

"Balancing Speed and Marathon Training"

From the September 2001 Port City Pacers PaceLetter

By now, just about everyone in town knows that L'Arche Mobile will be hosting Mobile's first marathon this winter, the First Light Marathon on December 30th. Excitement is growing along the Gulf Coast, and a lot of Pacers are planning to run or walk the certified (thanks Leon and John!), mostly (except for the hills) flat, Downtown to west Mobile and back course.

If you're one of the Pacers planning to perambulate from the port to the park (Langan) and back, your training should be starting now. But how will focusing your training on a marathon in December affect your ability to race well at distances from 5K to the half marathon between now and December? Well, you can't serve two masters. By that I mean it's hard to train for raw 5K speed while you're trying to build marathon endurance. On the other hand, a good runner is a good runner is a good runner. (Or a good walker is a good walker is a good walker...) By training for the long race you'll be stronger in your 5Ks and 10Ks; by training well for 5Ks and 10Ks (and adding enough long runs to build sufficient endurance) you can get yourself ready for a fast marathon.

But here's a bit of great news: Our Pacer race schedule is perfectly laid out to get you prepared for a late December marathon: from the Hurricane 5K and the Harvest Festival 8K in September, to the Senior Bowl 10K and Turkey 10-Miler in November and the Holiday Half-Marathon in early December, you can take your 5K speed and apply it to progressively longer efforts leading up to the marathon at the end of the build-up.

What follows is a sample schedule for a runner or racewalker wanting to be prepared for the First Light Marathon, but also ready for a series of progressively longer club races: The Hurricane 5K, Harvest Festival 8K, Senior Bowl 10K, Turkey 10- Miler and the Holiday Half- Marathon. For clarification... Alternate "A" and "B" weeks in succession; do "C" weeks before races, including the week before the Marathon.

Economy intervals are used mainly to develop efficient technique, but they also make your longer interval workouts seem easier. (And those intervals make the tempo workouts more manageable, and the tempos make the races and marathon pace workouts more manageable, and those efforts make your marathon pace seem easier. Got it?) Economy intervals early on should be close to 1-mile race pace, but later in the schedule you should back off a bit, to 5K pace or so.

Tempo workouts should be solid efforts, but not quite race pace for whatever distance you're doing; perhaps 30 seconds per mile slower. Finally, marathon pace days should be (obviously) pretty close to your expected marathon pace, while long easy days can be as much as 2 minutes per mile slower. Oh, and it wouldn't be a bad idea to do some of your mileage around Spring Hill-- those hills aren't going to be any smaller in December than they are now!

Speed/Marathon Training Schedule

| Week A: Saturday = Long EASY day | Week B: Saturday = Marathon pace day | Week C: Sunday = Race (shift back one day for Saturday races) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| M. Easy 30-45 minutes | M. Easy 30-45 minutes | M. Easy 30-45 minutes |
| T. "Economy" intervals. 10 -12 x 200 meters w/ 100-meter recoveries. | T. "Economy" intervals. 8 - 10 x 400 meters w/ 2 -minute rests. | T. 1 mile easy, then 2 x 1 mile @ marathon pace to 1/2 marathon pace with 1-minute |

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| | | rest between. |
| W. Easy 30-45 minutes | W. Easy 3 - 5 miles | W. Easy 2 - 3 miles |
| Th. "Tempo" 10 minutes easy, 20-30 minutes hard, 5 minutes easy. | Th. Threshold Intervals. 5 -6 x 1/2 mile @ 5K pace with 2:00 rests in September - mid-October; 6 - 8 x 1-mile @ 1/2 marathon pace in mid-October - December. | Th. Easy warm-up then 3 miles @ marathon pace. |
| F. Off or easy 30-45 minutes | F. Off or easy 30-45 minutes | F. Off or easy 20 minutes |
| Sa. Long EASY 8 - 20 miles | Sa. "Not so easy" 8 - 12 miles. | Sa. Easy 20 minutes, plus 4 x :30 second strides @ marathon pace. |
| Su. Easy 30-45 minutes | Su. Off | Su. Race!!! |

Long day progression starting September 8th, 16 weeks before the First Light Marathon:

5K Race, 8 EZ, 10 EZ, 8K Race, 10 Pace, 12 EZ, 10 Pace, 12 EZ, 10K Race, 14 EZ, 10 Mile Race, 16 EZ, 18 EZ, 1/2 Marathon Race, 20 EZ, 8 Pace, Marathon!!!

***Pace = Expected marathon pace; EZ = Easy**

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