, not Lonnie Hanlon, and certainly not Steve Baum, but not bad either. I became established as the second distance runner on the team after Tom Dettmer, and I was the top junior.

By the skin of my teeth I managed to make it to city semi-finals in the two

mile, before getting creamed in what was my last race of the season.

The most memorable part of that post-season was city quarter-finals. This was run on a Saturday in the San Fernando valley in 107F (42C) degree heat. Spectators were fainting in the stands. It was a dry heat: that meant after the first half lap your mouth was completely dry. It was a test of survival and somehow or other I survived.

That summer I didn't go to the beach. I did base running, long slow distance. Twenty miles a day, a hundred and forty miles a week. Some weeks, a hundred and sixty miles. I ran twice a

day except Sundays, when I did a single run of thirty miles. I usually ran on dirt or grass, concrete is hard on the knees and ankles, but on Sundays I ran the sidewalks of LA. I ran slow and easy, eight minutes a mile, drifting from Beverly Glen, to UCLA, to the Pacific Palisades, to the beach, to the Santa Monica Pier, to Beverly Hills, and to Hollywood, watching the shops, watching the people. Summer in the city. That part of training I didn't hate.

After the summer was the cross-country season. Oddly, what I remember most was going to Farrell's Ice Cream Parlor with the team after the meets. We were dressed in our

sweat clothes - it wasn't done in those days, and I had a horrible orange nylon sweat suit. We would down pig troughs, some sort of atrocious concoction of ice cream soda and banana split. I think my favorite moments of high school were spent with my friends at Farrell's.

The first race of the cross-country season was an exhibition meet against Fairfax high school. For some reason there was a fellow named Glick, who decided he should race all out. He won, he also injured himself and wasn't seen for the rest of the season. So my record of victories

remained that one race against Crawford.

I mention Glick because there is a lesson there. It's the same hard lesson that I learned when I broke my leg and missed the cross country season as a junior.

The thing an athlete should fear most - and anyone who trains regularly at any level is an athlete - is injury. It isn't hard to get up at six in the morning to run. What is hard, when something hurts, is to not run. Whatever success I had was because I remained injury free, and that is because I stuck to the strict discipline that when something

hurt I stopped running - for a day, for a week, for whatever it took. The reason Steve Baum never won a track championship is because he tore his achilles tendon before city finals.

Strict discipline has its limits. I was running along the beach on a lovely summer day, and decided to cut across a parking lot to run home. The entrance was blocked by a low chain, and there was a crowd of people arriving and departing. I decided to demonstrate my prowess by leaping over the chain. Unfortunately, I caught my toe on the chain, and fell flat on my face. The crowd was horrified, I brushed myself off, ignored my

bleeding knees, gave a cheery smile, pretended I did this sort of thing all the time, pronounced myself fine, and hurried away as quickly as I could. Fortunately, besides the scrapes, no serious harm occurred.

So, as I said, I started the cross country season much as I had ended the track season, as a fairly decent runner, with my usual solid second place. After that came the League meets. University High School, my school, is in Western League, six schools, so we ran five meets against each of the other schools, followed by Western League finals.

I had a plan. Fairfax hadn't figured into it. My plan was a considerably better plan than the lunatic plan of running a quarter mile farther each day at the same speed. My plan was to run the first mile a bit faster each week, then run the last mile in five minutes.

Sometimes dreams do come true. For me, the rest of the cross country season unfolded like one. I ran against myself and against the clock. I hit my targets for the first mile, and was all alone. I ran the final mile in five minutes. I was undefeated, in reality, unchallenged. It seems that running fifteen hundred miles over a few

months does make you a better runner.

In the final league meet of the season, against Venice, my plan was to run the first mile in five minutes, then see what I could do the second mile. I broke ten and moved into star territory.

In Western League finals, I ran 9:56, a Western League record, which I take to mean Steve Baum didn't run hard that day. Still, I was approaching Steve Baum territory, and in the city preliminary meet I tied his school record.

So, city finals, Los Angeles city, cross country, December 9, 1972. It was a cool, clear day, perfect running weather. For me, it was the worst of races and the best of races. The favorite was a fellow named Cliff Morden, from Taft high school, who had by far the best time in the city that year. The race was his to lose, which is not an enviable position. By contrast, me, I wasn't even nervous. Nobody had heard of me before the last couple of meets. My goal for the season was to be all-city, meaning finish in the top ten, and since I had the third fastest time in the city, that seemed like a snap.

It's probably a good thing to be nervous before a race. Did you ever have a bad day? Well I had a very bad day. A lot of running is concentration, it's in the head. It wasn't in my head. I remember drifting by the pig-pens, inhaling the wonderful odors, watching the other runners, and wondering why I was so far behind. I remember coming up the switchbacks, hearing my mile split, and wondering why it was the slowest first mile I ran that year. I remember coming around the bend, where you are in sight of the spectators again, looking out at the long, gradual, dusty decline, and at the fifteen runners in front of me. I

remember thinking I wasn't going to be all-city after all.

I had one superpower as a runner. It was my closing speed, my kick. I always figured if I was within ten yards of the leaders on the final stretch, the race was mine. It saved me more times than I can remember. It's how I earned my letter as a sophomore. It's how I beat Crawford, it's how I got into city quarter finals as a junior despite a hopelessly bad race.

My kick gave me supreme confidence. Not that it was always justified. Sadly, I was not invulnerable. The week after I beat Crawford for my first, and, for a

long time, only win, I ran a commanding performance in the mile at Westchester. So commanding that I eased up at the finish, and a miler from Westchester named Cully, who had been hanging tough behind me, nipped me at the line. My superpower didn't save me in city cross country finals either, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Anyway, looking at the fifteen runners ahead of me, I didn't fall into total despair. I thought I could still probably still be all-city. I was sure I could kick down five or six runners in the final stretch. Then I remember thinking, “what the hell, why wait?”

Suddenly I wasn't drifting, I was racing, I started passing people. The next half mile brought me to third place, to the top of a steep decline. Just ahead of me was Richard Nance, the junior star from Monroe, and just ahead of him was the favorite, Cliff Morden. I flew by Nance on the downhill, bulled my way up the next hill, looked down, saw Cliff in front of me, and thought, I'll catch him at the bottom, and blow by him.

I was half right. I did catch him at the bottom. I didn't blow by him. He was waiting for me. He turned on his afterburners, and took off. I went with

him. There was about a quarter of a mile, all flat, to the finish. I remember thinking “no way we run this fast to the finish, we’ll see who breaks first.”

I was wrong about that too. We flew to the finish, not side by side, but with Cliff slightly ahead. I would edge up on his shoulder, he would adjust a jet or two and pull ahead, and then I’d edge up again. At the finish, I finally did blow by him.

Sadly, I blew by him after we both crossed the finish line, so I came in second. It was a pretty close race, neither of the two of us, nor Richard, who had come with us, and was only a

few seconds behind, nor the spectators, had any idea who won. They didn't have a finish tape, an innovation they introduced the following year, just a chalk line on the ground to mark the finish. Only the official standing on the line and looking across could see who won.



Finish of the 1972 LA City Cross Country Championship

The truth be told, it was what idiots these days call “win-win.” For Cliff the race was about not losing, and he didn’t. For me, feeling a bit like Bill Murray in *Caddyshack*, to be second all city, to tie the record of Steve Baum, this was a season out of heaven.

In between the cross country and track season, I ran a marathon. I ran it with a fellow named Dylan Stark, who, when we were on speaking terms, was my best friend. This is the same Dylan Stark who introduced me to the

concept of mayonustard. At the time I thought it the most foul concoction invented by human kind. A decade later, in a different life, in a sandwich shop in Berkeley, my friend Andreu ordered a roast beef sandwich with “the sauce.” I followed suit, “the sauce” was mayonustard, and I've been an aficionado ever since.

Dylan would have been the star runner on our team had I not been on it, and while his event was the mile - he was as fast as Lonnie Hanlon - Dylan was stronger than me over really long distances...the marathon, for example.

When I say “we ran the marathon” it sounds like something we planned. That wasn’t how it was. A number of us went down to San Diego, mostly to watch, and a few to run in, the San Diego Mission Bay Marathon. A decade later, I was late to a seminar at UC San Diego because I was convinced it took only an hour to drive from Los Angeles to San Diego. I overlooked the fact that the first time I did it, we drove 120 miles an hour.

We stayed with a friend who was in college there, and had an apartment. Anyway, Dylan and I weren’t interested in running the marathon.

We thought it would be fun to run a fast ten miles then drop out.

Now you should understand that to enter a marathon in those days cost about fifty dollars, which was a lot of money for us. So we didn't officially enter the race, planning, as we were, on not finishing. At the start, we hid in the crowd so the officials, looking for scofflaws like us, couldn't see us to throw us out.

After a while the crowd at the start started to break up, the officials were left behind, and we broke out and started running. After a few miles, we caught up with a small group of

runners who seemed to be running about the speed we wanted. We chatted with them - the start of a marathon isn't like a track race, you have to run slow enough that you have some breath for chatting - and discovered that they were really hoping to get under 2:20 that day. Okay, you can look it up. That's world class time. Dylan and I kind of stared at each other, but we figured we could hang with them for ten miles.

We ran the first ten miles in fifty six minutes. That's pretty fast. Then, as planned, we quit. We walked a bit, caught our breath, then looked at each other. I mean, we just ran ten miles in

fifty six minutes, we could practically walk the rest of the way and still have a good marathon time. Why not? So we started running again.

The friend we were staying with had a car, and he and some other friends were driving around, and they'd get out of the car, bring us some water, and run with us for a bit. We were at around the fifteen mile mark, and no longer in a particularly chatty mood, when they pointed out a problem. If we finished the race without being entered, without having an official number, when we crossed the finish line, not only would they not tell us our

time, but they'd probably throw us in prison.

Fortunately, our friends had a solution: there were some runners who had paid the fifty dollar fee, but dropped out. They scouted two of these guys, repaid them their fifty dollars, and brought us the official numbers, which we pinned to our shirts.

I remember being chuffed when we crossed the twenty mile mark in just under two hours: the first time I ran the mile I ran six minutes, and that was fast enough that my gym teacher forced me to go out for cross country and track. Well, Dylan and I had just

run twenty miles at six minutes a mile pace.

I struggled to the finish - at one point Dylan had to wait for me - and we crossed the line together in 2:41. That's a pretty good time, we finished second and third in the high school division, and our friends went off to collect our trophies and prizes, a couple big jars of protein powder.

We were lying on the ground totally dead, when one of our friends came running up, and insisted we had to leave, leave immediately. They dragged us off.

What was the problem? The problem was the two fellows they had bought numbers off of were named Tony and Jose Martinez - neither Dylan or I look the least bit hispanic - but the main problem was that Tony was fourteen years old, and so had just set the fourteen year old age group record for the marathon. The officials, it seemed, were rightfully suspicious.

There ensued a long investigation, they eventually figured out from photos at the finish who we were, and then there was a long negotiation. The upshot was that we agreed to return the trophies (the protein powder was long gone), and they agreed not to put

us in prison. I never ran the marathon again.

I wish I could say the track season was as golden as cross country had been. It wasn't. The cross country season had been a joy for me personally, and for our team. We captured our third consecutive Western League championship, and we took fourth place in the city, breaking a three year streak of placing out of the money.



THE VARSITY CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM FIRST ROW: JOHN HURT, STEVE DUBIN, DAVID LEVINE, DYLAN STARK, ROY KAMEN, DAVID LUNT. SECOND ROW: RICH PERELMAN (MANAGER), ROY FARHI, GREG PROVISOR, LYNN THOMPSON, DANNY MCQUOID, DAN FRANKEN, DICK DOUGLASS. NOT SHOWN: MAX SLIMP.

In track, mentally, I was just hanging on. I had a shot at a city championship, and I wanted it enough to work for it, but the wonder was gone.

I ran well. I breezed through the league, I was undefeated. I ran under two minutes in the half mile, I ran a 4:17 mile and I broke Steve Baum's record. There wasn't any real challenge, and now I wasn't an unknown anymore, so there was no joy in surprising people.

I do remember running the mile at Palisades High School, Pali: somebody there had been saying all week they were going "to get me." Well someone rabbited out at the start, ran a sixty flat first lap, possibly with the idea of intimidating me. That sort of stuff just doesn't work.

When you are a serious runner, you know your pace. You know if you are running 65s, or 70s, or 67.5s. One day I went with a friend to the UCLA track to run a pace three mile. He timed me, I ran perfect 75 second laps for eleven laps, then closed out with a sixty flat final quarter.

At Pali, I ran a calm 64 first lap, passed the rabbit on the second lap, and finished, smooth and steady, in 4:20, with the rabbit dying somewhere half a lap behind.

There is something satisfying in showing up an obnoxious opponent, but there isn't any sport in defeating

someone who you outclass. The same day I set the school record in the mile at 4:17.9, Curtis Beck, the same age and grade as me, but attending a high school just outside of Los Angeles, ran a 4:09.2 mile. I would have been as outclassed against him, as the obnoxious Palisader was against me.

The truth is, except for a handful of Olympians, everyone is outclassed by someone. In the end, it is the competition that matters, not the level. When I ran against Pali, I crossed the three quarters mile mark in 3:20, then ran 60 flat on the final lap. In tenth grade, when I ran a three-quarters of a mile race nine seconds slower, in

3:29, I had to battle down the stretch to eke out second place - but that was the more satisfying race.

Running cross country with its pig-pens and hills is a lot more fun than running circles counter-clockwise around a track. There is something special about a track meet, though. The track is clean, with chalk lines marking the lanes. Sprinters adjust their blocks and jump about. Field events are constantly going on. Pole vaulters line up to jump, shot putters give enormous heaves. Meanwhile, in the infield, we runners are jogging, knees high, getting warmed up, or

lying on the grass doing our stretching exercises.

Officials, in their jackets, check their stop watches, their starter guns and the bell. Coaches give last minute advice. There is a nervous excitement in the air. Periodically the spectators in the stands start cheering for a particularly good leap or throw. The highlights of the meet are always the relays: everyone oohs at the dropped baton in the 4x100, and aahs at the incredible anchor leg in the 4x400.

In my junior year, I had made it to city semi-finals in the two mile. My senior year I ran in the finals, and it wasn't

about winning, it was about not losing - I was the favorite. The truth is, I never liked running two miles on the track. They say pain is the enemy of the long distance runner. I don't agree. To me, boredom is the enemy of the long distance runner. The fifth, sixth, and seventh laps of the two mile are hard and tedious, and it's difficult to keep focused.

When you are running a championship race, you don't run for time, you run to win. Early in the race, the other contender, a strong tough fellow, Robert Lugan from Banning, and I broke away from the pack. He wanted the lead, and I was happy to let him

have it. He towed me through those fifth, sixth, and seventh laps.

When the bell rang for the final lap, Robert rabbitted away from me, so I turned on the afterburners, slid by him after a quarter of a lap, and won by about four seconds.



Finish of the 1973 LA City Two-Mile
Championship

Honestly: it sounds anti-climactic and it was. I did win a city championship, and I am proud of that, but I was much more interested in being in love and having a girlfriend for the first time. I didn't quite quit running, I ran in a few all-comers meets that summer, but I quit training, and had a wonderful summer with my girl.

Looking back on it, although completely true, it is a remarkable story. If somebody had said to Joe Sedia, my gym teacher, or me, "this tenth grader who just ran the six minute mile, and only aspires to be a bench warming basketball player, will

win the city championship in the two mile as a senior” everyone would have agreed that it was nuts.

This story does have an end, however. I never came back to competitive running. I became a different person, and went on with a different life.

Only one other running experience sticks in my mind. I retained something from my thousands of miles of training, even a decade later.

What I remember is going to run in a 5K race on Treasure Island in San Francisco, with my friend Drew Fudenberg, and his wife Geneen

O'Brien. Both were runners - that is to say, unlike me, they worked out.

We got stuck in traffic, and arrived at the start two minutes after everyone else had left. Well there was nothing for it, so we started running. I ran with Drew for about half the race, although he was in far better shape than I was.

At about the mid-point, there was a short sharp uphill. I charged the hill, thinking of city finals in cross-country, and coming after Cliff Morden. I made it halfway up. It's the only time I ever threw up when I was running.

I waved Drew ahead, walked a bit, felt better, and finished the race. Anyway, the memorable bit was at the finish, where I caught up to and passed a bunch of Marines. Hopefully, they could shoot faster than they could run.

I am going to conclude by saying I had three goals in life: to slam dunk the basketball on a full height rim, to break four minutes in the mile, and to be the most famous dropout from my 1973 entering class at Harvard. Since I couldn't jump high enough to touch a full height rim, the first was never realistic. Perhaps if I dedicated ten years of my life to it, I could have broken the four minute mile, but, given

all the superior runners who never did, probably not. As for the last, look it up.

Afterward

I wrote this for myself, in the memory of Coach Kampmann, in the memory of my mother, who came to every single one of my meets, and for the great Uni runners that came before me: Al Collins, Dale Brooks, Bill Graham, Pete Rodriguez, Roger Egeberg, Joel Trout, Joe Jackson, Bobby Branch, Brian Kane, Steve Baum, and Tom Dettmer, and for those who came after, David Pascal, who broke my mile record and

probably would have broken Steve's and my cross-country record, except that they conveniently changed the course before he could, and Paul Medvin, who was state champion in the mile twice, shattered all our records, and still has them.

It's for my running mates: Dylan Stark, John Bennett, John Hurt, Mark Flory, Emmett King, Roy Kamen, Charlie Bunin, Stevan Dumas, Casey Trope, Don Franken, Steve Dubin, David Lunt, Max Slimp, the Ellis brothers, Don and Richard, for Richard Perelman who kept us all together, and for all the many others I ran with, hung out with, and wolfed down pig

troughs with. It's for Marc Lurie who taught me shot put and weight lifting, and for all the other members of the track team. It's for my younger brother Peter, who was himself an all-city miler.

One of the great things for all of us was the runner's reunion for Coach K: I got to meet many of the legends who I never got to run with: Peter Marks, David Pascal, Paul Medvin, and, to show that there is life after running, one of Coach K's earliest runners - Mike Love.

David Levine
London

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