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RACE RESULTS

Olympic 20 Km winner Daniel Plaza, looking a bit strained, but on his way to a decisive victory. (Claus Andersen photo from the Canadian publication Athletics.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ultramarathon of Panama</td>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>50.4 miles</td>
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<td>US-Canada Junior T&amp;F Meet</td>
<td>July 31</td>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
<td>10 Km</td>
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<td>World Junior Games, Seoul</td>
<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>5 Km</td>
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<td>World Masters 20 Km, Midland, Texas</td>
<td>Oct. 14</td>
<td>Midland</td>
<td>20 Km</td>
<td>2:17:21</td>
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**PLANNED PERAMBULATORY PROGRESSION PARTIES**

- **Scheduled races, to some**
  - **Sat. Oct. 10**
    - 5 Km, Dearborn, Michigan
    - 2 Mile, Rockport, Texas
  - **Sun. Oct. 11**
    - 5 Mile, Deal, N.J.
    - 4 Mile, Denver, 9 am
  - **Sat. Oct. 17**
    - New Mexico State 10 Km, Albuquerque, NM
    - 10 Km, Seaside, California
  - **Sat. Nov. 14**
    - Metropolitan 20 Km, Columbus, Ohio
    - 5 Km, Dearborn, Michigan
    - Gulf 25 Km and 10 Km, Houston, TX
  - **Sun. Nov. 15**
    - Henry Laskau 5 Mile, Miami, FL
    - 5 Km, Denver, 9 am

**Note:** Some races have additional distances and times available. Please refer to the full list for complete details.
Dear Editor:

After disappointing coverage of the men's 20 Km and women's 10 Km racewalks on the Olympic Triplecast, we finally received the coverage we wanted of the 50 Km race, due in large part to the lack of events on the track during the final stages of the race. Unfortunately for those who support racewalking, the athletes and judges let us down. Marty Liquori and Frank Shorter, two admitted non-experts in racewalking, even showed our rules are difficult to understand by trying to read and interpret the rulebook on the air. If nothing else, the wording of warning versus disqualification needs to be changed. It doesn't make sense to call something a disqualification and then need three of them to be actually disqualified. Maybe if we simply call these warnings and points, with 3 points equaling a disqualification. Or how about strikes—3 strikes and you're out. That's something the American public could understand.

This wasn't the worst of it though. Carlos Merenario, the silver medal winner, bent his knees and jogged around the curved course turnarounds. The cameramen were not shy about showing this to us nor were the commentators shy about pointing it out. The advantage of slow motion showed Perlov, the winner, to be lifting every step of the race. (Ed. See photo page 15, but, again, remember judging is with the naked eye on the spot and no one as yet has come forth with a practical alternative.)

Perhaps we're doing it backwards using "experienced" judges. All they seem to do is give more benefit of the doubt. Maybe we need some type of impartial "off the street" judges (like the U.S. jury system?). Read them the rules of walking and let them at it. Then the premium will be on who looks the most like they are walking versus who can bend the rules and, as the commentators mentioned, create the illusion of being on the ground when they are not. As it is, the writer who recently said we don't want to get TV exposure because of these problems was correct. Our sport became a joke in front of millions (billions?) of viewers. Making the human eye the judge is fine, but not when the technology exists to show its failings so readily. Even the most ardent defender of our sport would have had a difficult time of it at this broadcast.

What's the answer? Perhaps racewalking, along with many other limited participation sports, should just be eliminated from the Olympic venue and allowed to be what it is, a minor sport for real diehards, most of whom are in it, at least in our country, due to injury or lack of success at other events. Either that, or anyone who appears to be floating at all must be disqualified, even if that means we all have to walk a minute a mile slower to "look" like we are walking. Or maybe all the "races" should be held on treadmills where all we have to do is jog and three beeps and your out are a fact. Last person standing wins. A solution,
either through technology or some type of rules change, needs to be found if the
sport is to continue to exist.

Stan Chraminski
Seattle, Washington

Another view, in a letter that also comments on the U.S. Trials:

Dear Mr. Editor:

In his Track and Field News report, Bob Bowman touched on the judge's
frustration at trying to work in the dark at the Olympic Trials. The SE region's
major publication Running Journal was more blunt, describing the walks trials as a
"complete fiasco". As a competitor, I would have to say that race conditions were
unfair on both the athletes and the judges.

Martin Rudow's comments were astute, but I suggest that instead of placing
blame for the poor choice of start times and the inclusion of an inexperienced judge
in the men's race, we should try to avoid any recurrence. Maybe TAC rule 150
Section 4 (c) should be amended to ensure that all parts of walking events are
sufficiently illuminated to permit accurate judging.

(Regarding TV coverage) After the Triplecast's efforts to avoid any coverage
of the 10 and 20, I was lucky enough to be contacted by a reporter for USA Today,
who wanted to know if I thought the transmission was worth the money...I felt
much better after telling exactly what I thought! Ironically, the following day, NBC
added 50 Km coverage to the schedule, most likely because the first round of the
relay was cancelled. The film of the race was excellent, but the commentators were
in need of some random drug testing.

Ian Whatley

And Ian had the following letter published in USA Today:

I participate in racewalks. So I was interested in the Triplecast because the
ads said they would cover all the track and field finals in their entirety. It's a lie.
We had maybe 4 minutes of the men's 20 Kilometer racewalk, about 1 minute 40
seconds of the women's 10 Km, and there will be no coverage of the men's 50 Km.
(Ian's letter came before the 50.) I'm so disgusted, I'm going to ask for my money
back. It was misleading advertising. When they have every throw in women's
javelin, every round of the 100 meter races, it's pretty pathetic to show only parts of
the women's racewalk final. And the commentators don't even know what they're
talking about. It's been a complete ripoff.

Ian Whatley, Greenville, S.C.

Copy of a letter to Mr. Ray Wright, President, NBC TV:

Dear Mr. Wright,

Despite Bob Costas' excellent prime-time "salute to the race walkers" feature,
I feel that NBC again really missed the boat in terms of its race walking coverage in
the 1992 Olympics, and 80 million recreational racewalkers in the U.S. would
certainly agree.

It is a fact that in at least three Olympics--1968, 1972, and 1984--the loudest
crowd reaction (noise level, cheering) to any track and field event was for a
racewalk. And in Barcelona, "the locals went loco" for the 20 Km walk in the words
of Bob Costas.

The spectators in the Olympic Stadium, like the general TV audience, are not
die-hard track and field fans who only care about certain events or certain stars. So
why do they get so excited about the long races, which, like the marathon, are
mainly held outside the stadium? My theory is that by updating them on the
progress of the races (by way of the stadium TV screen and/or PA announcer)
suspense builds and builds. People start hoping for a certain athlete (or country) to
win and really get involved emotionally. Remember, these people are not watching
most of the race, which is outside the stadium, but it is on their mind.

With NBC's "coverage", we did not know what athletes were in the racewalk
events, how they were doing, or even that the races had started. Only one athlete
was even mentioned by name, and that was the winner of the 20 Km walk,
Barcelona native Daniel Plaza, as he approached the finish line! (Too late to build
any excitement.)

You have tried to build such emotional involvement by profiling "stars"
before various events. Racewalkers need role models too! It is a shame that 10 Km
walker Michelle Rohl, the athlete in your MCI commercial, had to call home to tell
family and friends how she did. Can you imagine any of the top American track
athletes having to do that? It would have been nice for the Triplecast announcers
to have told us how the Americans did in this most historic event.

Yes, historic. You blew a historic opportunity. In 1984, the first Olympic
women's marathon was held in LA—a real big media event. 1992 featured the first
women's Olympic racewalk and the U.S. was represented by three beautiful
women—one of whom, Debbi Lawrence, was a medal contender. NBC totally
ignored this event. Why?

Though Marty Liquori was very positive in his comments during the
Triplecast, your track experts are surprisingly ignorant of racewalking rules and
procedures to disqualify athletes. Why not have them read a rulebook or, better yet,
get a racewalker who knows what is going on. For example, it was said that an
athlete gets a warning and is disqualified if he gets another one. Wrong. This went
about 20 years ago. To protect the athlete, it now takes three judges (from three
different countries) to independently disqualify the walker. The DQ calls are posted
on a board; and when an athlete gets three marks he is out. The trade-off is that it
takes a while for the calls to be collected and recorded on the chart, so athletes in
violation rules are often not disqualified immediately. On occasion, they may even
get the bad news after they have finished the race. People ignorant of this—
including the Triplecast announcers—conclude that athletes are cheating and getting
away with it.

Likewise, judging must be done from a position that is perpendicular to the
athletes direction of travel. When viewed from the front or rear, racewalkers often
look like they have lost contact and are breaking the rules.
Enough of the technical stuff. The starts of the Olympic racewalks—with more than 100 athletes on the line—are visually exciting events sure to please your viewers. None were shown. Why?

A parallel was the use of the underwater tracking camera in swimming. I hate swimming and don’t even follow its “stars”, but I kept watching it because the camera was so beautiful.

My biggest complaint is that the 20 Km walk final was not given more air time even though it was scheduled to go against meaningless qualifying heats in the sprints. Something is wrong when athletes going for medals are ignored while sprinters are glorified while jogging to qualify in their events. That’s not drama.

Though things are getting a little better (no clown music or wisecracks this time), it clearly appears that some high level NBC track and field producer or director has been making a conscious decision to keep race walking subordinate to the other track and field events. Why?

Jim Hanley
Westlake Village, California

Jim also sent a copy of a letter to Bob Costas:

Dear Bob,

As one of the racewalkers who has written you in the past, I just wanted to drop you a note complimenting you on your prime-time Olympic race walking feature that aired on August 8. It was great.

Your comments about racewalkers writing letters were really funny. Importantly, this good-natured humor was not done at the expense of cutting down a great sport or its athletes. Thank you for your fine work.

You did make one mistake, however. You said that racewalking has been in the Olympics since 1932. Your researchers missed it badly, as our sport has been on the Olympic program since 1906, a year in which an American, George Bonhag, actually won a gold medal in a race walk.

Jim Hanley

(Ed. Note that 1906 was not an official Olympics, but the walk has been continuous since then, with the exception of 1928. That’s probably what threw the Costas’ researchers.)

And from on the scene, where things were apparently better, a brief note from Howie Palamarchuk:

Just back from Barcelona. Missed the 20 Km due to flight problems out of N.Y., but got to see women’s 10 Km and 50 Km. Both excellent and exciting races. So nice to see the walks treated with respect and embraced by all those loving athletics. Witness the enclosed. (Ed. He sent copies of a TV Guide type magazine and the TV guide from a newspaper, the former featuring a photo of Jose Marin together with a blurb on the time for the live telecast of the 50 km, the latter giving similar treatment to the women’s 10 Km.) Could you imagine TV Guide listing the walks in such a fashion? Also a front page color picture of Daniel Plaza. As I left Spain, I noticed in the airport Plaza’s picture on the cover of a Time-like magazine.

Howard Palamarchuk

A letter to the LA Times:

The professionalism of sport has reached its logical conclusion in the 1992 Olympic Games and the scene is ugly.

Charles Barkley elbows an Angolan in the opening Dream Team game and later states that the Olympics are not about making friends but about making money, marketing himself and the NBA. All three medalists in the shotput have just graduated from bans resulting from recent steroid use. And many are

When I made my first Olympic team (1976), Avery Brundage ran the Games, and the excesses were very different. An athlete who coached a high school team for a few hundred dollars would be banished forever from amateur sports. Old Avery was fanatic, but sports were much cleaner and somehow more noble.

Materialism wins the gold now, and the million-dollar contract rules supreme.

It is still true that most athletes do honor to their nations and to the talents they have been given, and they do so with an attitude of humility and a little awe. The Olympic Games still possess a greatness that sets them apart. But how many of us sometimes stop and wonder what has been lost?

Larry Walker
U.S. Olympic Teams 1976 and 1980, 20 Km walk

General comments from the editor: I didn’t see the Triplecast. Since we were going to be off at a cabin in a state park for the primary week of track and field (dictated by when my wife could get away—no, it didn’t upset me), I didn’t subscribe. (It’s not certain that I would if I had been home.) So I didn’t even see much of NBC’s coverage of track. I did see the 20 Km finish before we left and Bob Costas’ comments, which were after we were home. I didn’t feel quite so positive about what he said as did Jim Hanley. It seemed to me it was all laced with a lingering bit of sarcasm, which he barely suppressed in his final comment, which was to the effect that he was biting his tongue. But, it was an improvement over the past.

And I did see a tape of the Triplecast 50 Km coverage when Ron Laird stopped by on his way back to Ashiabula from several months in California. I agree with Jim here that some racewalking expertise was sorely needed. Stan Chraminski makes some valid points, but things weren’t as bad as the announcers, in their lack of wisdom, made them appear. I’m not sure where Korzenowski picked up his red cards (but, he had five of them, so it wasn’t a narrow decision), but from what I was seeing over the last 15 Km, I would certainly have been paying more attention to both Perlov and Mercenario. But, who cares, since I’m not a certified judge.

Anyway, the photo on the last page suggests they were worthy of attention—and maybe they were getting it. It’s still a question of how they look to the naked eye, on the spot, without the benefit of video, movies, or still photos.
Since this discussion has led us back to the age-old judging issue, Viisha Sedlak in the most recent issue of her American Racewalk Association Quarterly Newsletter has a long treatise on the subject. Perhaps we will have room to include it in a future issue. But a major point is her suggestion that the contact rule be eliminated—something suggested at length and quite eloquently by Ron Laird several years ago in these pages. Viisha says: “Lifting cannot be consistently judge at elite-level speeds. Why is there a rule that cannot be fairly judged by the human eye? It is ludicrous to have this rule and it should be eliminated. The straight leg of a racewalker creates the critical change in biomechanics that separates the technique from that of a runner. In any case, lifting away from the ground actually slows the racewalker because the walkers speed and power come from turnover.” This refutes the old argument that without a contact we will just have “straight legged running.” Obviously, that’s not true, as there is a decided difference in the mechanics. But, I wonder about not gaining speed—why do athletes seem to lift more the faster they go?

Before we leave the subject, Peter Marlow, chairman of the IAAF Committees on Rules and Publications, discussed judging issues at length in the May 1992 issue of the British publication Race Walking Record. As part of that discussion, he made the following proposals to help athletes and judges:

1. All walkers shall wear a shoe with a heel of at least 3/8 of an inch prominence. If this rule was enforced, a walker would almost certainly have to advance with heel down first, ensuring possibly both contact and straight leg. (Ed. Way back when I came into the sport, most walkers wore such shoes.)

2. Abolish the warning system. This rule states that competitors should be warned when they are “in danger of breaking the rule”. I have never been able to understand this. (Ed. Nor have I.) A walker is either breaking the rule or not. Surely, all competitors, in theory, are in danger of breaking the rule.

3. Replace the white warning system with a yellow symbol. This yellow symbol would indicate that the competitor is breaking the rules in the judge’s opinion and the judge is sending a red card to the chief judge. The system would then continue as at present, i.e., three DQ cards equals disqualification.

4. Before a competitor is disqualified, he must receive three DQ cards for contact or three for bent leg. I have always thought it very unfair, especially in a 50 kilometers race, when a competitor may receive two DQ cards in the first few kilometers for contact, settle down to walking without problems for the next 40 kilometers and then be disqualified because the chief judge receives a third red card for a bent leg offense when the athlete is tiring. (Ed. I would suggest that we change from three cards to a majority of the judges, but the cards may be for either offense. Thus, if there are eight judges, it will take five cards. I think judging needs to be tighter, but why should an athlete be disqualified when a majority of the judges feel he or she is okay, as is now the case? Of course, this is an improvement over the day when a single judge could toss you. But if judges knew that it was going to take a majority to disqualify a walker, they might be less lenient.
through the tunnel into the stadium when she darted from third to the lead. But with the lead and only needing to hold form to win, she made a spurt to try and open a safer lead with about 150 meters to go and immediately got the third red card. We also learn that Italy’s Ilean Salvador in fourth (third with Ivanova’s DQ), just ahead of Chunxiu Li of China, only to learn that she, too, was DQ’d. So Li, thinking she was in fifth as she finished, got the bronze medal.

LOOKING BACK

25 Years Ago (From the Sept. 1967 ORW)–Ron Laird won the National 15 Km in 1:08:13, 3 1/2 minutes ahead of Steve Hayden, with Jack Blackburn a strong third. The first U.S. 100 miler of this century was held on the track in Columbia, Missouri, and Montana’s 60-year-old Larry O’Neill broke the long-standing record with 19:24:52, walking an amazingly even pace all the way.

20 Years Ago (From the Sept. 1972 ORW)–Olympic titles in Munich went to the GDR’s Peter Frenkel at 20 Km in 1:26:42 and West Germany’s Bernd Kanneberg at 50 Km in 3:56:12. Vladimir Golubnichiy took the silver at 20, his fourth Olympic medal at the distance—golds in 1960 and 1968, bronze in 1964. Hans-Gerog Reimann and Gerhard Sperling completed a near sweep for the GDR in the 20 with third and fourth places, and the USSR’s Veniamin Soldatenko took silver at 50. For the U.S., Larry Young was brilliant with a 10th place finish at 20 preceding his bronze medal performance in the 50. He missed 4 hours by just 46 seconds. In the 20, Tom Dooley was 15th and Goetz Klopfer 19th, and at 50, Bill Weigle took 17th and Steve Hayden 27th.


5 Years Ago (From the Sept. 1987 ORW)–Italy’s Maurizio Damilano won at 20 Km in the World Championship T&F Meet in Rome, defying heat and humidity to record 1:20:45. He controlled the pace throughout to beat Josef Pribilince by 22 seconds with Spain’s Jose Marin third. Tim Lewis was the first U.S. finisher with a 1:26:50 in 19th. The women’s 10 Km went to Irena Szarko, USSR, in 44:12, 11 seconds ahead of Australia’s Kerry Saxby. Hong Yan of China was third. Lynn Weik led the U.S. with 46:51 in 15th. Debbi Lawrence was 40 seconds and five places back. Just as they had earlier in the year at the World Cup in New York City, the GDR’s Hartwig Gauder and Ronald Weigle finished one-two at 50, but switched positions this time as Gauder took the gold in 3:40:53. Weigel had 3:41:30 and Vyatcheslav Ivanenko, USSR, 3:44:02 in third. Carl Schueler was 16th in 3:57:09 and Marco Evoniuk 17th in 3:57:43. Jim Heiring had a personal best 4:03:24 in 22nd, easily the most distinguished showing the U.S. team had ever made at 50 Km.

Above, early in the second half of the Olympic 50 Km race, Canada’s Guillaume Leblanc (229), second at 20, duels with silver medalist Carlos Mercenario and gold medalist Andrei Perlov, both looking a little high. But it was Leblanc who got tossed. On the left is Rodriguez of Mexico (8th) with Robert Korzenowski, Poland (also DQ’d) over Mercenario’s shoulder. (Dr. Howard Palamarchuk photo.) Bottom, top U.S. finisher in the women’s Olympic 10 km, Michelle Rohl.