

Some tips to joggers on shoe selections

Charles R. Young, D.P.M., a specialist in podiatric medicine and foot surgery, will write a series of columns on jogging for the Observer & Eccentric sports sections. Dr. Young, the team podiatrist for the Detroit Express professional soccer team, has offices in Livonia and Center Line.

In his first article, Dr. Young discusses shoe selection.

A MAJOR area of confusion facing most joggers occurs in their shoe-selection process. Although a wide variety of running shoes is available in most athletic and retail stores, the decision-making process is often based upon effective advertising, magazine ratings or such factors as color and word of mouth.

As a foot specialist involved in sports medicine, I feel it's essential to improve the level of understanding and sophistication in selecting a running shoe.

In discussing basic running-shoe qualities, a good deal of the material is based on personal and clinical experience.

The following 10 features are those qualities which I believe comprise a good, quality shoe:

- **THE TYPE** of rubberized tread pattern should be selected so as to fit the particular needs of the athlete. For example, the typical waffle or "snow tire" variety is usually suggested for outdoor surfaces where uneven terrain is common. A flattened smooth type of tread is often recommended for indoor tracks and class activities such as dance aerobics and floor exercises. The common herringbone pattern is a type well suited for both indoor and outdoor, but as we suggest, essentially on even surfaces.

- **THE WEIGHT** of the shoe is an important consideration, particularly in marathons. Although an individual determination, the assessment can readily be made through a comparative examination of the available shoes.

- **THE DURABILITY** of the outer sole to a large extent determines the life of the shoe. Certain types of materials generally speaking demonstrate a more durable quality than others. The black-carbon rubber sole, so common in waffle patterns, is a long-lasting material compared to its counterpart crepe, or gum, rubber. A white polyethylene sole is now available in certain shoe lines, and it appears very durable as well as shock absorptive.

- **VENTILATION**, or breathability, of the shoe is another important quality. Essentially, the choice becomes one of nylon, nylon mesh, or leather-and-suede combinations. I usually suggest the nylon or mesh uppers for warm-weather running due to its light weight and maximum level of ventilation. For cold- or wet-weather running, I suggest the suede-and-leather type of shoe for its greater warmth and lessened permeability.

- **ONE OF THE** most important features of a quality running shoe is adequate flexibility in the ball of the foot. During the toe-off phase of the gait cycle, it is essential that the sole of the shoe be flexible enough so as to allow proper motion and weight bearing to occur. With rigidity in the sole at the ball of the foot, an excess strain is placed upon the Achilles' tendon with possible symptoms resulting. One can easily evaluate this factor by flexing the various shoes in his hand and making a comparative judgment.

- **A SHOE** with ample toe room is another essential necessity in order to prevent possible complications. During the running gait cycle, there occurs excessive sliding and compression of the digits within the shoe. There must be adequate room to compensate for these existing motions and pressures, or else painful ailments of the nails will soon develop.

- **THE TOPIC** of heel flare is indeed an interesting issue, but here is confusion as to how much is actually good. A flaring out of the heel is a sound principle in that a wider base of support provides additional foot-and-ankle stability during the contact portion of gait. It is my feeling, however, that in certain shoes where the outsole has become excessive, from a comparative standpoint, the gait cycle itself can actually be interrupted with subsequent problems resulting.

- **MOST OF THE** running shoes today have a padded extension at the back of the heel. The purpose of this segment seems twofold. It provides added grip and conformity of the foot in the shoe, and it serves to protect the Achilles' tendon. My only comment regarding this feature is that one should lean towards the softer, well-padded and flexible type so as to lessen the possibility of irritation. Certain individuals cannot tolerate this extended piece and find it necessary to remove it entirely.

- **AN ADEQUATE** type of insole padding is essential in reducing the pressure and friction upon the bottom of the foot. It has been my experience that for the most part the available insoles are inadequate for this purpose. Commercial and profes-

Take a gander at fowl

Ever have to tell a loon from a grebe? Kathleen Dougherty, a naturalist at Independence Oaks County Park, will conduct a public interpretive program titled "Webbed Wonders" at 10 a.m., Oct. 4 at Independence Oaks.

Independence Oaks is on Sashabaw Road in Clarkston, 2 1/2 miles north of I-75. The program will begin with a slide presentation on identifying various waterfowl — including grebes and loons — in the park's Twin Chimneys shelter. Participants will be able to examine mounted bird specimens after the presentation. Also after the presentation, the group will look for various examples of waterfowl on Crooked Lake.

The program itself is free. There is a \$2 park entrance fee, \$3 for non-Oakland County residents.

For more information, or to register, call 625-0677.



jogging

Dr. Charles R. Young

sional insoles of better quality are available for dealing with these factors. Adequate padding in both the heel and ball of the foot is essential for foot comfort in the runner.

• **THE FINAL** trait is perhaps the most important one of all. Simply stated, "How does the shoe fit?" After all is said and done, the shoe must feel

good on the foot. Since each manufacturing line has its own inherent styling and structure, seemingly minimal differences can produce major changes in fit and feel. I caution runners as to the often-used statement regarding break-in periods. Do not allow your body to pay the price while the shoe undergoes its supposed adjustment fitting. Purchase a shoe that fits well and feels good.

Marian 'gridders' prepare for battle

Look out Regina High School!

"Steamroller," "Bruiser" and "Mary-Go-Round," three members of the seasoned Birmingham Marian High School football squad, are out to get you.

The powderpuff football game to be played at 2 p.m. Saturday at Harper Woods Notre Dame High School may sound like a soft, silly idea, but the Mustangs are a rough-and-tumble gang of gridders. They are ready to take on the vet-

eran Regina football players after weeks of vigilant daily practice.

Although this flag football game will be the first ever for Marian, an unusual game plan, new plays and blue-and-gold jerseys complete with nicknames are awaiting action.

The Marian Mustangs are coached by Tim Wallace, assistant coach Dan Romaine and several Brother Rice students, including John Maher, Tim Madigan, Mike Welage and Rich Weber.

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