



The Benefits of Incorporating a Mindful Minute at Cross Country Practice

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Introduction

As an educator with 23 years of experience in boys' schools, I see how boys experience and ineffectively manage stress in academic, athletic, and social activities.

I wanted to help boys develop a behaviour to reduce stress. With mindfulness, educators can help boys with unwanted and unavoidable stress more effectively.

The Research Question

How does the incorporation of a Mindfulness Minute affect an upper school's boys' cross country team?

Research Context and Participants

The Roxbury Latin School has 300 boys in Grades 7-12. The 28 participants were those guys over there!



The Research Action

The change implemented for this action research was inserting a Mindful Minute during cross country practice.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected on the following and then analysed:

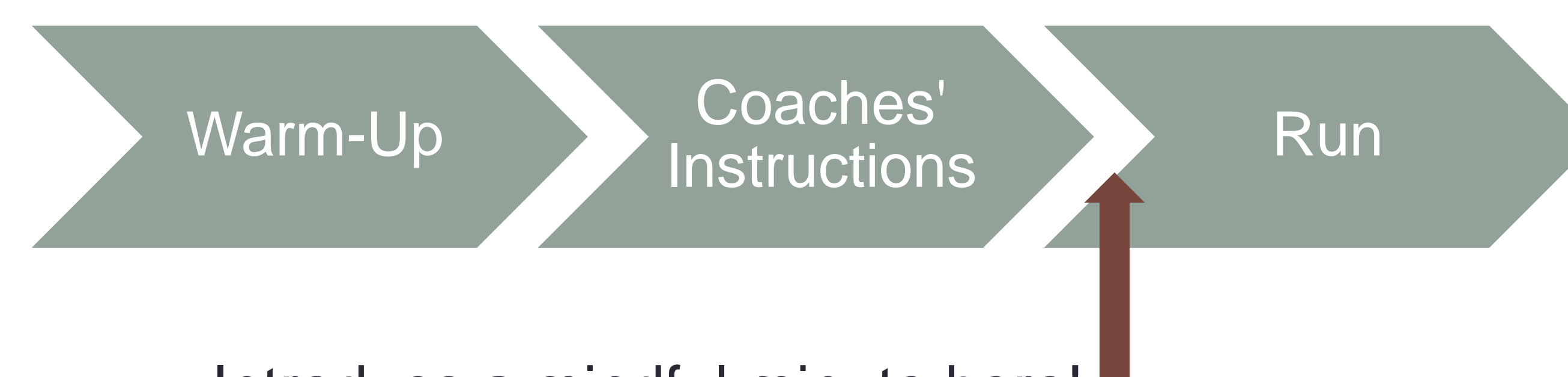
- How were the boys using mindfulness?
- What was their approach to incorporating mindfulness?
- What changed with mindfulness (if any)?

The boys described their experiences via questionnaires, group interviews (recorded, transcribed, and tabulated), (near) weekly reflections, and descriptive surveys.



The Roxbury Latin School Varsity Cross Country. As a coach of a competitive, upper level cross country team, I seek to provide boys with an athletic edge, improved study habits, and a life-long skill.

Cross Country's traditional practice process, with the implemented action change noted by the arrow:



Engaging in a Mindful Minute. The boys were instructed to "clear their minds," "relax their bodies," and "prepare for what's coming next." Note the variety in positions the boys chose.

Key Findings and Discussion

The action research data collected showed three themes from the Mindful Minute:

The boys used mindfulness to relax.

"Stepping away from the 'grind' a moment, being relaxed about whatever I'm about to do," Boy E.

"I use the mindful minute to relax my mind and don't worry about what's to come," Boy L.

The boys use mindfulness to improve performance.

"It feels like a smarter race, not just [feeling] more relaxed," Boy W.

"[It helped me] calm down before races, get my mind off school and [develop] a quieter mindset," Boy G.

The boys used mindfulness to enhance routines in school and academics.

"I use it to relax before bed and sometimes before a speech or concert," Boy K.

"[I use it] sometimes before I go to sleep or before studying for a test to clear my mind," Boy Y.

Conclusions

The findings were surprising regarding how the boys applied mindfulness in athletics as well as academic and social settings.

Incorporating a Mindful Minute during athletic practice (or class period) for the boys was justified as benefits included improved relaxation, changed attitudes, and the development of an adaptive behavior toward stressors.

Key Readings

David, D. (2009). *Mindful teaching and teaching mindfulness: a guide for anyone who teaches anything*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.

Kaufman, K., Glass, C., & Pineau, T. (2017). *Mindful sport performance enhancement: Mental training for athletes and coaches*. (Kindle Edition). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Rechtschaffen, D. (2014). *The way of mindful education: Cultivating wellbeing in teachers and students*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Further Information

This poster and more information is available at <http://www.theibsc.org/>

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