

# The Empire Runner

## ***Blast From the Past!!!!!!! – June 1978 ER Runner***

### HOW CAN YOU DECIDE WHICH RACES TO RUN ?

by Glenn McCarthy

With more and more races in our area we are faced with the problem of deciding which of the races we will run and race. I have a few suggestions on choosing your race. We all benefit much more and succeed as well if we have a plan to guide us.

Let me divide us up into 2 groups, marathon runners and distance runners. Marathon runners run mostly marathons and longer races, this is a problem for them. They run so much distance work that they feel they cannot run well at shorter distances. They run slow to cover the distances they need to run a marathon, the problem is that slow running does not make running fast short races easy. They are just not ready to run faster. So they become stuck in a cycle of not running the shorter faster work they need to reach their potential. Either they say "I don't race well over shorter distance so why try racing them?" or "that race is only 4 miles, and I need a 15 mile day". They can run for hours, just not very fast.

The distance runner is the type of runner who may run a marathon but is usually content with races in the 3-12 mile range. Usually this runner does well at the shorter distances, and feels he is not competitive at the longer distances. When trying the marathon this runner does not run as well as he does at shorter runs and decides to give up on that aspect of running.

Most of us fit into one group or the other (More or less), so pick a group. From here let's discuss various distances as they affect these types.

One to 3 miles-our marathoner probably won't even look at these on his schedule. (It is on my 20 mile day, I'll spend as much time getting there as I'd need to run my 20). The distances require speed, not one of his developed commodities. If by chance he does run he goes out to fast for his ability and fades, to which he decides I am just not made to race these short races. Our moderate type eats up this distance. The stress is low and it makes it possible for him to race these distance even several times a week. Both types of runner can use these races to keep themselves racing sharp. The speed is good and the anaerobic running helps keep the anaerobic level high.

3-6 miles- our marathoner may run one or two of these a year but again as he has not developed an anaerobic capacity tires early from a fast early pace and is dissatisfied by his performance. He still uses these performances to rationalize his belief that he cannot run anything but marathons. He should be racing over this range more often to improve his speed and economy of motion to run faster marathons. Our moderate man may run these races too often and loose that zest for competition, or not be able to run well all the time, he should decide to run some relaxed and others harder. In our area he may decide to race hard at Kenwood, or some other highly competitive run.

6-12 miles-The marathoner runs fairly well over this range and doesn't hesitate to race over these distances. The only problem is that he does not have the co-ordination of speed and anaerobic capacity to race up to his ability. He may still loose to the moderate runner who is tired at the end of the run but ahead of the marathoner who is not. The moderate runner runs fairly well over this distance range, but still feels to tired from the effort to feel this is his range. He should race this range more often to gain strength and confidence.

12-20-The marathoner will run most any race you put on in this range but there is little speed requirement, this only goes to reinforce his belief that the longer races are where he belongs. Our moderate runner may never enter one of these. Preferring to stay away from "them long runs" because he does poorly. However, if only to use it as a training run, he should run a couple of these a year.

20 and longer-The marathoner is home here, no problem here except that he may run so many that he is either "building up for" the next one or "recovering" from the last. It is a good excuse for not racing the shorter distances he needs to improve his speed. Poor moderate runner, he runs only one of these every three years (it takes that long to forget the last one) and does poorly, usually because of fast early pace. He needs to finish an easy one for the confidence.

So which do you choose, the best bet is a potpourri of the whole bunch. A group of shorter runs for the speed and anaerobic capacity it will develop and longer runs for the confidence with faster paces over the longer distances. We all need all these aspects, whether we are trying to race the mile or the marathon. Pick and choose your races and your running will probably improve with intelligent decisions.