Mr and Mrs Sooner Football Spectator, meet your new between-halves diversion, the two-mile team race.

As a means of creating more interest in track, developing better milers and two-milers and giving football crowds something to watch between the second and third quarters, Big Six conference directors have voted to oust the traditional five-mile crosscountry run and substitute for it a new two-mile team race, every inch of which will be run on the cinder track in plain view of football spectators.

Under the new plan every school in the conference will meet each other once (single round-robin) and the championship decided on a percentage basis, as in wrestling. There will be no conference run at the end of the season, corresponding to the annual conference crosscountry run of former years.

Although the returning members of the Sooner championship crosscountry team of last November are better five-milers than two-milers (Captain Glenn Dawson, Warren Moore, Richard Barrett and Jack Wilhelm) John Jacobs, the Sooner coach, is willing to give the new plan a trial if for no other reason than it assures the University of Oklahoma a strong dual meet schedule. Never before have the Sooneers met every team in their conference in dual crosscountry competition.

The change was suggested by Henry "Indian" Schulte, the Nebraska track mentor, one of the smartest and best-liked track coaches in the nation. However one wonders if the fact that Mr Schulte has never had many strong distance runners and therefore would have nothing to lose by the new scheme, might not have influenced his suggestion.

Whom will the change affect?
Farmers living along the route of the old Sooner crosscountry course will probably benefit the most. Floyd "Red" Rutherford, '26, of Henryetta, won the "O" in crosscountry in 1923, 1924 and 1925 and was individual champion of the old Missouri Valley conference the latter two years.

Are the days of crosscountry runners like this one gone forever from Oklahoma, because of the new Big Six rule?
ably welcome it since thinly-clad runners will no longer rob their persimmon trees, frighten their livestock nor give exercise (both vocal and pedal) to their shepherd dogs. In his eager absorption of the football game your average Sooner sport fan probably won't give a whoop one way or the other. But what will be the reaction among that seldom-considered class, the runners themselves?

It doesn't take much imagination, to hear Floyd "Red" Rutherford's snort of disgust when they break the news to him. The "Galloping Redhead," as they used to call him, is still regarded by many as the greatest five-miler ever developed at this university. He is the only Sooner who ever won the individual championship twice (in 1924 and 1925) and the only man who ever defeated the celebrated Ray Conger at five miles. And nobody has ever equaled his 26:06.9 over the most difficult course in the conference, the one at Lawrence, Kansas, in which the runners twice scale Mt. Oread (They ought to call it Mt. Rutherford).

"Two miles?" "Red" will guffaw, "only two miles? Why a fell'er can't get warm that soon. First thing we know they'll cut it down to half a mile and serve tea at the quarter post!"

And how will Leslie Niblack take it? Les had long hairy legs, and wore a mustache to scare off his opponents. He was the most formidable-looking Sooner harrier who ever laced on a spike shoe. Leaping snowdrifts and hurtling down hill with an eight-foot stride were his special delectations. He welcomed all hazards save vertical ones.

Would he have been satisfied to circle a nice tame 440-yard cinder track eight times and then take his shower?

Glenn Dawson, who won the conference five-mile run last fall, shouldn't like it either. Five miles is his best race. He's not so good at two. Putnam, the Iowa State ace, was Dawson's master all four times they met at two miles last spring and Putnam is eligible again this fall. Yet Dawson conquered him over the five-mile distance last November and probably would again.

Dawson is perhaps the greatest intercollegiate five-miler in the nation today. He isn't a 23:57 man by any means (running five miles straightaway with a wagging north wind behind you is like carrying a sail) but he can probably canter five miles in close to 25 minutes and would be an excellent prospect for the 5,000 or 10,000 meters run in the Olympic games of 1932, providing he gets crosscountry experience meanwhile (10,000 meters is slightly more than six miles). He won't get it running a two-mile team race.

Awarding a minor sports championship on a single track event which is already contested by conference runners twice each spring (in the indoor and outdoor meets) is a bit hard to grasp. It means there will be three two-mile runs and no five-mile runs this coming season.

It also makes one wonder if there is not after all, some justification in likening conference officials to members of the football rules committee which some coach said should be prevented from meeting oftener than once every five years because they were "always changing something."

Proponents of the two-mile team race assert it is advantageous because football spectators may see every foot of it, yet how many of them will watch the first seven laps? The home stretch is the only thrilling part of a two-mile race to the average spectator and that will be over in a few seconds with the contestants comparatively well bunched.

Gone will be the old five-mile cross-country gallop's biggest thrill, recognition of the leading runner as he strides into view behind the south stadium fence after the runners had been out on the road 20 minutes and the crowd had forgotten all about them in the excitement of the football game. There was always an eager craning of necks when the cry arose "Here come the harriers!" And a roar of shouting when pair after pair of them staged exciting sprints down the 220-yard straightaway sometimes as long as three minutes after the leaders had finished.

Assuming that crosscountry doesn't interest football spectators nor adequately condition an athlete for two track events (and this latter assumption is like drinking kerosene) is that reason enough for its banishment?

Nearly all the larger universities recognize crosscountry as an eminent minor sport, demanding considerable qualities of sportsmanship and courage. Since 1899 crosscountry has been in vogue in the Eastern Intercollegiate conference and since 1908 in the Big Ten conference. Coaches in these two loops wouldn't part with it, not only because they regard it as a prime builder of heart, leg and lung strength but because it is deeply seethed in tradition and attracts thousands of spectators. There it exists for its own sake and is no more dependent upon football and track than is wrestling or tennis.

The contention that the two-mile team race will develop better milers and two-milers for track is easily assailable.

Preparing an athlete nowadays for a two-mile run requires lots of speed running. Running two miles in the fall means two months of speed training, a six weeks rest, and then start all over again on speed for five more months. Four months of speed running, over a strenuous schedule, will cause the average athlete to "go stale."

There is also a psychological advantage in giving a runner a change of running scenery as well as a change of distance. One grows tired enough in May and June of running on a cinder running track, let alone devoting an entire autumn to it. An athlete is lots more apt to welcome the cinders in the spring after he has galloped over roads and turf in the fall. There is exhilaration in a few weeks of each kind of running which disappears when you string one kind out over a whole school year.

Under the old system a distance runner's stamina was built up during the crosscountry season. Then he rested over the holidays and when his coach put him on the boards and later the cinders for the half, mile and two-mile, all his training could be concentrated on speed.

Some coaches may counter by asserting they'll still do most of their training on the road, but will this meet the case? In a two-mile race a runner must learn lap-by-lap pace and how to hug the pole and he can't acquire this knowledge loping by-lap and how to hug the pole and it can't acquire this knowledge loping by-lap pace and how to hug the pole and

What do the ranking track coaches and trainers of the nation think of crosscountry as a conditioner of milers and two-milers? Here's what the dean of them all, Michael C. Murphy, American Olympic team coach in '08 and '12 and veteran Yale and University of Pennsylvania trainer says on page 62 of his book Athletic Training:

The best kind of training for the mile run is crosscountry running taken in fall and winter. The development of crosscountry running in our preparatory schools, colleges and clubs has been the most important factor in raising the standard of distance runners in this country.

What is the British view? This from page 198 of the volume entitled Athletics, by Lowe and Porritt, perhaps the most authoritative book ever written on track and field sports:

A great proportion of distance runners born with brilliant results across country during the winter and there can be no doubt that this is the finest preparation obtainable.

Now let's take a peek into the record book and see what crosscountry has done for our intercollegiate milers and two-milers.

John Paul Jones of Cornell, holder of the world's intercollegiate one-mile record of 4:14.4, set in 1913, made it only after he had built up his stamina by winning

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