

What Is Your

BY THERESE IKNOIAN

We all have different ways of measuring our walking success: Some count the pounds shed or the miles accumulated. Others revel in the good feeling and reduced stress. But these all measure the *benefits* of your walking. To measure your *performance*, you need a way to compare your current walking to that of 5 or 10 years ago and to your friends' performances.

Therein lies the beauty of calculations by the World Association of Veteran Athletes (WAVA). With these numbers (at right), you can see how your speed for a 1-mile walk compares to the best in the world and to walkers of any age. Starting from a best-possible time (100% performance) for your age and gender, you can calculate what percentage you are currently achieving. (WAVA uses the world record for each age as the 100% level—round to the nearest age for your calculation.) By

knowing your percentage, you can rate your fitness and measure the improvement brought on by our speed-building workouts below.

To put this into perspective, we've segmented the times into fitness ranges: Those of you below 35% are **healthy strollers**; between 35% and 55% are **fitness walkers**; those between 55% to 80% are **performance-conditioned**.

*You've put in the time.
You've logged the miles.
Now measure how good
you really are.*

WAVA rates those above 80% as **nationally competitive**, and a 100% time means you could win the gold at the next WAVA championships!

Let's take Margaret, 45, as an example. If Margaret held the world record for her age, she'd be able to knock off a mile in an astounding 6:51. Although

nowhere close to that, Margaret can still walk a mile in a very good time of 15:00 (4-mph pace). How does that rate? Simply divide the 100% time in seconds by her time in seconds (411 divided by 900) to find her rating of 46%, which puts her solidly in the fitness-walking zone. To move up to performance-conditioned speed, she'd have to cover a mile in 12:27 (the 55% level for her age).

Margaret often walks with her 35-year-old friend Nicole. Nicole can walk a mile in 14:40 (about 20 seconds faster than Margaret). But since Nicole is a decade younger, her 100% potential is 6:21, and her 14:40 time rates as a 43% performance (381 seconds divided by 880). So, even though Margaret's best mile is slower than Nicole's, she's actually outperforming her younger training partner (46% vs. 43%).

But Nicole isn't quite ready to concede. Next time they walk a weekend event together, they'll compare percentages, not times. Their deal: The better percentage buys breakfast.

How Much Younger

Improving your fitness takes only a few weekly walks aimed specifically at speed and endurance. Do one of these workouts each week if you're a three- or four-day-a-week walker; try two a week if you walk five days or more per week. Vary which workout you pick.

These intervals should take less than an hour, but remember to begin each with 10 minutes of easy walking to warm up and to finish with a 5- to 10-minute cool-down stroll and some stretching (see our June 1995 issue: "Five Essential Stretches," p. 22).

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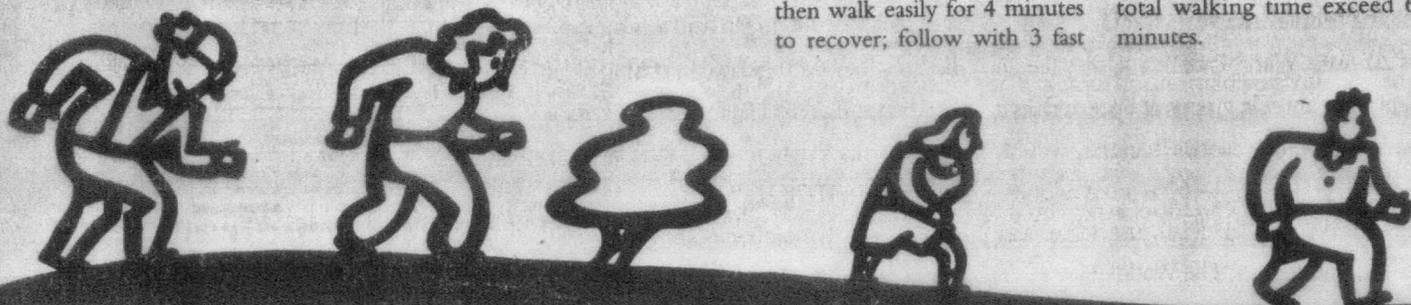
The Descending Ladder

Where: At your local high-school track.

Workout: Walk 4 fast laps, then walk easily for 4 minutes to recover; follow with 3 fast

laps, and 3 easy minutes; then 2 fast laps, and 2 easy minutes. You should be working comfortably hard, but not straining on the fast parts.

To add more: Add one lap to each interval every 3 weeks, until you get to 8, 7, and 6 fast laps (and 8, 7, and 6 easy minutes). Don't let the total walking time exceed 60 minutes.



Team Competition....Various Categories and Proper Scoring Make it Fun

One of the more interesting and innovative ideas in road racing is team competition. The idea is not new, but very few races have really promoted the idea and again very few have used the proper scoring system. In past races, team recognition and awards seemed to get lost among all the other items at the awards ceremony. Since award ceremonies, in many cases, are long and boring, team results and awards were not available or were mailed to the winners later.

Most teams in Oklahoma are comprised of three members. Teams can have more than three but only the top three best times are combined for scoring. It is much easier for runners to recruit three members rather than five or more.

Here are a few of the team categories that have been used in the past: OPEN, MASTERS, CORPORATE, CLUB, FAMILY, FRIENDS, COED, MEDIA, SCHOOL, CITY, STATE AND ALSO COUPLES AND RELAY.

The OPEN team competition has been used quite often and is for the Open class runners. That is those who will have the best performance based on time only. In other words, the top three actual times are added together and the team with the best time wins. Open team scoring is simple and can be done on the spot with a calculator. Of course, each runner's finish tag must have the team name or code on it for manual posting. Computer scoring will give you instant results.

Team competition is fun only if it is scored properly and equitably. One thing certain about team scoring....races using the categories above must evaluate and compare performances. Performance Comparison as determined by the World Association of Veteran Athletes is the ONLY way to do team scoring and do it equitably when ages and sexes are mixed. Keep in mind that the teams with the good performing runners are the teams that will win. This innovative system selects the best performing runners of all ages and both sexes. This system does not equalize poor performing runners with good performing runners. It determines the best performance considering both age AND time.

Here is an example of why WAVA scoring must be used: A small corporation comprised of six female employees wished to enter a team in a 5 km race which offered corporate team scoring. The top three women runners were ages 36, 56 and 62. Their best 5 km times were 20:19, 24:48 and 28:17 respectively. Two of these three times were in the state record book. Another corporation entered a team with three male runners, age 24, 24 and 28 with best times of 18:46, 18:58 and 19:12 respectively. Another corporation entered a team of two men and one lady age 29, 32 and 48 with best 5 km times of 15:48, 17:10 and 29:11 respectively. With corporate and most other teams you will get many combinations of ages and sexes. You can see at a glance which team would win using a system based on time only. Certainly there is nothing fair about the all-female older team competing against the all-male younger team. Young, male runners equally trained will

invariably reach the finish line first.

Performance Comparison or age-graded scoring by WAVA gives everyone an opportunity to contribute.

Some corporations or organizations may be large enough to enter more than one team. For example, if a corporation has 30 runners entered in an event, it could conceivably have ten separate teams. Most teams should have an extra runner or an alternate in case someone does not show. In other words, each team should have four members with the top three being scored. Some families have enough members to have more than one team in the family category. Considering the categories listed above, many of these would probably be able to field more than one team. This is additional fun...not only does each corporation or organization get to compete against other corporations and organizations, they will be competing among themselves! This is possible only if the WAVA scoring is used.

Couples scoring opens up other possibilities. Couples is usually a two person, male and female team. These couples are assigned to ten year age groups based on combined ages starting at age 29 and under through 110 and over. In addition, sub categories can be added such as, mother/son, father/daughter, brother/sister, husband/wife and so on. Of course, the WAVA system must be used to be fair. The question asked by some...is WAVA scoring necessary for couples teams since age groups are used? YES. For example, in the 70-79 age group, you could have two runners age 35 and 36, male and female. In that same age group you could have a 70-year old female and a six-year old male resulting in unfair competition.

Relay teams is another type of competition. The recent Run Amuck Relays in 1992 and 1993 was a fun event. Each team was comprised of three members in various categories. Each team member ran one 5 km segment in a 15 km race. Computer scoring was done on the spot by Glen's Road Race Service. The time for each runner in each segment was listed in addition to the time for the first two segments and the total times. Every conceivable combination of results was printed on race day. Scoring is the same as that in a triathlon or a duathlon wherein five separate races are scored and posted. For example, the first 5 km, the second 5 km the total of the first and second 5 km's, the third 5 km and the total of all three 5 km's.

Team scoring does not eliminate runners from competing in the other categories, runners are still eligible for Open, age-group, Clydesdale, Masters and other awards. Team scoring is a supplement to the other categories.

Runners should encourage race directors to offer team competition. On-the-spot results is important to enhance the awards ceremony and make the entire event more fun and more meaningful. Many good runners have a copy of the WAVA tables which enables them to compare and project their performances.

BEAVER COWCHIP

CLASSIC

10 km Road Race

Saturday

April 22

Downtown

Beaver, Oklahoma

**"Friendliest Race in
the Panhandle"**

25 mi bike race - 8:30 am

10 mi bike ride - 8:40 am

(helmets required)

10 km Run - 8:40 am

1 mi run/walk/crawl - 8:40 am

Entry Fee:

Children age 12 & under

\$10 with T-Shirt

Ages over 12

\$13 with T-shirt

USATF

Certified Course,

out & back

Sanctioned Event

Awards to Top 3 male/female in 25 mi bike race and 10 km; Medals to all age group winners.

Awards to top male & female finishers in 10 mi bike race and 1 mi run/walk.

Medals to all finishers in both events.

Plus gifts to all participants.

Mail generic form to:

Merkey Campbell

P. O. Box 492

Beaver OK 73932

Check payable to

Panhandle Windchasers

(405) 625-3179 day - Info

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**THE FOURTH ANNUAL
BROOKSIDE STRIDE
AND
TRIPLE CROWN**



FINAL EVENT

5KM Run/Walk – 7:30 p.m.

USAT&F Sanctioned Event

Coordinated by

Glen's Road Race Service

FRIDAY – MAY 19, 1995

COURSE:

- Rolling Scenic point to point course
- 10th and Boulder to 32nd and Peoria (Brookside)

ENTRY FEE:

- Individual \$12 (with shirt)
- Individual \$7 (without shirt)
- Children 12 and under free (no shirt)

Shirt designed by JAHRAUS

AWARDS:

- Standard USAT&F 5-year age groups

TRIPLE CROWN RACES:

Prize Money Awarded

- Bristow Wildflower May 6
- Field of Dreams May 13
- Brookside Stride May 19

TRIPLE CROWN PRIZE MONEY:

- Awarded to male and female overall winner
- Awarded to open and age groups 35-39 and above
- Triple Crown Awards presented after the Brookside Stride Awards

SPECIAL DONATION:

- Each Triple Crown Race will donate \$1 to a local charity for every paid runner that participates in all three races.

Information: (918) 587-5981

*See advertisement in next months
Oklahoma Runner for more details.*

How Fast Do We Age? New Data Suggests Not as Fast As We Thought

How much of our physical abilities do we still retain at age 40? At age 60? at 80?

More than we might think, as shown by the new Age-graded Tables compiled by the World Association of Veteran Athletes (WAVA).

Taking the performances of thousands of runners, throwers, jumpers and walkers over the past 25 years, WAVA, the official world governing body for the sport, has compiled tables which show how much the abilities of a well-conditioned individual vary at each age from 8 to 100 for all common track and field, long distance running and racewalking events.

The decline varies by event. For example, at age 40, a marathoner can run within two percent of his/her best-ever time, while a 40-year old sprinter loses five percent. At age 50, the decline is nine percent for the marathoner and 11 percent for the sprinter. At age 60, the dropoff is about 16 percent. At 70, it's 23 percent and at 80, 31 percent.

In other words, the data shows that 80-year olds can theoretically run 69 percent as fast as they did in their prime.

In the jumps, the decline is greater, varying from about 10 percent for the 40-year olds, to 20 percent for age 50, 30 percent at 60, 40 percent at 70 and 50 percent at age 80....a dropoff of about one percent a year.

The tables confirm that after a certain age (which varies from approximately 30 to 40), performances always get weaker and weaker in a continuous or ever-increasing manner. For example, the loss in performance from age 49 to 50 is equal or greater...percentage wise...than the loss from age 48 to 49. The difference in performance between a 69-year old man and a 65-year old man is far greater, for example than that of a 44-year old man and a 40-year old man.

The tables also chart the abilities of youths. For example, a good 62-year old sprinter will beat a comparable 9-year old. But when the man turns 63 and the boy is 10, the youngster will win. A 50-year old and a 12-year old are about equal, as are a man, 39, and a boy, 16.

"The tables are fun for all ages from 8 to 100," says Al Sheahen, chairman of the WAVA Age-graded Committee and editor of National Masters News, the official world and U. S. publication for the sport. "If older people exercise regularly, they can retain much more of their physical abilities than we previously thought possible. The evidence proves it."

"Age-grading can relieve two problems in Masters running; the inevitable and often depressing slowdown with age and the confusion with age-group awards," says Joe Henderson, noted author of Running Commentary. "These tables give runners a way to improve indefinitely and they give races a way to award fewer but more meaningful prizes."

WAVA Age-grading or best performance scoring is absolutely essential in scoring runners in the Clydesdales, the vast majority of teams where ages vary and in Masters performances for prize money. Most Oklahoma races are using this system....the positive comments by the experts nationwide are too numerous to mention in this column.

For a copy of the 60-page Age-graded Tables book which includes easy-to-follow samples and charts, send \$6 plus \$1.25 postage to National Masters News, P. O. Box 2372, Van Nuys CA 91404.

Also, ask for information on the Time Master Calculator which works directly in hours, minutes, seconds. It works as a stop watch and calculator.

Editor's note: We suggest asking for a sample copy or information about a National Masters News subscription.

We have condensed tables available for each of the LDR distances. However, we suggest that you order the booklet and learn how to use all of the tables. We also have a Time Master Calculator which will convert any number to hours, hours and minutes or hours, minutes and seconds. This item is recommended also.

Fitness

'Age Factoring' hits Nashville

By **KIM SWINT**

Sports Writer

Randy Brady describes tomorrow's track and field meet at Vanderbilt University as something that's 'just for some fun and light-hearted competition.'

There is no entry fee and the main rewards given to individuals will come from their own sense of accomplishment.

For local athletes who don't want to travel out of state to Bowling Green's 10K Classic, an open invitation is extended by the Nashville Track Club to any male or female, regardless of age, to try their skills at tomorrow's track and field events.



Monday: Sportsponi

Tuesday: Running

Wednesday: TV/Tickets

Thursday: Outdoors

Friday: Fitness

"We are especially wanting to encourage masters competitors to attend," said Brady.

For the first time in Nashville, a track and field event will involve 'age factoring' in the judging of each individual's performance. "Age graded tables, which are a series of age factors and age standards, will be used to compare performances at different ages and in different athletic events," said Brady. "Theoretically, what this does is show how a masters athlete would have performed if they were under the age of thirty."

Brady gave the example of a 40 year-old female who runs the 100 meter event in 13 seconds. With age factoring, the 13 seconds is multiplied by .9379 (a factor derived from a athletes gender and age), which equals a time of 12.19. The 12.19 represents her finishing time for the 100 meter event, had she been under the age of thirty.

Age factoring is only for ages 30-90. The assumption is that after the age of thirty, athletic abilities start to decline. "This general assumption has met a lot of opposition lately," said Brady. "If you look at Carl Lewis, who after the age of thirty set a world record for the 100 meter dash with a finishing time of 9.86 seconds, the above theory can be challenged."

The National Masters News publishes a monthly newsletter, which gives the most current age grade tables. Brady says that they will be using these tables for judging and ranking their track and field events.

There is only one stipulation for entering tomorrow's meet. Each participant must sign up for three events in their respective division.

For sprinters, there will be 100, 200 and 400-meter races. The distance runner can participate in the 400, 800 and 1500-meters runs, and the field events held will include the shot put, discus and javelin throw.

The overall age factor winner will be given a gift certificate from the Athletes House. The events start at 8:00 a.m., and will the last event is scheduled to start at 10:00 a.m.

For more information on the meet, contact Randall Brady at 383-6733.

For information on age factored tables write: National Masters News, Inc., P.O. Box 2372, Vannuys, CA 91404. ■

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SPEAKER'S CORNER

by JIM TURNER

Age-Graded Scoring

Most masters runners, particularly those who have competed for many years, have seen their pace slow. Although we know intellectually that some slowing occurs with the changes in our physiology as we age, it can still be difficult to accept. What we need is a way to measure our present performance against a standard that takes into account the inevitable slowing. The recent introduction of age-graded scoring tables now enables us to do exactly that.

A set of tables of "standard" times has been published for all the major racing distances for men and women starting at age 30 for each single age up to age 90. These standards correspond approximately to world record times for a person for that age and sex at that distance. Your age-graded score is obtained by dividing the standard time by your actual time and converting the result to a percentage. Before dividing, both your time and the standard time must be converted to a common time unit, typically expressing minutes and seconds as minutes with a decimal point. For example, the standard for 52-year-old males for 8K is 24:35. If his actual 8K time is 31:20, his age-graded score is $24.58/31:33$ $100\% = 78.4\%$.

The following classification of age-graded scores is often used:

- 90%+ = World Class
- 80-89% = National Class
- 70-79% = Regional Class
- 60-69% = Local Class

Your age-graded score can be used in numerous interesting ways. One use is to compare present times with times you achieved in the past. For example, my own best 10K time of 36:12 occurred at age 39. My best 10K time since turning 50 has been 37:48 at age 51, 1:36 slower. The age 39 age-graded score is 78.4% while the age 51 score is 81.5%, which happens to be my all time best age-graded score. This makes it a lot easier to accept the loss of 96 seconds.

Another use of age-graded scores that is coming into more common practice is to base masters race awards on the relative ranking of the age-graded score. The masters athlete with the highest age-graded score receives the first place masters award, the second highest age-graded scorer receives the second place award and so on. Even when race awards aren't based on age-graded scores, it still enables race officials to acknowledge strong performances of older athletes. For example in the 1992 running of our Fifty Plus 8K race, John Keston, age 67, finished 15th overall but recorded the best age-graded performance of the day, an outstanding 94.85%.

Age-graded scoring allows you to compare your own performances at different race distances. For example, if your 5K and 8K age-graded scores are about 75%, but your best 10K result is closer to 70%, you could reasonably expect to achieve a substantial improvement in your 10K time.

Direct comparison of men and women is possible with age-graded scoring. Just think of how many arguments you can get into over that one! A novel way to look at men's versus women's standards is to identify at what ages men and women should compete on equal terms. For example, the women's age 50 8K standard of 27:14 approximately matches the men's age 63 standard of 27:20. Thus it is fair to say that these two should compete on even terms, an "age handicap" of 13 years. This age handicap may drop as more women masters runners compete seriously and standard times for women become more stringent.

Age-graded scoring opens up a new



Cheryl Kincaid, W40-44 2000 Steeplechase winner (13:44) from California, heads for an enviable dip at the National Masters T&F Championships, Spokane, Wash., August 13-16, where temperatures soared over 100° daily.

National Masters News/Jerry Wojcik

realm of "round number" possibilities. We've all set round number goals for ourselves such as achieving a sub 6 minute mile, a sub 40 minute 10K or a sub 4 hour marathon. Age-graded scores give you a whole set of new round numbers to shoot for. You might try to break 70% at a particular distance or at any distance. You can try to achieve a national class (80%) or world class (90%) performance.

At the risk of confusing matters, there is an alternative way of computing age-graded results using "age factors" instead of age standards. Age factors are mathematically equivalent to age standards but they are expressed as a fraction of the open competition standard. Using our prior example, the age factor for a 52-year-old male runner at 8K is 0.8664. The most common use of the age factor is to calculate what a race time at a certain age would be equivalent to as a younger open competition time. Applying this to our initial example, the actual run time of 31:20 of our age 52 runner would be equivalent to $.8664 \times 31:20 = 27:09$ as an open competition time. This approach may be of particular interest to runners who started running later in life and are curious about what kind of race times they might have achieved if they had competed when they were younger. Of course you can never set the clock back and know for sure, but this method gives some insight into what you might have done.

Age-Graded Medalists At Nationals

by PHIL MULKEY, TAC Masters Southeast Regional Co-Coordinator
Once again, I've taken on the project (see page 9) of age-grading the National Masters Track and Field Championship meet, held in Spokane in August, 1992. The primary purpose of this examination is to find the medalists if we all were competing on a level playing field; if we were in our prime.

To this end, I have age-graded the entire meet on a single-age level to show total equity. What could be fairer?

Such a mythical meet gives our truly outstanding performers a platform to show how well they are actually doing. Certainly the superstars stand out as expected. But what about some of the other folks? Maybe some names you had never heard of before also stand out.

There is a by-product to this project that reflects on the authenticity of the age-grading system, itself. In past meets, we've found the grading to be slanted in favor of the sprinters and hurdlers, followed in order by the runners, jumpers, throwers, walkers and multi-eventers. This meet confirms that bias, and should hopefully influence the revision of the tables currently being done by WAVA.

The ultimate problem I have in accepting such age-graded performances is they seem too generous. Almost

The complete set of age-graded tables is available from NMN, P.O. Box 2372, Van Nuys, CA 91404. The cost is \$5.95 plus \$1.25 for shipping. □ (Reprinted from *Fifty Plus Fitness Association Bulletin*, Fall, 1992.)



Shirley Matson, 51, Moraga, Calif., after U.S. record W50-54 4:57.44 in the 1500, National Masters Championships, Spokane, August 13-16. National Masters News/Jerry Wojcik

without exception, all the medalists performed beyond anything they had done when they were in their prime. This is not to say that some are not working harder now than ever before, and, as a result, are able to perform in a superior manner. Still, I personally LJed 24-4½ in the 1960 Olympic Trials, and yet was credited with nearly a foot farther (25-3½) at the Spokane meet. I question if I have gained that kind of skill with the amount of work I'm putting in.

This is not an effort to defame our age-graded tables. A lot of hard work went on in many corners of the world to come up with those tables. We had to start somewhere. It now appears that with all the actual empirical data gained that perhaps some adjustments are due.

Stan Whitley won three firsts (100, 200, LJ) with a silver in the 400 to easily lead all male performers. Ray Funkhouser (5KRW, 20KRW) and Tom Gage (SP, HT) each won two championships. Al Funk (10K, 5K) and Dan Bulkley (SC, LH) each took a gold and silver.

The distaff side of the meet saw Phil Raschker winning five events (200, SH, PV, LJ, PEN) plus three bronze medals. Shirley Matson took four golds and four of the top five percentages. Grace Apiafi was the only other double-gold winner. □



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Age-Graded Scoring

Most masters runners, particularly those who have competed for many years, have seen their pace slow. Although we know intellectually that some slowing occurs with the changes in our physiology as we age, it can still be difficult to accept. What we need is a way to measure our present performance against a standard that takes into account the inevitable slowing. The recent introduction of age-graded scoring tables now enables us to do exactly that.

A set of tables of "standard" times has been published for all the major racing distances for men and women starting at age 30 for each single age up to age 90. These standards correspond approximately to world record times for a person for that age and sex at that distance. Your age-graded score is obtained by dividing the standard time by your actual time and converting the result to a percentage. Before dividing, both your time and the standard time must be converted to a common time unit, typically expressing minutes and seconds as minutes with a decimal point. For example, the standard for 52-year-old males for 8K is 24:35. If his actual 8K time is 31:20, his age-graded score is $24.58/31:33 \times 100\% = 78.4\%$.

The following classification of age-graded scores is often used:

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Your age-graded score can be used in numerous interesting ways. One use is to compare present times with times you achieved in the past. For example, my own best 10K time of 36:12 occurred at age 39. My best 10K time since turning 50 has been 37:48 at age 51, 1:36 slower. The age 39 age-graded score is 78.4% while the age 51 score is 81.5%, which happens to be my all time best age-graded score. This makes it a lot easier to accept the loss of 96 seconds.

Another use of age-graded scores that is coming into more common practice is to base masters race awards on the relative ranking of the age-graded score. The masters athlete with the highest age-graded score receives the first place masters award, the second highest age-graded scorer receives the second place award and so on. Even when race awards aren't based on age-graded scores, it still enables race officials to acknowledge strong performances of older athletes. For example in the 1992 running of our Fifty Plus 8K race, John Keston, age 67, finished 15th overall but recorded the best age-graded performance of the day, an outstanding 94.85%.

Age-graded scoring allows you to compare your own performances at different race distances. For example, if your 5K and 8K age-graded scores are about 75%, but your best 10K result is closer to 70%, you could reasonably expect to achieve a substantial improvement in your 10K time.

Direct comparison of men and women is possible with age-graded scoring. Just think of how many arguments you can get into over that one! A novel way to look at men's versus women's standards is to identify at what ages men and women should compete on equal terms. For example, the women's age 50 8K standard of 27:14 approximately matches the men's age 63 standard of 27:20. Thus it is fair to say that these two should compete on even terms, an "age handicap" of 13 years. This age handicap may drop as more women masters runners compete seriously and standard times for women become more stringent.

Age-graded scoring opens up a new



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hallucinate about the possibility of the Opera Guild sponsoring their own musical inspiration for the runners; maybe a contingent of Valkyries in full armor, belting out a rousing Wagnerian chorus. I don't think that there is much question that a group of women with spears and horned helmets would get me up this hill a lot quicker.

Turning onto 11th Street, I spot the paparazzi capturing dissipated runners at their absolute worst. This time, I resolve to beat the system; last year's photo had shown a startled, almost frenzied apparition with an expression best described as Bambi-in-the-headlights. I pull in my stomach, hold my breath and smile cheesily at the camera.

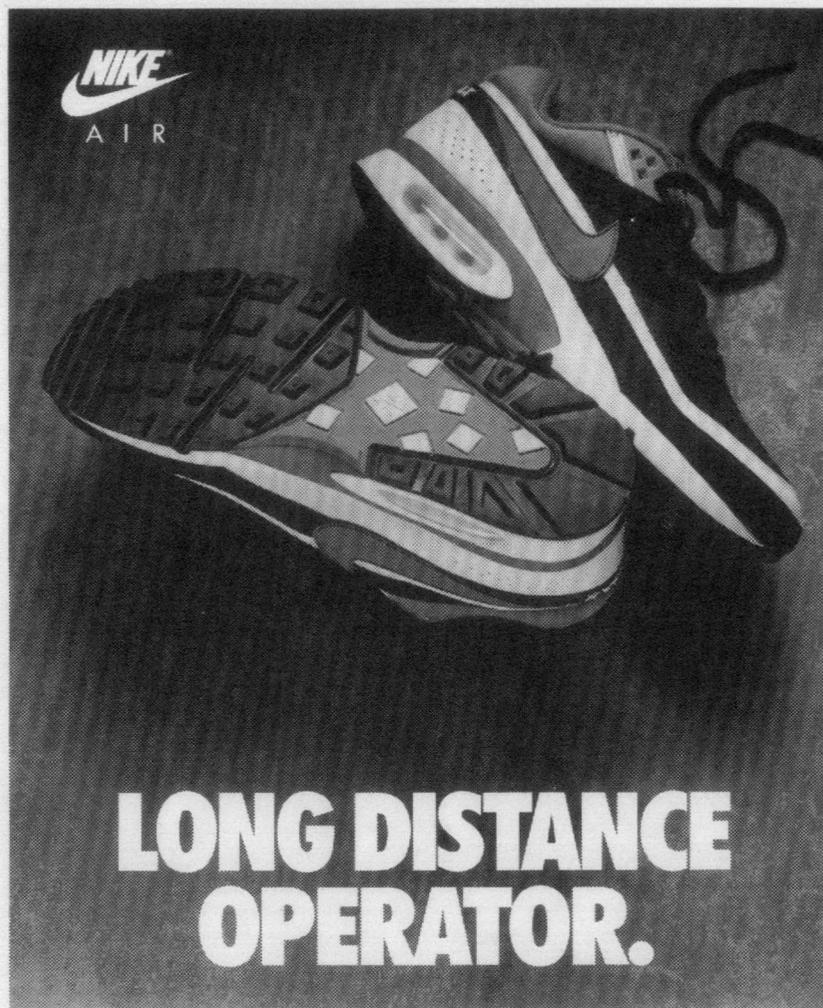
I make a wide, sweeping, stumbling turn onto Boston Avenue and there in the distance is the finish banner. I begin an imperceptible "kick" for the final few blocks and then gape in amazement as the finish line and crowd seemingly telescope away from me like some receding doorway from Alice's Wonderland. The harder I try to run up Boston, the farther away it appears to be. My targeted finish time appears briefly on the distant digital race clock and then clicks relentlessly on with me still several blocks away. People shout my name. People yell that we're nearly finished. People tell me to kick it in. People wonder if my face will ever look normal again. I hear a voice chanting over the public address system, like some endormorphin induced mantra, "...allchutesareopenallchutesareopen..." This, I realize, is a good thing, as I am way past the point of even considering a directional change.

And suddenly, it's done. I'm staggering down the finish chute pounding on some poor guy in front of me, congratulating him on his great run. All of the adjoining chutes are also filled with finishers in various stages of recovery and celebration, some with hands on hips or with fingers linked overhead. Each individual is taking inventory of his physical state, his performance and his immediate bodily requirements. My own personal agenda is air, water, and chocolate.

The crowd of spectators on Third Street parts before me. Drenched with perspiration I slog wearily across the Williams Center Green to the refreshment tent, practically regressing to childhood when faced with Quik Trip's generous smorgasbord. A Tulsa Run candy bar is, without question, as close as you can come to guilt-free calories.

I peel off my soaked singlet and prepare to don my hard-earned Tulsa Run t-shirt. I stand on the Williams Plaza, bare chested, savoring the warm autumn sun, the surrounding revelry and the day's triumph. I watch the approach of my regular running buddies, anticipating their comraderie. Nothing can detract from this moment, from this feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction and well-being.

"Hey, John. Nice pasties."



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FEATURE Tulsa Run '91 Masters Championship A Look at the Front Line

Running Times calls him the most durable master in the country. He calls himself gifted. Many call him unbeatable. The man known to his friends as **Norm Green** will compete in the TAC 15 km 1991 Masters Championship Race at the Tulsa Run on November 2. At 59 years of age, Green is ranked number one in his age-group by Dan Brannen of *Running Times*. He has held that ranking for seven of eight consecutive years and does not appear to be threatened in '91.

Green admits to having been blessed with good genes and a cardiovascular pulmonary system that ranks in the 98th percentile of the total population.

"It's a gift I want to make use of," he said.

Green's weakness is his biomechanics, plaguing him with recurring tendinitis and hamstring pulls. He must work faithfully on strengthening and flexibility.

The gift was discovered only 10 short years ago. Green had run in his early years in California, but at age 20 retired from track and field, cross-country, and road racing until September of 1981. He ran a Fun Run on the Bay to Breakers course in San Francisco.

"I finished second to a runner from Germany

and was hooked," Green recalls. "That November I ran my first marathon."

Green has run 25 marathons since that fall of '81 and 162 total road races. He trains at an average of 50-60 miles a week doing mainly tempo runs. Races count as speed work.

"Most of my training runs until '90 were at less than six minutes a mile," Green said. "In '90, I averaged 6:02; the last four months of '91 have been at 6:30."

Green suffered a torn hamstring in early '91 which accounts for the slowdown in his training runs. Although the hamstring has healed, he is still doing weight training and hip strengthening exercises two to three times a week until he is able to return to the quality training he is accustomed to.

Green, after the age of 50, has beaten the entire field in eight National Masters Championships, ranging in distance from 20 km to the marathon. His favorite race distance is the half-marathon. He holds the Oklahoma State Record at the half-marathon for the 55-59 age-group. He ran 1:15:35 at the age of 55 in 1987 at the National Masters Championships in Oklahoma City. Based on the World Association of Veteran Athletes (WAVA) age-graded scoring system, Green's time converts to a 1:03:47.

The age-graded scoring system is an equitable way to score "Best Performances" for runners age 35 and over. It was developed after a lengthy and comprehensive study which involved the tracking of times for runners age 35 and over, taking into consideration the ageing and slowing process. The result was a formula for each age, by sex, which converts a runner's actual time to an open equivalent time or, in theory, what a runner would have run in his prime years (somewhere between the ages of 20 and 34). The scoring system will be used at the Tulsa Run.

"WAVA's scoring is the best thing to hit masters running," said Green. "It has energized my running. I have found I can maintain the percentages so I can check my performances. Even though the aging process naturally slows me down, I find my WAVA percentages remain close."

Green illustrates his point from the Gasparilla Distance Classic, a 15 km, which he has run for ten consecutive years. His age-graded performance in 1982 was 92.8% of the open-class standard; in 1987 it was 96.7%; and this year 94.6%. His ten-year average is 94.5%.

Green looks forward to his next birthday when he will enter the 60-64 age-bracket.

"Every fifth birthday is exciting because I can aim toward setting age-group records," he said. Green enjoys records, having set over 30 of them.

An ordained American Baptist minister, for the last 30 years Green has been a commissioned missionary and a member of the national staff of the American Baptist Church. He is director of planning and research, a job whose skills transfer well to race organization.

"I use my strategic planning skills in health/sport organizations such as the American Running & Fitness Association (AR&FA), the Philadelphia Sports Congress, and the Philadelphia Distance Run. I also manage the computer data base for Mid-Atlantic Athletics Congress and the championship statistics for Masters Long Distance Running Committee of The Athletics Congress," said Green.

After his strategic planning consultation with AR&FA, Green was asked to join its Board of Directors and this past July became president of the organization. He has recently organized a 10-race Grand Prix Circuit in Mid-Atlantic which will be expanded to 12 races in 1992. Scoring for the circuit features WAVA's age-graded system.

Green's personal best at the 15 km distance is 49:14 run in May of '84 at the age of 51. His current 15 km times are in the neighborhood of 53:00.

"I'm at about 90% since coming back from the torn hamstring," Green said. "I have a ways to go; we'll just have to see what happens in Tulsa on November 2."

Other Contenders

Also in the running for the Masters Championship title is **Dan Conway, 52**. A resident of Wisconsin, Conway placed third in *Running Times'* Masters Age-Group Rankings and predicts his Tulsa Run actual time to be around 52 minutes.

Gaylon Jorgensen, 62, ran the Tulsa Run in 1985 and is returning this year in the hopes of capturing the Masters Championship title. He leads the *Running Times'* Rankings in his age-group for the second straight year. His predicted actual time is 54 minutes.

At age 84, **Ed Benham**, picked up his sixth number one ranking from *Running Times*. His actual Tulsa Run time is predicted at 1:14:00. This time would convert to approximately 44:30 using WAVA's age-graded scoring.

story by Jane Hawkins

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1991

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Fitness

'Age Factoring' hits Nashville

By **KIM SWINT**

Sports Writer

Randy Brady describes tomorrow's track and field meet at Vanderbilt University as something that's 'just for some fun and light-hearted competition.'

There is no entry fee and the main rewards given to individuals will come from their own sense of accomplishment.

For local athletes who don't want to travel out of state to Bowling Green's 10K Classic, an open invitation is extended by the Nashville Track Club to any male or female, regardless of age, to try their skills at tomorrow's track and field events.



Monday: Sportspour
Tuesday: Running
Wednesday: TV/Tickets
Thursday: Outdoors
Friday: Fitness

"We are especially wanting to encourage masters competitors to attend," said Brady.

For the first time in Nashville, a track and field event will involve 'age factoring' in the judging of each individual's performance. "Age graded tables, which are a series of age factors and age standards, will be used to compare performances at different ages and in different athletic events," said Brady. "Theoretically, what this does is show how a masters athlete would have performed if they were under the age of thirty."

Brady gave the example of a 40 year-old female who runs the 100 meter event in 13 seconds. With age factoring, the 13 seconds is multiplied by .9379 (a factor derived from a athletes gender and age), which equals a time of 12.19. The 12.19 represents her finishing time for the 100 meter event, had she been under the age of thirty.

Age factoring is only for ages 30-90. The assumption is that after the age of thirty, athletic abilities start to decline. "This general assumption has met a lot of opposition lately," said Brady. "If you look at Carl Lewis, who after the age of thirty set a world record for the 100 meter dash with a finishing time of 9.86 seconds, the above theory can be challenged."

The National Masters News publishes a monthly newsletter, which gives the most current age grade tables. Brady says that they will be using these tables for judging and ranking their track and field events.

There is only one stipulation for entering tomorrow's meet. Each participant must sign up for three events in their respective division.

For sprinters, there will be 100, 200 and 400-meter races. The distance runner can participate in the 400, 800 and 1500-meters runs, and the field events held will include the shot put, discus and javelin throw.

The overall age factor winner will be given a gift certificate from the Athletes House. The events start at 8:00 a.m., and will the last event is scheduled to start at 10:00 a.m.

For more information on the meet, contact Randall Brady at 383-6733.

For information on age factored tables write: National Masters News, Inc., P.O. Box 2372, Vannuys, CA 91404. ■

Write On Continued from page 5

As one of many who participated in the National Weight Pentathlon, I would like to compliment George Mathews and Ken Weinbel for doing an excellent job. This meet was very well organized, had excellent officials, and had a great social function and fine meal afterwards.

Bob Sager
Belgrade, Montana

AGE-GRADED TABLES

Derek Turnbull, 65, exceeded the 100% age-graded level four times this year, which should draw attention to the fundamental flaws in the WAVA age-graded tables.

The standards are based on the records achieved in previous years. Where those records were soft (e.g. the old M65 5000 and 10,000 marks of 17:43 and 36:03), Turnbull's 16:38 and 34:42 meant age-graded efforts of 102.0% and 101.7%, respectively.

Since age-graded tables are being used to award cash prizes (e.g. Twin Cities Marathon), it would be fairer to round off the figures to the nearest five-percentage points and divide the money equally in case of a tie.

Max Jones
West Yorkshire, England

ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

After setting four U.S. records in a single month (800, 1500, 5000, and 10,000), Shirley Matson of Moraga, Calif., must be wondering what it takes to be recognized as the Masters Athlete-of-the-Month.

I'm curious myself. What more could a competitor do in a single month? Perhaps the judgment of whoever makes the selection was clouded by a little Sorbothane between the ears.

Jim Goodnik
Oakland, California

(Matson was a strong contender for the honor. It went to Stan Whitley because he had better age-graded marks than Matson, and because he set three world M45 records the previous month. — Ed.)

JOLTING WORKOUTS

The 7.6 and 6.4 earthquakes that hit our area in July had a profound, short-term effect on me.

In recent years I have trained every other day in order to maintain an 80% result-level in the short dashes and the horizontal jumps.

Three hours after the 7.6 jolt, I worked out and had a tired feeling and poor results. Minutes after I finished, the second jolt came, and after-shocks continued.

Just before my next workout two days later, there was a 5.5 jolt. At the workout, I performed at a level which I would rate about 100%. It was a fast way to get into shape for peak performances.

This jumpy-jumper effect con-

tinued for three more workouts before wearing off.

Joe Caruso
Palm Springs, California

SUGGESTIONS

With a new track year coming soon, here are some more or less brilliant suggestions to those who organize our track meets.

1) Include a 50- or 60-meter sprint. It makes a nice added event for sprinters.

2) Eliminate the "No false start rule." After all we are human, and we traveled a long distance.

3) Take a reasonable approach to pre-registering relay teams. What club knows ahead how many it can field in any one age group?

4) Keep Saturday as the basic day for meets.

Finally a word of thanks for all your planning and good work. We appreciate it.

Clarence Killion
Sanger, California

CHISHOLM'S LAWS

When I submitted Chisholm's Laws of Running, which you published in April, I neglected to include numbers 13-15.

Number 13: Warm weather races starting later than 8 a.m. are set for reasons other than runners' concerns (late-rising politicians/celebrities, media coverage, etc.)

Number 14: Concerning the best time to run — no one (at home or work) misses you at dawn.

Number 15: Race Directors who feel that age-group winners prefer trophies should take the acid test — offer a choice between trophies and gift certificates!

Herb Chisholm
Alexandria, Virginia

RENAMED MEET

The Minnesota Masters Early Morning "R" Track and Field Meet has added the "Senior Olympics" title to its name. We're now into our 13th year and are looking forward to many more.

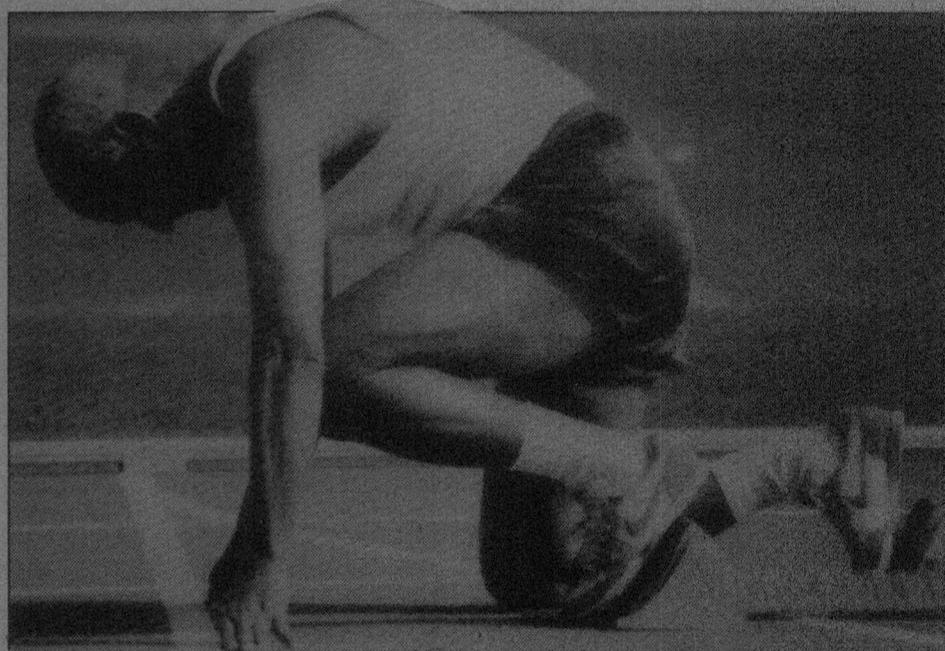
Thanks to NMN, countless others can share the results of our efforts. Look for the new MMSO track entry form in the December issue.

Rachel Lyga
Minneapolis, Minnesota

THANK YOU

I'd like to offer a belated thanks to Jim Pearce and his staff for handling the National Indoor Championships, and to Haig Bohigian and his staff for putting on a first-class Eastern Outdoor Regional Championships. Without these dedicated professionals, we would not be able to experience the joy of competition.

Barry Kline
Washington, Pennsylvania



Sri Chinmoy set a personal best 13.7 in the M60 100 in the Sri Chinmoy Masters Games, New York, July 11.

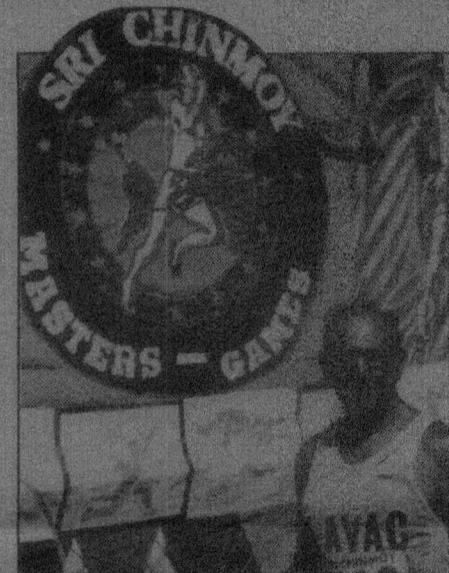
Sri Chinmoy Games

by DAVE POWELL

Another perfect day in Southern California greeted the participants of the 5th annual Sri Chinmoy Masters Games at CSU-Long Beach on September 20. Athletes from as far away as Colorado participated in this year's event. This was a new venue and allowed a 2000m steeplechase.

Edith Mendyka, 81, took home a string of W80 records in the long jump (AR 1.57), shot put (AR 5.48), discus (WR 21.96), and javelin (AR 14.64). More than ten of the athletes had a faster time here in the running events than at the Nationals in Spokane.

Sri Chinmoy, an internationally-known peace ambassador, is planning to attend next year's meet in Long Beach, September 12. The founder of the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, which organizes race events worldwide, tries through his own example to "inspire others to transcend their own limits" and "never give up." He was recently honored by the Canadian Niagara Falls Parks Commission, which named Niagara Falls the "Sri



George Simon at the Sri Chinmoy Masters Meet, Long Beach, Calif., September 20.

Photo by N. Krack

Chinmoy International Peace Falls."

Our thanks for the success of the meet go not only to all the competitors but also to Andy Sythe, head track coach at Long Beach, who has been most supportive and helpful, and to Marv Thompson, our faithful starter, as well as to everybody else — too numerous to mention — who kindly assisted us whenever needed. □

Eastern Regional Championships

by HAIG BOHIGIAN,
Eastern Regional Coordinator

The Eastern Regional Masters T&F Championships were held at Randall's Island, NYC, August 1, with 166 athletes competing. The NY Masters won the overall team title with 193 points, and also captured the 50-59 team title with 120, but lost the 60+ title to the Philadelphia Masters, 66 to 73. The Garden State AC took the 30-39 and 40-49 titles.

Two men won four events: Ed Lukens, 70, HH, LJ, TJ, and JT; and Claude Hills, 80, 100, TJ, PV, and HJ. Triple winners were Cliff Pauling, 57, 200, 400, and 800; Barry Kline, 52, both hurdles and HJ; and Herb Cantor, 67, SP, DT, and JT.

Twelve men were double winners. Among them were Ken Brinker, 45, with a 15.72 in the HH and 52.42 in the 400, and Joe Johnson, 47, with an

11.84 100 and 23.59 200. Gary Null, 47, turned in a fine 24:21.63 in the 5000 racewalk.

Libby Hagemann, 71, won the LJ, SP, DT, HT, WT, and JT. Irene Thompson, 38, won the 100, 400, HH, SP, and JT. Roslyn Katz, 50, Barbara Stewart, 50, and Lorraine Tucker, 45, each won four events.

The success of the meet can be shared by the 33 TAC officials and volunteers who helped conduct the meet. The use of fully automatic timing by Northeast Timing was crucial.

The meet was co-sponsored by the NY Masters and Valian Associates after it became clear that the scheduled host, the Potomac Valley Seniors, could not host it before the Nationals in mid-August. A special thanks to Beatrice Kee, president of the NY Masters and members Arthur Bradley and Bill Benson. □



SPEAKER'S CORNER

by JIM TURNER

Age-Graded Scoring

Most masters runners, particularly those who have competed for many years, have seen their pace slow. Although we know intellectually that some slowing occurs with the changes in our physiology as we age, it can still be difficult to accept. What we need is a way to measure our present performance against a standard that takes into account the inevitable slowing. The recent introduction of age-graded scoring tables now enables us to do exactly that.

A set of tables of "standard" times has been published for all the major racing distances for men and women starting at age 30 for each single age up to age 90. These standards correspond approximately to world record times for a person for that age and sex at that distance. Your age-graded score is obtained by dividing the standard time by your actual time and converting the result to a percentage. Before dividing, both your time and the standard time must be converted to a common time unit, typically expressing minutes and seconds as minutes with a decimal point. For example, the standard for 52-year-old males for 8K is 24:35. If his actual 8K time is 31:20, his age-graded score is $24.58/31:33 \times 100\% = 78.4\%$.

The following classification of age-graded scores is often used:

- 90%+ = World Class
- 80-89% = National Class
- 70-79% = Regional Class
- 60-69% = Local Class

Your age-graded score can be used in numerous interesting ways. One use is to compare present times with times you achieved in the past. For example, my own best 10K time of 36:12 occurred at age 39. My best 10K time since turning 50 has been 37:48 at age 51, 1:36 slower. The age 39 age-graded score is 78.4% while the age 51 score is 81.5%, which happens to be my all time best age-graded score. This makes it a lot easier to accept the loss of 96 seconds.

Another use of age-graded scores that is coming into more common practice is to base masters race awards on the relative ranking of the age-graded score. The masters athlete with the highest age-graded score receives the first place masters award, the second highest age-graded scorer receives the second place award and so on. Even when race awards aren't based on age-graded scores, it still enables race officials to acknowledge strong performances of older athletes. For example in the 1992 running of our Fifty Plus 8K race, John Keston, age 67, finished 15th overall but recorded the best age-graded performance of the day, an outstanding 94.85%.

Age-graded scoring allows you to compare your own performances at different race distances. For example, if your 5K and 8K age-graded scores are about 75%, but your best 10K result is closer to 70%, you could reasonably expect to achieve a substantial improvement in your 10K time.

Direct comparison of men and women is possible with age-graded scoring. Just think of how many arguments you can get into over that one! A novel way to look at men's versus women's standards is to identify at what ages men and women should compete on equal terms. For example, the women's age 50 8K standard of 27:14 approximately matches the men's age 63 standard of 27:20. Thus it is fair to say that these two should compete on even terms, an "age handicap" of 13 years. This age handicap may drop as more women masters runners compete seriously and standard times for women become more stringent.

Age-graded scoring opens up a new



Cheryl Kincaid, W40-44 2000 Steeplechase winner (13:44) from California, heads for an enviable dip at the National Masters T&F Championships, Spokane, Wash., August 13-16, where temperatures soared over 100° daily.

National Masters News/Jerry Wojcik

realm of "round number" possibilities. We've all set round number goals for ourselves such as achieving a sub 6 minute mile, a sub 40 minute 10K or a sub 4 hour marathon. Age-graded scores give you a whole set of new round numbers to shoot for. You might try to break 70% at a particular distance or at any distance. You can try to achieve a national class (80%) or world class (90%) performance.

At the risk of confusing matters, there is an alternative way of computing age-graded results using "age factors" instead of age standards. Age factors are mathematically equivalent to age standards but they are expressed as a fraction of the open competition standard. Using our prior example, the age factor for a 52-year-old male runner at 8K is 0.8664. The most common use of the age factor is to calculate what a race time at a certain age would be equivalent to as a younger open competition time. Applying this to our initial example, the actual run time of 31:20 of our age 52 runner would be equivalent to $.8664 \times 31:20 = 27:09$ as an open competition time. This approach may be of particular interest to runners who started running later in life and are curious about what kind of race times they might have achieved if they had competed when they were younger. Of course you can never set the clock back and know for sure, but this method gives some insight into what you might have done.

Age-Graded Medalists At Nationals

by PHIL MULKEY, TAC Masters Southeast Regional Co-Coordinator

Once again, I've taken on the project (see page 9) of age-grading the National Masters Track and Field Championship meet, held in Spokane in August, 1992. The primary purpose of this examination is to find the medalists if we all were competing on a level playing field; if we were in our prime.

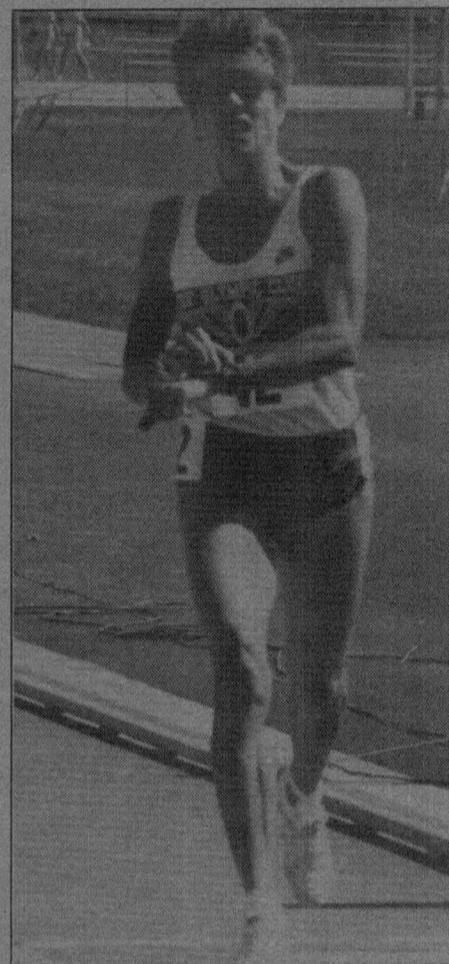
To this end, I have age-graded the entire meet on a single-age level to show total equity. What could be fairer?

Such a mythical meet gives our truly outstanding performers a platform to show how well they are actually doing. Certainly the superstars stand out as expected. But what about some of the other folks? Maybe some names you had never heard of before also stand out.

There is a by-product to this project that reflects on the authenticity of the age-grading system, itself. In past meets, we've found the grading to be slanted in favor of the sprinters and hurdlers, followed in order by the runners, jumpers, throwers, walkers and multi-eventers. This meet confirms that bias, and should hopefully influence the revision of the tables currently being done by WAVA.

The ultimate problem I have in accepting such age-graded performances is they seem too generous. Almost

The complete set of age-graded tables is available from NMN, P.O. Box 2372, Van Nuys, CA 91404. The cost is \$5.95 plus \$1.25 for shipping. □ (Reprinted from *Fifty Plus Fitness Association Bulletin, Fall, 1992.*)



Shirley Matson, 51, Moraga, Calif., after U.S. record W50-54 4:57.44 in the 1500, National Masters Championships, Spokane, August 13-16. National Masters News/Jerry Wojcik

without exception, all the medalists performed beyond anything they had done when they were in their prime. This is not to say that some are not working harder now than ever before, and, as a result, are able to perform in a superior manner. Still, I personally LJed 24-4½ in the 1960 Olympic Trials, and yet was credited with nearly a foot farther (25-3½) at the Spokane meet. I question if I have gained that kind of skill with the amount of work I'm putting in.

This is not an effort to defame our age-graded tables. A lot of hard work went on in many corners of the world to come up with those tables. We had to start somewhere. It now appears that with all the actual empirical data gained that perhaps some adjustments are due.

Stan Whitley won three firsts (100, 200, LJ) with a silver in the 400 to easily lead all male performers. Ray Funkhouser (5KRW, 20KRW) and Tom Gage (SP, HT) each won two championships. Al Funk (10K, 5K) and Dan Bulkley (SC, LH) each took a gold and silver.

The distaff side of the meet saw Phil Raschker winning five events (200, SH, PV, LJ, PEN) plus three bronze medals. Shirley Matson took four golds and four of the top five percentages. Grace Apiafi was the only other double-gold winner. □

FORUM: Age Graded Awards

Florida Running & Triathlon would like to explore the pro's and con's of age-graded awards — the system of presenting awards based upon two factors: the athlete's age and the athlete's time recorded in a particular event. This system of recognizing "outstanding" achievements is in use on a limited basis around the country. Here in Florida, Deland-based John Boyle of Alta Vista puts on a number of races, in some of which he recognizes age-graded performances.

First, you will read an open letter from some masters runners in Oklahoma who feel it is time for race directors to recognize masters runners for their age combined with their timed performances at races they compete in. You will then be presented with two opposing points of view on the subject. We asked John Boyle to provide a "pro" position while Florida Running & Triathlon presented a "con" position. Our "con" position is solely for the sake of argument and should not be misinterpreted as our opposition to the age-grading philosophy.

Dear Ladies, Gentlemen:

This letter is being written as a formal protest to the procedure of awarding Masters prize money based on time only.

Try as we may, it seems that our plea to the sponsors and race directors have fallen on deaf ears. It seems that the sponsors listen to the person or persons in charge of the race with the mistaken assumption that they are the "experts" in this area.

For age 40 and over, your procedure for giving money to the first runners who cross the finish line based on time only is grossly unfair. The reasoning for such a procedure is ludicrous. Let's explain why:

High school and college-age runners are not normally eligible to receive money, so they are not considered in the prize picture; however, they may be awarded ribbons, medals or trophies. The Open category may include a runner of any age, but it generally is made up of runners between ages 20-34. We've long known that runners in the Open compete favorably with each other. In other words, there is no apparent physiological slowing up. So, in the Open, it is fair to award prize money based on the actual order of finish.

Starting from around the age of 35 runners gradually slow down. Their slowing phenomenon increases its rate with age until runners in their 60's, 70's and 80's can in no way run abreast of those in their 40's. Most all runners understand and accept this as it is a law of nature. But, most Masters do not consider it fair to award Masters prize money based on time alone. Such a procedure completely ignores the natural aging process (slowing down) of all people.

You have established age groups for both sexes from the very young to the over 70. This is good for it provides a reasonably fair way to give awards. However, when giving Masters prize money, you lump everyone over 40 into one huge age group. Is this not a double standard? The age groups and the open awards should always be based on time only. Time AND age must BOTH be considered in determining the best performances for Masters prize money. In the same manner, you must consider TIME, AGE and WEIGHT in the Clydesdales. Would it be fair for a 70-year-old, 230 lb runner to compete with a 180 lb 25-year-old runner? Does the same principle not apply? It also applies to team scoring where there is a big gap in the ages of team members.

Here is an example of what has actually happened: The prize money in this particular race was five deep and the first five Masters to cross the finish were in their 40's. You can bet that they will always be in their lower 40's except in a small field occasionally. These five runners posted times from 18:10 to 18:40. These times were all very average, not even newsworthy other than being printed in the results. In this same race, a 66-year-old man was timed in 18:52 which is close to the national record and was an outstanding performance. This 66-year-old runner finished 6th in the Masters based on actual time. Can you be serious when you tell us that these five average runners deserved the prize money and the record performance deserved none? Can you be serious when you say a 40-year-old should run heads-up with an 80-year-old? You cannot compare performances and award Masters prize money on an equitable basis and not consider BOTH time and age.

Great performances by older runners are just as newsworthy, are every bit as significant, require as much talent, hard work and dedication and deserve as much recognition and prize money as a 40-year-old runner. Ed Benham's super performance, at age 84, in the Tulsa Run was almost as good as Doug Bell and Gary Romessers' performances at age 40. Benham received

continued

third place prize money and rightly so. Also, runners at ages 59, 57, 73 & 45 received prize money in the Tulsa Run. What did 40-year-old Gary Romesser have to say? "I like the age-graded idea. There are some great older runners out there that definitely deserve the recognition and chance for prize money." Yet you choose to ignore these performances when it comes to prize money?

Are you aware that the average age of runners goes up each year and in a few more years it will be near 50? It took several years of protests and even petitions to get the older age groups installed. Why should we have to do the same for prize money?

The World Association of Veteran Athletes did not come up with a gimmick or throw something together overnight in developing their age-graded scoring system. It was a time-consuming and very thorough study by a large group of experts on the subject who also happen to be older athletes. It is accepted worldwide. It sorts out the best performance within reason considering ALL the masters and is the only way to award prize money equitably. It can be done on race day with a calculator and only requires a few minutes.

The proceeds from your events all go to excellent causes and all are good events. We very much want to be a part of these. Yet, you are saying to us... we want you to come and pay to enter but we cannot consider you for prize money even though you may set a state, national or world record. You may have to outrun some 10, 20, 30 or even 40 years younger than you to win any money.

We think it is high time you came out of the dark ages. You should take a lesson from the Tulsa Run, Redbud Classic, Night Tracks, Bristow Wildflower Run and other races around the state and use the WAVA age-graded system to award Masters prize money.

THE POSITION FOR

As a sport striving for media acceptance and participant continuity, road racing needs, rather, deserves all the help it can get. Age-graded awards may become an integral part of that help.

On the other hand, someone once wrote that if this sport keeps increasing the quantity and the categories of awards, it will be come perceived as a sport where a bunch of old guys get together to give themselves trophies. While aware of that theory, I disagree.

In my dual roles as State TAC Masters Chairman and as a competitor, I talk to a wide spectrum of folks about this kind of thing. To many top age-groupers, actually the award itself is somewhat insignificant. The payoff comes in three areas: first is personal satisfaction, second is recognition and last is gratification extension.

Gratification is extended via the awards ceremony, the award itself and whatever other continuation of an excellent moment is possible. If there is any legitimacy at all in awarding anyone other than the winner anything, it seems like the best performance should get the most gratification.

I've heard the awestruck comments from all ages of runners on the remarkable racing of a John Campbell, a Norm Green, a Warren Utes or an Ed Benham. I've observed the delight from master runners of all abilities upon reviewing race results presented in an age-graded format. I've also heard the interest expressed by members of the media in this aspect of performance evaluation.

That the media likes such an approach is evidenced by the fact that the grading guidelines for runners were in part devised by Al Sheehan of *National Master's News* and a system for triathletes by Lew Kidder of *Triathlon Today*.

Ten years ago it was a mostly different group of folks

THE POSITION AGAINST

Age-graded awards are just another scheme by a small group of runners who are not competitive in the masters division to attract attention to themselves. Why should available prize monies be awarded to masters runners other than to the swiftest? The reality of road racing in the 1990s is that there are two groups of runners that usually receive the most recognition—the overall and master winners. There is no benefit to road racing in taking away prize money from the swiftest master runner and awarding it to, for instance, a 73-year-old. Just as there are money incentives for world record performances for overall runners, the same may be offered for record performances for age group runners, if that is what concerns age-grading proponents. To take existing prize money away from the swiftest master runners is simply not fair.

The argument that only masters' prize money should be determined on both time and age is indeed a double standard because proponents do not advocate that for open prize money. To be fair, one must also argue that prize money should be considered for not just the swiftest overall runner, but also for those swift and gifted twelve, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen-year-olds who happen to record outstanding times. The aging process, whether a runner is growing up or growing old, is an irrelevant measure for a money award.

A good example for this reasoning appears in the July 1992 issue of *National Masters News*. In the 10K held in conjunction with the Revco-Cleveland Marathon on May 17, a 43-year-old John Campbell and a 47-year-old Priscilla Welch were the top age-graded performers, even though Campbell was beaten in the race by 41-year-old Doug Bell by 4 seconds. The second and third place age-graded

FORUM: Age Graded Awards

THE POSITION FOR

continued

who were winning the older age divisions. In other words, the guys and gals that once took home the 40-44 division hardware, for the most part, have not become the 45-49, 50-54 winners. One reason (and there are many others) that this happens is that after being at the top, it's difficult to get motivated to be an also-ran while performing at relatively similar or better levels.

Road racing theoretically needs an interested group of participants. I say theoretically because arguably the sport could survive on plenty of hype and lots of sponsorship without truly interested participants.

What interests most is not the race but the races within the race. To me there has always been something odd about a sport where a majority of the contestants go home without even knowing who won, but they do generally have a better idea as to who won their division. This, to me, may be one of the keys for continuity. How does the sport keep everyone's interest?

Personally, I'm undecided on whether the age-graded champ should be the overall race winner, but convinced about he or she being the masters champ.

On the subject of overall winners, it's obvious that a 33-minute 10K by a 59-year-old Norm Green is worthy of far more gratification than a 32-minute clocking by a 28-year-old, but should Norm get top honors? Does that fly too much in the face of the spirit of the race? I think not.

Recalling the time in a prediction run 5K where at 43 years I finished ahead of 1000 or so runners in 16:30, I can identify somewhat with the person who crossed the line first but didn't get to win. Going into the race, I knew the rules, so I had no complaints. Besides, I certainly understand that a 16:30, while great for me at the time, is an unlikely winning time in a race that large. I still had the thrill of being first. Whattaa country!

A mediocre winning performance in the masters category by a 40-year-old should be secondary to a quality time by an older competitor. With age-grading, the outstanding 40-year-old has just as much chance as the outstanding 60-year-old.

On the issue of prize money, the sport would be better served by age-grading. Look at who presently takes home all the cash — foreigners, I've always wondered how long gringo companies were going to keep that flow going. Some experts feel that the reason the USA are not world-beaters is that our top runners race too much for cash. How many runners can make a living out of racing purses anyway?

Age-grading brings a new kind of fun to a sport that is comprised mostly of folks who are there for exactly that purpose.

John Boyle

THE POSITION AGAINST

continued

performers were Bill Rodgers and Bell, respectively.

So, according to the age-grading theory, the body of John Campbell is not as competitive as the body of Doug Bell, even though they are two years apart. And possibly, the age difference between them may only be just one year and one day apart! It doesn't appear that the bodies of either Campbell or Welch have really slowed all that much.

The reason they, and runners of their calibre, are still winning is that actually their bodies have not aged along with others the same age. It is a medical fact that as runners get older, their bodies age at a different rate, even among runners the same age. And quite often, the swiftest 40-year-old in his or her time, barring retirement or

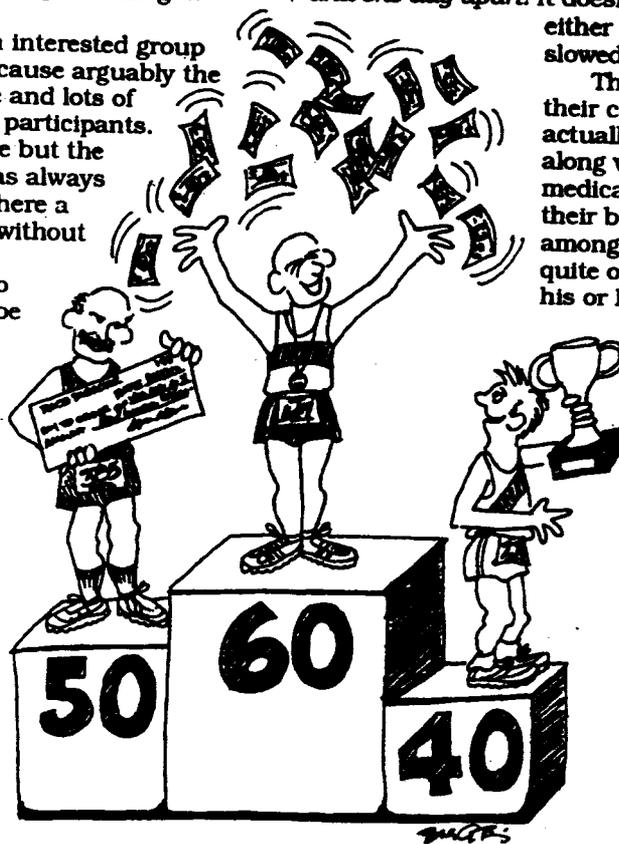
injuries, will also be the swiftest 50-, 60-, and 70-year-old when the time comes, winning an age-graded award if available. In essence, age-grading just extends the winning ways of these older gifted athletes, while ignoring the newly-turned 40-year-old who is now the swiftest master in the race. That is unfair. It's just a reshuffling of prize money, and age-grading proponents are only appealing to sponsors to recognize a different group of elite runners.

Why is money so important to these would-be age-graded advocates? They seem

to have lost the real reasons for competing in road races that the remaining 98% of us race for: competitiveness, camaraderie, emotional and physical well-being. What about the majority of us who cannot compete with the open runners nor set records in our respective age groups? Why shouldn't age-grading be extended to the 30-and-over group? The majority of them certainly are not on the same competitive level as the swift young horses in their 20s!

There simply cannot be two standards by which to recognize athletic performance in one race, nor two separate rationales for offering prize money to the open runners vs. the over-40 group. Prize money is a gift, not a right. So far, this gift is for the swiftest. There is no other reason to award prize money on anything other than overall placing. If it's money that these over-40, -50, -60, -70 and -80 individuals are after, would it suffice if their entry fee was waived at the races they entered? That would be a start!

Readers, what do you think? Should race directors provide age-graded awards/money to top performers at the expense of the overall winners? Is this philosophy a viable one that more races should adopt? Send your comments to: Age-Grading • Florida Running & Triathlon • 8640 Tansy Drive • Orlando, FL 32819



You're only as old as you run

Record book allows age-group ratings

COMPARING your fitness running or walking time to a friend's might not be the best way to see who is faster — especially if that friend isn't your age.

As much as we hate to admit it, we do slow down as we get older. But although our times in a weekend fun run or on a walk around a park might not be as fast as they once were, we might be just as fit as a younger friend.

You can turn to a newly revised book of tables developed by the World Association of Veteran Athletes to figure out how you rate, either to challenge your own fitness or to sneak a little fun competition into your runs or walks or any track or field event, including throwing and jumping.

The tables use the world record for each age as 100 percent performance potential. Once you know your age's potential, you can calculate your own percentage of that. With that figure to compete against, you can better challenge yourself, devise appropriate goals and perhaps give your self-confidence a boost when you discover you're running "faster" than someone younger doing the same pace.

Here's an example: Joe is 40, and he can run five kilometers (3.1 miles) in 19 minutes. If he held the world record for his age, he'd be able to fly through the distance in 13 minutes, 28.8 seconds. When Joe divides the world record in seconds by his time in seconds (808.8 divided by 1140), he finds he's reached almost 71 percent of the potential for age.

Let's put the percentages into perspective: If 100 percent means you can shoot for Olympic gold, 90 percent means you can compete with the best in the world, 80 percent means you're ready to do well at national champion-

See **AGES**, Page 14D

Compete against someone your own age

AGES

from Page 16D

ships, 70 percent means you could place strongly at regional competitions, and 60 percent means you're local-class. Your fitness starts to improve once you've reached about 35 percent of your potential.

Now compare Joe's 19-minute 5K to his friend, Ray, who at 34 can just barely edge out Joe with a time of 18:45. Check the charts and divide the world-record 34-year-old's time of 12:58.4 by Ray's time (778.4 seconds divided by 1125 seconds) to discover that

Ray is at 69 percent of his potential. Joe, although slightly slower, is actually more fit.

The numbers on the tables can become a little addictive as you start to compete with yourself. Let's see — if I can do the distance X seconds faster, how many percentage points would I raise myself?

Unfortunately, as you get faster, it gets more difficult to make huge gains, but even those fractional increases can be like a carrot dangling in front of your nose. And who doesn't need a trick now and then?



THERESE IKNOIAN

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

To receive a booklet with a full set of age-graded tables, as well as explanations and sample formulas, send \$6, plus \$1.25 postage, to National Masters News, P.O. Box 50098, Eugene, OR 97405.

Write Therese Iknoian at Venture, San Jose Mercury News, 750 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose, Calif. 95190; or fax (408) 920-5244.

11/23/95



THERESE IKNOIAN

You're only as old as you run

*Record book allows
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COMPARING your fitness running or walking time to a friend's might not be the best way to see who is faster — especially if that friend isn't your age.

As much as we hate to admit it, we do slow down as we get older. But although our times in a weekend fun run or on a walk around a park might not be as fast as they once were, we might be just as fit as a younger friend.

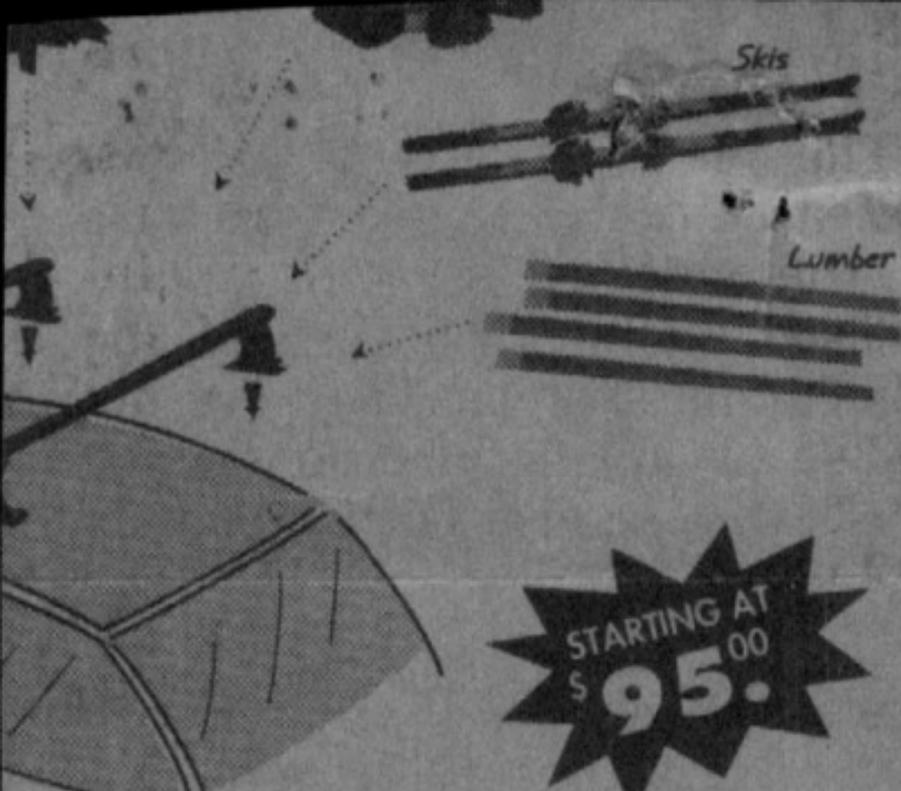
You can turn to a newly revised book of tables developed by the World Association of Veteran Athletes to figure out how you rate, either to challenge your own fitness or to sneak a little fun competition into your runs or walks or any track or field event, including throwing and jumping.

The tables use the world record for each age as 100 percent performance potential. Once you know your age's potential, you can calculate your own percentage of that. With that figure to compete against, you can better challenge yourself, devise appropriate goals and perhaps give your self-confidence a boost when you discover you're running "faster" than someone younger doing the same pace.

Here's an example: Joe is 40, and he can run five kilometers (3.1 miles) in 19 minutes. If he held the world record for his age, he'd be able to fly through the distance in 13 minutes, 28.8 seconds. When Joe divides the world record in seconds by his time in seconds (808.8 divided by 1140), he finds he's reached almost 71 percent of the potential for age.

Let's put the percentages into perspective: If 100 percent means you can shoot for Olympic gold, 90 percent means you can compete with the best in the world, 80 percent means you're ready to do well at national champion-

See AGES, Page 14D



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Compete against someone your own age

■ AGES

from Page 16D

ships, 70 percent means you could place strongly at regional competitions, and 60 percent means you're local-class. Your fitness starts to improve once you've reached about 35 percent of your potential.

Now compare Joe's 19-minute 5K to his friend, Ray, who at 34 can just barely edge out Joe with a time of 18:45. Check the charts and divide the world-record 34-year-old's time of 12:58.4 by Ray's time (778.4 seconds divided by 1125 seconds) to discover that

Ray is at 69 percent of his potential. Joe, although slightly slower, is actually more fit.

The numbers on the tables can become a little addictive as you start to compete with yourself: Let's see — if I can do the distance X seconds faster, how many percentage points would I raise myself?

Unfortunately, as you get faster, it gets more difficult to make huge gains, but even those fractional increases can be like a carrot dangling in front of your nose. And who doesn't need a trick now and then?



THERESE IKNOIAN

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

To receive a booklet with a full set of age-graded tables, as well as explanations and sample formulas, send \$6, plus \$1.25 postage, to National Masters News, P.O. Box 50098, Eugene, OR 97405.

Write Therese Iknoian at Venture, San Jose Mercury News, 750 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose, Calif. 95190; or fax (408) 920-5244.

with ring nets; otherwise, fishing is slow because of rough seas. (415) 355-0690.

- **MONTEREY:** Rockfishing trips to Big Sur catch daily limits of mixed rockfish plus near limits of lings using live squid. (408) 375-5951, 372-7440, 372-0577, 372-2203.

Source: Dale Lackey

370-2223.

- **Mission Rugby** Looking for new or used players for the '95-96 season. (409) 983-1652 or (415) 594-8727.
- **Peninsula Women's Rugby Club** Looking for athletic women to play this season. No experience necessary. Practices Monday and Wednesday at 6:45 p.m. in Cupertino. Jennifer (408) 739-7884.

RUNNING

- **Gold Medal Turkey Trot** Today at 10 a.m. at Pinole Valley High School. Four miles. Cost \$15. Sky High (510) 223-5778.
- **San Francisco Turkey Trot** Today at 9 a.m. at the Polo Fields in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Five and

through U19. Mike (408) 262-7149.

- **PAL spring soccer** Santa Clara and Rose Garden, U8 through U19. Norm (408) 248-8516.
- **Premier team** Looking for intermediate to experienced female soccer players for women's league based in Palo Alto. (408) 374-7201 (evenings), Gus (408) 738-6688 (days).
- **Women's team** Looking for dedicated, hard-working players. Goalkeeper needed; all positions considered. Kasey (408) 531-9320.
- **Referees** Metro PAL is looking for referees, all levels of experience. Must be at least 12 years old. Complete training and licensing are free to all that complete the program. Bryan (408) 235-9898.
- **Coaches needed** Monroe middle school, for seventh- and eighth-grade girls and boys teams. Paid positions. Scott (408) 984-0551.
- **Coaching position available** CYSA Ambronzino, U-15 girls select soccer team. Male or female, candidate must have strong team building and conditioning skills; class D license preferred. Paid position. Starting date in February. Skip Borst (408) 779-3726.

SOFTBALL

- **Prince world team tennis** Ongoing co-ed recreational league for all levels. (408) 425-3223.
- **Tennis instructors needed** Full-time and part-time for the City of San Jose. Sherri (408) 277-5556.

TRIATHLONS

- **Harbor Bay Tri Bi** Dec. 16 at 10 a.m. at Harbor Bay Parkway, Alameda. 5K run; 17-mile triple loop, paved, flat bicycle; 5K level run or 5-mile inline skate. Entry fee \$25 through \$35. (510) 223-5778.

VOLLEYBALL

- **City Beach Club** Tryouts for girls 14s and 12s Dec 3 from 2 to 5 p.m. at Mission College. Tryout fee \$25. Mandatory parents' meeting during tryouts. (408) 267-3676.
- **Griffin Volleyball Club** Tryouts Dec. 3. 14U and 12U 9 a.m. to noon at the Sport Centre of San Jose. 18U from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 16U from 6 to 9 p.m., and 14U from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Koret Center, USF. (408) 946-9420.

Equal time on adjusted times

Race director points out flaws in age handicapping system

In a recent column I wrote about the structure of awards in road racing. Several issues were raised, and among them was the use of age-adjusted scoring to determine the distribution of purse money in the masters division.

My position was that age adjustment (a handicapping system done by computer to adjust all runners' times to a theoretical 27-year-old's ability) is the fairest system to determine the best masters performance. Thus a fast 62-year-old, running slower than a fast 40-year-old, might be declared the winner.

That column has elicited many responses — most endorsing my position and a few who disagree. Perhaps the most articulate response came from John Hollenbeek, the race director of the former Asbury Park 10K Classic, which has moved to Red Bank this year and been renamed the George Sheehan Classic.

Hollenbeek and I have carried on a lively dialogue on running and racing since first meeting, and his response to my column is in keeping with our continuing debate. Hollenbeek raised good objections and presents them well. In the first of two parts, I am reprinting portions of his letter concerning age adjusting.

"Thanks for your recent correspondence. Your columns are articulate and challenging. Not surprisingly, there are a few areas in which we seem to disagree.

"The age adjusted times are an interesting issue for serious masters runners, but I think that the premise of age adjusting is on a very shaky conceptual foundation.

"As I understand it, the formulae that are used to compare times are based (as they must be) on the current world's best times for various ages. I think this unfairly skews the results in favor of older runners.

"The younger age groups have much deeper competition and have had that competition for a much longer period of time. My sense is that the age group marks for younger runners are generally closer to the maximum attainable.

"With the older age groups there are several factors that would seem to keep the records softer. There has been no serious competition in these age groups until recently and without the financial and promotional incentives offered to open runners, I doubt we are seeing the highest level of competition in these age groups.

"As a result, it seems logical that more of the older athletes can meet or exceed the theoretical best for their ages. . . .

"The bottom line is that we really do not know the effect of aging on our sport. Until we do, the age-adjusting process will be suspect.

"This situation seems analogous to the state of women's running until recently. Once women obtained the opportunity to compete seriously, there was an enor-



MADELINE BOST

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mous drop in record times. This process is still far from complete, so I think we'll see more dramatic advances.

"A similar situation exists in ultra running. Since this discipline does not attract the sport's very best athletes, the performance levels are probably significantly less than they could be."

My response and the balance of John's letter will appear soon.

Bandits

What's a bandit? No, it's not a masked man with a gun in his hand relieving you of your valuables.

In road racing it's a runner who shows up for a race but does not pay an entry fee. Race directors loathe them. For good reason.

Bandits take all the benefits of a race: water, a cleared road, adrenalalin pump to achieve a fast race pace and, most importantly, they take up a spot from a paying runner.

At Tuesday's Chemical Runners Corporate Challenge, we saw the worst form of this theft. Taking up a spot on the starting line was more than one bandit — a second look at the newspaper photo of the start will confirm this.

As the lead pack pulled away from the field, one of the bandits was with them. Obviously a talented runner, he showed an uncommon lack of sensitivity. Taking the lead after the first mile, he garnered the attention that should have gone to the legitimate runners in the race.

Ignoring warnings from race officials, he was finally chased off the course by finish-line workers who are themselves elite runners.

The Corporate Challenge series emphasizes participation by all company employees. Some, like Bellcore, fielded more than 250 runners. Many of these people have never before run in a road race, but through the Challenge they are introduced to the sport and often continue to run and stay fit.

To be able to compete, you must be a participating company's employee. Thus many runners are not eligible. At Tuesday's race, many of these ineligible runners were at the scene, but they were paying their dues by helping out as course marshals, finish-line workers, etc. Some of them could have won the race, but had the courtesy to stay out.

By grandstanding in a race where he didn't belong, the bandit stole from the sponsors and the others in the race. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. Perhaps with exposure in print, such runners will see themselves as others see them.

RUNNING BY MADELINE BOST

(Column to be printed in New Jersey
Newspapers on Sunday, August 14, 1994)

Last week I reprinted a portion of a letter from John Haulenbeek, the director of the George Sheehan Classic 10K. In his comments, Haulenbeek questions the accuracy of the age adjusting factors, in particular, he raised the issue of the factors unfairly favoring older athletes.

Because the older age groups have not had serious competition until recently he doubts that we are seeing the highest level in these age groups.

His objections are quite timely and have been raised by others. It is one that I have been concerned about. Are the tables accurate?

Perhaps the best source of information is Al Sheahan, editor of the National Masters News, the monthly newspaper for masters athletes.

"People are saying the tables are too soft?" he responded in surprise. "We've been getting the opposite reaction," he said.

Despite the protests, the age grading tables have been revised, he told me, and they are tougher than the 1989 originals.

Sheahan was delighted to learn that Dave Siconolfi, of CompuScore is supplying age adjusted times for the races that he scores. A copy of the new tables was sent immediately to Siconolfi who has reprogrammed them into his system.

An analysis of the age adjusted times of the recent President's Cup Night Race 5K is very interesting and leads to a surprising conclusion.

In that race, the first master's male was 40 year old Kelly Jensen. His actual time was 16:02. Using the old table that time was adjusted to 15:07 - with the new table it is 15:25 - a significant change.

Next master to finish was 45 year old Roger Price. His actual time was 16:09. The old table gave him a 14:44 and the new one put him at 14:59- in both cases he heads the list of masters finishers.

Second master on the list is 53 year old Pat Cosgrove whose actual time was 17:29. The old table gave him a 15:01 - the new a 15:14 - and, as in the case with Price, he retained his position with either table.

Third was Jensen and fourth was Manuel Gama, 42, whose time of 16:19 was adjusted to 15:11 and then to 15:28 on the new table.

A shuffle occurs with fourth and fifth. With the old table Larry Graham, 42, has his time of 16:32 adjusted to 15:23. The new table gives him a 15:41, thus shifting 54 year old Victor Cruz up into fourth. Cruz had finished in 18:06 and was first adjusted to 15:24, behind Graham.

The new table gives Cruz a 15:38 and a 3 second lead over Graham.

Very interesting. Does that mean that the older runners are being given an edge? We have Dudley Healy to use for comparison. At 80, Healy is one of the oldest men in the country actively

competing. He ran in the President's Cup also.

Healy's time of 25:57 was adjusted to 16:23 on the old table which put him at 15 in the masters placing. With a flick of it's heartless chip, the computer added nine seconds and bumped him down to 16 with the new table.

Does this really prove anything about the accuracy of the tables? I decided to check with an athlete who has been competing all of his life at the highest level.

"I could never hit those times in my prime," Hugh Sweeney told me several weeks ago. Like all of you, his post card from Dave Siconolfi's CompuScore has been showing his age adjusted times in New Jersey road races.

What about now? At the Ridgewood 5K on Memorial Day, Sweeney, who turned fifty this year, ran a 16:51. The 1989 table gave him credit for a 14:50, faster than he ever ran in his prime years. The new table added 13 seconds for a 15:03 and nearly matched his personal 5K record of 15:07.

How do we account for the 4 seconds? We don't, asserts Sweeney.

"It's the fairest system of handicapping that we have," said Sweeney.

And that is the bottom line. We are trying to determine the masters winner in a given race. We don't really have to be 100% accurate as to that runner's 27 year old potential - we only need to adjust everyone equally. As long as we don't integrate the adjusted times into the open runners file, and keep the masters separate, we are on firm ground.

It's a handicapping method - period. Let's start using it when giving out purse money to masters.

Give the 60 year old runner as much chance as the 40 year old. In fact, had there been purse money at the President's Cup, 64 year old Lois Filreis would have taken third in the women's masters.

Filreis ran an actual 24:48 which was adjusted to 18:41. I was adjusted from 20:44 to a 17:25 (54 years old) for first and Betty McCulloch, who is 45, went from an actual 20:17 to an 18:31, for second place.

This fall, the first race in the state to use age adjusting for a masters purse is the Run For Life 10K on September 11 at Picatinny Arsenal. It will be interesting to see how the masters runners support this race.

Awards structure stirs debate

Do you care about awards in road races?

I pose the question because race awards can lead to a lively discussion about what is fair in the structuring of awards.

After over 10 years of competing and several years of being active in directing races and writing about the sport, I have come to some opinions which I'd like to share with you. Two issues stand out — gender and age divisions.

Let's look at gender first.

I charted several New Jersey road races last year to see just who was competing and folks, this is a male-dominated sport.

While the numbers varied slightly, on average the ratio was 75 percent men to 25 percent women. When we look at the awards do we see this balance reflected? No we do not.

Across the board, women are winning an equal number of awards as men, while they compete against a much smaller field of competitors than do the men. This is especially true in the age divisions. On the men's side, there may be only a minute separating first place from third, while the first woman may finish five minutes ahead of the third woman in a 10K race.

In fact, the third woman may get the award by default — there were only three competing in that division. On the other hand, in that same age division there might have been 10 men, thus creating a true competition.

The solution is to award deeper on the men's side and even cut off some of the awards on the women's side. With the aid of a computer, awards could be given based on percentages, as is done in the Prevention Half-Marathon in Pennsylvania.

When road racing first began to develop and they started handing out awards, there were no age divisions — and sometimes no gender divisions either. As time went

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Madeline Bost

on, some folks started to realize that something was amiss. If we only recognize the front runners, we are missing some significant performances by people who are no longer in their peak years, or those who have not yet reached them.

The solution? Age divisions.

Recognizing that a runner, no matter how talented, loses speed as part of the aging process, accommodations had to be made for the aging athlete. If anyone doubts that, just look at Eamonn Coghlan's sub four minute mile (3:58:15) at the age of 41.

Rightly heralded as a great achievement for a masters runner, it acutely points out the slowdown of even this elite runner whose prime year's indoor PR is 3:49:78.

If Coghlan is slowing down, then so are the rest of us older athletes. But what is the rate of that slow down? That's a hard question to answer and each individual is different. So let's pose the question in a different way. Will a 49-year-old athlete have a chance against a 40-year-old? And should he have to compete against the 'youngster'?

Many race directors think he should. And that the 69-year-old should compete against the 60-year-old. Are you catching my drift? We're talking about 10-year age groups in masters competition. Even worse is the 'something'-and-up, often 60-and-up, but I've seen races where it's 50-and-up. Now, come on! Let's get reasonable.

Two reasons usually offered for these decisions are money and time. Money, because it costs more to go to five-year age divisions. I have an answer for that — in a smaller race where the budget

is tight, give less expensive awards.

If the race is larger and better funded, then loosen up on the purse strings and give back to the runners who are supporting your race.

Yes, I know you are trying to raise money for your charity. But remember who you are raising that money from.

Granted, an award ceremony lasts longer if you give out more awards. By the time you get to the older age divisions most of the crowd has disappeared. You can remedy that, too.

Start with the older divisions. To be fair, those folks are the ones who should have the privilege of walking away before the awards are over. After all, they are older and shouldn't be made to stand around longer than anyone else. Start with the less populated older groups and it will go quickly enough. When you get to the larger divisions your crowds will still be there.

Now lets look at purse money.

If a race is offering prize money three deep to the women, and I believe that they should, then go to five or six deep on the men's side.

The only fair way to distribute purse money in the masters divisions is to use age adjusted scoring. This system uses the computer to adjust the runner's time to equate what he or she would have run in his or her prime years. It puts the 40-year-old runner on a par with the 60-year-old.

This concept was introduced to New Jersey runners at last fall's East Brunswick 10K when they gave awards, but no money, to the age adjusted winners. The man and woman winners were both coincidentally 54 years old.

Well, what do you think? Write to me in care of this newspaper and express your opinion. In another column I will print your responses.