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HOMETOWN BOY MAKES GOOD

Barcelona—On the first day of Olympic track and field, Barcelona native, Daniel Plaza was a surprise winner in the 20 Km racewalk. And it was almost a one-two for the Spaniards, as Valetin Massana was pulled in second place on the approach to the stadium. That left second place to another surprise, Canada's Guillaume Leblanc, walking the finest race of his distinguished career.

Later in the week, in another surprise, the Chinese women, led by gold medalist Yueling Chen, took 1-3-5 in the women's 10 Km, showing an amazing return to form after some lean years. The final event, the 50 Km for men, was no surprise as the two strong favorites, Andrei Perlov and Carlos Mercenario finished one-two. However, Mercenario got his silver only after Poland's Robert Korzenowski, known as a 20 Km walker prior to this race, was DQd only a few steps from entering the stadium, about a minute ahead of the Mexican.

In the 20, held on a moderately hot, but very humid day, Plaza was on the lead from the start and was simply too strong for the rest of the field up the final killing hill into the stadium. Actually, it was down to a four-race at the 15 Km mark, with Plaza and Leblanc together, Massana right on their heels, and Italy's great veteran, Maurizio Damilano struggling to keep contact, 11 seconds behind. Although he slowed considerably on the final 5, thanks to the hill, which was moderated by switchbacks for the marathoners but not the walkers, Plaza was able to pull 40 seconds clear of Leblanc by the finish. Guillaume, in turn, had 46 seconds on Giovanni DeBenedictis, who overtook countryman Damilano for the bronze. Behind them, the field was well spread out, most of the spread coming on that final 5 Km.

Going into the race, Massana was given a greater chance than Plaza to capture the gold for Spain. But they were going to have to beat the likes of Mikhail Schennikov and Damilano, ranked one-two in the world last year. A long shot was 1984 gold medalist and former world record holder, Ernesto Canto. However, Canto was never in the hunt and Schennikov was fading by 10 Km. Actually, the field was surprisingly spread out by the halfway point, with 10th place 33 seconds off the lead, not the usual state of affairs in an international race, where the racing usually begins somewhere in the second half. But the Spaniards were setting a very hot pace in the conditions, passing 5 Km in 19:50 and 10 in 40:06. And although the pace slowed further the next 5 km, as we noted, only four were in the race by 15 km.

Although not expected to win, Plaza is certainly not unknown. He was ranked third in the world in 1990 and ninth last year, just behind Massana. He
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PAGE 2

AUGUST 1992

The strong finish of the Chinese (Yingzi Cui was fifth) was a real surprise. China had come from nowhere in the early '80s to dominate women's walking, winning World Cups in both 1983 and 1985 and setting numerous world records, but had then faded from the scene, due in large part to continuing problems with the judges. Chen was removed while leading last year's World Cup race and they had two leaders disqualified in the latter stages of the '87 World Cup. They had no ranked walkers in either 1990 or 1991. Chen had been ranked ninth three years ago. Besides Ivanova, other significant disqualifications in the second half of the race were to Graciela Mendoza and Ileana Salvador. Other highly ranked walkers, like Victoria Herazo and Kerry Saxby and Beate Anders were on the pace at 5 Km, but were unable to respond when the real racing began.

For the U.S., Michele Rohl had a super race to finish 20th in 46:45, a fantastic time for her considering what others were doing on the day. She also made it on to the television screen, albeit on long-distance telephone commercials. Victoria Herazo led early, as she likes to do, and walked her usual gutty race, coming back on Debbi Lawrence in the second half and nearly catching her. Debbi did not have one of her better days; unfortunate as well as she has been walking this year. The 50 turned out to be the most competitive, with 12 walkers still in contention at 30 Km. At that point, Perlov and Mercenario accelerated to a 22:08 for the next 5, caught and passed leader Valentin Kononen of Finland, and spread the field. A 22:07 on the next 5 made it a three-man race, with Perlov and Mercenario 5 seconds ahead of Korzenowski. Germany's great veteran, Ronald Weigel, was 1:40 back in fourth.

Perlov applied the screws over the next 5, although his pace slowed slightly and seemed to have the race in hand with a 42 second lead as they started the last 5. With his bear-like strength, he continued to move away up the hill, and Korzenowski, who passed Mercenario just before 45 Km, seemed to have the silver in hand as his lead on the Mexican grew. One would suspect that his final red card came before they hit the hill, although he did not get the red flag until his he was outside 3:50. It won't bother Perlov, who, had he but known it, gained a clean sweep. He may well have regretted not staying a little closer in the early going. He covered his second half of the race 4 minutes faster than the first, a god effort on another very humid day. Only Perlov and Mrazek among the leaders were also the faster second half, and not by nearly as much as Johansson.

British observer Paul Warburton, covering the race for Athletics Today, commented: "The race took its toll on finishing times. Not since '72 has the winner been outside 3:50. It won't bother Perlov, who, had he but known it, gained a famous admirer at the medal ceremony. It is doubtful whether Jack Nicholson, watching from the stands, will soon be out on the roads heel-and-toe, but as the huge video screen replayed Perlov's final few yards, the Hollywood film star's walking style imitation to his seat was fairly close to the mark. I suppose it supports the theory that only Jokers are made enough to walk 50 Km."

Not a strong race for the U.S., as the results show, but Herm Nelson, had a good excuse for his below par performance, though he is not making it an excuse. He had a severe gall bladder attack the week before the race and was hospitalized, finally going undergoing therapy for gallstones. He may require surgery.

Wom~n's 10 Km, August 3, 7:50 pm: 1. Yueling Chen, China 44:32 (22:19) 2. Bobby O'Leary, Ireland; and Thierry Toutain, France (19:50, 40:06). Temperature 79°F.


PAGE 6 AUGUST 1992


National TAC Championships, Columbus, Ohio, July 4 (Since the race was here in town, and since I was among the judges, you would think I would have had the results sooner, and you would think I would have complete results. And I am sure I did have, but sure can't locate them as I go to press. Sorry, juniors):


21:52  5. Emilia Cano  21:53  6. Maria Cruz Diaz,

PAGE 10 AUGUST 1992

PAGE 11 AUGUST 1992

<...other text continues...>
been engendered by the attempt in the July issue to correct the reference to Garry the publication (beides the esteemed editor). As an example, much merriment has ORW threatens to engulf the country. The question rages from coast to coast: Do
find an issue without error, I would suspect dangerous forces had been loosed and
Little, which resulted in a reduction of 90 percent in his age, to 5 years. If I were to
they enhance the magazine or not? Certainly, they provide a unique character to
Is th~s editor a masochist? Does he enjoy the barbs cast at him by an outraged
The editor is, actually, always careless and in a hurry—not a very professional approach, but an expedient one.
(And, believe it or not, the editor is, in real life, a writer and editor who tries to turn the turn the very fuzzy jottings of scientists and engineers into something a less
informed readership might understand. He even has degrees in journalism.) So, I,
the editor, sit with a stack of incoming material at my side, start pounding the keys, occasionally glance up at the screen, and, really, correct a significant number of errors in relation to those that remain. But, actually proofread—never. (In the other
life, things are actually read very carefully and worked, kneaded, and polished. You
get sort of a stream of consciousness—which isn’t too difficult when the copy is just
results.) You might ask why I don’t at least use the spell checker. Well, besides
always being in a hurry, consider the following, which shows just how much they are worth:

From Heel to Toe

Is this editor a masochist? Does he enjoy the barbs cast at him by an outraged public? Or, does he take perverse pleasure in receiving notes such as this one from Norm Brand, In Washington, D.C.: "The continuing controversy over the typos in ORW threatens to engulf the country. The question rages from coast to coast: Do they enhance the magazine or not? Certainly, they provide a unique character to the publication (besides the esteemed editor). As an example, much merriment has been engendered by the attempt in the July issue to correct the reference to Garry Little, which resulted in a reduction of 90 percent in his age, to 5 years. If I were to find an issue without error, I would suspect dangerous forces had been loosed and the future of the sport would be jeopardy. Don’t change, keep on being arbitrary and fuzzy.” Well, that was one of several letters letting me know that in correcting

On the Uselessness of an Editor in the Presents of a Spell Chequer

Who wood have guest
The Spell Chequer would super seed
The assent of the editor
Who was once a mane figure?
Indeed did it altar
His work load’s coarse.
Once, awl sought his council:
Now nun prophet from him.
How suite the job was:
It was all sew fine.

Well, the poem goes on for about 20 more lines, but you get the idea. See if your spell checker detects any errors. Which, of course, still doesn’t excuse typos in the ORW. But, just remember—it’s the content that counts. But, I will endeavor to pay a bit more attention to what is actually going onto the screen. The whole problem, you see, is awkward fingers...Dave McGovern has just completed another successful racewalking camp and has scheduled the nest for November 4-8 at the Healing Springs Ranch in Texas. We have received good comments on these camps. As noted last month, attendees receive individual videotaped technique coaching from national team members, lectures in sports psychology, physiological principles of racewalk training, biomechanics instruction, and assistance in developing a training program. The fee is $495. Contact Dave at 4540 Raleigh Avenue #102, Alexandria, Virginia 22034 or call 817-437-2204 for further information...Former racewalker and current outstanding administrator, official, and commentator on the
LOOKING BACK

.25 Years Ago (From the Aug. 1967 ORW)—Ron Laird was the star of the month, and then some. He first won the Pan American 20 Km title in 1:33:05, leaving up-and-coming Mexican runner (excuse, me, walker) Jose Pedraza nearly 2 minutes back. (The next year, Pedraza sort of trotted into the Olympic Stadium in Mexico City to a silver medal.) Later, Ron did a 43:10.4 10 Km on the road in England, a 44:36.8 American record on the track in Germany, and a 1:28:18 to beat 1964 Olympic gold medalist Abdon Pamich in Italy. Larry Young walked the same three European races in 45:29, 46:22, and somewhere in the low 1:30s, after winning the Pan Am 50 Km in 4:26:21. With those two in Europe, Tom Dooley had his best ever distance race to win the National 40 Km in 3:30:10, 2 minutes ahead of Goetz.

Klopfer. Bob Kitchen showed his great promise at the distances with a third place in 3:34:04. Dooley was fourth at 20 Km and Klopfer third at 50 in the Pan Ams.

15 Years Ago (From the August 1977 ORW)—Larry Young won his eighth National 50 Km title and fourth in a row with a 4:19:58 clocking in Columbia, Missouri. Taking the lead in the 10 Km, Young pulled away gradually the rest of the race. Augie Hirt went with Young briefly, but couldn’t hold the pace and was soon back by O’Connor, who took second in 4:24:06. Hirt had 4:25:50, Tom Dooley 3:26:26, Bob Rosencrantz 4:29:23, and Randy Mimm 4:32:01. In the Women’s World Championships, Sweden’s Siv Gustavsson walked a world best 22:57 to win the 5 Km and lead her team to victory. Sweden’s Elisabet Olsson won the 10 Km in 51:35. For the U.S., Sue Brodock was third at 52:55 and Jeanne Bocci fourth at 52:52. The U.S. team was second behind Sweden. Maccabiah Games titles went to Bos Rosencrantz at 3 Km (13:45:5) and Shaul Ladany at 50:44:35 in extreme heat in Israel. Tom Knatt captured the National 40 Km in 3:33:28 with Carl Schueler 4 minutes back. Wayne Glusker and Bob Falcioia followed. Anticipating our typo of last month, the ORS referred to the 2-year-old Schueler. England’s Colin Young won the 50 Km, France 24 Hour race for the third time, covering 210 Km 717 meters. The Paris To Strasbourg, covering some 507 km that year, went to Robert Shoukens in 6:11:25, with Jose Simon nearly 1 hour back. Neal Pyke won the National 15 Km in Santa Monica in 1:09:50. Larry Walker was second in 1:10:32.

5 Years Ago (From the August 1987 ORW)—U. S. Sports Festival titles went to Marco Evoniuk at 35 Km (2:50:51), Gary Morgan at 20 Km (1:31:10), and Maryanne Torrellas at 10 Km (47:55). The races were held in very hot conditions in Durham, N.C. Jim Heiring was a minute-and-a-half behind Evoniuk, and Randy Mimm was second in 1:34:46, 17 seconds behind Andy Kaestner. Debbi Lawrence finished 13 seconds back of Torrellas and 10 seconds ahead of Lynn Weik in the 10. Morgan also took the National 10 Km title at Niagara Falls in 44:05, with Ray Sharp (45:07), Canada’s Michel Lafortune, and Schwartzberg following. The women’s race went to Debbi Lawrence in 48:31, nearly 3 minutes ahead of Torrellas. Mexicans swept the gold in the Pan American Games in Indianapolis. Carools Mercenario captured the 20 km in 2:24:10, Maria Colin the 10 in 47:18, and Martin Bermudez the 50 in 3:58:53. Tim Lewis was second at 20 in 1:25:50 and Maryanne Torrellas third at 10 in 46:26, behind Canada’s Ann Peel. Italy’s Giovanni DeBenedectis previewed his Olympic success with a win at the European Junior 10 Km in 39:44:71. Spain’s Valentin Massana, who almost had Olympic success, was second.