

Why So Many Miles?

Why do you guys run so much?

Running that many miles can't be good for you.

Why do you run ten miles when your race is only three?

There's no way I could ever run four/seven/ten miles.

As coaches, we get these questions and comments every season from students, athletes, parents, administrators and even coaches of other sports. Is there really a good reason for the kind of mileage we put in? The answer is an emphatic "YES!"

Longer runs strengthen the heart - Our long runs are typically an easy to moderate pace, meaning we can build our heart's strength without having to max out our effort. Our heart and lungs adapt to be able to get more oxygen to our muscles

Longer runs muscles to adapt - During these longer sessions, our muscles begin to open up more tiny blood vessels to get more oxygen. This builds endurance to perform longer at a higher level. The more we run (within reason), the more our muscles naturally adapt to improve our performance.

Longer, slower runs actually prevent injury - Endurance running helps our ligaments and tendons become both stronger and more pliable. However, they strengthen at a slower rate than muscles, so we have to work gradually to increase mileage so as not to overstress those connective tissues.

It takes time to build up to longer mileage, and that's why summer running is so important. We have a very time-tested and scientific approach to building mileage and endurance, so please talk with your coaches about how best to approach your training. Our general guidelines look something like this:

- Long run should be no more than 30% of total weekly mileage
- Long run should increase no more than one mile per week
- Total weekly mileage should not increase more than 5 miles per week

Our goal is to help each runner reach their individual potential, and we want to do it in a safe and healthy way that's sustainable throughout high school and beyond. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Coach Hesson or Coach Schwan!