



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 Nike Running Camps and a contributing editor to Running Times (<http://www.coachbenson.com>).



from the editor

E. Gary Heil

THE MILLROSE WOMEN'S HIGH JUMP, which is explained in some detail on p. 12, seemed to arouse a passionate response in all who saw it. Bringing passion to the sport is never bad, even if it does cut both ways, as it did in New York.

Bad passion—from the guy in the crowd with the loud voice who yelled “@#\$%!” when the tight-time-frame/few misses rules was explained, to the people who booed when I announced to the crowd that the whole competition had taken less than 15:00, to those who wrote irate letters to *T&FN*, many longtime fans didn't buy the concept. They feel it wasn't “real” track. And they're right.

Good passion—but elsewhere in the issue, you'll find Craig Masback saying it was the most exciting high jump competition in Madison Square Garden in years. He's right too. And as the sport continues its struggle to find its rightful place in the modern sports world, more not-real track & field may well be what's called for.

Overlooked by everyone, however, was the real significance of the Big Apple experiment: the secret to a fast-paced vertical jump lies not with the athletes, but with the judges and the way they have to enforce the rules on measurement. Because of the “exhibition” nature of the Millrose competition, the standards were pre-marked so that effecting a height change took only a matter of seconds instead of 5 minutes.

OK, when there's a World Record on the line, it adds to the drama to see a couple of guys teetering on a stepladder, micrometering the bar to within an angstrom of perfection. But during the course of the competition, do the fans really want to see that kind of hairsplitting? I think not. They paid to see the jumpers jump, not stand idly around. I would suggest that for 99% of the heights cleared in all high jump (and pole vault) competitions, the settings should simply be pre-marked on the standards and then taken at face value. The way they did it when you scissored into a sand pit in grade school, and the crossbar was a beat-up old thing held resting on a couple of spikes poked into holes somebody had drilled in a 2x2. It's the essence of the competition that's important.

I've got two other radical solutions—one that applies to the U.S. only—to making the vertical jumps more popular. The first concerns number of attempts. You may recall that in a previous column I came out as a supporter of the 4-tries only setup in the throws and horizontal jumps. Too much time is wasted on marks that don't have any significance. Nonetheless, I think that not only should the vertical jumpers not be given fewer attempts, they should also have *more*. That's right, more.

Next time you're at a meet, listen to what incites the crowd's passion the most. A great battle up the homestretch comes first, of course. But what's next is an attempt in a vertical jump (PV more than HJ). Whether it's a miss or a make, the crowd reacts with an “oooo!” or an “ahhhh!” If the crowd is eating it up, why don't we give them more, not less?

The second suggestion, U.S. only, is for USATF to ignore IAAF rules (which it does in other places, so don't say that's not possible) and allow half-centimeter measurement in the verticals. Why? So the two events can be contested in full inches. Because of the nature of metric-to-English conversion, the Millrose women jumped at 5-8³/₄, 5-10³/₄, 6-1¹/₂, 6-2, 6-3¹/₂, 6-4³/₄ and 6-6. Aside from the illogic of not jumping at full inches, the amount the bar was raised each time wasn't the same in English, even if the metric was.

And worst of all, since nobody seems to make an everyday indicator board with fractions, a fan looking down would think they were jumping at 5-8, 5-10, 6-0, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4 and 6-6. Only twice in eight heights did something as crucial as the indicator reflect reality. Would anybody watch a ball game with a 25% accuracy rate in reporting the score?

Gee, maybe they shoulda just jumped at 5-8, 5-10, 6-0, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4 and 6-6 to begin with.