James tops 30 Km field

Atlanta, Oct. 31—Allen James was an easy winner in the USATF National 30 Km racewalk today, covering the distance in 2:14:31 despite freezing temperatures, howling wind, and snow flurries. Allen's closest competition was Canadian Martin St-Pierre who finished in 2:20:30. Alan Cole was the second U.S. finisher in 2:33:52. Bohdan Bulakowski led the masters in 2:29:30 with Ed Whiteman the U.S. master's winner in 2:47:34 (Bohdan is not yet a citizen). Lynda Brubaker led the women in 2:42:46 with Cheryl Rellinger not far behind.

James walked an outstanding race. Too bad no one was there to challenge him or themselves. (See the From Heel to Toe column.)

**Men:**
1. Allen James 2:14:31
2. Martin St-Pierre, Canada 2:20:30
3. Bohdan Bulakowski, Poland 2:29:30 (first over 40)
5. Rob Cole 2:33:52
6. Ivo Majestic, Czech. 2:38:50
8. Keith Luoma 2:58:32
9. Art Grant 3:07:47 (2nd master)
11. Dave Gwyn 3:12:11 (4th master)
12. Cokey Daman 3:26:57 (5th master, 1st over 70)
13. Mike Michel 3:30:49 (5th master, 1st 60-64)
14. Ron Preece 3:34:06 (1st 50-54)
15. David Stohl 3:35:40 (1st 45-49)
16. Alfred Clouser 3:36:43 (2nd 60-64)
17. Bernie Finch 3:44:51 (2nd 50-54)
18. Alvia Gaskill 3:47:29
Women:
1. Lynda Brubaker 2:42:46
2. Cheryl Rellinger 2:45:21
3. Micheline Denue, Canada 3:07:12
4. Yvonne Clark 3:07:27
6. Arlette Berlin 3:32:40 (1st 40-44)
7. Kathy Frable 3:34:10 (1st 45-49)
8. Laura Barnes 3:47:27

**5 Km, same place:**
Women—1. Susan Armenta 24:38
2. Chris Sakelarios 25:24
3. Julie Appel 30:52
Men:
1. David WIlbanks 24:59.7
2. Bert Starzer 25:45
3. Joel Carter 27:03
4. Alvia Gaskill 27:11
5. Gary Langley 27:29 (1st 45-59)
6. Ron duPreez 29:09 (1st 40-44)
7. Charles Carter 29:43 (2nd 40-44)
8. David Waddle 30:52 (3rd 40-44)

**Other results:**
Women's 5 Km, Hamden, Conn., Oct. 3--1. Lynda Brubaker 23:41
2. Susan Armenta 24:35
3. Kais Ajaye 26:06
4. Ellen O'Shaughnessy 26:59
5. Sharon Lyons 27:20
6. Michelle Rohr, 20 finishers
Men's 5 Km, same place—1. Dave McGovern 21:03
2. Rob Cole 21:25
3. Marc Varsano 21:40
4. Curt Clausen 22:48
5. Doug Fournier 24:39
6. Jim Brochin 27:19 (1st Master)
7. Robert Barret 27:59 (1st over 50)
8. Jack Botlano 28:19 (1st over 60)
9. Sal Corrallo 28:21 (2nd over 60)
10. Louis Free 30:11 (3rd over 60) 22 finishers.

Address all correspondence regarding both editorial and subscription matters to: Ohio Racewalker, 3184 Sunnyside St., Columbus, Ohio 43202.
NOVEMBER 1993

Marathon, Half-Marathon, and 5 Km, New Orleans, 8 am (M)
Sun. Jan. 23

Indoor 2 Mile, Arlington, Virginia, 8:30 am (I)
Sat. Jan. 29

5 Km and 1 Mile, Metairie, Louisiana, 9 am (M)
Sun. Jan. 30

Indoor 3 Km, Arlington, Virginia, 8:30 am (I)
Sun. Feb. 6

Indoor 3 Km, and Women, Boston, 8 am (I)

Indoor 3 Km, Men and Women, Boston, 8 am (I)

5 and 10 Km, Metairie, Louisiana, 8 am (M)

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CC--Sal Corrallo, 3466 Roberts Lane N., Arlington, VA 22207

FROM HEEL TO TOE

I know this has been through the mill many times during the 35 years I have been involved in racewalking and that even mentioning it is heresy to many, but when one looks at the totally unrepresentative fields in recent national races at 2 hours, 25 Km, 30 Km, and 40 Km, it certainly becomes tempting to raise the question of why we continue to contest so many "national" races. It seems from this tower (and I haven't done any formal study) that we are seeing fewer and fewer of our elite walkers at Nationals other than than the 20 and 50 for men and, I and 10 for women. (Not to take anything away from a great performance by Cokey Daman who beat many younger walkers, but a 70-year-old really shouldn't be finishing 12th at a "National" 30 Km. Nor, should you have just five finishers in a "National", as at the 2 Hour. We'll leave the 100 mile out of this discussion, since that's a different animal.) For sure, this has always been a problem, but part of it used to be in the idea of spreading the races around with some of them going to some very out of the way places without even any appreciable local walking community. Now we give the races only to centers of the sport with a good program and proven ability to put on a class race and still no one comes, often not even nearby elite walkers. We are supporting national teams, but where are the national team members at some of these events? Wouldn't some good competitive races against each other do them some good? In the past few years, even Frank Alongi's international race has drawn surprisingly little support from the U.S. walking elite. Here's a chance to get some strong international competition with traveling to Europe so why don't we take advantage of it? Well, just thought I'd ask ... Alan Wood commented along the same lines and then led into another problem in a letter he sent me a couple of months ago, addressing several issues in the August ORW: "1. The 25 Km. The attempt to resurrect this national was not a booming success. Virtually no "name" walkers were there. Distance walking seems more and more to be the province of masters and sub-masters. (This might be okay. Let the younger walkers emphasize speed and develop maturity.) In the accompanying women's Senior 20 Km, all seven top finishers were over 30. In this age of Instant gratification and time pressures, relatively few young people apparently are willing to do the long training. In less affluent countries, they are going to beat us in walking largely because there were fewer distractions and the lifestyle is much more physical--more walking and biking to get places, etc. We shouldn't stop trying to beat them, but we also shouldn't be overly frustrated if we don't." (Ed. I can't remember if I have made these comments in print before, if so forgive me, but my feeling is that hardly anyone is interested in the distances anymore. It seems that 90 percent of the results I receive are for 5 Km races and that's not really what racewalking is about from my perspective. I always defined it as an endurance event--1 mile and 5 Km races were fun, but not the real essence of the sport. Now, few people seem interested in even going 10 Km, let alone 20 and 50. It's great that we are getting greater participation, but I would like to see these people learn that real racing doesn't even start until 10 Km. Well, that's my prejudice--back to Mr Wood's comments.) 2. National Senior Sports Classic. The huge number of DQs suffests that judging at the state qualifying level did not screen out enough people. This needs to be bolstered. An ORW sentence says "Why does this event draw so many more than the supposed official National Championship sponsored by USA T&F?" Here are some thoughts, some of which might be applicable to the latter as well as our road championships. Incentive. The average walker may feel intimidated in going from local races to nationals, where he or she may be outdassed. But, if walkers compete comfortably at the state level and qualify, they feel that they are in with their peers. Maybe we should try this concept. 55 +. The idea of being with all people of a similar age who lived through World War II, etc., feels more bonding. 55+ is the "in" generations. In bridge, there are tournaments just for them. Communication. The U.S. National Senior Sports Organization has fantastic promotion. I raced in one state qualifier 3 years ago, received just one medal (bronze at that) and am still getting the national newsletter. (Their mailing list must be gigantic.) Sponsorship. Their many sponsors are apparently promised great visibility. They are prominently mentioned in the newsletter and
The attitude of racewalkers themselves, we could hope to prevent the bad PR that has resulted from incidents in some meets where racewalkers have refused to accept the judge's decision. Certainly any elite walker with a turnover time of 200 plus strides per minute should realize he or she is risking warnings and disqualification. See the latest on this hot issue on subsequent pages.

Dear Sirs:

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE FOLLOWING COMMENT:

"The aggressiveness of the young U.S. men even in the face of two red cards was commendable despite their obvious disappointment." (Ohio Racewalker, October 1993)

Perhaps this "aggressiveness" is less than commendable. Perhaps, the two red cards were an indication of potentially serious problems in style. Perhaps, these young U.S. men have developed flaws in style that may easily lead to major grief ahead. Maybe it is better to perfect a style, at an early age, that will guarantee a young walker many years of satisfaction from the sport and freedom from worry that a DQ may be imminent. Maybe this is exactly what is wrong with youth and junior walking in the USA.

Performances at the Youth and Junior level are not truly important in the big picture. What's truly important is that these young walkers stay in the sport a good number of years, at least until they have reached full strength and maturity. To regularly risk DQ with a style that is flawed is an obvious invitation to major troubles down the road, and major troubles often lead to an abandonment of the sport altogether.

Check out the results of recent years' Junior Olympic and Junior National results. How many of the top finishers are still in the sport? My personal observation is that the number is small. How many bailed out of the sport because they had never developed proper style and met frequent difficulty when confronted with proper judging? Poor style is the surest route to disaster in our sport. It's time we stopped "playing the judges" and criticizing the judges when DQ's actually take place. I've seen young walkers break down and cry when DQ'd. In many cases, they simply had never been trained in proper style.

We can avoid all this with some serious work on proper style. Perhaps we can keep young walkers in the sport by helping them reduce the risk of DQ now. After a while, too many bad habits may be developed and style faults too ingrained to be changed.

Not only that, we've got to think of our sport-long term. If our sport degenerates into one series of hassles of athletes with judges after another we will eventually have no sport. We may already be endangered. The operative word on any sport's or event's continuing presence on the Olympic schedule is "telegenic." It's got to look good on TV or it may not be there at all in the future. And if racewalking's not in the Olympics, where will this sport we all love actually be? History, that's where we'll be.

To sum up, there's no way to help assure racewalking's future other than by teaching our young walkers proper style.

Most sincerely,

Elliott Denman
25 Years Ago (From the November 1968 ORW)--Gary Westerfield was a dominant force at the 11th Annual Ohio Track Club Distance Carnival. On the first day, he won the 7 mile walk by 5 seconds from Jack Blackburn in 55:01. Max Goud captured the Master's Division in 57:17. The following day, Westerfield was back for an easy 15 mile win in 2:06:13, with Jack Montland, who had been busy conducting the 10 mile run the day before, a distant second (2:11:15). Fat Jack (Blackburn) won the Cincinnati Thanksgiving Day 10 mile (actually well short) in 41:53. Odd distances seemed to be in vogue as Rudy Haliwa won a 7 mile (said to be closer to 6 1/2) in 47:00 and Dave Romansky beat Shaw Ledany and John Knifton in a 20.6 mile race in 2:49:52.

20 Years Ago (From the November 1973 ORW)--Our Fourth Annual World Rankings, published a month earlier than usual, saw Hans-Georg Retkman (GDR) and Bernd Kannenberg (West Germany) on top at 20 and 50, respectively. Ron Laird was ranked fifth in the 20. Toppling the U.S. rankings were Laird at 20 and John Knifton at 50. We hadn't yet started women's rankings, not because of sexism on our part, but because there wasn't enough activity to justify rankings.

15 Years Ago (From the November 1978 ORW)--Once again the rankings came early. On top of the world at 20 was Mexico's Daniel Bautista. His countryman, Raúl Gonzales topped the 50. Todd Scully and Marco Evoniuk were number one in the U.S. at the two distances. On the women's side, Sweden's Brit-Marie Carlsson and Sw Gustavsson were on top at 5 and 10 Km, respectively. Susan Liens was number one in the U.S. at both distances. June MacDonald won the U.S. women's title at 15 Km in 1:27:10. Martin Kraft did 20 Km on the track in 1:33:42 and comebacking Bob Henderson covered 8 miles and 30 yards in an hour.

10 Years Ago From the November 1983 ORW--The National 100 Km race, held in Arlington, Virginia, went to Brian Savilonis in 10:33:12, with defending champion Bob Keating about 9 1/2 minutes back, but gaining ground over the final 25 Km. Two-time winner and early leader Alan Price was third in 10:44:08. Chris Knotts was fourth, and Sal Corrallo beat Jack Blackburn for the master's title, as they finished fifth and sixth. Bev Leveck was next, and the first woman, in 12:04:17. Mike Morris won the National 2 hour title in New Jersey, covering 14 miles 1690 yards and leaving Mike O'Rourke better than a quarter mile behind. Dan O'Connor broke the American 50 Km record (track) with a 4:12:46 in Irvine, Cal. The Canadian National 50 was a fast race, with Guillaume Letblanc winning in 3:58:32, 4 minutes ahead of Francis LaPointe. O'Connor was third in 4:14:35, 4 weeks before his record effort. Morris also had a 1:31:58 for 20 Km at Niagara Falls, edging Pete Timmons, who was given the same time. Ed O'Rourke was just 7 seconds back.

5 Years Ago (From the November 1988 ORW)--Lynn Weik was an easy winner in the National Women's 20 Km, held on Long Island. Her 1:45:37 left Karen Rezach nearly 10 minutes behind. Susan Travellin edged Susan Liens for third, with both given 1:57:04, and Canada's Christine Ottley also went under 2 hours with a 1:58:06. In the accompanying National 30 Km, Dan O'Connor finished 5 minutes ahead of Jeff Salvage to win in 2:24:15. Curtis Fisher and Curt Clausen followed.

Revolution in racewalking

Dr. Dennis Furlong is starting from the ground up in his campaign to bring fairness and accuracy to the sport of racewalking. The Dalhousie, New Brunswick, family physician has competed in, and judged, racewalking on the national and international level for several years. Frustrated by inaccuracy and inconsistency in judging, he has invented a device that will eliminate judging errors in the sport. The Run-Alarm is a small electronic device attached to a racewalker's shoe. Through sensors built into the shoe, the alarm can detect whether a walker is lifting or has one foot on the ground. If a walker lifts, the Run-Alarm will emit a beeping sound and a small orange patch on the shoe will flip up, making it easy for a judge to determine that a racer should be disqualified. "Someone is disqualified at every major international event, sometimes fairly, sometimes unfairly," Dr. Furlong said. "The margin for human error is just too great."

The Research and Productivity Council in Fredericton has perfected his invention and is confident the sport of racewalking will move forward into a new era where fairness and accuracy replace human error and bias. His ultimate aim is to have the Run-Alarm approved for use in time for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.
SILVER LINING TO STUTTGART FIASCO

August 1992 is how long it has been since the World Championships in Stuttgart. The following is an excerpt under a 5/8th inch bold headline - NO PRIZES FOR CIGARETTE WALK OUT OF LINE.

I would certainly hesitate before calling all race-walkers cheats. But the point is that plenty of them are and never have they been more savagely exposed than in the merciless German TV coverage of the men's 20km walk here on Sunday. For sequences of up to 15 seconds at a time, several were proved to be running.

The upset in the stadium was certainly the most embarrassing spectacle at any of the four World Championships staged so far. As they came on the track, huddled with exhaustion, 'walker after 'walker' was shown a red disc and shoved to one side. Seven - two Mexicans, one Italian, one Japanese and three East Europeans, were disqualified under Rule 21.

What was so unfair about it was that they were blatantly arbitrary victims. So many 'walkers' had been seen on TV to be violating the rules that the judges similarly had to be seen exercising their power. Unfortunately, it was nothing short of a kangaroo court.

To conduct a World Championship athletics event, under such conditions it is entirely ridiculous. . . . There is a sense of deprive. For a sport whose scientists can now instantly measure a sprinter's reaction off the blocks to the third decimal place of a second, it must be possible to devise some instrument which can determine whether or not a race-walker has been, to quote the vernacular, 'lifting'. Until that happens, race-walking is for the birds. Already serious athletes writers, as whom I'm not one, do not even bother to report it.

EXCUSES This excerpt is just one example of the consequences of the judging fiasco at Stuttgart, and, of course the IAAF judges had excuses. There are always excuses. However, for the last 20 years, the credibility gap between judging by the human eye has been widening, and the power of their excuses has hit zero.

SILVER LINING - A RUN ALARM

Dennis Furlong, a Canadian Judge and race-walker, has developed a device which can detect illegal foot movement by use of a battery operated sensor applied to the shoe. This device received an overwhelmingly positive response at an Testing Exhibition arranged by Paul Warburton, walking correspondent of Athletics Weekly, and top English Race-walkers, Ian McCombie, Vicki Lupton, Darren Stone and other athletes, as well as Ray Hall, Britain's national coach for men's walking and the media on October 28. The device was devoted one-half page of his lead sport's page in a favorable article by David Powell. And according to Paul, the BBC's very popular prime time Technology show is talking about featuring it.

The device sends a cautionary signal if a walker is lifting (losing contact with the ground and violating Rule 21), then lights up when he exceeds his permitted warnings. A judge can disqualify the competitor by the evidence of the light. An electronic module is fitted to the top of each shoe with contacts in the tongue of the right shoe and the sole of the left.

Messages are sent through the athlete's body using electronic impulses. Sensors in the shoes detect when contact with the ground is broken. "The shoes talk to each other," says Dennis Furlong the inventor. The device adds 180 grams to a pair of racing shoes.

According to David Powell's article in the London Times, by the end of the testing session, Ian McCombie, who holds five British records, was using the Run-Alarms a speedy entry into the field of walking, "It is exactly the tonic that the sport needs," McCombie said. "My physics 0-level tells me that it is sound in principle, my walking experience tells me that, practically, it has easy application. I am amazed that it can be done so easily."

Quoting the same article by Powell, Ray Hall, Britain's national men's race-walking coach was also impressed. He notes that the judging system was developed at a time when it was possible to monitor walking in compliance with the rules, but its competitors now move up to 20 percent faster than they did 25 years ago.

EDITORIAL - ON U.S. SOIL

The North American Racewalking Foundation is taking a keen interest in the serious judging problem that is hanging like a guillotine knife above our sport. The Foundation is heading a two-pronged attack.

(1) With congratulations to the initiative of Paul Warburton in setting up the first demonstration of the Run Alarm sensing device invented by Dennis Furlong on October 28 in England (see front page story), the Foundation is presently organizing a similar demonstration in the United States. (The possibility of holding a demonstration at the IAAF Convention in Las Vegas on Friday December 3 is being explored.)

(2) The Foundation is also collecting information on studies that have been done in analyzing the walking gait versus the running gait with the intent of finding a definitive scientific study that will provide authoritative information about the difference and/or similarities in these gait. With Norway, New Zealand and Germany calling for the elimination of the Contact Rule as a solution to the current judging crisis in our sport, the Foundation feels that it is essential to either prove that elimination of the rule would lead to straight knee "running", or that the running and race-walking gaits are dissimilar.

In the words of the Foundation's Chairman, John MacLachlan, "we are going to support any promising effort that we think works towards the long-range success of our sport and the welfare of the race-walking community."

November 16, 1993

Elaine Ward
P.O. Box 50312
Pasadena, CA 91115-0312

Dear Elaine:

As a follow up to our phone conversation about Dennis Furlong's shoe device, I am enclosing a copy of the letter I sent to Dr. Furlong regarding his proposal.

By the way, you state in your letter to me that the judging at Stuttgart took a pummeling in the media. This is not universally correct. The judging actually received tremendous support in most of the European press, especially in Spain and Italy. 
course their walkers did very well). Only the English press was somewhat negative but they always are. You simply can't satisfy the English press. Despite the event management problems in Stuttgart, the judges overall did a great job under the circumstances. Perhaps you should contact Elliott Danman of the Asbury Park Press for his insight, since he was not only covering the competition for his newspaper, he was also the USA Judge for the walking events.

If your foundation is truly interested in supporting well-conceived, serious technological aids for judging, I would have you rule out the shoe alarm. However, a small hand-held video camera with playback capability would be one to look at. Also we are in need of a better communication system between the judges and the recorder (an electronic hard-wired system versus the current bicycle system). The video could be a complementary solution along with the heel requirement which will definitely cause a correction in the current modern technique as noted in my enclosed letter.

By the way, you have missed the comment in the National RW Newsletter regarding pending USATF legislation: No one is proposing the elimination of race walking from track and field! Only the title "men's and women's" is being proposed to be dropped. Despite our problems, race walking is one of the most popular events in the world. It is drug-free and still quite amateur as compared to the other events. There were over 100 protests in the other track & field events in Barcelona and Stuttgart, and none in all 6 walking events!

Best regards,

Bob Bowman, Chairman
IAAF Walking Committee

INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR ATHLETIC FEDERATION
Walking Committee

Memorandum

Date: November 13, 1993

To: Dr. Dennis J. Furlong

Cc: Bruce Douglass
Jack Mortland
Lawrie Robertson
Martin Rudow
Ian Whatley

Dear Dr. Furlong:

Thank you for sending the material on the shoe alarm device. I had also received the English newspaper articles from Peter Marlow, member of the IAAF Walking Committee. Of course we had been in touch earlier and I did review your circuit design at that time.

The IAAF Walking Committee continues to study all possible ways to improve the sport and of course we are quite familiar with the problems being encountered in our competitions. The situation in Stuttgart with the men's 50-km was unfortunate but totally preventable as evidenced by the excellent job done in recent World Cups. This situation also had nothing to do with the ability to judge loss of contact. I won't go into the details of this competition but we have written a report outlining the event management problems and recommended solutions.

The problem area which your shoe device addresses is of course the judging contact issue, which continues to hurt the credibility of our sport. Even though some of the criticism, especially by the media, is often unfair; nevertheless it is a real problem area for us to deal with. To correctly and fairly solve this problem area requires us to understand the scope of the problem and address it honestly and objectively. We have a wide range of solutions being proposed. Some involve technology (video, shoe alarm, etc.) and some have even proposed eliminating the contact rule (only require the heel to make contact first). All of these proposals have and are being reviewed. But obviously any accepted solution must be both practical and reliable as to its implementation and therefore not introduce even bigger problems.

Before I comment on your proposal, I would like to take exception to some of the statements you have made in the press:

(1) In the article on 'Innovations' you imply that a walker that lifts gains an advantage over a racer who is following the rules. This is not necessarily so. A walker who lifts is not following the rules but also is usually losing speed to the fair racer. It is a myth that loss of contact helps a walker walk faster. In fact, good technique (no contact) is the fastest way to walk. Video studies often show the fastest walker to be the most legal. Similar to running the hurdles, the flight phase is the slowest phase and therefore should be eliminated in order to walk properly.

(2) In the same article you are quoted as saying, "Someone is disqualified at every major international event, sometimes fairly, sometimes unfairly." This is a false statement that you cannot support. I am fully aware of the limitations of human eye judging but no one has ever shown that a walker was unfairly disqualified. You are unfairly suggesting that walkers are disqualified who do not deserve to be. You are wrong. I have never seen this in all my years in the sport. The only problem I've seen is the opposite case, some walkers who should be disqualified are often not because of judging limitations, etc. Of course, the same could be said of any other athletic event.

(3) In one of the English newspaper articles you are quoted as stating, "the advantage gained in illegal race walking is more than you gain with performance enhancing drugs." This is nonsense. See explanation stated in (1) above. A violation of the contact rule in walking events is in no way comparable to the advantage gained from performance enhancing drugs which has practically ruined some athletic events and the lives of many athletes. I might add that these substances have never been detected in any race walker at the world championship level.

I realize you are enthusiastic about your device, but to promote it on the basis of such false and exaggerated statements doesn't help you and does the sport a disservice. This gets back to understanding what the real problem is and what solutions, if any, offer any improvement.

I think you know my professional background is in reliability engineering. I have a BS in engineering and have been a practitioner in this field for 30 years (10 years in the aerospace industry and 20 years in the computer industry). I have authored a textbook on the subject and teach the subject to industry and at the graduate level of several universities. So I am uniquely qualified to assess the reliability of the shoe alarm. Even though I told you several years ago that the design is functionally workable, the possibility of meeting the reliability requirement of such a concept is doubtful. If you add in the practicality requirement, it is almost impossible.

I realize you are not happy with this assessment, but I would be doing you and the sport a disservice if I wasn't totally honest with you. It is an intrinsically unreliable and impractical concept. You simply cannot design and build this device reliably enough to overcome the failure modes and make it a practical solution. Let me list just some of the failure modes (I'm sure you are aware of some of these):
a. Electronic components' susceptibility to electrostatic discharge.
b. Mechanical shock and vibration causing opens, shorts & intermittent signals.
c. False signals due to noise interference and shielding.
d. Environmentally induced failures such as moisture contamination and uneven road surfaces.
e. Limitations in correctly identifying signals, especially in large groups of walkers.
f. Component random failures (normal component failures).
g. Security-related failures (athlete disengaging device).

The combined effect of all these failure modes means the probability of a failure occurrence during an event is almost certainty. This is obviously not acceptable. Most likely the reliability would be considerably lower resulting in many failures during each competition.

By the way, a close circuit video judging setup has few, if any, of these problems and yet it is also an impractical solution.

You may not be aware that the sport of fencing has dropped the touch sensor system because it wasn't reliable enough and that application certainly has less failure modes associated with it than this one.

The most promising (the only one) we have is an old one that is again being given serious consideration. This proposal involves the regulation of the shoe by increasing the heel thickness so as to discourage the lifting action of the walkers.

The 'modern' quick-stepping technique being employed by many of the present day elite walkers results in these walkers not making contact with the front foot until it is almost under the body. At this point, the rear foot has often left the ground. The shoes being used have very thin soles and no heels.

There are two possible ways by which shoe design might lead to the reduction or even elimination of the flight phase of race walking. The first way is by Bridging the heel to ground gap earlier in the stride and before the trailing toe has broken contact. The second way is by decreasing the elastic energy storage of the lower leg. This should reduce the vertical component of the push-off force of the rear foot thus decreasing the lifting action of the walker.

This solution will offer a uniform preventative measure for the violation of the contact rule. This will not prevent all loss of contact, but with the new shoe design, it will be more difficult to break contact without an exaggerated lifting action that is easily detectable. This is a reliable and practical solution.

Sincerely,

Bob Bowman, Chairman
IAAF Walking Committee