With the chance of Olympic glory taken away from him, German Democratic Republic ace Ronald Weigel made the most of another opportunity today, as he took better than 2½ minutes off Raul Gonzales' world's best for 50 km. Weigel's stunning 1:38:31 bettered the 1:41:20 by the Mexican in Czechoslovakia 6 years ago. Gonzales has the official world record, on a track at 1:41:28.

Weigel, who had beaten Gonzales earlier in the year by nearly 3 minutes, won the World Championship last year and was ranked first in the world. In today's race, he was accompanied by Hartwig Gauder and Dietmar Miesch through 20 km, but then blew the race open with a stunning display of speed, his final 20 km taking just 1:26:20. Actually, his sprint appeared to start at 20 km, which was passed in a pedestrian 1:28:43! He then did 21:55 and 22:11 for the next two 5's (41:32 for 10 km). Although Gauder and Miesch stayed with him through that, they couldn't survive any longer and dropped away the rest of the way. Nonetheless, Gauder missed the former best by only 4 seconds and Miesch was only a couple of minutes behind him. A week later, Weigel destroyed Gauder in a 20 km as he exploded 1:19:56. Results of the two races:


OTHER RESULTS


Mercenarlo controlled the men's race all the way and pulled steadily away after 2 miles. In the women's race, on the other hand, Farias and Colín constantly traded the lead, with the American just able to surge ahead at the finish. Nancy Laskau was Chief Judge for the men's race.


Winner Raul Gonzales paces the Olympic 50 Km field after the first 5. Behind him are an Aussie, Maurizio Damilano, Marco Eton, and Ernesto Canto, the 20 Km winner. Handing the water bottle in 1976-20 km gold medalist, Daniel Bautista. Below: Kerry Bratton, Donna Goldstein, and Sybil Perez in National Junior 3K. Bratton won this race, but Perez came back to win the Pan-American Juniors (see results this issue.) SPORTSFOTOS by John Allen.
Sun. Dec. 9--50 Km, Houston, 6 am
5 Km, New York City, 9 am
Todd Scully Day 10 Km, Long Branch, NJ, 10 am

PAGE 6

SUN. DEC., 9--50 KM, HOUSTON, P A GE 6

B--Tom Giantvalley, 4010 Mt. Diablo Blvd, San Francisco, CA
E--Wayne Jl icoll,
C--John K ella.y, 1024 Third St., Santa Monica, CA 90401
H--Dave Gwyn, 6502 S. Briar Bayou, Houston, TX 77027
J--{;a.ry
I--Giulio

PERIODICALS OF THE ATHLETIC CONGRESS, was under way.

on! Masochists, if so inclined, could have a ball. Self-inflicted pain,

September 17-Sea.ring heat, cloudless, glaring, most stifling ever at this

race. As is Missouri's wont, that was sudden contrast from days of fickle

and

warm

in the wes

Hickman 's red shale outdoor oval.

It set, orbited, rose. Still, as dawn broke, the steps-stepped stepped

of this writer's 19:40:20 to a paltry third. Prior to that '78 U.S.

Open 100-mile in Columbia, the U.S. record of 12:24:34, set by the late

Larry 'O'Neil of Kalmia, Montana, had stood for 11 years. But in '78, Price

snapped that with his 19:37:41. Hendrick's effort also beat the old mark,

while price fell 15 minutes and change short.

Thus ended my 8-year quest to topple the American record, though I

would continue to rack up 100-mile successes (more on that later). Price's
			
time would prove virtually out of my reach, and indeed remains untouched as

of 1984. (94. This year's race is in being contested on the weekend I prepare

this issue for mailing. Results next month.)

This Sunday, when the countdown ended, the ticking stopped at 1, only

two--Custer and Price--had 100 miles. "I've never been so tired of

walking," said Chris, a behavioral therapist, the next day. She added the obvious,

"And I love to walk."

Therapist, has anyone questioned your behavior? "No, I've had great

support; lucky my friends think it's good."

Chris' offbeat habits include walking 7.3 miles daily at high noon (in

1:20 to 1:45) to work at Woodhaven, a center for mentally retarded. Ah, heat

conditioning. Maybe that's her weapon.

"I'm not a summer person," she claims, seeming bewildered that she sur-

vives otherwise. "I don't even own a sun hat. We've got 11½ hours of
time, first time since she slumbered while in Pacific, MO High.

Swimming 12 miles four times weekly, weight work, and one to two hours

of calisthenics daily spell stamina for Chris.

Strolling the track at 42 miles, she responded, "I feel good, great." After

11½ hours' sleep, she could add Monday, "I feel pretty high, like a

big balloon, but weak, slow." That didn't stop her from 30 minutes on a

kneeling mat on John's eyebrows. "We're going to be close. Her

stomach's upset," he fretted. "I don't think she's taking the right kind of

nutrients. About an hour ago the fatigue hit."

She'd been munching figs, dates, grapes, nuts, bread and cheese, and

expanded that to a chocolate malt (on my advice).

"You're a legend," Joe Marks, a timer, muses as he logged

spits while the night wore on. It was an ego-gratifying

overstatement, of course, but nice, among laurels tossed dur-

ing my first layoff in 12 years.

During that time, I'd completed 11 of these 100-mile racewalks--

no one else in the United States had completed that many--winning

2nd place in 1977 and 3rd place six times from 1975 to 1981.
Racewalking has just two rules to set it apart from running: one foot must be on the ground at all times (or it’s a foul), called lifting; the supporting leg must be straight at the knee at some point (or it’s creeping).

I’ve been asked the formula for success in this event. Nothing fancy is the answer, just a goodly bunch of training (1,700 to 3,400 miles a year) and a desirous desire. To do a 100, you don’t just walk 100. I’d elected to skip this year, rest injured joints in hip and foot. (Maybe my dad had something when he’d joked, “If you hurt in the joints, stay out of the joints.”)

Price sat on the infield now. He had 50 in 7020, a mindboggling 50 to go, ahead of Jack Blackburn by 2 miles. “Struggling, trying to keep those little-bitty cramps from coming up; you know how it is, minor, potential cramps,” he said, massaging his calves.

A bottled smorgasbord of herbs/vitamins filled the grass. Price explained on health, gulped handfuls of pills. “You really want to get rid of arthritis?” he asked. “Go on a carrot juice and celery fast for 2 weeks. Go easy on meat. That’s what it is—a uric acid buildup,” he advised.

How do you train, Alan? “15 to 20 miles a week,” he said deadpanned.

Such low mileage does strain credibility, in light of Price’s vigorous, arm-pumping gait, more typical in 20 to 50 km races. But it’s his story and he sticks with it.

Alan stacked quantities of skin moisturizer all over. Does he run?

“Four or five years ago, I did a 3-hour marathon. Biggest thing I did was 100 km a day for three days in ’75—a run/walk. Starts in D.C. and ends in Cumberland, Maryland, along the Potomac.”

Alan took second behind Park Barner, an ultra-running phenom. “I’ve seen my number, you should have seen those old guys; they were shocked.” Mrs. Blackburn, an upbeat optimist, laughed at the memory.

“Yeah, we’re going to pass them. We’re not going to do this again, like he did last year, while soaking in a bathtub, toes black and blue.”

Steve Jones, Molly’s friend, was out there, destined to do 50. He was listless to the right. “Blistered,” he moaned, “right under my toe and circling around the heels. Last year, the same thing. This is pretty tremendous stuff.”

Knowing what 5½ felt like in ’82, Steve thought it was going to be different. “You just can’t count on it. Physically, you can do it mentally, I just can’t do it. It’s fun seeing if you can better yourself.”

Obsession, that’s what it is. “I think it’s great,” Corinn said. She was thankful, too, for her son’s clean shave, his first time in 15 years. “I never did care for that beard.” Jack’s wife Joyce of seven years had never seen his face till this summer, and on seeing it, “is kind of shy.”

The youngest son begged, “Put it back.” Corinn had a theory on that full beard, “I think he wants to hide his emotions sometimes.”

Jack is complex. His rise to fame and fortune, his race-controlling, his Artful Manege, with neck over flapping. “I think it’s worth the risk of injury just to be a Centurion; they can never take Number 22 away from me.”

Myers was 22nd in the U.S. to grab that title with a 22:57:36 in 1977, and chopped off 1½ hours a year later.

Gimickery is an element in his attack on this sport, more so than with most, in a sport that needs and breeds mental tricks. Sure others also cart in tents, cots, blankets, portable stoves, exotic tidbits, and their helper-and-cheering section with relatives and friends. But Myers has tracked his measured doses of fluids, stacked in tubular dispensers, with automatic counters that log what’s used. He wants to know his body, keep tabs on it.

He’s a computer dabbler, knows precisely how fast, based on distance walked, he must go per lan to get the job done at any time. Hickoan’s a meter track (25 laps in 6.2 miles); Myers has tallied that 3½ laps in 38 miles, 285 yards or 93.6 km, that 73 miles equals 117.479 km or 293.7 laps. And 100 miles in 160.93 km or 402.3 laps.

No family is perhaps more swept up in racewalking than Ohio’s Blackburns. Jack, parents John and Corinn, and sons Nate, all are immortalized, as are others of his seven children. Five times father and son joined with Ohioan Jack Mortland in 1959-60 to win national team titles in 10 to 40 km races. John, a retired physician, turned in a 1:48 20 km in the late ’50s “when 1:48 was respectable.”

Corinn, whose name is hard to tell if it’s a man or a woman, used to put gray balm in AAU officials in the early ’50s by registering in races decades before the fad of females testing AAU waters. “When I’d come to pick up my number, you should have seen those old guys; they were shocked.” Mrs. Blackburn, an upbeat optimist, laughed at the memory.

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in 1965 by Jack and friend, fellow walker, and wit, Jack Mortland, who carries it on grandly today.

John was "talking me down." Withdrawal from my addiction—racewalking—was hitting hard; pains were coming at me. I was miserable, bemoaning not having entered the race, feeling guilty, whining, thinking I'd goofed, made an awful mistake. (Conscience wasn't eased in retrospect either, as it turned out, knowing that finishing a mere 10 minutes short of 24 hours would have taken second in this national race.)

So there I was, a blubbering hen of regret, knowing I couldn't ignore my body's warnings, trained more and jumped in as Jack, indeed, had urged me to do as the racers were lining up: "Come on," he'd prompted, "why don't you just jump in? I've got an extra pair of shoes," he said. I'd teetered, teetered, wanted to, but knew I'd blown it at that point by any reasonable logic, since I'd added to the insult to my body by late-night partying—subconsciously, I suspect, as an added buffer to argue out of a last-second change of heart.

But now, may hours into the fray, Dr. John was telling me, reassuring me I was right to withhold: "You weren't mentally ready, even if physically; you can't separate the two." "But it's going to be so slow this year," I whispered. "Life isn't fair," John philosophized. "First of all, you've got to be born right, then have the emotional fortitude and ability." He acknowledged that Price is "a tough little fellow," but that smallness is an unfair plus here, whereas in, say weightlifting, he wouldn't have a prayer. "I don't think the slight people have the guts and fortitude of you people of heavier build (6'2", 190 here)." "cause you're carrying about one-third more (with basically the same engine). It comes down to power-to-weight ratio. Alan will burn maybe 80 calories per mile, you 120, maybe 130."

Wow. I was starting to snap out of it, starting to feel less sorry: an 8,000-versus 13,000-calorie race, yet. Thanks, Doc. "You found that out; you had all the determination, all the drive to win, but your body wouldn't do it." Dr. John said, soothing my brain. Yes, true, I've placed 2nd or 3rd seven times from 1975 to 1981 in this 100-miler in Columbia, but have never won it.

Benefits besides winning: "Racewalking's been good to me," John summed up, "able to vent my frustrations; keeps you decent; so many people vent anger in ways not decent."

Sadness I could not wash away, however, grew from what might have been in '78, the year I intended, and had a shot at, breaking the 100 mile U.S. record, set by Larry O'Neil 11 years previously. I had all the tools, but as much as anything what killed it was taking of a prescription arthritis medicine, which battered me during the race with waves of sleeplessness; imagine trying desperately to reach a goal, clawing, a nightmare, as you're dragged down, like the hapless racehorses, it's been said, were doped not to win, only this is by your own doing: live with that.
and Hendricks were going real fast, it seemed like you guys got real big and the track shrank: you went—shooosh!" (Some very good years: '74 when I set an outdoor speed record of 4:49:25 for the final 25 miles, exceeded only by the indoor 4:31:37 in '77 by Columbia's Olympic Larry Young (bronze medalist 50 Km in '68 and '72); and '77, when Hendricks (19:45:17) and I (20:07:01) dueled four miles at 10:25/mile pace, with 20 miles yet to go, including a 9:33 one-mile burst.)

Chuck Hunter, 46, had a problem. "I've got a 90-year-old knee," he said. He was limping badly, trying to make it right 1000 (he won in '75), but it wasn't to be. "Wander how well those plastic hinges work?" he asked. Hunter's had most of the cartilage removed in operations: "Nothing left in there. He's thinking seriously of going plastic. In my freelance roaming, Dec Blackburn gave a view: "I wouldn't advise it just to race walk. Plastic joints have a lifespan, like an oil change; use them a lot and they'll wear out. No reputable surgeon would keep reinstalling." I pipelined that to Chuck and he seemed to take pause, "Well see, competitor that is.

For Bob Gragg, seven has been unlucky. After six 100 successes in a row, he was on a third futile quest. He was "kind of oiling in" on wraparound blisters, but that wasn't his problem: "It's my back. Why is he messing with this? The typical I-don't-know look, then he guessed it's "the challenge. People at work can't even conceive this. You do what? They're sprinters: what they do takes about 10 seconds; this takes 24 hours."

Time: 5:35 am, sky faintly light. Centurion Rob Spier, veteran of triple-bypass heart surgery (he's since done 80 miles), was still walking bravely, "Leonard, you picked a good year to drop out; the performances are just terrible," he observed. He blamed heat. His wife, Vera, forever carnivore, expounded, flopping around, "Just terrible," he occurred. "The sea.-e., I chirped. "You're sprinters: what they do takes about 10 seconds; this takes 24 hours."

Bill Taft, 67, another toughy has attained 70 miles, and 100 Km five times, shutting out distractions with a radio headset. Plugging away, he heard Wisconsin defeat Missouri at football, then settled into "easy music" on Madison's KARZ-FM. "I don't know about this crap," he expounded, flopping into a chair. His wife, Myrtle, 65, athletic herself with 2-mile daily jogs and large slugs a week, evaluated Saturday's weather: "It was 61 degrees at 5 am. By 6 o'clock it was 91. Not that's a big jump. No one disagreed.

Joe Duncan, president of the sponsoring Columbia Track Club, tried to explain the "why" to the curious. "It's in the nature of a challenge, like running a marathon, climbing a mountain. It takes a lot of endurance." He's seen the paranoia set in as walkers, ever more tired, gasp at the timers, fearing despitably a lap may go uncoun ted.


I think it's in here," said Roy Chapin, tapping his temple. Two years ago he did 22. "Nothing inside that said, 'You gotta keep going.' Last year I did 50 while my Dad (Bob) did 100. Now, he quit at 50 miles.

Richard Schofer of Columbia and Bill Hillman of DG, educator friends, cranked out 50 Km and 100 Km. "My legs are killing me," Hillman admitted. Tom Kline dropped down from Scarsdale, New York because he "got tired of marathons," and spun out 81 miles. "It's just good discipline he allowed.

An important letter from Jim Hanley:

Jack:

I recently read the latest ORW including Henry Laskau's letter re: the Olympic race walks. Obviously, Henry was happy with what he saw and wanted to give credit to all of the people whose hard work was so evident.

Unfortunately, he mentioned people with high-visibility jobs on race day and intentionally slighted many who did much more work. The 04000 coordinators and managers had worked on the '84 Olympic race walks for 1/2 to 2 years (or more), including monthly meetings and "practice" races at the 1983 USA-CRR dual meet and this year's Final Olympic Trials, in addition to our ongoing SPA-TAC Race Walking program.

These hard-working, quality people and their jobs were:

Hal McWilliams--course selection, course measurement, and certification
John Kelley--water and refreshment stations
John Kelly--technical manag e r, local race walk chairman (public relations in the community)
John MacLachlan--support manager (getting all equipment to the track and coordinating our efforts with Marathon crowd control marshall)
Diane Curtis--split timing and lap counting
Roland Veen--course set-up inside the stadium (placing cones on the track, working with IAAF officials, etc.)
Dr. Bob Breitenstein--medical manager (taking care of 100 walkers)

Each of these coordinators had a staff of from 3 to 30 people working for them to bring the total number of staff to about 115 (not including marshall and Red Cross medical volunteers, who just showed up on race day). Many of these 115 people, likewise, did much more work than many of those mentioned by Henry. I wish all of them could be mentioned.

These dedicated, hard-working people have been quietly running a quality SPA-TAC Race Walking program for years. They deserve our recognition and appreciation.

Bill: Henry also wrote to add a few names to the list of those who deserve credit for making the Olympic walks a great success--Frank Alongi, Elliott Deman, Larry Larson, John MacLachlan, and Dr. Howard Palmarchuk. Again, these were apparently those who Henry could see performing from his view as a judge. From far off Columbus, Ohio, I can only say thanks to all of those mentioned—those who unselfishly gave many hours over months and years and those who traveled long distances to give what assistance they could on the spot. All I did was write about the results of their dedicated efforts.
To date, only one reader has chosen to comment on my remarks regarding the position of U.S. walking on the international scene. While I am not sure I agree totally with all that is said, Bob Jordan's thoughts, which follow, are most interesting, and show the astuteness we would expect from one who has learned to carry weight in excess of 12 stones across the country and over the roads.

Jack

None of what I write should be seen as an attempt to denigrate the American walkers and their performances in the L.A. Games. I thought Carl Schueler's sixth place in the 50km, particularly stunning considering the field and conditions (among which was the short time interval between the Trials and the Games).

The reason behind what you called the "retrogressing...in international competition" of American walkers is simple enough: most of the best athletes for walking (at least with respect to cardiovascular endowment, somatoskeletal, leg speed, dedication and desire) are runners in this country. Why "waste" a lot of time perfecting the international style of walking (i.e., lifting without being detected) when an athlete can cash in on domestic road races and overseas track meets these days. Do you think anyone can persuade Pat Foster, Alberto Salazar, Steve Scott, or any of the other good runners with an appropriate somatoskeletal for walking to give up their lucrative careers to train for a handful of international races with no remuneration outside of expenses and maybe a little T.A.C. Grand Prix and minimal shoe contract money on the side? They have families to support. A good "rabbit" on the European track circuit who never wins a running race and may not even finish one can earn much more than any of our American walkers. The women's walking scene is even more bleak. Unless U.S. racewalking comes up with a sugar daddy as U.S. bicycling did in the Southland Corp., training facilities on an old Air Force compound in Colorado Springs won't bring about a consistent turnout of top international-class walkers.

Money may not even be enough to lure athletes into the field. Continuing the contrast with amateur bicycling in this country, the program was built up from the junior ranks over several years. Perhaps that is how it will have to be done for walking, also. But unlike the bicycling athletes, the teeny-bopper track & field set in the U.S. is mainly the bailiwick of reactionary high school coaches and the individual states' athletic associations. With few exceptions, coaches and athletic associations know little if anything about racewalking than the general public.

And then there is the impatient mentality of the American runner. When I cut training and cross paths with one of the speedier foot-pounders, I'm sometimes asked "why?" After my pitch of walking's advantages (especially if the runner has good leg speed and might be successful at walking) and a recital of my litany of stress fractures and torn Achilles tendon sheaths attributed to running, he usually nods his head and adds, "Yeah, I can see your point. But if all those injuries happened to me and I couldn't run anymore, I'd take up biking or swimming before I'd do that." In other words, when you can get an American to run for exercise, he doesn't want to be slowed down to a walk even if he'd become a better athlete for doing so.

As far as the relatively higher placings of past U.S. walkers in earlier Olympic Games, it may be that guys like Ron Zinn, Ron Laird, Goetz Klopfer, and especially Larry Young were exceptional athletes in a time when most walkers learned to be legal before learning to be fast instead of the other way around.

Bob Jordan

It's a baby boy for Maryanne Torrellas! Henry Janka has learned that he was not disqualified in the 1948 Olympics! Details on these items and more exciting news next month.