



Coaching Freshman Distance Runners

Zach Burgoyne (Fr.)

- Freshman year 2012-2013
- 1st 5K 21:12
- Frosh PR 19:37
- 80th Place Continental League Open Race
- 1600 PR 5:30.14
- Never missed a day of practice in 4 years
- 100% Commitment to “The Process” and “The TEAM”





Zach Burgoyne (Sr.)

- Senior Year: 2015-2016
- “The Tail Gunner”
- 17th 5A Region 5
- 16:30 PR
- 9:56 at Sea Level
- 10:02 and 4th place at the Varsity Continental League Champs
- Key reason for boys success in 2015 (State Champs, NXRSW Champs)
- You never know how a kid is going to develop

A Simple Philosophy for Coaching Freshman

- Don't go somewhere until you need to go there.
- Just because you can do something, doesn't mean that you should.
- Build the foundation mentally, emotionally, and physically for future success.
- Teach TEAM culture and find ways to make freshman feel that their efforts contribute to it.
- [“Long Term Athlete Development: A Case Study for a 9:15 HS 2-Miler Becoming a sub 2:17 Marathoner”](#)





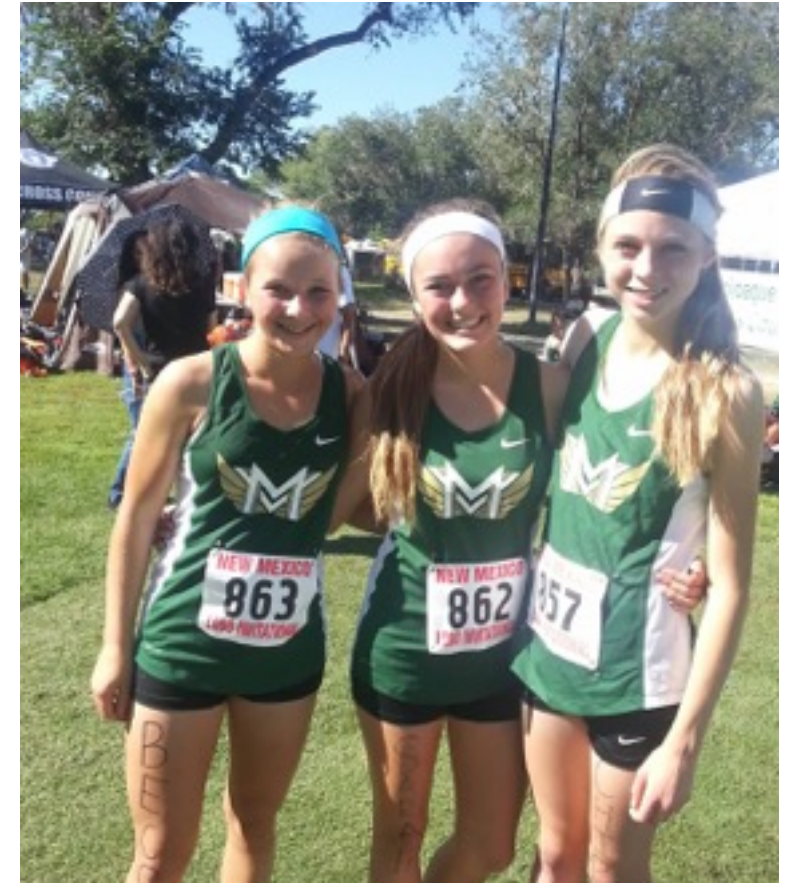
**Freshman are a blank canvas, what picture
will you paint?**

Blank Canvas

- Teach TEAM Culture
- Basics of Training and Recovery
- Multisport Athletes
- Learning to Compete
- Working Towards the Future



Teach Freshman About Your TEAM Culture



Teach Freshman About Your TEAM Culture

- **Talk to the upperclassmen about their responsibility to the freshman**
- **Ride shares**
- **Team communications (Blog/Remind)**
- **Teaching freshman parents about your TEAM's culture as you teach the kids**
- **Making training accessible to parents and kids**
- **Hanging out after practice**
- **Breakfast**
- **Goal Setting w/ Freshman**
- **Make them believe running is cool!!!!**



Training and Recovery for Freshman



Training and Recovery

- What does their running background look like before joining your TEAM? (Middle School, club, P.E., video games)
- Hold them back when they are young, even if they are fast.
- Teach them what “The Process” looks like to be successful.
- Teach the fundamentals of recovery (easy running, sleep, nutrition, hydration, stress management).
- Young kids can have drastic improvements simply by consistently running for the 1st time. It does not have to be a lot.



Training Tricks For Freshman Success

- **Give options for distance (i.e. run 20mins or 30 mins)**
- **Walk until you can run (Build up to 15 mins to start)**
- **Negative split runs instead of tempos or progressions (i.e. go out 10 mins easy, come back faster)**
- **Sit an interval out and then join back in (great for your fast freshman, or kids that want to try to run with your top athletes)**
- **Add 5 mins to the long run option**

Sample 2017 Summer Training Weeks for Freshman

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
June 5-11 (week 1)	15-20 mins	15-25 mins	15-30 mins	15-25 mins	15-30 mins	15 mins on your own	REST
July 3-9 (week 7)	25-40 mins hilly + 6 strides	Negative Split Run: 10-15 mins easy, come back faster	20-30 mins	25-35 mins + 6x10 sec hill sprints	45 mins (or add 5 mins to your longest run since June 1st)	15-25 mins on your own	REST
Aug 28- Sept 3 (week 13)	Fartlek: 2-4 sets of (2 mins fast, 2 easy, 1 min fast, 2 easy) Sit out a set if needed.	25-35 mins	30-40 mins (Last part of run do 3 laps of 200m stride, 200m easy)	Starbucks Run (3 miles) + 4x150 cut- downs	Arapahoe Inv. Frosh/ Soph Race + 1 mile cooldown w/ TEAM	Up to 60 mins (or add 5 mins to your longest run since June 1st)	REST

The MultiSport Freshman

- Most freshman do not view themselves as runners only.
- This is okay, let them make that decision for themselves as they get older.
- Teach them the value of communication, and have them talk directly to you about other practice commitments.
- If you have a policy about being at practice to run varsity, communicate that as well.



2018 Downers Grove North XC



"DON'T I KNOW YOU?"





Learning to Compete





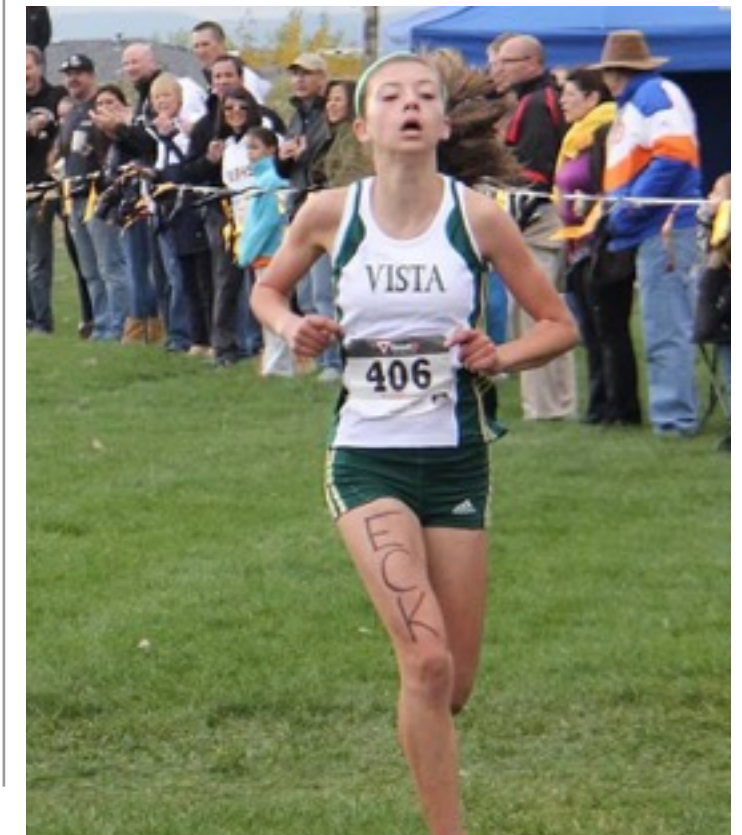
Learning to Compete

- Set them up for success
- Start w/ practice
- Frosh/Soph and JV/Open races, even for your varsity type freshman early on
- Put them in situations that challenge them in races (run varsity or JV when your regulars are not racing if they are ready)
- Race young kids more often. During track race them in all distances 400 to 3200. This can help you learn the athletes strengths.
- Celebrate the young kids in front of the whole TEAM (Superman Shirts and Trophy Giveaway)
- Give them a chance to contribute to the success of the entire TEAM (Open Races and Leagues)
- Racing: Freshman Boys vs. Freshman Girls

Continental League Championships



Working Towards the Future



Working Towards the Future

- **Have in mind how you will progress athletes through a career. Adjusting the plan is okay as you move forward.**
- **It takes a year or two to understand how an individual athlete responds to training and stress. Be patient.**
- **Better to hold them back early, than to give them too much when they are young. Even if the athlete wants more.**
- **You can help athletes break through plateaus by changing the stimulus each season.**
- **Look for things you have not “added to your canvas” moving forward.**



Sample 4 Year XC Progression

	Volume (speed of athlete will dictate volume)	Races	Threshold/ Tempo Training	Long Run	5K Race Specific Work
Freshman	20-35	10+	10-15 mins	Up to 60 mins	2400 to 3200 meters
Sophomore	30-45	8-10	15-20 mins	60-70 mins	3200 to 4000 meters
Junior	40-55	6-8	20-25 mins	65-80 mins	4K-5K
Senior	50-65	6-8 (maybe less)	25-30 mins	75-90 mins	5000 meters



**2008 Olympian
5,000 meters**



**2012 Olympian
10,000 meters**

Matt's High School Track Progression

800 Progression

Frosh: 2:20

Soph: 2:15

Jr: 1:59.92

Sr: 1:55.12

1600 Progression

Frosh: 4:59.72

Soph: 4:31.03

Jr: 4:17.37

Sr: 4:11.37

3200 Progression

Frosh: 10:04.98

Soph: 9:43.77

Jr: 9:14.1

Sr: 8:53.79



Matt's High School Mileage Progression

- **Freshman: 30-35**
- **Sophomore: 40**
- **Junior: 50**
- **Senior: 60**
- **See Coach Dave Denny's quote from handout about Matt's HS training***

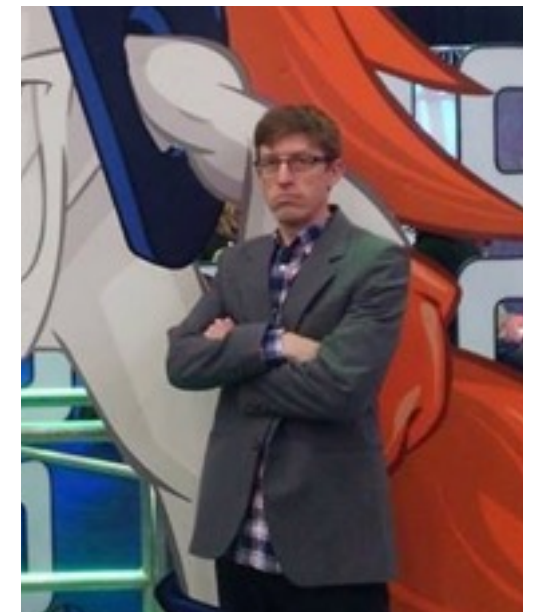
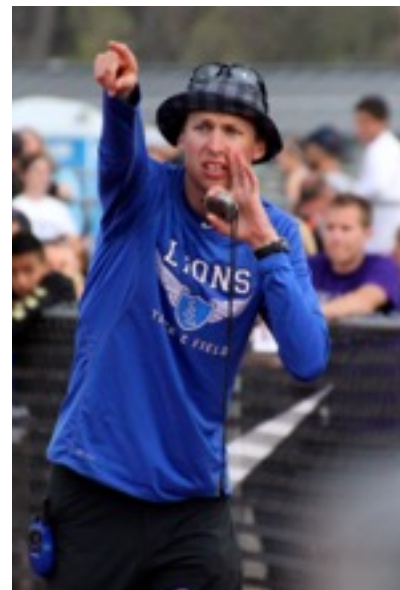


Final Thoughts

- You never know how someone will develop, especially a 14 year old kid.
- Spend as much time (or more time) w/ your young kids as your older varsity.
- By the time they are upperclassmen they will be more independent.
- They will also be ready to teach your new freshman runners.
- Most importantly let them be kids, enjoy the process, and have fun!



Questions?



Thank You!

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