RAPID SPRINTING.

Malcolm W. Ford Writes of Short Distance Running.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE START.

Different Methods Practiced by Various Schools of Athletes—The Positions of Legs and Arms.

Sprinting or short distance running is probably the first game tried by the average man who visits an athletic field to see what he is good for. The idea of running fast attracts most men, and as the only way to determine how speedy one may be is to try and see, it is quite natural that this game should be much more than usually popular. Sprint races include distances from 300 to 440 yards. The first distance is generally considered the limit, although some claim that a 440 yard run is a sprint quite as much as a 220 yard run is. A distance which is a sprint for one man may not be so for another, for the term defines a distance where full speed is sought for from the beginning to the end of a race. As men vary at distances in which full speed

POSITION FOR "SETTING."
[From an instantaneous photograph.]

can be maintained, there can be no specific distance mentioned as being the limit of a sprint. The large majority consider the extreme point to be anywhere from 250 to 350 yards. In running distances of 400 yards and over an athlete will hold himself in during the first part of the race, and the longer the race is the more importance this holding in gains.

In all races where full speed is maintained from start to finish one essential point is to be able to start and get into one's stride with as little loss of time as possible. The shorter the race, the more important this point is, and many contests have been won by gaining an advantage of two or three feet in the first five yards and holding, without being able to increase the advantage to the end. An athlete winning a race of that kind shows, not that he is more speedy than his opponent, but that he is able to get into his stride sooner and thereby get going quicker.

When foot racing was young and the different contests were not governed as well as they are now, the habit of "beating the pistol" used to be so prevalent that an athlete was considered quite a novice if he could not steal a yard or two on the pistol firer. Beating the pistol means that after a runner has been told to get ready, he starts on his journey before the pistol has been fired, but after the starter has begun to pull the trigger. In this way an advantage (unfair, of course) of a fifth to two-fifths of a second can sometimes be gained over competitors who wait, honestly, for the signal. It can readily be imagined what a peculiar sight it was when four or five sprinters in a race anticipated the firing of a pistol and ran off. Six or eight years ago such a scene at amateur sports was quite common, but now it would be considered a curiosity, so much has the management in this line improved during the last half dozen years. Even now in localities where athletics are not well established, beating the pistol in the sprint races is practiced, but the important games nearly always have a pistol firer of known ability who is paid for his services, and as his reputation depends upon his getting the men off evenly in a race, there is a natural incentive on his part to do the work properly.

The method employed by several pistol firers of known reputation at the present time to dispatch contestants in a sprint race is, after the clerk of the course has put them on their marks, to tell them to "set." Most of them will then assume a position similar to that shown in the illustration "Position for Setting," and they will wait there for some seconds, or until the pistol firer is convinced that all are steady, when he will pull the trigger. The advantage of holding one's self in the attitude shown by this illustration is that with the arms extended and the position which the feet are in one can get under way very quickly. It will be noticed that one foot is about twenty inches back of the other. The front foot, which in this case is the left one, is supposed to be on the line with the toe of the hind foot resting in a little hole dug in the track to get a push

OTHER METHODS OF STARTING.
[From an instantaneous photograph.]

from. An athlete in this position when he hears the pistol brings his left arm back and his right arm forward until both are about parallel with the body, when the motion he has made with his feet in the meantime will necessitate his extending them again in about the same positions, only to bring them back in exactly the reverse position which is the commencement of the arm swing used by all sprinters.

There are two ways of using the feet in this style of starting; one is to step out with the back foot when the arms are drawn half way back, and the other is to leave the back foot where it is and take a short stride with the front foot, the arms in this case going through the very same motion as when the first movement of the feet is made with the back one. The length of stride when the back foot is used first would bring the first step about three feet in front of the scratch mark which is where the front foot is resting. If the front foot is put forward first, it will strike the ground anywhere from nine to fifteen inches in front of the scratch line, and the movement is followed by a regular stride made by the back foot. The two styles, as can be seen, are quite different, and each method has many advocates.

Some claim that the short stride with the front foot when the legs are already some distance apart, makes them sag too low by further spreading the legs, and that an athlete cannot recover so well to take another stride, simply on account of the sagging when the body is not enough in motion to stand it. The advocates of this style say that the position of "setting" necessitates their bearing nearly all the weight of the body on to the front leg, and that a short stride of about a foot with the front leg puts them better in motion than if they struck out directly with the back foot, which necessitates, before a stride can be taken with it, the putting of a certain amount of weight on it so that it can be pushed from. Nearly all the weight being on the front foot brings about a loss of time after the pistol is fired in transferring some of it to the back foot before the latter can be used in shoving.

Another way of holding the arms when the back foot is used to spring from is shown in the illustration, "Other Methods of Starting." The athlete in this picture has his left foot at the scratch line, as in the first illustration, but his right arm is forward and his left arm is pointing back. He will use no half swing with his arms, but will, when he hears the pistol, step out with his back foot, bring his right arm back and left arm forward all the way, and go on with his arm swing, which is rendered possible by it being originally commenced in accord with the stride of the legs. The style is not used very much, although it has been proved by some sprinters to be good enough to be worthy of a trial. After an athlete is at home with a certain style of starting it would be rather foolish for him to change his style unless he is convinced that some other method is better than the one he uses. If he continually practices different styles confusion will show itself in the race, and as so much depends upon the start of a sprint race an athlete should feel thoroughly at home when on his mark and be able to move from it with a sensation that he has been long accustomed to.

Another style of getting ready to start is shown in the illustration, "Other Methods of Starting," by the athlete, who has both hands and right foot at the scratch mark, stooping down with his left knee just above the ground. It was used successfully by C. H. Sherrill, the 100 yard champion of America of 1887 and inter-collegiate champion 100 yard runner of 1888 and 1889. In his later races he has not used it, but stands on the mark, as shown in the illustration, "Position for Setting." The stooping start is not popular, and Sherrill said he adopted it to prevent falling over the mark, which he seemed unable to avoid when he used the regular position for setting. Some sprinters have used the stooping start to good advantage, but outside of its making Sherrill hold his mark, it was of no advantage to him in getting into his stride.

At the time he used it he was running very fast and won his races, although it was the universal opinion that he invariably lost a little distance at the start. The principle of this style of starting is to rise quickly on the leg placed at the scratch mark, which in Sherrill's case is the right one, and step out with the other. A little push can be given with the arms, but it must necessarily be very slight. If the shoulders are stooped far enough to enable the arms to be bent, it brings the athlete too close to the ground. Sherrill was taught this style of starting at Yale college, but latterly he became reconciled to the ordinary style.

THE FIRST STRIDE.
[From an instantaneous photograph.]

The illustration called "The First Stride" shows two athletes in a race just after the pistol had been fired. It will be noticed that the one on the left hand side has brought his arms back and is giving the half swing as described before. It was a handicap race and the one on the left side had one yard allowance. The runner on the right is nearly at the extreme point of the arm swing. Both are on the left leg, but the one to the right is further advanced into his stride, for his right leg is being put forward and the angle of his body shows that when the stride is taken he would be almost level with his opponent even though he started a yard back. The position of the athlete on the left side looks as though his legs had a tendency to straddle, and there is not the direct front motion which is noticeable with the other.

To be able to start well in a sprint race requires a great amount of practice. The best way for an athlete to learn it is to have some one tell him to set, and start him either with the word "go" or with a pistol just as though he were in a race. His friend should hold him on his mark different periods of time and if any motion is made which resembles the athlete's premeditating the pistol he should be held until quiet reigns again. At the pistol he should run off, using rather short strides until he gains some momentum, when his regular running stride can be used. Anywhere from thirty to sixty yards is a good distance to run at each trial. Half a dozen or even a dozen of these starts whenever he practices will in time make him feel at home while standing on his mark and getting into his stride.

It makes no difference whether one is practicing for 100 or 300 yards, the starts should always be tried, and running the full distance occasionally should be done according to the athlete's feelings. In practicing for 300 yards, for instance, if the athlete wished to test his finishing powers he should try a stiff 200 yards and only a moderately hard 300 yard run occasionally.

Practicing starts not only teaches the athlete a quick way of getting into his running, but the action of the running itself is developed. Not so much attention to the finish of the race concerning probable staying powers, etc., is necessary as might be supposed by a novice. The finish of a race generally shows the strength of a man's staying powers, and this is developed more by starting than by finishing.

Malcolm W. Ford

Better Than a Diary.

For fifteen cents you can buy a neat and convenient pocket scrap book, large enough to contain the published accounts of 100 railroad accidents. If you got one Jan. 1, 1890, you have already pasted up sixty-three accidents and got a nice start. You can fill three such books in the year, and they are nice things to ponder over and wonder why no one has been held to blame.—Detroit Free Press.

THE KICKING LUMBERMAN.

How He Was Caught Through the Negligence of His Office Boy.

The numerous lumber dealers of Buffalo will appreciate the following true story.

In a New Jersey town is a gentleman engaged in the lumbering trade, whose fame as a kicker is not unknown to some of our Buffalo dealers. Try as hard as they might no dealer was ever able to ship this man as good stock as other dealers did. It is believed, in fact, by some lumber salesmen that this particular buyer relies more upon the rebates from kicking for his profits than upon a legitimate percentage added to the first cost of his stock.

On one occasion not many years ago he placed two orders with two rival concerns in the same market. The shippers in each case were instructed to make the grades good and to give careful measurements to avoid the customary kick and subsequent rebate in settlement.

But one day there came to each firm a letter, addressed to the other, complaining of the quality of the stock not being up to representations, and saying that the "goods were there subject to orders."

Each firm thought they had got a bit of breezy news about the other's methods of business, for each letter stated that it was "very queer that you are the only house I have any trouble with."

A sent the letter over to B with the explanation that it came to him, having been wrongly addressed. B sent an exact counterpart of his letter to A, with a like explanation. It was now clear to each that something was radically wrong and should be looked after. They held a council of war and decided to send their adjusters together to interview Mr. Kicker. The adjusters happened to meet by mere chance, of course, in Mr. Kicker's office.

No. 1 started the circus by stating that he was very sorry to learn that his was the only firm with whose goods he ever had to find fault, and hereupon drew the letter from his pocket and read it aloud. At this juncture adjuster No. 2 remarked that there must be some mistake somewhere, as his was the only firm with whom Mr. Kicker ever had any trouble, and he read his letter, which was an exact copy of the other, the firms' names being the only words differing. They both looked at their cringing victim and asked what explanation he had to offer. He said not a word, but wrote out a check for the face of each invoice and asked the gentlemen to receipt their bills.

They did not wait to see what became of the office boy, who had made the fatal mistake of mixing up those letters, which should each have been worth at least $25 to the kicker.—Warren G. Benton in Buffalo Express.

A White Deer Killed.

William Greer, who is engaged in the cattle business on the Canadian river, Deer's Fork district, shot and killed a white deer a few mornings ago, says a Dennison (Tex.) dispatch to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The deer had been seen on a previous occasion, and Greer spent all of one day in pursuit, but to no purpose. On that morning, while Greer was on the edge of a small tract of prairie, he espied the deer several hundred yards distant, standing in some sumach brush. Greer dismounted, and, crawling on hands and knees, keeping large trees between him and the deer, he finally got a shot which brought the animal down. It was small and perfectly white, with the exception of a black spot the size of a silver quarter on the left ear. The pelt was removed, and will be tanned and then forwarded to Gen. Sherman, under whom Greer served during the march to the sea.

Morphine the Czar Uses.

The czar of Russia has become such a confirmed slave to the habit of injecting morphine that he is now said to inject daily from twelve to fifteen grains of this seductive drug. When it is remembered that the dose of morphia usually administered by a doctor to a patient is from a half to one grain, it will be seen how the craving has increased in the case of the Emperor Alexander. The czar has made many efforts to break himself of a habit which must end disastrously if persevered in, but the result of total abstention from the use of the injection even for forty-eight hours has been such a terrible state of nervous debility and depression that he has not been able to persist in his resolve.—London Figaro.

Novel Street Car Motor.

A company is being formed to introduce a new street car motor, which is to be driven by compressed air applied at stations along the line. It is asserted by the controllers of the invention that the roads operating this system can be built and equipped for less than half the cost of cable car lines; that the speed can be instantly and accurately regulated up to twenty-two miles an hour; that the cost of operation will be three cents per mile as against nine or ten cents with cable or horse cars; that curves with a radius of but twenty feet and steep hills offer no difficulties to the motor. The manner of stopping, reversing and regulating the motion of the cars is declared to be practically perfect.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

Powers of Peculiar Ice Water.

A peculiar result of the drinking of ice cold water from a spring in Stonington, Conn., is reported. The water flows from a crack in a high rock, and the veins of a man who drinks from it begin to swell and he looks and feels as though he were about to burst for the next ten minutes. The swelling gradually subsides and no serious effect is felt except a slight buzzing in the ears. It is the talk of the neighborhood, and everybody is eager to try the effect of the water. A specimen has been sent to Boston for analysis.—New York Telegram.

A Seven Pound Cat's Eye.

A Ceylon paper, received by today's China steamer, gives an account of the finding of the largest cat's eye of which there is any record by a digger at Galle, Ceylon. It weighs nearly seven pounds. The finder was a moor man who had been very poor. A few months ago, however, his digging for gems was rewarded by finding a cat's eye which he sold for $5,000. Soon after he dug up another, for which he realized $10,000, and then his run of luck reached a climax when he unearthed his large stone, which is described as of perfect luster. He had been offered £19,000 by a syndicate of local dealers, but has refused, as he declares he can cut the gem into forty stones, each of which will bring £1,000. A short time ago he also found a larger cat's eye than this big one, but the ray was imperfect, so that it is not more than one-quarter as valuable. His total findings in one-half year, at the lowest estimate, will reach $150,000.—San Francisco Cor. Globe-Democrat.

Married by a Priest's Ghost.

The ghost of the Rev. T. Starr King married a couple at San Francisco on Sunday night. The spirit of the once celebrated clergyman and lecturer did not appear in person, but was represented by a spiritualist medium, who assured the lovers that they were as firmly tied together as if Mr. King had materialized and twisted the nuptial knot with his own hand. Marriage by proxy has hitherto been performed by representatives of the principals to the contract or by the representative of one of them. The San Francisco wedding is probably the first in which the officiating clergyman, and he a ghost, has been a proxy. There has been at least one specter bridegroom, but never before, so far as we know, has a ghost projected itself into the flesh in order to make two lovers supremely blessed. If such a proceeding should turn out to be illegal, no sheriff would ever be able to reach the offending ghost with a writ or an officer.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

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1890. 1890.

Spring Announcement!

Beg leave to announce to the multitude that our Spring and Summer stock is perfectly complete and ready for your inspection. The recent unfavorable weather caused no drawback on our usually heavy purchases. On the contrary, our stock for the coming season excels both in quantity and quality any of the previous springs in our quarter of a century's reign. A positive fact known to the most skeptical that we always handle none but first-class goods and cater to none but such trade, who appreciate a thorough reliable article, as, for instance, a garment that is well made up of dependent fabric, and more so, a perfect fit.

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