



# Minnesota Distance Running Association

SUPPORTING MINNESOTA RUNNERS SINCE 1961

## MDRA Spring Marathon and Half Marathon Training Program Overview

This program is designed to prepare you for a fun and successful Grandma's Marathon (16-week training) or Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon (16-week training) or other fall races. This group training program is geared to runners of all abilities and levels. It is developed to encourage beginning marathoners/half marathoners while still meeting the needs of the more experienced runners. We emphasize the teamwork aspects of the sport along with the fun and enjoyment that can be provided through running with others.

Runners of various levels will register for the MDRA's Marathon and Half Marathon Training Programs. Because of this, runners will be divided into four pace teams based on their current fitness level. The teams have been given the following names with approximate training paces within that group (what an individual can run comfortably for one hour):

**The Terrapins:** Training Pace: 11:00 – 12:00 and up (4:45 to finish)

**The Kiwis:** Training Pace: 10:00 - 11:00 (4:00 to 4:45)

**The Kenyans:** Training Pace: 9:00 -10:00 (3:20 to 4:00)

**The Flying Finns:** Training Pace: 8:00 or under (3:20 or faster)

The distinction between these groups tends to blur as people gain fitness and reevaluate their goals. Today's Kiwi or Terrapin might be a Kenyan or Flying Finn later in the program. The coaches will help determine the best fit based on your current fitness level. It is better to start out in a slower group than one that is too fast for you.

Each group will have a Team Leader (TL); these individuals are experienced marathoners and are familiar with the MDRA training program. TLs will train with their teams and help the program participants to understand and complete the training runs and workouts. TLs also provide a source of feedback from the program participants to the coaching staff and assist in providing additional individual attention to program participants.

### TRAINING CALENDARS AND LOGS

The groups listed above help determine what group is appropriate for you based on your training pace. The next step will be to evaluate your starting point or your "current" level of fitness in which to start your mileage build-up during the 16 week training cycle.

To help guide you to the appropriate starting point, three Training Levels have been developed. The Training Levels are based on a person's average weekly mileage run comfortably during the past month prior to the kickoff of the training program. Calendars are used to outline the training at each level. The starting point for each Training Level is as follows:

Level 1: 20-35 miles for marathoners (10-15 miles for half marathoners) Level 2: 35-45 miles for marathoners (15-25 miles for half marathoners) Level 3: 45-55 miles for marathoners (25-35 miles for half marathoners)

It is critical to determine an appropriate starting point based on your current level of fitness. For example, if you have been running an average of 30 miles a week for the past month and can do that fairly comfortably, the starting point to

begin your training program would be to follow the Level 1 training calendar. The training calendars/levels are meant to be used as a guideline only. We expect adjustments may be needed depending upon your level of experience. Please see your coaches if you fall outside these guidelines and they can advise you on appropriate mileage based on your current level of fitness.

We encourage you to track the mileage you are running. A good resource to use is the training log in your MDRA Annual Calendar. We also encourage you to use the log to track any other information, such as cross training or how you felt that day. Please keep the coaches informed of any changes in your training or nagging injuries they should be aware of. Feel free to ask your coaches for specific feedback on your training.

## **MEETING AND RUN INFORMATION**

**Long Runs:** Saturday mornings are for long slow distance (LSD) endurance runs. The first Saturday we'll meet at 8:00 am with all remaining runs beginning at 7:00am. The Long runs start at 6-12 miles and build up to 12-20 miles. Directions/maps/water stops will be provided for the running locations. The Long Runs are a very important part of your training and should be run at a conversational pace.

**Tuesday Sessions:** Plan on meeting for weekly Tuesday evening sessions at 5:45 – 6:00p.m. Workout runs will begin from 6:00 to 6:15p.m. (see speaker information below) and last approximately one hour (sometimes longer). The Tuesday sessions start out with easy training runs to build your mileage base and graduate to optional faster paced workouts including strides, hills, intervals and tempo runs. Runners training for their first marathon or half marathon will be encouraged to run at a comfortable pace during workouts until they reach a conditioning level that enables them to participate in the faster paced training. **It is important to read the weekly email for the specific location of the Tuesday session because we will be meeting at a variety of locations.**

**Speakers:** Presentations and/or coaches' talks will be held after the Tuesday runs. The dates, topics and speakers will be communicated to you via the weekly class emails.

## **LOCATION INFORMATION**

For Tuesday night sessions, as well as Saturday long runs, we will meet at a variety of locations across the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. Locations may include, but are not limited to:

Wabun Picnic Area/Minnehaha Falls Calhoun Executive Center, Lake Harriet Bandshell, Nokomis Community Center, Bredesen Park, Sear's parking lot/ Finish line of TCM, Wirth Lake Beach, Minnetonka Civic Center, Parade Stadium, University of St. Thomas/ Summit Avenue

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

**Coaches:** The Coaches will email you twice a week. On Sunday's you will receive an email from the coaches regarding the Tuesday night workout and on Wednesday, you will receive an email from the coaches regarding the Saturday workout. There will be a dedicated class website where coaches will post all information about the upcoming training runs and relevant training topics.

**Facebook Group:** The group is intended to be a forum for registered participants to chat with your fellow runners and set up runs on non-class days, etc. Any specific correspondence with coaches should be done directly with coaching staff via email.

*Please let the coaches know if you are experiencing injuries, having difficulties or if you have concerns or questions. This program is structured, yet is also intended to be as flexible as possible to fit everyone's needs and goals. You are encouraged to work with your coaches so that the program works for you.*