

The Empire Runner

The PREZ SEZ

Ask a little leaguer his favorite third-baseman and you'll get a long list. Ask a high school footballer his bets for the Super Bowl and you'll get a long conversation. Ask a random guy on the street, one who doesn't play competitive basketball, about March Madness and he'll likely have filled out a bracket.

But if someone asks you some simple answers about running, odds are you just won't know.

Our sport unfortunately suffers from a lack of publicity, and while it is one of the biggest participation sports at the prep level (cross country and track & field), as well as hugely popular in the road-race scene, most people don't really know, and thus don't care, about the elite side. But it's an incredibly interesting sport. Part of it is that it isn't on TV much, and isn't covered by local papers. But it's kind of a chicken and egg thing.

I challenge you all to this little survey I found online a few days back (and was the spark for this column): <http://www.norwichbulletin.com/sports/x128432021/The-Long-Run-Test-your-knowledge-of-distance-running-and-its-history#axzz1KWF7JnJ9>

While the competitive side of the sport may not bombard you in all media sources (ESPN, newspaper, radio, etc), it's out there, and you can follow it. Check out sites such as LetsRun.com, TrackAndFieldNews.com, USATF.org (our national governing body), and IAAF.org (the international governing body). Really see what else there is out there on the pro level.

And we are fortunate enough to have a PHENOMENAL source of local prep coverage: northbay.com/running. We are incredibly lucky to have Jim Crowhurst run such a site for us. Check it out.

Even more-so, on that note, go check out a prep track & field meet! What these local kids can do is incredible, and track & field meets are like three-ring circuses. There is always something going on, and it can just get your blood pumping. Lists of upcoming events can be found on that northbay.com/running site.

A big one to put on your calendar is the Santa Rosa All City meet, to be held Friday, May 6th. Of course a big draw is the Heart and Sole Elite mile (heartsolesantarosa.com/elitemile.html), in which a bunch of professional milers will be racing, but show up for the high school portion too. These kids really care about it, race with all their hearts, and really, I can't explain it if you haven't checked it out. Give it a try. Then check out some of the league championships the week after.

Our sport is a great one, with events happening across the globe across the calendar. There's always something to watch or read up about. You all participate in it, but now spend some time following and learning about it. You won't be disappointed.

Hope to see many of you out at the All City Meet at Santa Rosa HS on May 6th!

-Alex