



PREPARING FOR A RACE

By Coach Ken Perchaluk

It's racing season once again and it is very important to prepare properly during the week leading up to the race.

Your last hard workout should take place no later than five days prior to the race. In order to conserve your energy for race day include easy runs in the last four days prior to the race.

I notice some runners doing hard workouts only two to three days before a race. After these people have completed their race they wonder why they have not achieved the performance they were expecting. The reason for not achieving their optimum performance is because they have already run their race in the training program.

Roger Bannister, the first human to break the four minute barrier for the mile, did not run at all for the last four days before his monumental race.

I recommend my runners to take the day off before the race and to try and relax. A lot of runners would rather take the day off two days before the race. This is fine but make sure if you do run the day before the race to keep your run to a time limit of approximately twenty to thirty minutes. In addition, use this run as a warm up run for race day and try to run it as easily as possible.

Try and arrive approximately one hour before the race (no later than 45 minutes) . This time will allow you to pick up your race number (if you haven't already done so), go to the washroom, stretch properly, talk to other runners you haven't seen for awhile, and sufficiently warm-up for the race.

If you haven't pinned on your race number to your race clothing, do it before you start your warm-up. If you don't get your number on ahead of time, you will be fumbling around at the start line trying to get the pins on.

Jog for about five to ten minutes before you start your stretching regime on race day. After you have stretched for at least ten minutes, jog for another ten to fifteen minutes.

With ten minutes to go before race time, perform four, 60 to 80 metre accelerations (fast pickups at about 80 to 90% optimum heart rate). Any earlier than ten minutes before the race will result in your heart rate falling too low for race performance by race time.

After you have completed your accelerations walk or jog easily for the last five minutes before the race.

You shouldn't have to run more than 20 minutes (not including accelerations) before the race to sufficiently warm-up. There is a fine line between warming up too much or too little. I see too many people warming up too long and too hard before a race and this definitely affects their race performance.

Once you have reached your position at the starting line keep moving (e.g. wave arms, moving up and down on the spot, etc.) until 30 seconds before the start of the race. This will help you to keep your heart rate up for the start. Approximately 30 seconds before the race stop moving and take some deep breaths and try to relax.

Immediately after the race do your cool-down in order to ensure that your muscles don't tighten up. The absolute minimum for a cool-down is ten minutes. Cooling s/down (easy running) for a period of 15 to 20 minutes would be more beneficial to help recover from the lactic acid buildup caused from racing. After you have completed your cooldown, stretch for at least 10 to 15 minutes.