



QUICK FACTS & FAQs

1) Does every U.S. High School athlete run the 1600m?

Well, almost. If you're good enough, you might run the Mile at select invitationals that understand the value and the history of the Mile. Or you live in Massachusetts (#BostonStrong). The original American Rebels are the only state that never switched. They still run the classic Mile (and 2 Mile) at the State Championships and all their other races. For everyone else, unless you are an elite Miler, you are stuck with the 1600m - sorry. Although a handful of states do run the 1500m and if you're "lucky" enough to live in New York, the Boys run the 1600m and the Girls run the 1500m.

"New England's was my first time running 1600m. I honestly didn't know this race distance existed prior to that meet. I remember seeing converted times on the heat sheet and realizing that none of the competitors from other states raced the Mile. It was odd to me; the distance seemed to be a kind of knock-off. - MA State Champion in the Mile on the 1600m - Madison Granger

2) What's the difference between 1600m and a Mile?

1600m is actually 9 meters short of Mile. So, if you run a 4:29 1600 or a 4:58 1600, you can't actually call yourself a sub-4:30 Miler or a sub-5 Miler.

"I PR'd again with a 4:58 and was initially ecstatic. However, when I realized that the time converted to a mark just over five minutes in the Mile, I was disappointed. I still had not accomplished my goal. It didn't matter at all to me what my 1600m PR was. I wouldn't be satisfied until I broke five in the Mile." - Madison Granger, 2012 Massachusetts State Mile Champion

3) Why is the 1600m run at the High School level?

In the late 1970s when tracks went to 400m ovals, High School state federation officials across the country ignored the history of the Mile. They decided to start and finish the four lapper in the same place for convenience sake. Apparently, stepping back 9 meters was too much work and "close enough", but close enough really isn't good enough as no American boy has dreamed of breaking 4 minutes in the 1600 meters.

"I hope they bring the Mile back; it's what people get" - Bernie Montoya, 2012 adidas Dream Mile Champion

4) Is the 1600m an internationally recognized distance?

No. The 1600m isn't recognized by the IAAF (they run the World Championships) or USATF (they run our National Championships). In fact, the Mile was the only official record distance carried over from the imperial system of yards to the metric system of meters. It is also still run internationally at track meets like Prefontaine Classic and the Bislett Games and their famed Dream Mile.

And the IAAF now allows Mile times to qualify for its Indoor and Outdoor World Championships. The 1600m is only run in the U.S. at the high school level.

"I am a high school Miler who runs the 1600 meters. The sad thing is that I have no way to compare myself to the greats such as Prefontaine and Bannister, because there are no opportunities for me to run a full Mile. The fact that I can't compare myself to my idols or inspirations, really pushes me away from the sport. And it pushes me away from others outside of the sport. No one ever asks: "What do you run for the 1600?" - Andrew Huitt, Jesuit HS (CA)



HOW TO SETUP A MILE

Do all tracks at least have a Mile mark on their track?

Not all tracks have it marked, but many do. If it does, you'll notice a slight waterfall start a few paces back from the track's finish line like the photo below.



If you don't have the line at your track, there's a couple things you can do.

- Unofficially, you can bug the math wiz at your school who will jump at the chance at using measuring tape and marking the Mile starting line. If you do this, definitely take a picture or shoot a video. We want to share it with the world.
- Officially, you can work with a contractor to come out and mark it. This might cost nothing, it might cost something, but not too much. Send us an email if you want help bringing a Mile mark to your track. We'd love to help!

Can I just step back 9 meters at the start of a 1600m race and do the Mile?

Can you imagine spotting your competitors 9 meters at the start and still beating them? Then yes. That would be incredible. Or maybe, they'll join you in protest and solidarity. You're still running 1600m, so you shouldn't be penalized. If you plan this, definitely take a picture or shoot a video. We want to share this with the world too.

What about hosting a Community Road Mile?

There are hundreds of Mile races across the country, small and large. The great thing about the Mile is that it really is something almost anybody can do - young, adult, beginner or pro. The Mile is relatively short distance compared to other road races and as such local permits can be easier to come by. The Mile also makes for an exciting, fast event that lends itself to being hosted on almost any day of the week, morning or night. It can be one incredible community event.

Check out our [BBTM Mile Calendar](#) to see what's going on in your neck of the woods. You can also contact David Monico at david@bringbackthemile.com for specific questions and ideas.