



Ellis Boal '66

The Accidental Athlete

“When I was a kid, I did not consider myself much of an athlete,” says Ellis Boal '66. Today, Boal has run and skied in excess of 75,000 miles (he maintains precise daily logs). His self-image started to change one fateful day at Bowdoin.

Calisthenics was once a requirement of all Bowdoin first years and sophomores. As a sophomore, Boal did not get his first choice of volleyball and decided to give track and field a go. After watching Boal run laps for the first time in his life, Coach Frank Sabasteanski '41 asked him to try out for varsity.

Boal made the team, but he consistently ran himself to the point of collapse. “I developed a huge fear of practice and quit,” says Boal. But Sabasteanski stayed on him and asked that he run the two-mile at a University of Vermont meet. Boal won—and continued winning—though he never again trained with the team.

The semi-retired, northern Michigan attorney now averages forty miles weekly. Though he has not run a marathon since 1996 (his best time was 2:36 in his forties), Boal continues to train daily and aims to break 100,000 miles by age eighty-one. According to Boal, “the key to athletics and doing well is being consistent, and doing it whether you feel like it or not.”