

Watching emptiness



Whenever I walk to the track before a meet, when nobody else is there, I feel a sense of mystery. A mystery of what is going to happen right here, in this precise place, at the precise time. It feels like nothing exciting could happen here because it is so quiet and serene. But anything can happen. Anything good, anything bad, maby.

The first thing I think of when I walk up to the empty track is how quiet it is now. But thinking ahead, I know how loud and exciting it is going to be. Now I can just hear my slow footsteps on the track, but soon, I will be able to hear my competitors' racing steps behind me, along with the cheering crowd. I also hear an occasional car drive along on the driveway nearby, but I know that they are not seeing what I am seeing because not too many people are drawn to an empty track in the early morning. Only those who like the mystery and potential it holds.

I feel comfortable being alone at the track. I like how I can do anything, and no one would see me. No one is running with me, no one is watching.

Everything is played out in my imagination, like a play of what it is going to be before the day ends. I can feel the flexible track under my feet, both now and in my imagination, but then, I am running hard with my racing spikes on instead. Thinking of the future, I can feel the wind racing by my face as I speed along, but now I only feel a slight breeze.

When I look around, I see nothing obviously stimulating, but I start to get excited and nervous anyway. Even though there is nothing to see but an empty track and bleachers, I can see the competition already . . . I can see myself on the track, running my favorite race, and coming out of top. I can

see my relay team and I, racing head to head against our rivals. Then I can see us start to pull ahead and finally win the race, leaving our competitors behind us. I can see potential for good things to happen. I can see all this by just looking at this empty track, when no one else can see it . . . yet.

There are no people moving about like I normally would see at a track. I don't see competitors lined up, ready to race. But instead, there is nobody and nothing on the track, except for a few lone hurdles and race markers. The dew on the infield is uninterrupted, with only the coming sun to melt it away. The bleachers are still wet with last night's rain, and they don't look ready to hold the crowd for today's meet. But as the rest of the team walks up behind me onto the track, I know that we are ready.