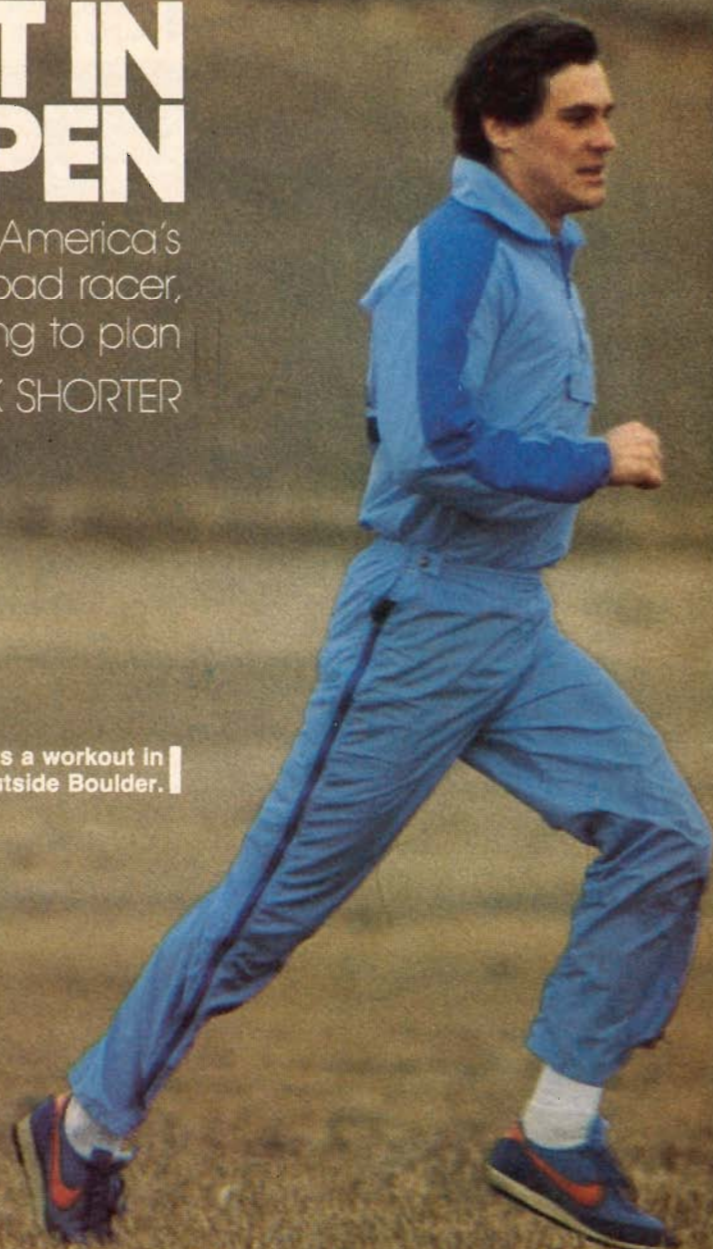


OUT IN THE OPEN

Herb Lindsay is America's
best road racer,
precisely according to plan

BY FRANK SHORTER

Lindsay enjoys a workout in
Eldorado Canyon outside Boulder.



Last month, in our review of the year, we reported that Herb Lindsay of Boulder, Colorado had earned the number-one position for the second straight year in The Runner/Heineken Road Race Rankings. After the results had been tabulated, we sent fellow Boulderite Frank Shorter over to Herb's place for a little chat. It took place in early December.

SHORTER: We just heard today that Rob de Castella ran 2:08:18 at Fukuoka. Does that make you want to run a marathon?

LINDSAY: I met Rob at the Maple Leaf Half-Marathon in Vermont and he told me that he was a marathoner then and I didn't believe him.

SHORTER: You believe him now. You ran 1:01:47 in Vermont. He finished in what?

LINDSAY: He lost contact with us. He was third, in 1:03. His friends kid him in Australia. They say that he won't have running injuries but he might have Dutch Elm disease. His legs, you know—tree trunks.

SHORTER: He has huge legs?

LINDSAY: His legs are bigger than mine and we were giving each other a hard

time about the size of our legs.

SHORTER: Is he a smooth runner? Is his form good?

LINDSAY: He's fairly smooth, yeah. He doesn't bounce a lot.

SHORTER: It looks like the 2:09 psychological barrier for the marathon is not there anymore.

LINDSAY: I agree.

SHORTER: What about in your mind? Are you just sitting there saying, "God, I can run 2:08."

LINDSAY: Well, it makes me think more realistically about 2:09 or 2:10 for me. I would like to run a marathon someday. It's something I'm going to have to do to satisfy myself, not to satisfy anyone else. It's just to let myself know that I'm able to run 2:10 or 2:11 or whatever.

SHORTER: Have you ever run over 20 miles at one time?

LINDSAY: In training runs occasionally. I ended up going 18 yesterday morning. I ran off the triple hop-back route. It just felt good. Surprisingly.

SHORTER: I think you plan things a lot more than most runners do. Have you made a conscious effort to select your races so that you maximize your chances of doing well in the rankings?

LINDSAY: Certainly it was as important this year as it had been last year. I recognized that the way to score well in *The Runner's* system was to run in several large road races and to consistently be in the top three or four in all those races. Of course it helps to already be established so that race directors are anxious to have you come to their race. It's kind of a snowball effect. Once you place well in one race, you're able to make it more easily to the next race and thereby gain points throughout the entire year. You can go to some road race in some out of the way place and win by a large margin, but where there's no competition . . .

SHORTER: I know you tend to operate in terms of goals, and you actually put them down on paper. I don't think a lot of runners do that. Throwing out the Boulder Boulder where you were hurt, you didn't finish worse than third in just about any race you entered, did you, last year?

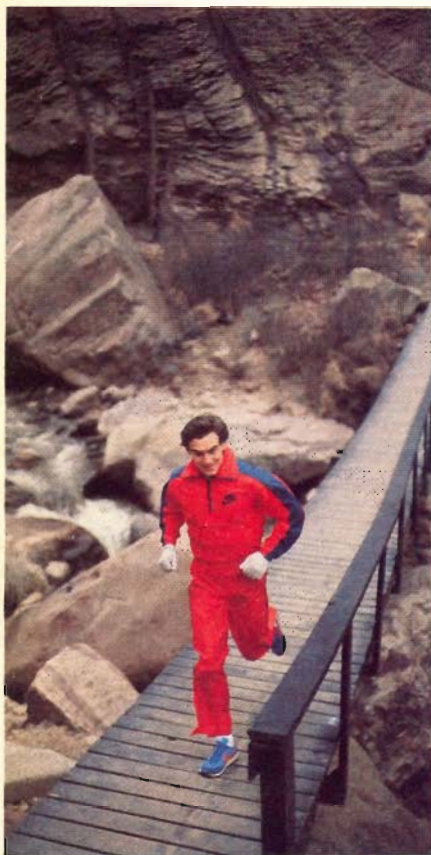
LINDSAY: Well, last weekend I was eighth in the cross-country nationals in California.

SHORTER: I'm talking about road racing.

LINDSAY: I was fifth at the Hibernia race, but I was coming off of a lay-off period.

SHORTER: You probably ran 25 races last

Left: Training in Eldorado Springs. Below: Herb keeps up his diary with meticulous care on the steps of the Lindsays' home in Boulder. Right: He works out regularly at a Nautilus club. Bottom: With his wife, Terry, Herb visits In The Wind, a favorite stop, to check out the kites.



year, right?

LINDSAY: That's exactly right. How did you guess the number?

SHORTER: I just, you know . . . just figuring. Twenty-five races or so. I kind of think that what does it is consistency and out of that 25 I bet you were first in about what—15 or 18 of them?

LINDSAY: I think it was 14.

SHORTER: Are you satisfied with the year compared to the previous two?

LINDSAY: There were some areas where I wish I could have done a little better. Of course, at the Bolder Boulder I would have liked to have been a little closer to you, but I was feeling a certain amount of fatigue from having raced against Greg Meyer's 25-km record in the Old Kent River Bank. I think that race gives me some indication of how I'm going to feel after a marathon. My muscles weren't hurting, but there just seemed to be a general state of fatigue . . . for a week and a half, two weeks.

SHORTER: Your mind said "go", your body said "no".

LINDSAY: Exactly. I wish I had done a little better there. I would like to run track, if I can sandwich this in with road racing, but it is difficult to be on the track

if you're road racing quite a bit. If you're going to set goals for yourself in road racing and you know that you have to perform quite well throughout the year and some of those road races are in April, May, June when some of the bigger track races are held in the United States, then you're going to have to sacrifice one or the other to a degree.

SHORTER: You mean you would rather be a specialist and specialize in the roads?

LINDSAY: Well, if I'm going to try and be the leading road racer I'm going to have to run some of those road races in April or May. If I hadn't run in the Old Kent River Bank Run I could have scheduled some track races to replace that but I wouldn't have gotten road-racing points for the rankings.

SHORTER: But you can also use the track races; you can run through them and just use them as training for the road.

LINDSAY: Well I am going to change things a little this spring. I'm planning to get on the track and run for some 5 Ks and some 10 Ks. I was hoping we'd get our new track done [in Boulder]. I was reviewing that last night. Most recently I felt as though my training and my whole daily routine have been stagnant and

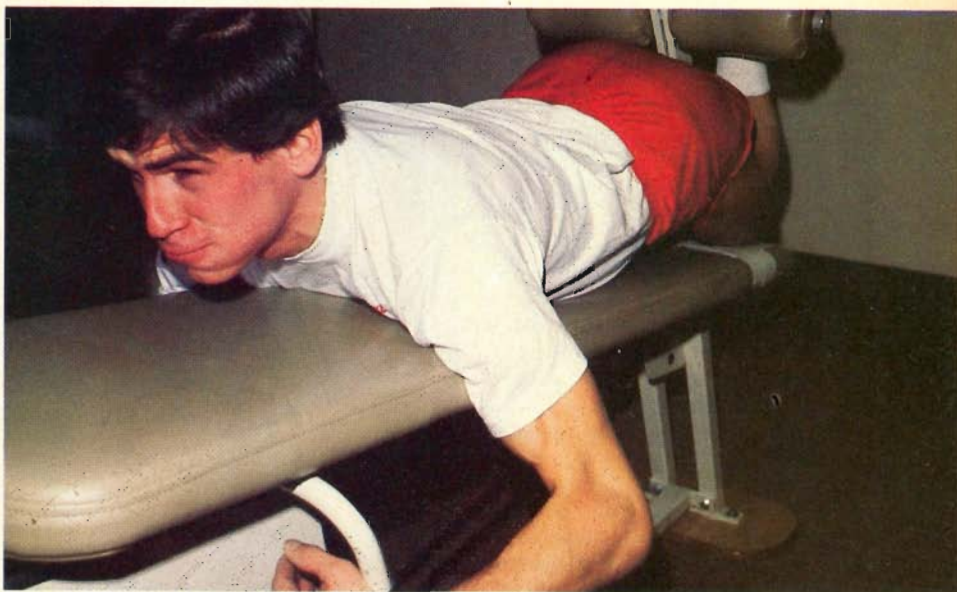
that's because it's reaching the end of the year and the goals I've set for myself one year ago have already been realized, or it's not realistic to approach them any longer so it's time to sit down and decide on new goals for myself in the coming year.

SHORTER: Is that why you jumped into the cross-country nationals? Did you do that for diversion, just to run something else, or did you have plans to try for the world championship this spring?

LINDSAY: I entered the cross-country national because I wanted to see Athletics West have the strongest team possible. Athletics West has done quite a bit for me in the last year and even though there wasn't any great incentive for me to race there I wanted to race with the team and provide it with the strongest chance of winning.

SHORTER: Was it fun to get back in cross-country after all that time?

LINDSAY: It was really an exciting race for me and one that I entered probably with not as much confidence as I enter most road races because I hadn't been training on such irregular surfaces—at least not running as fast as that. Having an illness and traveling a good deal had



taken a big chunk out of my training for two or three weeks before that competition. But I still wanted to go out there and race and see what I was capable of. I didn't feel as though I ran a real strong race, but I still managed to finish eighth and it gives me hope that I'm going to come back and run the trial. I understand it's going to be at altitude. In Pocatello. **SHORTER:** Were you keeping track of some of the other runners last year? Rod Dixon was closest to taking over the ranking, and he had some good races. He won Falmouth, he won in Virginia. Had you been kind of keeping an eye on what he was doing and figuring out what the situation was?

LINDSAY: Midway through the year I knew that the only person who realistically could catch me, even though Benji Durden and Bill Rodgers were actually closer at the time, was Rod. I knew that with races late in the year, September and October, Rod would have a chance of catching me, especially if he ran in New York and ran well. I'm glad he didn't run in New York because you get big points for the marathons. But I always considered him the biggest threat to my winning again, and I just said well, whatever

will be will be.

SHORTER: I want to ask you a little bit about training. When you're training for road racing do you train on the roads totally, or do you go on the trails and on the track?

LINDSAY: I haven't touched the track for the most part since my preparation for the 1980 Olympic Trials. I do most of my training as if I were doing it on a track, on the roadway. The same loops that I use for my long runs, I use for my interval training. I know that it will take me about

65 seconds to cover a quarter of a mile, so I will run quarters on my nine-mile loop. I mean it's on country roads. I'll run 15 quarters or 15 times one minute or I will run eight or 10 or 12 times two minutes and time my rest period also. Sometimes I run "ladder" workouts: six minutes as hard as I can, recover for half of that six minute period; five minutes for as fast as I can, recover for two and a half minutes, and so on down to one minute. I'm almost simulating a race situation.

SHORTER: When you're running a pace, just distance, do you run a lot of hard pace, or do you just run easy?

LINDSAY: When I'm running well I find that I always have to tell myself to slow down, because when I'm going out for a nice easy run, that's what it should be, a nice easy run. And if I had run intervals the day before I'm already fatigued, and this is the day just to run easy and to allow my body to rest. Those are the days when I like to go onto the trails, because the footing is such—irregular with lots of stones and rocks—that it forces me to slow down.

SHORTER: Do you run any tempo runs, where you're going 70, 80 per cent effort for six, seven or eight miles?

LINDSAY: I do that occasionally. I call it my sustained distance run.

SHORTER: On a whim, or . . . ?

LINDSAY: No, I plan those. I will run one workout where I run for a specific period of time, another workout where I'll run a sustained run, and then I'll come back and run very specific distances and times. So it kind of breaks up the hard run. It's still a hard effort, but it doesn't play on

In 1981 Lindsay competed in 25 road races, including this one, the Nike club championships in Philadelphia, where he earned one of his major victories.

my mind as much as watching a watch.

SHORTER: You seem to be very good at knowing when to back off from both hard training and racing. Just what goes on in your mind, what's your mental process, when you say, "Okay, I'm not going to race for three weeks or a month and I'm just going to back off," or, "This week's going to be an easy week." How do you convince yourself to really do it, and not go too hard?

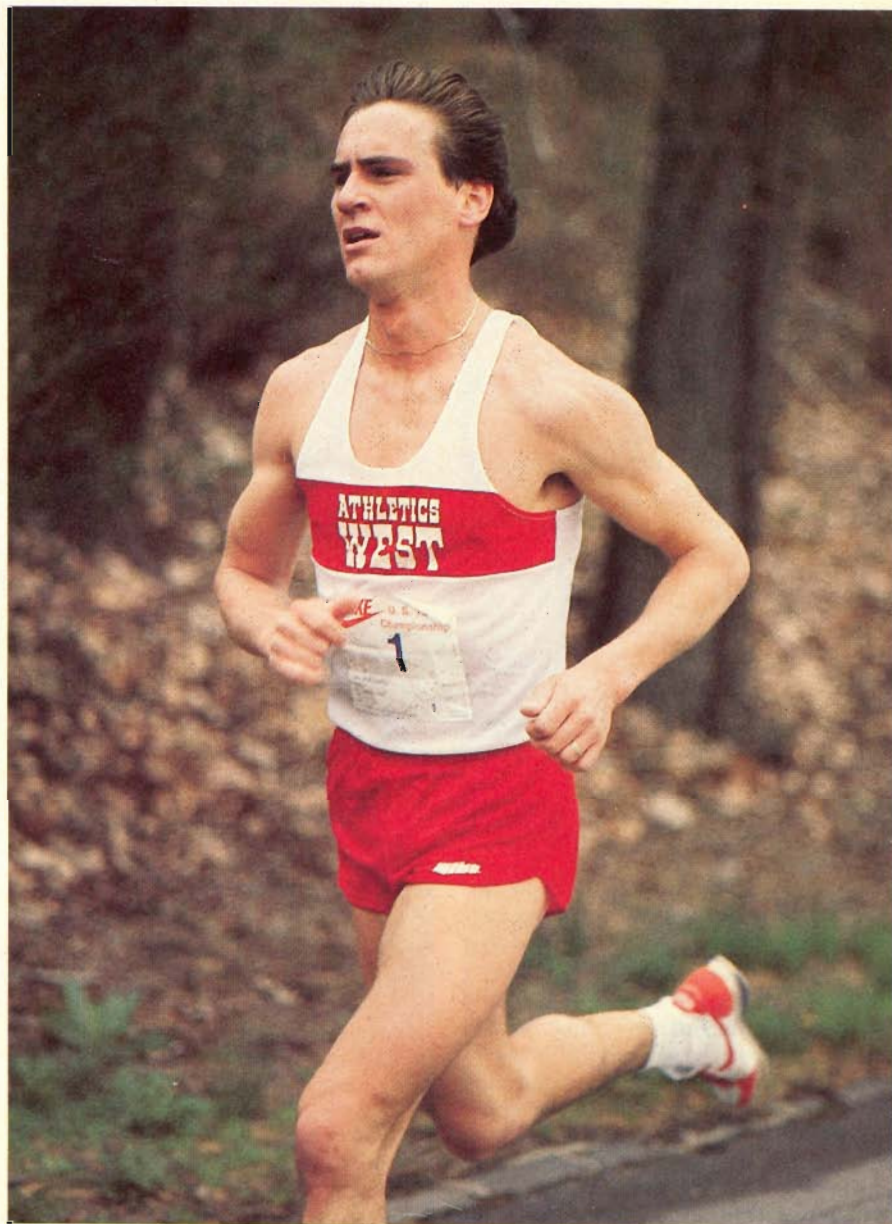
LINDSAY: It probably has to do with just writing it down somewhere, for the most part. Each day, usually just after my morning run, I sit down and plan the day's activities, and on Monday or Sunday I plan the upcoming week's training and other activities. And I'll decide then what days I'm going to try to do the hard workouts and how many hard workouts I need. I have to organize that and adjust it to travel schedules and so on. And every day I open that same book up and at the top of the page are my notes that I wrote three or four days before, and it just reminds me that this is what I want to be doing today. And I know when my body's in need of a rest, especially after a hard competition. I have watched some people, following a hard competition, who go out the next morning and run for an hour and a half. I cannot imagine going out and running an hour and a half as hard as they do after running very hard the day before. I might as well allow my body to rest for two days and then come back and start into my training.

SHORTER: Because you know you will do the hard efforts. They will be done.

LINDSAY: Yes, exactly. I don't have to pound myself, pound my feet into the pavement every day to give myself confidence. I know that if I space my workouts, allow for rests and recovery periods between the hard workouts, then I'm going to be better off. I don't have to go out and run hard every day.

SHORTER: That comes with experience.

LINDSAY: I think it's experience and a feeling and discipline. There are some days where you have to tell yourself to slow down. Following the cross-country race last weekend my body was hurting enough, my soleus muscles were tight from my heels sinking into the soft surface and running up hills, and my foot was bothering me. So I didn't run at all the day after the race. Monday I only ran six miles. Tuesday I only ran eight miles. And then Wednesday I was feeling comfortable enough and I got back into my training on two-a-days again. I need that. Now I'm feeling good again. If I had gone



right into my training schedule again on Monday, I might still be feeling more fatigue and more tightness than I am now.

SHORTER: It's an unusual ability you've got to do that. Especially without a coach—you basically coach yourself.

LINDSAY: Well, I talk to a lot of people. I like to think of you as being my coach. Rich Castro, Andy Pruitt, Stan Mavis, Kim Cronin. Whoever's around me, I always ask for advice.

SHORTER: I think that's a talent. Is it important for you to try and attain a number-one ranking again, for a third straight year?

LINDSAY: It would be important to me because it's a goal that I've had for the last several years now. But whether or not I will be able to be in that position again next year will depend on how much I race on the track this spring, because that's going to take away from some of my road-racing performances. If I race perhaps the Penn Relays, then that might influence my performance at the Trevira race, which is the same weekend. But the Trevira race is a way of gaining some pretty good points because that's a pretty good field.

SHORTER: Whatever you decide, good luck.

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