Russians sweep world indoor titles

Toronto—Russia’s Mikhail Schennikov continues to make the World Indoor 5 Km Racewalk title his exclusive property. The IAAF has held the Indoor Championships four times, starting in Indianapolis in 1987, and four times, Mikhail’s long legs have propelled him into the winner’s circle for the 5 Km racewalk. In this year’s race, he had his slowest winning time yet, but was still a clear winner over Poland’s Robert Korzenowski. No one else was close. Canada’s Tim Berrett had a brilliant race in fourth place, but could not chase down Rsslan Mikhail Orlov for the third medal.

Elena Nikolaeva ruled the women’s 3 Km, winning in 11:49.73, the second fastest time ever. (Her countrywoman Alina Ivanova walked 11:44.00 last year.) She left Australian veteran, Kerry Junna-Saxby some 4 seconds back at the finish. Ileana Salvador, who had the year’s fastest time (11:58.36) coming into the race, had to settle for the bronze medal. For the U.S., Debbi Lawrence broke her own American record in the heats, but was disqualified in the final. Victoria Herazo did not qualify for the final. To add to her miseries, she got bumped while trying to negotiate snow and ice on the way to dinner before attending the final, fell, and returned home to Las Vegas with the help of a wheelchair and crutches. Diagnosis—a major spiral fracture of the fibula. She hopes to be back in training in 3 to 4 months. The Canadians had a tough time as well, taking the 11th and 12th spots in the heats with ten qualifying for the final.


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All-Time Top 10, Women’s Indoor 3 Km

11:44.00 Alina Ivanova, Russia 1992
11:50.90 Oeate Anders, Germany 1991
11:49.73 Elena Nikolaeva, Russia 1993
12:01.22 Elina Arshintseva, Russia 1993
12:04.16 Annarita SidoU, Italy 1993
12:07.70 Olga Kardopoltseva, Russia
12:06.10 Sari Essayah, Finland 1993
12:05.49 O lga Klrshtop, Russia 1987

US Indoor titles to Lawrence and James

New York, Feb. 26—Debbi Lawrence walked smoothly away from the rest of the field and scored an easy win in the National Indoor 3 Km racewalk in Madison Square, missing her own American record by less than 4 seconds. Likewise, Victoria Herazo was also by herself in second and Sara Standley was unchallenged for third. In a very competitive race, Lawrence led all the way and her time (12:35.79) came five seconds under her American record of 12:40.84. Herazo was second gap. The men's race was a bit closer, but Allen James was an easy winner in 20:24.37, better than a minute behind Tim Lewis' American record or 19:18:40 (Set way back in 1987 in the first World Indoors In Indianapolis). Doug Fournier and Marc Varsano copped the silver and bronze medals. The results:


Other Results

SPRING IS HERE! WHY NOT SPRING INTO SOME OF THESE RACES. (But don’t spring too high. The contact rule has not yet been repealed, despite the flight-phase advocates.)

Sat. April 10
- 10 Km, Plainview, N.Y. (Q)
- 5 Km, Flushing, Michigan, 10 am (I)
- 1 Mile, Albuquerque, N.M. (L)
- 5 and 10 Km, Washington, D.C., 8:30 am (J)

Sat. April 17
- 5 Km, Brookings, S.Dak. (BB)
- 5 Km, Benton Harbor, Michigan, 10 am (F)
- 7 Mile, Miami, 7:30 am (C)
- Master’s 5 Km, Naples, Florida, 8:30 am (Q)
- 5 Km, New Orleans, 8 am (W)
- Gulf 10 Km Championship, Houston (Q)
- Julie Pratridge 10 Km, San Francisco (N)

Sun. April 18
- 10 Km, Kenosha, Wis. (F)
- 10 Km, Ashland, Virginia, 1:15 (S)
- 5 Km, New Orleans, 8 am (W)
- 2 Mile and 10 Km, Houston (O)
- Mt. SAC Relays, 5 and 10 Km, Walnut, Cal. (B)
- 10 Km, Seatle, 8:55 am (C)

Sat. April 24
- Women’s 5 and Men’s 10 Km, Penn Relays (R)
- 5 Km, Kalamazoo, Michigan (F)
- 5 and 10 Km, Miami, 7:30 am (Q)
- 5 and 10 Km, Albuquerque, 8 am (L)
- 10 Km, Columbia, Missouri, 8 am (U)

Sun. April 25
- 5 Mile, Westerly, R.I., 11 am (K)

MARCH 1993

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As Elaine Ward has pointed out to me, I may have gone a bit overboard in rebutting your two letters on the contact rule. Perhaps I can blame any lack of sensitivity on my part to a flash of my competitive instinct. While it serves me well on the racecourse, I fear that it may have caused me to present my arguments in a way that may have been unduly personally painful for you. If I have caused you undue pain, I am sorry. If, in the process, I have convinced you of the necessity of the contact rule for the survival of racewalking, then the pain has not come without some compensating benefit. The contact rule and the knee straightening rule are the defining parameters of the racewalking gait. The existence of these two rules cause the racewalking gait to be what it is. It is a nonsense phrase to say that scientific studies need to be done to prove the validity of the contact rule. By way of analogy: The rule states that you stop when the light turns red. How do you scientifically prove the validity of this rule? To talk of validity or nonvalidity makes no sense. It's simply one of the rules of the game.

As Ian Whatley, Greenville, S.C.:

"I would like to say I see no reason to change any rules in racewalking. Like Casey Meyers, I came to learn about racewalking as a result of seeking an aerobic exercise. I have competed in one event and helped post times during the national 40 Km at Fort Monmouth, N.J. I like the sport because it allows me to get a great heart rate during a training session without any injuries during the 2 years I've been doing it. My knees really don't like jogging or running."

I learned about Casey for a book called Cardiac Rehabilitation, from Casey's book I learned about race walking and the Ohio Racewalker, and I am grateful to all of you. My fitness is due entirely to racewalking. No one, including school children, has ridiculed me as a result of seeking an aerobic exercise. I...I hope you'll help me now to do some damage control by publishing this apology to Casey Meyers." And here is the apology:

Dear Casey,

As Elaine Ward has pointed out to me, I may have gone a bit overboard in rebutting your two letters on the contact rule. Perhaps I can blame any lack of sensitivity on my part to a flash of my competitive instinct. While it serves me well on the race...
because of the "funny look", if they had, I simply would say, join me and keep up if you can.

The double contact rule may be difficult for observers not trained well enough, which really say we need to have judges trained a bit better. Even other areas of form cause judging problems. Martin Rudow in his Advanced Race Walking states that the "soft knee" draws varying opinions of legality.

In closing, I just feel we must not let varying opinions make a mountain our of a molehill. Practice of form really is what matters most. Judging will be better as participants improve and remember that the unaided eye does offer a two-way margin of error."

Paul Cajka, Virginia Beach, Virginia

"I have been reading all of the debate on the enforcement of lifting in racewalks. I think we should keep and enforce both creeping and lifting. If we can't keep, enforce, and explain these two rules, walking will not retain it's unique character. Educating the sports fans of the country is the way we will get our sport accepted. We should also find a few experienced walkers who can communicate effectively with the broadcasters of track and field meets. Our sport is unique enough to require color announcers as much as the field events require ex-athletes like Dwight Stones."

Cajka

FROM HEEL TO TOE

We also have a lengthy follow up letter from Ron Daniel, which isn't as easy on Casey as Mr. Matthews, but there is no room for this time around. Perhaps next month... The Shore AC is again sponsoring the National 1 Hour postal walk for 1993. Races can be held locally anytime between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31. Races must be on certified tracks of 400 meters or 440 yards with a minimum of three judges present. There are Open, Masters, and Junior Divisions. (See the 1992 results earlier in this issue.) To submit results or obtain further information, contact Elliott Denman, 28 N. Locust Avenue, West Long Branch, NJ 07764, (908)222-9080. ... A note from reader Gary Bower: "Jonathan Matthew's half paragraph description (in his letter on Casey Meyers' book in the Feb. '93 ORW) of how racewalking captures a person is perhaps the most exquisite prose describing a human activity that I have ever read. Like Jonathan, in my youth I never considered taking up the silly sport. Then, a year ago, as I was driving, I briefly saw a man flow along beside the road with incredible speed, dynamism, and grace. I knew immediately that he was a world class racewalker in training. That brief image returned to my thoughts again and again until somehow without even really making a conscious decision, I took up racewalking 6 months later with only the help of a book (by Casey Meyers!). A month ago, I found and joined the local racewalking club and discovered the man that inspired me that day along the road was a club member... none other than Jonathan Matthews himself... With the idea of getting useful training and racing information to as may U.S. walkers as possible, Ian Whatley has passed along the following Sports Science Bulletin, which he prepared. He suggests that "If we could fill the pages of our journals with as much coaching data as we have letters about lifting, we would all be able to train more effectively."
SHOULD WE HAVE A NATIONAL RACEWALKING COACH?

An opinion paper by Paul A. Csikszentmihalyi

At the recent USA Track & Field Convention in Louisville the racewalking community discussed many issues affecting the sport. The main problem this point brings up is: What can we bring to the Olympic Games? This is the first of several articles discussing the development of racewalking which should be discussed completely. It is not a new idea that track & field power like the US. Everyone had good reasons for their finishes in the Games, but excuses do not make you a world walking power. Our country should be a leader in all track & field events for all of the resources we can bring to bear.

The first topic to be covered is the need for a National Race Walking Team. The showings of our race walkers in the Barcelona Olympic Games is just another chapter in the less illustrious history of American Race Walkers in International Competition. Our best placing in Barcelona was 20th (Michelle Rohl, 10K). That’s not much of a showing for a track & field power like the US. Everyone had good reasons for their finishes in the Games, but excuses do not make you a world walking power. Our country should be a leader in all track & field events for all of the resources we can bring to bear.

Before we go on, let’s take a look at three sport programs, their coaching setup and the results. The first program I want to look at is US Gymnastics Program. This program is run in most aspects by one coach, Bela Karolyi. He has gathered the best talents of American gymnastics in one location and trained them to his exacting control and leadership has paid off in the US becoming a world class country in gymnastics. In his pursuit of excellence he has made both friends and enemies, but he has produced a gymnastics team the country can be proud of.

My second example is a program where there is both a coach and a coordinator. This program is the US Junior Race Walking Team. Through the coaching efforts of Bob Ryan and the coordinating of Steve Vaivotes, the Juniors have been steadily improving over the years to become a good National Team despite a lack of a large pool of Junior walkers. From my rankings I have found a total of 48 (22 male, 26 female) walkers who can go faster than 7:26/kilometer (12:00/mile) in their events. This represents about 1% of the USA T & F registered race walkers (approximately 4200). Coach Ryan works with his athletes in seasonal camps throughout the year, and the athletes work with their own coaches the rest of the time. Steve Vaivotes has devoted some time in arranging international events for the Juniors and kept up with Junior developments from all over the world. By working together to cover all areas, they are developing the future members of the US National Race Walking Team. Although they don't have a record like the gymnasts, they are beginning to develop internationally.

What would a National Race Walking Team Coach provide? A National Coach would provide unbiased leadership to the National Team, especially if the coach is from outside the US. A recent example of this is cycling's Eddie Borszewycz. Mr. Borszewycz was the coach of the World Champion Polish cycling team in the mid 70's. He came to this country and cleared out those cyclists who were unwilling to do things HIS way. He knew what had to be done to develop a world class team, and he did it. The United States Cycling Federation supported Eddie Borszewycz in all of his efforts and they paid off. Our cyclists are a threat to do well internationally and they are competing successfully on the professional cycling circuit.

A good national coach would also develop solid networking contacts with other national coaches which could benefit our international walkers. Although I am sure that Richard Torrellas keeps in touch with various people on race walking overseas, it would help our stature in race walking if we had a National Team Coach. Most successful programs have one central authority figure and this is what our program is lacking. I'm sure the Mexicans would not have dominated racewalking as much as they have without the leadership of Gerzy Hausleber.

Another advantage of a national coach would be the management of the progress of the team members. With the Team Coordinator to handle all of the travel and logistics, the national coach could concentrate on athlete development and readiness. Through personal experience, the coach should know who is and is not ready to compete in a major international race. Many of these athletes have coaches, and these coaches can be utilized to monitor and adjust the athlete's compliance with the National Coach's prescribed training program. The athletes who do not have coaches...
would be coached by the National Team Coach or a designated assistant. In all cases, the National Team Coach would know the training activities of the National Team athletes through constant communications with them. Athletes could file a standard training log form with information on mileage, workout length, intensity, and other day-important to the coach. If any walkers are not willing to do along with the coach's program, the athlete could deal directly with the coach. This coach to athlete interface is important to the overall success of the program, and it should not be broken by the Chairman, Team Coordinator or other USA T & F officials. The National Coach should be back to the National Coach fully as long as the coach's actions are consistent with the improvement of the National Team. To do any less would be a slide back down to the present level of disorganization.

How will we pay for a National Race Walking Team Coach? We could use the present funding allotted to race walking if the leadership was willing to shoulder a greater share of their travel and administrative costs. One real good way would be corporate backing (financial and material) for the job search, salary and relocation of a top International Coach. Another possible funding source could be the USOC or the USA T & F National Office. Our last sponsor (Dess Foods/Mazola) put about $400,000 into TAC, video tape production and the athletes themselves. Let's get out to find another sponsor to support the hiring and resettlement of a good coach from overseas or within the US. The National Coach could also help to develop the whole sport through development general training schedules for walkers aspiring to National Team status. This will make up for the lack of race walking coaching and the multiplicity of track and field coaches in high schools and colleges. Training modules for the Level I and II Courses in Race Walking could also be developed by the National Coach. This will expand the ranks of the racewalk literate coaches and bring up the overall coaching level of race walking. Including modules on race walking will encourage most of the uncertified walking coaches to be certified as Level I or II Coaches.

In summary, let me restate briefly my overriding opinion. This country needs a strong, knowledgeable National Race Walking Team Coach if we want to improve to the World Class level and stay there. The present system will not develop an outstanding program because there is no constant leadership inherent in a system of independent athletes coached by coaches elected for individual events. We need a National Race Walking Coach and finding one should be a National Goal for 1993 or 1994.

LOOKING BACK (Covering two months since lengthy discussions of “to contact, or not to contact” usurped space for this feature last month)


15 Years Ago (From the Feb. and March 1978 ORWs)--Sue Brodock won the Women’s National Indoor 1 Mile In 7:01.7, better than a half-minute ahead of Susan Liers. The men’s 2 Mile title went to Todd Scully in 13:07.6, with Dan O’Connor (13:20.3) edging Jim Heiring (13:21.2) for second. Ron Daniel and Dave Romansky were about 14 seconds further back in fourth and fifth. Neal Pyke walked an American record 6:04 mile in San Francisco and Scully set an American record at 1500 meters with 5:47.9 in New York. Italy's Vittorio Vistoli set a World Indoor record at 2 Miles with 11:57.6 in Genoa.

5 Years Ago (From the Feb. and March 1983 ORWs)--The National Indoor 2 Mile went to Ray Sharp In 12:13.33, 2 seconds ahead of Jim Heiring. Dan O’Connor and Todd Scully also went under 13 minutes. Sue Brodock won the Women’s 1 Mile In 7:14:67. Teresa Vaill was less than 3 seconds back, with Susan Liers and Vicki Jones following. Heiring set an American record of 11:32.14 for 3 Km in Chicago and Sharp had a 5:47.98 1 Mile in Albuquerque. Heiring by 7 seconds. In the National 30 Km, Marco Evonuk left Heiring nearly 3 minutes back as he recorded a quick 2:16:41. Jim Lewis was third In 2:23:50. European 20 Km champion Jose Marin won the Spanish 50 Km in a blistering 3:40:47, 7 minutes ahead of Jorge Llopart. Dan O’Connor was seventh in the race with a 4:21:27. A week later, O’Connor won a 20 Km In Long Beach with a 1:28:38. Tom Edwards made an impressive debut at 50 Km, winning the Eastern Regional In 4:23:22.

5 Years Ago (From the Feb. and March 1988 ORWs)--Carl Schueler was a very impressive winner on the National 50 Km, held in North Carolina, breezing home in 4:02:55. Andy Kaestner (4:11:10) Jim Heiring (4:12:37), and Dan Pierce (4:18:00) followed. Fourteen walkers went under 4:30 In the highly contested race. In the women's Indoor 3 Km title race, Maryanne Torrellas set an American record while winning In 12:45:38, just 2 seconds ahead of Teresa Vaill. Lynn Welk was third. The men’s 5 Km went to Canada’s Guillaume Leblanc In 18:53:25 with Tim Lewis second In 19:56:05. Gary Morgan had 20:02.50 and Paul Wick 20:11.42. Sapin’s Reyes Sobrino won the European Indoor 3 Km In 12:48:99 ahead of Dana Vavracova, Czech., Maria Cruz Diaz, Spain; and Ildiko Illes, Hungary. The men’s 5 Km went to Czech Josef Pribilin In 18:44:40, with his countryman Roman Mrazek second In 18:44:39. Five others were under 19 minutes.

Mikhail Schennikov was DQ’d.