

## STEVE PREFONTAINE

I've been training under the Oregon system for five years. They started me off in my junior year in high school. I started morning running in 1966 when I started out covering 3 to 4 miles in the morning. Now in college I've slowed that down a little. I go out for 5 to 6 miles in the morning and run six minute pace or faster.

I run six mornings a week, Mondays through Saturdays and then on Sundays, I do just one long run. I usually get about eleven to twelve miles, at 5:30 to 6 minute pace. Unless I have somebody to run with, I get very bored. I really don't like to train that hard. So the longest run I've done this year is a fifteen mile run. Of course sometimes I have interjected a 25 minute 5 mile.

I got started running in the 8th grade in junior high. It was kind of a last resort for me because in the school from where I graduated football and basketball are very big sports. Our school won many state championships in football and basketball. They really pushed football. I didn't have the build or the desire I guess, to become a great football player. In the 8th grade I was not very big, 5'1" and 100 pounds. I was just sitting on the bench and I didn't like that. So we had a pre-training period where the people who wanted to continue in track and field could be in a jogging class where we would go out and jog 1 or 2 miles a day. When the season started we went into a regular track class and the rest would go into a P.E. class. I found that I could do reasonably well. I could place in the top ten every time we'd go out to race or to goof around so I figured I would give track a try. I ended up running a 3/4 that year in 3:51 in the 8th grade, and I won our sectional meet. So my high school coach, Walt McClure who is just like my second father, wrote me a letter stating he'd like me to come out for his cross country team. I decided to give it a try since here was somebody who was showing some interest in me. From there I slowly developed my own mental toughness or whatever, to the point where I am now. It's been 8 years of running. I think I really started enjoying my running during my sophomore year. Up to that point I was running because it was a way to get some sort of recognition. I liked the idea of going out with other students and we did have some fun, but I more or less goofed off until that time. I wasn't very serious about running until I missed the state meet during my sophomore year. I didn't make it to the state meet and it was at that particular point in 1966 that I decided I wasn't going to lose any more. I started running every day and I started training in the morning. I began to enjoy it after my sophomore year and I really wanted to do something with it.

My favorite event would have to be the 5000 meters because I've had the most success with it. But I just like the idea of competition and competing against somebody else. I enjoy the mile and I really enjoyed running the 3000 meters last weekend. I never figured that when I came here, I'd end up running the 6 mile, but I even enjoyed that. I ran a 6 mile in the spring and I felt very good. In a few years from now my best race will probably be the 10,000 because the more running I do the stronger I get and my mental attitude toward running is improving. I can handle a bigger work load without getting tired of running. The enjoyment keeps growing along with the competition and everything else.

I like running but I do not plan to go to the extreme of running the Marathon. It is a beautiful race but I like the idea of being able to get out of bed the next day and move around a little. A Marathon race, if not planned properly, takes around a month or month and a half to fully recover from. I don't like the idea of waiting that long. So the 10,000 will probably be my longest race. However, I can fluctuate. I can run an average mile and I can run a pretty good six. So with that combination, and with an in-between race like the 5000 meters, I feel pretty confident.

I'm not exactly the sprinter type but I can run a 440 under 50 seconds. My basic speed is not that great, but along with help from Bill and the other coaches and running with people that have great speed, I have increased mine. I started out in college being able to run the 100 in 11.2 with a running start. I can probably run 10.3 or 10.4 now because last year I ran a couple of 110's in 11.1. The problem is I can do it 4 or 5 times but I can't run it any faster. My speed hasn't really increased with age and the amount of work and strength and everything else. I can run 330's at the end of a very strenuous workout in 38-39 seconds. That's the kind of speed I have. I don't have the blazing Ryun kick, but I can run the last three quarters in 3:02, or 3:01 on the end of a 5000. so you don't have to worry about it right now anyway.

I plan my races. I go down the list of entries; a runner might be a five minute miler but I don't overlook him. I plan my strategy this way. I know most of the runners and I know what their strong and weak points are so I plan my strategies accordingly. I have more than one plan to a race because if something goes wrong on a given meet such as in the Olympic Trials, somebody is going to be ready to do something they wouldn't ordinarily do. You have got to be ready for anything and you've got to be alert throughout the whole race. You can't go to sleep in any part of the race. If something goes wrong in my race this next week, I'm going to have something else I can fall back on, so I won't be left out in the cold. I respect everybody. As far as respecting one more than others, I really couldn't say because I haven't had that much experience with people like Bedford and a few more of those fellows. I put them all in a heap and say you're all the same, now what do I have to do? I'm going to respect the 12 people that make it to the finals if I'm there. I'm going to sort them all out individually and make a plan for each person.

My high school training: I came up to the University of Oregon and trained with some of the athletes during my junior year. My high school coach sat down with Bowerman and Dellinger to work out a program for me. The program that I'm on now is very similar to what it was then. I ran 8:41 in high school for 2 miles and four days before that I ran 4 x 880 under 2:08 with a 220 fast jog in between and then a couple miles jog and then some 330 cut-downs. After that I knew I was going to break the record. That was a typical workout. The biggest week I ran in high school was 85 miles. My longest run in high school was 11 or 12 miles at the very most. On Sundays, instead of going out for 12 or 15 miles like I do now, I would maybe go 5 to 7 miles, but I ran twice a day. I would only run 3 or 4 miles in the morning and 3 or 4 miles in the afternoon on my off days. On my heavy days, I'd run anything from 4 x 880 (880 is the longest interval work I did) when I would do maybe 4 x 880 at a goal pace. Then I'd take a jog and then run maybe 13-20 cut-downs or 440's, 660's at a slower pace. It was a little different program then (we have "goal pace" - "date pace" in now) because I do all my work at a goal pace. My goal for the 2 mile is 8:40 and I do all my work at a particular distance with that in mind.

In the 2 mile, I'd go  $1\frac{1}{2}$  the distance at 2 miles goal pace. I'd go 12 x 440 at 65 with a 220 rest, and then I'd take a light jog and do something a little slower. Then every two weeks I'd have a time trial where I'd run the first seven laps or so at a certain pace and let go on the last lap. The way it is supposed to work is, at the end of a season, (it was all on a graph) my date and goal pace were all the same so instead of the slower pace, everything was at 65 second pace.

My present height is 5'9" and I weigh between 143 -45.

Concerning the trials, I'm going to run what I have to run. I just want to make the team. That's a big enough goal right now. It's going to be hard enough to make the team without saying what I'm going to run or what I'm going to have to run. -- Whatever it takes! I guess if it takes a 13:10, I'll have to run a 13:10. If I have to run 14 minutes, or whatever, I'm going to do what I have to do. And that's all a person can say. In a race of this nature, you can't say, "I'm going to run a 13:20 today," because it's the way you feel. There's a lot of emotional tension, a lot of pressure. A lot of strange things happen. So I'm just going to float along with the way the pace goes and then when I feel good I'm going to make my move.

To me, consistency is probably the biggest thing in middle distance running. I am on a 10 year program where I'm supposed to increase or improve 10% a year. The coaches could have probably pushed me a lot harder than they have. I could probably have gone out and raced a 5000 meter and 10,000 meter in the NCAA, and probably try the 5000 and 10000 in the Olympic Trials; but probably two years from now I'd be so sick and tired of running that I'd never run again. You have to keep an appetite for it and you have to enjoy what you're doing. I don't feel a runner should get pushed too much and do too many miles. I have never run 120 miles a week in my life. But the 110 miles a week that I've done have all been quality miles. I don't go out and run 20 miles of 8 minute pace. It's too boring to do that. I'd rather go out and run 10 miles in an hour or 55 minutes and get it over with so I can go fishing and hunting and swimming or chasing girls or whatever else I want to do. If I had to do 220 miles a week, I'd give up after the first week. I couldn't do anything else if I ran 220 miles a week. Running isn't all there is to life.

For a warm-up, before I take my hard interval days, and when it's really warm, I'll probably take  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles of light jogging and then pick the pace up and maybe do a few strides of 150 yards with my spikes on to loosen up and maybe a few stretching exercises.

It depends on the weather and the race. Usually it takes me anywhere from 2 to 4 miles to warm up before a race. And I do basically the same things. I just warm up until I get that certain feeling that I'm ready to go. Sometimes the coaches have to tell me I'm ready to go, and sometimes it is mostly just nervousness. Sometimes I could warm up for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours and still not feel ready but that is just nervous tension.

After the race I like to get away from everyone, including fighting the press, in order to cool down properly. This is the number one thing for me. When I am emotionally involved in a race (and I get very emotionally involved) my body is still going at a very high rate and I have to slow everything down very slowly. You just can't stop there and stop. I have to jog 2-3 miles just to get myself down to earth again. Your body is going even after the race and you have to bring it down to a normal pulse rate and a normal feeling.

I run anywhere from 2-3 miles on the morning of a race. My first mile would probably be a 6:30 and it takes me about a mile just to get warmed up and then I can just drop down to the pace I want to.

Last week I didn't even prepare. I felt the loosest I've felt all year. I had a few butterflies in my stomach. I went out with a very relaxed feeling. That's the same way I felt when I ran 13:29 for 5000. I just went out there and said, "I'm going to run the way I feel." I wanted to run well but it wasn't going to be a big thing to me if I didn't. I just went out very relaxed, followed their pace for the first mile, and then with 3 or 4 laps to go, I started feeling good so I picked the pace up. I had no set procedure. I just went out and ran the way I felt. I've been on a Dellinger peaches pre-meet meal for the last three years. It's a very good pre-meet meal. There's a lot of complaining going on but most of the athletes do understand the purpose of it. I eat a bowl of peaches, toast with honey on it and a glass of orange juice between 4 to 5 hours before competition. All of those things are pretty easily digested. The night before I usually eat something like meat. It doesn't really matter. Jim Ryun ate hot dogs the night before he ran 3:51 so I guess you can just about eat anything.

As for what I do the day before, well, most of the season up to the NCAA, I'd go out for a 10-12 mile run the day before because I train through the bulk part of the season. I trained through most of the other races. I'm just now starting to rest 3 to 4 days before the race. Now before the Trials, the last 3 days, I'll probably jog lightly in the morning, lightly in the afternoon, maybe covering 4-6 miles a day, trying to get a reserve strength built up.