Rohl and James stay on top

Atlanta, March 4 (From Steve Vaitones)—Michelle Rohl and Allen James brought their early season dominance indoors and earned the gold medals at the USATF Indoor Track & Field Championships. Only nine walkers toed the line in each race, the small fields due in part to the year’s unusual winter racing schedule, which had trials races at both 20 and 50 Km for men and at 10 Km for women.

The walks were moved to Saturday morning after originally being scheduled for Friday night, as they would have been the only finals on Friday. That, though may have been a mixed blessing, as the walks would have been the lead-in to the Georgia High School Invitational with several thousand spectators, providing the off-asked-for "exposure". On Saturday morning, in comparison, it was a toss-up as to whether there were more officials on the field or more spectators in the stands. Nonetheless, the athletes were ready to put it on the line around the Georgia Dome's spacious, banked 200 meter circuit. A far cry from Madison Square Garden's steeply pitched 11 lap per mile runway, the blue mondo oval allowed plenty of room for strategic moves and shoulder-to-shoulder matchups. The winners, though, were decided shortly after the gun in both races, with only a few midpack challenges spicing up the competition.

In the women's race, Rohl led from the start, getting comfortably out in front by the 800 meter mark and gradually increasing the lead over second placer Victoria Herazo. “I was surprised because Victoria usually goes out harder,” noted the LaGrange, Georgia resident. “Mostly, I was walking conservatively because I wanted to win it. I didn’t care about the time. I didn’t train for this distance because I’m getting ready for the Pan Am Games.” With kilometer splits of 4:15 and 8:39, she finished in 13:04.99, moving her to seventh fastest American performer of all time.

This season’s surprise, Joanne Dow of Manchester, N.H., place third in her first go at a USATF Track championship. Her 13:28.22 clocking (4:25, 9:04) moves her to ninth on the U.S. performers list. In fourth, Gretchen Eastler moved to tenth all-time, while Kristen Mullaney and Danielle Kirk also recorded personal bests. Ali DeWitt was the only DQ in the race.

In the men's race, an expected rematch of last year’s great duel between James and defending champion Jonathan Matthews never materialized. James utilized a similar race plan to Rohl’s—establish a lead and remain just out of reach. James had a 5 meter lead over Matthews and training partner Rob Cole after 400 meters. Matthews put the same margin over Cole in the next two laps, and those gaps widened throughout the race.
The Ohio Racewalker is published monthly in Columbus, Ohio. Subscription rate is $10.00 per year ($12.00 outside the U.S.). Editor and Publisher: John E. (Jack) Mortland. Address all correspondence regarding both editorial and subscription matters to: Ohio Racewalker, 3184 Summit St., Columbus, Ohio 43202.

"This race was a bit slower than what I had hoped, and this year my mile at the Millrose Games was slower than I had hoped," remarked James. "We did a 50 Km eight weeks ago; it takes a long time to make the transition to speedwork after distance training."

Planning the first double in recent memory by an American at the Pan American Games, weeks ago; it takes a long time to make the transition to speedwork after distance training.

The Mobil Indoor Grand Prix standings were the same as the final result order in both races. This was the only race of the season for the women, while the men's tally also included the Commonwealth Invitational and Millrose Games. Results:


OTHER RESULTS


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**PLANNED PERAMBULATING PROGRAMS**

(Or, if you prefer, race schedule)

- **Sat. April 8**
  - 5 km, Los Altos, Cal. (G)
  - 5 km and 1500 meters, Darlington, S.C. (L)
- **Sun. April 9**
  - 10 km and 5 km, Walnut, Cal., 8 am (B)
- **Mon. April 10**
  - Ron Zinn Memorial 10 Mile, Asbury Park, N.J., 11 am (A)
- **Sat. April 15**
  - 5 km, Atlanta, Ga. (D)
- **Sat. April 22**
  - 5 km, Atlantic City, N.J. (I)
  - 15 km, Portage, Mich. (Y)
- **Sun. April 23**
  - 5 km, Indianapolis (V)
- **Sun. April 30**
  - 15 km, New York City, 9 am (E)
- **Sat. May 6**
  - 5 km, Decatur, Georgia (D)
- **Sun. May 7**
  - 5 km, Providence, R.I., 10 am (A)
  - 3, 5, and 10 km, Dearborn, Mich. (W)
- **Sat. May 13**
  - 10 km Broomfield, Col. (H)
- **Sun. May 14**
  - 1500 meters, Atlanta (D)
  - 25 km, San Mateo, Cal. (G)
  - 3 mile, Detroit (W)
- **Fri. May 19**
  - 5 km, Indianapolis (V)
- **Sat. May 20**
  - 5 km, Minneapolis, Minn. (P)
  - 20 km, Yellow Springs, Ohio (K)
  - 10 km, London, Ontario (W)
- **Sun. May 21**
  - 5 and 10 km, Albuquerque, N.M. (AA)
  - 25 km, San Mateo, Cal. (G)

**USATF Women's 20 km, Men's 25 km, Albany, N.Y. (S)**

Western Regional Women's 10 Men's 20 km, Palo Alto, Cal. (G)
**FROM HEEL TO TOE**

The Jack Mortland Invitational Racewalks, the brainchild of the Wolfpack Track Club's founder and president, John White, were going under this year because John can no longer get permission for races on the Whetstone Park bikepath. The walks had been conducted under John's able guidance for the past 7 years. To the rescue comes Ohio's Racewalk Chairman, Vince Peters, who is putting on the Jack Mortland Racewalks in Yellow Springs, Ohio on May 14. Vince is offering races at 5, 10, and 20 km with $50 prize awards in the Men's 20 and Women's 10. Those races will be the Ohio Championships. Yellow Springs is in a beautiful spot with lots of terrific hiking trails around, for those who don't get enough walking in the races. It's a delightful village and the home of Antioch College, which welcomed bohemians, beats, hippies, and flower children before anyone had heard of bohemians, beats, hippies, and flower children. For information on the races, contact Vince Peters at 607 Omar Circle, Yellow Springs, OH 45387, 513-767-7424 evenings. Correction to the National 50 Km results reported in the January issue. Mike DeWitt had a 4:43:57 (not 4:33:57) and Ian Whalley, not Mike, was 10th. ... From Ron Daniel: "Thoughts on Looking Back for newcomers to the sport. Somewhere at the end of the '70s or early '80s, there was a significant change to the implementation of the racewalking rules in the judges procedure. That was the introduction of the warnings (white paddle) as we now know it, along with the three DQ calls from separate judges (for a short while, the Chief Judge's call counted for two). Until then, there was no distinction from the first warning and it being a DQ call, of which the walker only received two, and both calls could come from the same judge. That first warning/DQ call, early in a race, sure had you walking cautiously the rest of the way. The current rules certainly give the benefit of the doubt to the walker, which may account for some of our present problems, along with aiding in some of the faster times." ... From Steve Vaitones: "The Boston Marathon has been working to collect memorabilia of the historic race's first 100 years and they are finding that even the office itself had surprisingly little in the way of early history of the event. Our own New England association of USATF can only trace most of our championship events into the 1970s, mostly because age-old old-aged administrators' files were often flung to the wind. There's probably a lot of walking material that is in basements or attics, one step away from being just one more round of the trash or recycling man. As a saver of statistics, reviewer of records, and collector of "stuff" related to walking, I am trying to rescue some older material from this plight. If anyone has ORW volumes from before 1974 (my intro year to the sport--wow!, over 20 years), any copies of "it's the Racewalker", Harold Whitlock's old book, posters or programs from Lugano Cups prior to 1985, trophies or accounts from really old races, I'd be interested in putting them into useful storage. (Ed. Gosh, Steve, I have a lot of such "stuff", but I sort of treasure it, too. Maybe some day.) Being hopelessly non-profit, I'm willing to apy face value plus postage. Please contact me directly with what you are willing to part with (written list if possible): Steve Vaitones, 90 Summit St., Waltham, MA 02154. (Ed. Another rather meaningless aside. Noticing that Steve also leaves on Summit St., I'll drop a bit of trivia on you. My last two residences as I grew up in Galion, Ohio were on Summit St. and Columbus St., and now, for nearly 32 years, I've lived on Summit St. in Columbus. Back to Steve.) I'm also looking for any Track & Field News prior to 1970, and the old black and white issues of Runner's World. Thanks in advance. (Ed. Well, I could help there too, were I willing to part company. A complete file of T&F News from the fall of 1953 on, and I think I have most of the early copies of Runner's World stashed in a box somewhere.) Oh, and the Boston Athletic Association is still looking for memorabilia, primarily earlier than 1970. Contact Gloria Ratti at 617-236-1652." ... More of Dave's World Class Racewalking Clinics on the docket. Dave (McGovern) has scheduled clinics for Atlanta, April 21-22; Mobile, Alabama, May 12-14.
Miami, May 19-21; and Somerset, Penn., June 9-11. The clinics include individual video analysis, training theory, and training schedule design. Contact Dave at Box 584, 601 Brand St., LaGrange, GA 30240, 706-883-1409 for more information. Also note that Volumes 1, 3, and 4 of "Ian and Dave's Low Budget Videos" (see Dec. 1994 and Jan 1995 ORWs) are now ready. Contact Ian Whatley at 240 Donnington Drive, Greenville, SC 29613 about these. The Potomac Valley Track Club is sponsoring a series of spring racewalking clinics. The PVTC instructors will cover proper form and offer teaching advice. Instructors are racewalkers with years of training, racing, and teaching experience and include National Team members and coaches, American record holders, and age group champions. Beginner level clinics are held at Constitution Gardens in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday evenings from April 4 through May 9 at 6 pm. Beginner and intermediate level clinics are scheduled on Saturdays starting at 8:30 am from April 15 through May 20. Call 703-671-2520 for recorded information or call Dick Jirousek (before 9 pm) at 703-451-5194 to talk live.

Tom Colby in Madison, Wis. informed us and our readers that there will be a feature on racewalking televised nationally on PBS. It will air during the program "Get Real." The story will feature kids from the West Side Track Club of Madison. The show is to be aired on May 14, 6:30 am; May 19, 4 pm, and May 20, 9:30 am, CST. Or, check your local listings. The USATF Racewalking Committee has named twelve athletes to the national development program Intermediate Team. The athletes, age 19 to 22, were selected based on their accomplishments and potential as national senior team competitors. All are current college student-athletes. The team is: Men: Sean Albert, St. Peters College, Paramus, N.J.; Chad Eder, Cedarville College, Cedarville, Ohio; Al Heppner, U. of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.; Yariv Pomeranz, New York University, New York City; Tim Seaman, UW-Parkside; Will Van Axen, UW-Parkside; Women: Gretchen Eastler, Simmons College, Boston; Debbie Iden, UW-Parkside; Danielle Kirk, UW-Parkside; Bobbi Prakside, Kenosha, Wis.; Yariv Pomeranz, New York University, New York City; Debbie Iden, UW-Parkside; Danielle Kirk, UW-Parkside; Bobbi Prakside, Kenosha, Wis.; Yariv Pomeranz, New York University, New York City; Debbie Iden, UW-Parkside; Danielle Kirk, UW-Parkside; Bobbi Prakside, Kenosha, Wis.; Yariv Pomeranz, New York University, New York City. The Intermediate Team was established in 1993 as a development program for racewalkers age 20-23 to assist with coaching, training, and competition as they make the transition to senior level competition. Plans for 1995 include an international competition in July and a training camp at the US Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs in August. Development program coordinators are Steve Valitones (617-566-7600 and Gwen Robertson (216-392-1500).

Flying Lessons at Palo Alto

Our reference in last month's From Heel to Toe column to the newsletter of the Monterey Peninsula Walk Walk Club has elicited some interesting commentary.

From Roger Burrows, Event Group Coordinator--Walks, Athletics Canada:
Thanks for your comment "Why was this a surprise?" to the revelation from California that slow motion videotape of an elite walker shows a flight phase. Of course it does. Slow motion video tape of people hurrying for a bus would likely show one too! The Monterey Peninsula Walk Walk Club should, with all respect, wake wake wake up!

If the video camera had been invented when rule 191 was written, the rule might read something like this: "Video and photographic equipment provides perspectives of
Also implied in the editorial was another reference to past misinformation, that being an IAAF proposal to drop the contact rule. How many times does it have to be written, there is no IAAF proposal to drop the contact rule, period. (Emphasis Daniel’s) There is a dream/fantasy by Caesar Moreno and a few members of the Norwegian federation.

Thanks also to Roger Burrows for the following interesting commentary on another item in the February issue.

PLYOMETRICS

By Roger Burrows

I am always impressed by Ian Whately’s explanations of aspects of sport science. It is a mark of true knowledge to be able to communicate intricate ideas in such a clear and accessible way to those seeking to understand.

I wonder if he might be interested in comparing notes on plyometric training with an old liberal arts type like myself? In the last ORW, Ian explained plyometrics wonderfully, but then expressed doubts about its specificity in terms of race walking technique. A fair point, but hear me out.

“Plyometrics” is not just a series of drills searching for relevance. Although the term is often used in this loose way, plyometrics is not a synonym for “bounding” (which Ian was originally asked about).

Plyometrics refers to the training and use of a kind of muscle strength, just as “muscular endurance”, and “power” are kinds of muscle strength also. A muscle’s plyometric response is, as Ian says, its ability to return stored energy completely and quickly. It’s sometimes called “special strength”, “explosive strength” even “elastic strength”.

This is the essence of speed and it varies from event to event only in degree. All human motion is muscular activity of some kind. To do an athletic action faster than the time before needs an increased plyometric response from the working muscles. It matters little whether this is your second long jump take-off of the day or the last loop of your 50k race walk.

The uncanny rhythm of a Perlov or a Mercenario at the top of their game is, at least in part, because their muscles maintain their plyometric response. They can therefore keep the same amazing stride rate more than three hours after they started. The blistering speed of a Shchennikov or an Anders is not solely because they did lots of “speed-work”. It’s because they are genetically endowed with a neuromuscular system which causes each muscle contraction to be plyometrically better than yours or mine. Then they did lots of speed work.

Frankly, I would put a case of beer on the fact that they are also better than most of us in a 30m sprint, or a standing long jump, even an overhead shot put heave. These are some of the useful little tests of explosive muscle strength which our power and speed event colleagues use.

But let’s not give up too easily. We may never catch Mikhail or Beate in a sprint walk. But we can work with our own “wiring” to improve its strength and efficiency. Let’s not overlook an important clue provided by Ian when he mentions that plyometric training seems to work for 400-1500 runners. It does, it works wonderfully ... and guess who has the stride rate of a top class middle distance runner? A top-class race walker, that’s who.

Dave McGovern provides the following observations on the World Cup 20 Km Trials (reported last month).

Young Studs Hammer Retreats

With an average age of nearly forty, the U.S. World Cup fifty kilometer squad proves that there is still some life left in the legs of former national and Olympic team members such as Marco Evoniuk, Carl Schueler and Eugene Kitts. Perhaps heartened by
the graying of the fifty kilometer squad, several more former stars came out of the woodwork at the twenty kilometer trials in Monterey California, only to have their hopes dashed by a crop of emerging elites.

Most surprising, perhaps, was the resurfacing of former 1:25 walker Ray Sharp who vowed never to return to the sport after the 1991 season. Currently residing in Sedona, Arizona, Ray resumed racewalk training in November in the hopes of travelling with the U.S. team to Beijing, China in April for the World Walking Cup. Ray was joined in his pursuit by 1988 Olympic 20 kilometer trials winner Gary Morgan and four-time Olympian Marco Evoniuk.

A relatively pedestrian first loop of the flat, two kilometer course gave fleeting hope to the veterans as a large pack followed closely behind Evoniuk through a 9:02 first split. As the pace intensified, the old horses fell off one by one. Ray Sharp, the first casualty of a series of sub-4:20 kilometers, dropped out before the ten kilometer mark, followed by Evoniuk at the 12. After ten kilometers, Allen James, closely pursued by 1993 World Cup teammate Dave McGovern, pulled away from a tight second pack of Phil Dunn, Andrew Hermann, Rob Cole, Gary Morgan and promising newcomer Will Van Axen. Morgan fell off the pace by fifteen kilometers, leaving the four X-generation athletes to duke it out for the three remaining seats on the bus to Beijing.

The pack of emerging elite athletes traded places leading the pack into a strong sea breeze on a long uphill section of the course, as they each faced the realization that four athletes were now fighting for the three remaining spots on the Cup team. The pack broke with four kilometers to go as the inexperienced Van Axen stopped to tie a shoelace. A strong surge to rejoin the pack left the UW Parkside sophomore dead-legged for the final sprint to the finish line.

After shadowing James through 18 kilometers, McGovern was once again slowed by a weak stomach. After stopping briefly to vomit before the final loop, the NY Athletic Club/Powerbar veteran resumed his charge after 1992 Olympian James, closing the gap to 12 seconds. James emerged victorious in 1:28:21 followed closely by McGovern in 1:28:33. Hermann pulled away from Adidas teammate Philip Dunn over the final kilometers to take the third position with a 1:28:47 to Dunn's 1:29:19. Rob Cole, able to keep his Reeboks tied through the entire twenty kilometers, bought his ticket to China with a 1:29:21 to Van Axen's 1:29:40.

Hermann, Dunn, Cole and Van Axen, all under the age of twenty five, all set personal bests in Monterey. Also, in eclipsing the 1:30 barrier, each has qualified for the 1996 twenty kilometer Olympic Trials. Although not quite matching the lofty accomplishments of their predecessors yet, in trouncing the veterans at this important trials race the novices have shown that they will be a force to be reckoned with in the coming years.

NEW OLYMPIC RACEWALK COURSE PROPOSED
by Phil Howell

The Pan Am Cup last fall was, in part, a test of the proposed Olympic racewalk course. Judging from participant feedback, the course clearly failed that test. While hills are to be expected in Atlanta, the Summerhill course had one steep downhill section that was just TOO much.

Atlanta Olympic officials recently announced a new proposal for the 1996 course (see diagram at right). Using this new course, competitors would start in the Olympic Stadium, head north on Clark Street (passing between the I-75/I-85 connector and Atlanta Fulton County Stadium) and then head east to Capital Avenue.

Competitors would then enter a 2K loop in which most of their walking will be done. That loop runs from a turnaround point on Capital Avenue to a mini-loop around the State Capital building and back to the Capital Avenue turnaround.

As competitors approach the end of their race, they would return to the stadium the same way they left it - via Clark Street - and finish on the track inside the Olympic Stadium.

The new course appears to this writer to be a very significant improvement over the Pan Am Cup course. It has fewer hills and less crown, and should give racewalking greater exposure with a venue that is right in the middle of crowds headed to and from the Olympic Stadium.