

Darryl Varney

## What Running Means to Me

There are many people in the world who run. Each year tens of thousands of people complete the Boston Marathon, just one race out of countless others. There are also the people who run to lose weight, or keep lost weight from coming back. Then there are those who run for other sports, so they can succeed in their own. These are just a few of the endless reasons people venture out onto the roads each day. It is perhaps the most practiced sport in the world, with virtually everyone alive having run at one point or another. It might also be the most hated sport out there, punishing those who come unprepared. To most people running is a burden, a task that must be completed for whatever reason. However, there are a few of us who are wired differently from the rest of the population. We look forward to runs and often plan our day around our daily punishment. For us there is no choice whether or not we will run, it just becomes routine like eating and sleeping. The transition from human to runner is not a fast one, but once it is over there's no going back.

Over the last few years of high school running has played a huge role in my life. It used to be something I got involved in to stay in shape for soccer, but my junior year I gave up my love of soccer and became a year round runner. Ever since then I have never looked back. To me running has meant more to me than satisfying my competitive cravings. While I have had my share of success competing on the track, the most rewarding thing about running is not winning races. Going for a run has the ability for you to spend quality time alone, which is quite rare in our busy lives. Between all our high school activities, it is hard to find time to simply reflect upon life and just think to ourselves. It is like a daily bathing of my mind.

Besides helping to relieve daily stress, running has improved nearly all aspects of my life. A large portion of my friends are involved in track, and were met through running. Nothing can create a closer friendship than running everyday with the same group of guys. I have also become involved in our town's middle school track program. As an assistant coach for our young distance runners I have been able to appreciate working with different types of people and passing on my love of the sport to others.

As I prepare to leave for college next fall, I know that wherever life may take me I'll be running. From my days as a youth in MVS to running for North Andover, I have grown a lot as a person, and I owe a lot of that to running. It has taught me all the major