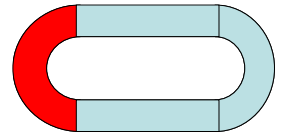


Strategy for 800 race

To be successful in the 800/1600 meters an athlete must be fit, above average speed and be aware of the constant changing of positions that occur during the flow of the race. It is possible for an athlete with a slower PR to win one of these races by putting themselves into the right position or have a better strategy than their competitors to win the race. In larger meets or the state meet level the quality is fairly even in terms of fitness and talent. So the race strategy developed by the coach & athlete and how well applied by the athlete could be the determining factor in who wins the race

Breaking down the 800 meter race into 100 meter components

1. **The first 100 meters** – get out at a fast pace at about 80-90% effort to establish momentum and competitive position. **Sprint for the first 7 seconds.** React to the smoke (eyes up!)



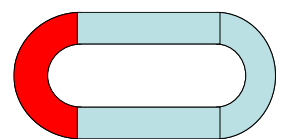
2. **The second 100 meters** – the race forms up and has slowed down to about 60-70%. You should be in your rhythm by the end of 1st 200 meters. Mentally you should feeling confident and staying relaxed physically.



3. **The third and fourth 100's** – held at a fairly even pace at about 50-60% effort.



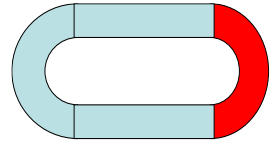
4. **The fifth 100** – starting the final lap, you will have a slight build-up of momentum around the turn at 60-70%. You need to mentally be telling yourself that you can do it. An optimist will always run faster than a pessimist. Don't fall asleep and think this an unimportant part of the race. The 400 to 500 meters are the 2nd most important hundred meters of the race. Do not settle in, If you do you should expect to get passed by at least one person.



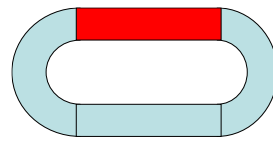
5. **The sixth 100-** the back straight away in the race becomes more aggressive and the effort should be about 70-80%. Talk yourself through it. For the remaining 300 meters of the race talk to yourself in your head. Stay positive. You should always be telling yourself that you can go faster. Keep pushing yourself every step to lift your feet quicker and harder then the time before, but maintain a relaxed physical motion with your arms and strides.



The 800 is won from the 400 – 600 mark!!
Move up if behind, put yourself in position to win



6. **The seventh 100** – around the turn is maintaining the build-up of speed from the 600 meter mark. The energy output is still between 70-80%. Focus to deflect the pain. When the pain sets in (and it will) focus on your form. Don't let your arms cross your body. Keep them as parallel as possible. Also if you can do it, try to get up on the balls of your feet for the last 150 meters. Getting passed in the final stretch of the race is just because someone wanted it more than you



7. **The eighth 100** – an all out effort to win the race. Keep your form! Focus to deflect the pain. When the pain sets in (and it will) focus on your form. Don't let your arms cross your body. Keep them as parallel as possible. Also if you can do it, try to get up on the balls of your feet for the last 150 meters. Getting passed in the final stretch of the race is just because someone wanted it more than you.

Running is a matter of efficiency. So establishing a solid and safe racing position early in the race is important. The best positions to establish in the 800/1600 meter events would be:

1. The leader
2. The outside shoulder and slightly behind the leader
3. The outside shoulder and slightly behind second place
4. Outside and behind third place

These positions allow for a fairly safe and competitive rhythm during the race.

Have a race strategy that works well for you should also be based on your strengths. For example, if you are a good sprinter at the end, the best strategy may be to hang back in position #3 or #4 or #5 and then "kick" the last 180 meters to pass the competition. This has the advantage of forcing someone else to be the pace setter, knowing you can most likely outsprint the competition to the finish towards the end of the race. If your sprinting speed is not exceptionally fast, however, then the better strategy may be to go at a fast pace throughout the race and try to build a 10 to 25-meter lead over the competition, discouraging others from trying to challenge you at the end of the race.

Splits for the 800m

Usually looking for a :02 difference between first and second 400m. This is harder for younger less experienced runners and a :04 difference is acceptable. **Even paced race (not even effort!)**

- Two minute 800m = 59/61

Starting lane strategies for 800/1600

- **Lanes 1 & 2:** Go out faster than normal. Take the lead and maintain it, or take the lead and move slightly out into lane 2 after the break line and let the inside fill in or drop back early and gradually work up around the pack
- **Lanes 3, 4, 5:** Come off the turn in the start and run nearly straight down the back stretch. The other runners will either speed up and cut in or drop back and cut in leaving the outside open.
- **Lanes 6, 7, 8:** Stay outside and let the pack of runners form up as the outside position should be easy to obtain

Taking the lead and bell lap

There are two basic reasons to take the lead and both are designed to control the pace;

1. Take the lead early to slow the tempo of the race
2. Take the lead to force the tempo of the race

Taking the lead just before bell lap and slowing the tempo can cause great confusion in the race as the runners are preparing to race down the back stretch. Slow the pace around the turn and then make a strong move coming out of the turn.

Running the last turn effectively is very important. Opponents rarely try to pass on the last turn as it takes too much energy. The leader should:

- Stay relaxed but maintain or slightly increase the tempo to ward off challenges
- Stay relaxed and slightly slow down. This will conserve energy and the opponent will assume the leader is fading. However, the leader then starts to finishing effort a little early which will catch those following unprepared.

The most dangerous areas for the front runners (positions 1,2, 3) is someone attacking from behind going into the last lap or from about 550 meters out. While the front runners are still in a good position and running comfortably, someone from the back may quickly move up the outside taking the lead and either slowing the pace or forcing the pace. This is a simple move if the race tempo is slow. If the runner takes the lead and slows the pace this will create a box for those who were leading.

Being in a box or being back in the pack are the two most difficult positions in which to respond from going into the bell lap. If someone is caught in a box during the bell lap or last 300 meters to go, the common reaction is to panic and make a desperate move by falling back and trying to come around the pack. Some runners will break out, sprint to the front and try to win the race too early. The best options to get out of a box:

- Stay up close in the race looking to the outside and making an aggressive move to get out at the slightest opportunity.
- Wait until the turn; a small gap will occur and let the inside runner push out.
- Wait until the last 300 meters. The box almost always falls apart!

Critical zones

- 1600 – last 400 m
- 800 – last 150m
- 3200 – last 600

Goal is to get to the *Critical zone* in position to win

Success in the critical zone separates the champions from the runner-up