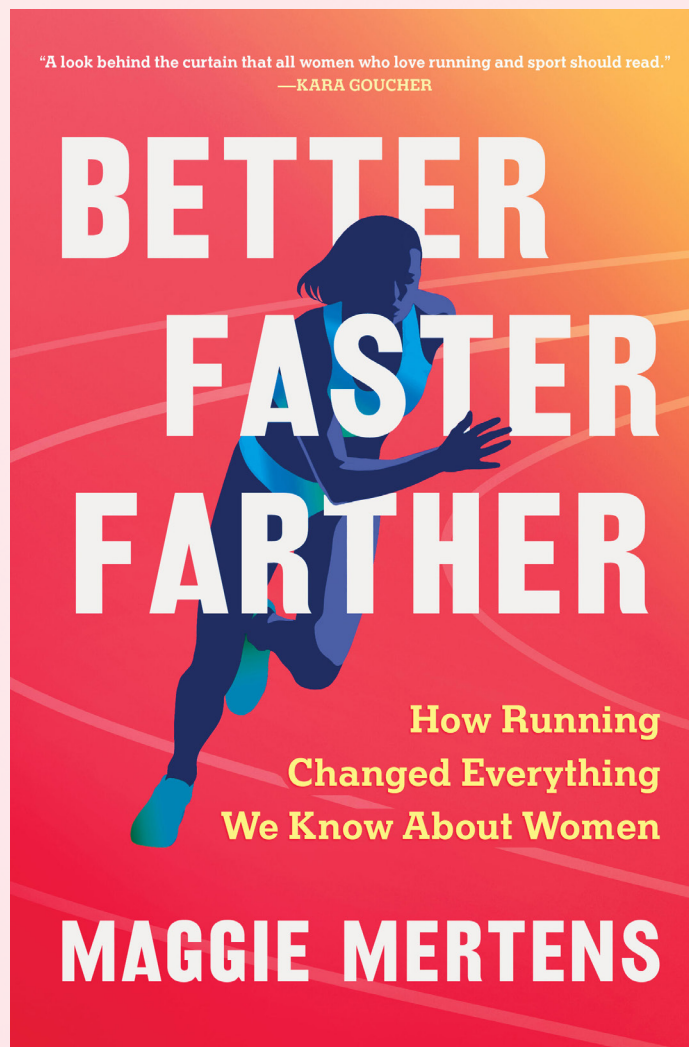




BOOK CLUB KIT



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Had you heard that earlier generations of women weren't allowed to run long distances? What are your impressions of rules like this?
2. When Paula Radcliffe ran a marathon after having a baby, she was considered "the medical unknown." Have you ever felt like your own body confronted a "medical unknown" simply due to your sex?
3. What was your experience with school sports growing up? Did anything about the women in the book having access to or not having access to school sports surprise you?
4. If all children were given more opportunities to play coed sports or encouraged to be athletic regardless of gender, what might the effect be?
5. Have you noticed female athletes being treated differently from male athletes during the Olympics? Did you know that it took until 1984 for women to have an Olympic marathon, and even the 3,000-meter race?
6. Have you ever felt physically underestimated because of your sex? When? How did you feel?
7. Diane Leather's family was frustrated that her achievements, including being the first woman to officially break the five-minute mile, weren't appreciated during her lifetime. How do the stories we are told about athletes change what we believe about ourselves? Would knowing more of the women's stories from this book earlier in your life have changed the activities you chose to do?
8. Tidye Pickett and Louise Stokes were both discriminated against as runners on the Olympic track and field team in 1932 and 1936, but track teams became dominated by Black women runners in later years. Have you ever made assumptions about an athlete's abilities because of their race?
9. Why do you think the original creators of the modern Olympics were so against having women compete? Did anything in their arguments sound familiar to messages we hear about gender today?
10. What emotions came up for you when reading about the surgery Annet Negesa underwent? Did reading her story change anything about the way you view transgender women athletes?
11. Are the attempts to keep intersex and transgender women runners from competing in women's events reminiscent of other rules that have tried to "protect" women in the past?
12. Jasmin Paris, and many other women ultramarathoners, beat men outright in their endurance races. Did you know this was possible? What was the most impressive or inspiring part of her story?
13. When the author learned that the official Olympics footage of the 1928 800-meter race had been doctored to align with the story the newspapers of the time wrote—that the women all collapsed—did it bring up any questions for you about other media stories we've accepted about the past?
14. How has coverage of women athletes in the news media changed over the past 100 years? How has it not changed?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN RUNNING

1896

First modern Olympic games, a woman runs the marathon — the day after the men

1922

The First Women's Olympic Games garners 20,000 spectators

1928

The myth that all the competitors in the 800-meter women's Olympic race collapsed means women won't run longer than 100 meters officially for decades

1948

The first two Black women medal at the Olympics, Mickey Patterson, a bronze in the 200-meter race, and Alice Coachman, a gold in the high jump

1954

Diane Leather runs the first women's sub-5:00 mile, the same year that Roger Bannister breaks the 4:00 minute mile for the first time

1966

Bobbi Gibb becomes the first woman to run the Boston Marathon when she sneaks into the race

1981

The Marathon is finally voted into the Olympics for women for the '84 Games

1983

Mary Decker becomes the first to ever win a gold at World Championships in the 3,000-meter and the 1,500-meter race

1984

Joan Benoit Samuelson wins the first ever Olympic Gold medal in the Women's Marathon in Los Angeles



A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN RUNNING (continued)

1992

The medical term the Female Athlete Triad is coined thanks to physiologists and doctors finally beginning to pay attention to the specific needs of women athletes

2007

British runner Paula Radcliffe wins the New York City Marathon just nine months after her first daughter was born – the first marathon she'd run in two years

2012

At the London Olympics, Allyson Felix wins three gold medals in track and field, the first American woman to do so since Florence Griffith-Joyner in 1988

2013

As a junior in high school, Mary Cain set a US Junior record in the 1,500m at 4:04.62

2019

Caster Semenya, who won gold medals at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics in the 800m lost her case against the track federation's more restrictive new testosterone rules, banning her from competition

Alysa Montaño, Allyson Felix, and Kara Goucher speak out against Nike's lack of maternity protections for sponsored athletes

Jasmin Paris wins 268-mile UK Ultra-Marathon, beating all men and shattering the previous record, while pumping for breast-milk along the way

2023

World Athletics, the international track federation, announces most restrictive testosterone rules ever, and bans transgender women runners from international competition

Faith Kipyegon sets a new world record for the women's mile race: 4:07.64 seconds

SOME RUNNING TIPS FROM OUTSIDE MAGAZINE

1. **Become an Aerobic Monster**—Mileage isn't everything, but most runners will become stronger aerobically by carefully and gradually increasing the volume of running they can handle.
2. **Strengthen Your Whole Body**—Good runners condition their whole bodies. The arms drive the legs.
3. **Run More Hills**—One of the beauties of hills is that they really work on dynamic power, hip strength, and hip mobility.
4. **Quit Trying to Set Your PR**—Be process-oriented, not outcome-oriented. Get a little better with each training session.
5. **Hydrate!**
6. **Cultivate Controlled Consistency**—Try to perform at 80 percent on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday and then at 50 percent Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday.
7. **Stretch and Refuel Immediately Post-Race.**
8. **Find a Routine, Then Stick to It**—Dial in your race-day outfit and nutrition plan in advance to eliminate any surprises.
9. **Eat Whole Foods**—Avoid processed foods, they're packed with sodium, sugar, and empty calories and are a drain on your digestive system.
10. **Slow Down to Spare Carbs**—Run at a pace that feels sustainable.
11. **It's Not All About the Carbs**—Most healthy diets provide enough incidental carbs—byproducts of fruit and beans—to fuel you.
12. **Layer Up When It's Cold**—Buying clothes like a moisture-wicking base layer, gloves, and a breathable wind-blocking top will make training outside a lot more enjoyable.
13. **You Need to Sprint More**—Five percent of an athlete's total weekly mileage should be taken up by sprints.
14. **Patience Is a Virtue**—In distance running, you've got to learn to love the process. Whether it's in training (it takes a lot of time to get better) or in racing (holding back for the first 20 miles of a marathon).
15. **Don't Hydrate Too Much Right Before Running**—Sloshing in your stomach is a sign that water has not worked its way into your bloodstream, providing a full feeling that's a ruse for hydration.
16. **Take Recovery Days Seriously**—The day after a tough workout, the most you want to do is jog lightly or do some form of cross-training, like cycling.
17. **Make It Social**—Try joining a group for long weekend runs and (re)discover the joys of exercising with friends.
18. **Maybe Skip the Long Run**—You can't just look at a singular long run or back-to-back long runs. You have to look at the whole picture. Every run is like bricks that add up over time.
19. **Know When Your Running Shoes Are Worn Out**—The typical lifespan of a shoe is between 300 and 600 miles. Shoes will start to feel a little different after about 200 miles—it's a depreciation curve.
20. **Don't Run Injured!**