



## Fueling muscles

By Coach Roy Benson

Carbohydrate in the form of muscle glycogen is the primary energy fuel for track and field training and competition. Since most track events are of short duration, they do not require constant mid-race replenishment of carbohydrate. However, carbohydrate supplementation during a workout can help you train harder now, so you can race faster later.

During intermittent bursts of intense activity, which are the norm for track workouts, muscle glycogen is used much faster than during steady aerobic exercise. That's why it is important during a workout to consume a sports drink that contains carbohydrates and electrolytes, which will help maintain fluid balance and conserve muscle glycogen.

New research may dramatically change our view of what constitutes an ideal sports drink. Scientists evaluated the effect of a carbohydrate/protein drink (ACCELERADE) with a 4 to 1 ratio against a conventional sports drink containing carbohydrate only and water during intermittent exercise simulating a track workout.

The results were dramatic. The carbohydrate/protein drink increased endurance 24% more than the carbohydrate-only drink and 54% more than water. The bottom line: consuming a sports drink with a 4 to 1 ratio will help you sustain your training intensity and prepare you better for competition.

Roy Benson is Director of the Smokey and Green Mountain Mike Running Camps and a contributing editor to Running Times ([www.coachbenson.com](http://www.coachbenson.com)).



# from the editor

E. Gary Hill

I NEVER CEASE TO BE AMAZED at how little the general public knows about our sport. No more evidence of that is required than for me to be in a social situation with non-track strangers, who upon learning of my occupation are quick to tell me that they're intimately familiar with the magazine. If everybody I ever met really did read us, I would have retired to a secluded mountain-top valley in Switzerland years ago.

Even after I convince these well-meaning souls that they're thinking of either *Road & Track* or *Field & Stream*, I then have to fend off endless queries about every other sport under the sun. But hey, after 32 years at *T&FN* I figure answering inane questions is just part of my job title.

### The "amateur" label continues to hamper track's development

However, I'm not sure which is worse: people who don't know anything about the sport or those who know just enough to be dangerous. Those who file track athletes away in the wrong pigeonhole.

While at a dinner party the other night—with a group of otherwise very educated and intelligent people—I was asked to explain why I was going to the Millrose Games. Or, more precisely, why the athletes were. The folks couldn't get it out of their heads that track meets exist solely to qualify for the Olympics. When I explained that there was a regular track & field circuit, with people competing in meets that were independent of anything else, the question became "why?" When I explained that getting to the Olympics (and the World Champs) was certainly a goal, and that while at the top end people competed for money, the shock was palpable. "Money?!"

Now we were down to the crux of the matter. Enter the dreaded A-word: the "amateur" label continues to dog our sport and hampers its ability to be recognized as the real-life endeavour that it is. Don't misunderstand me: there's nothing wrong with competition for competition's sake. Indeed, it's an integral part of track & field, just as it is in baseball, football or any other sport you can name. But to be recognized as a "real" sport in the modern world, there has to be a professional element at the top.

The IAAF has finally realized this, changing its name from International Amateur Athletic Federation to International Association of Athletics Federations. That's a start.

Domestically, we've got a tougher row to hoe, as our various alphabet organizations all contribute to the problem, even if it's surely without malice aforethought:

- Start with the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union). The name says it all. For many kids/parents, their first exposure to track is through this group's age-group programs.
- The NCAA, next up the ladder, remains steadfastly against compensation for athletes at the collegiate level, no matter what the circumstance.
- USATF got its mandate from Congress through the Amateur (there's that word again) Sports Act of 1978. That means it has to act as the umbrella organization for the sport from cradle to grave. So decisions affecting international-class athletes can be effected/affected by those who have no interest or understanding of their needs. (As a baseball analogy, think of Little Leaguers making rules for the World Series.)

• The USOC has to rely on the public for support in keeping the Olympic movement going, so it has to tiptoe around the fact that some tracksters are pulling down 6-figure incomes when it goes looking for donations.

None of these people are "bad guys," but it's little wonder that the public perception of our sport doesn't jibe with reality. And in the end, that hurts us.