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Bill Bowerman and the Men of Oregon: The Pursuit of the Collegiate Four-Minute Mile

This paper is a study of the American collegiate version of the fascination with breaking the sub-4:00 minute mile. Bill Bowerman was track coach at the University of Oregon from 1948 to 1973. During his era he was the most prolific producer of sub-4:00 minute milers in the United States, and possibly the world. The first such run in the United States was by Jim Bailey, an Australian student at Oregon. Bowerman produced numerous NCAAH champions, Olympic team members, and American record holders during his era. He also strongly influenced American training methods up to the present day.

The paper utilizes racing results and discusses the training methods Bowerman used with his teams in pursuing perhaps the best known goal in track and field, maybe the best known goal in modern sport.