


BOOK REVIEW

Title: THE RUNNER: ENERGY AND ENDURANCE
Authors: E. A. Newsholme and A. R. Leech
Publisher: Fitness Books, 21 Pitts Road, Oxford
Price: £6.95 + 55p P & P

Whenever one picks up a book by an author whom one knows, or knows of, there is inevitably a degree of expectation as to its merit. Eric Newsholme, co-author with Tony Leech, of this book, which should perhaps be subtitled "A runner's guide to the biochemistry of exercise", is one of the leading figures in the study of the regulation of metabolism; he also happens to be very experienced, even if not very fast, marathon runner. In recent years, he has been a regular guest speaker at symposia on the physiology and biochemistry of exercise, where his contributions have been marked by their clarity and authority. These qualities have been admirably applied to this book, which presents a state-of-the-art guide to thinking in the field of exercise biochemistry.

The Publisher's material recommends the book to coaches, runners and the intelligent laymen. To that list could be added all those subscribers to this Journal who do not fall into one of the categories mentioned. The greater part of the book is, as one would expect from these authors, devoted to the biochemistry rather than to the physiology of exercise and it is precisely for this reason that it is so welcome. There are scores, if not actually hundreds, of texts on the physiology of exercise available at all levels, from the elementary to the advanced. The average student, however, encounters more conceptual problems in the study of biochemistry than in physiology, and yet no textbook is available to guide him through these difficulties. This little book outlines the main aspects of physiology and biochemistry as they relate to exercise in general and to running in particular.

The text is clearly written and supplemented with excellent illustrations drawn by Dr. Leech. The presentation assumes that the reader has only a minimal knowledge of the life sciences and yet, even those areas which most undergraduate and many postgraduate students find difficult, are explained in a clear and concise manner.

In view of the present trend for mass-participation in endurance events, particularly marathon running, an understanding of the biochemical responses to endurance training and to acute exercise is essential. This is true, not only for those actively involved as participants, but also for those responsible for all aspects of the medical supervision of these competitors. Although coverage of many topics is necessarily superficial, anyone reading and understanding this volume should carry away sufficient information to form the basis for more advanced study.

R. J. Maughan.