James, Vaill defend titles

Sacramento, June 17-18—Allen James continued to dominate U.S. walkers at the 20 Km distance as he won his fourth consecutive National title here on Sunday morning. In the process, he left Herm Nelson, walking his best ever race at the distance, 2 1/2 minutes behind. Allen continued to perform at a consistently high level with his 1:24:46.8 effort, the second fastest of his career. His four straight titles at the distance are bettered only by Henry Laskau, who won five from 1951 to 1955, and Tim Lewis, who won for seven straight years, ending with James first title in 1992. So, it's been 11 years since anyone but Tim Lewis or Allen James has stood at the top of the victory stand. That was Ray Funkhouser in 1984.

Herman, known more for his 50 Km prowess, was a surprising second in 1:27:15. After him, veteran Gary Morgan, now an ancient 35, led six others under the 1:30 mark to take third. Good promise for the future, with Curt Clausen at 27 the oldest of the next five. World Cup team members Andrew Hermann and Dave McGovern were left in the wake of this surge, though not walking particularly bad races.

In the women's 10 Km on Saturday, Teresa Vaill resurrected what was turning into a disappointing season with a decisive win in a meet record time of 45:01. (Not a record by much; she set the old mark at 45:01.46 last year.) Teresa had managed only fourth in the Cup trial earlier this year, had been DQed in the Pan Am Games, had to drop out of the World Cup race, and dropped out again in the National 20 Km race, so she needed a positive performance. Michelle Rohl, who has been dominating at 10 km for the past couple of years had to settle for second in this one, 14 seconds back of Teresa. Debbi Lawrence overcame Victoria Herazo for third, with Debora Van Orden not far back in fifth with a personal record.

Results:

Szelaa, Herzoa win nationals in Albany

Albany, N.Y., May 21—Breaking Teresa Vaill's U.S. record in the process, Victoria Herazo easily won the USATF National 20 Km racewalking title today. In the men's 25 Km title race, Lukasz Szela was very strong over a distance he is not accustomed to and scored an easy win.

In the women's race, Vaill tried to go after her own record setting a blistering pace from the start, but had to give up the effort at 10 km. Herazo, walking a more reasonable, but still very quick, pace was unchallenged from there on. She finished in 1:35:39, 49 seconds under Vaill's old record. On the way, she also bettered her own U.S. 15 Km record. Lisa Sonntag was alone in second with 1:47:13, nearly 3 minutes ahead of her closest pursuer.

McGovern defends 10 Km title, Lawrence tops women

Niagara Falls, N.Y., May 28 (From Dave Lawrence) -- He slowed down 19 seconds from last year, but Dave McGovern was still first across the finish line in the USATF National 10 Km Racewalk Championship. As the race began, the wind coming off the Niagara River picked up. The lead pack of McGovern, Rob Cole, Wojciech and Lukasz Szela, Curt Clausen, Rick Birkhimer, Pascal Pedneault, Aruto Huerta went through the first kilometer in 4:20.

McGovern took the lead on the second lap, with the Szela brothers sticking close. The trio passed 3 Km in 12:51, with Cole and Clausen a few seconds back. On the third lap (1667 meter laps), McGovern was still in the lead with Lukasz Zsela on his shoulder. The trio went through 5 Km in 21:30.

On the fifth lap, Szela developed what appeared to be a side stitch and fell back leaving McGovern all alone in first. The other Szela, Wojciech, made a move, but couldn't close the gap. McGovern finished in 43:15 with W. Zsela second in 43:29. Cole moved up to third, finishing in 43:40, as Lukasz Zsela hung on for fourth ahead of Clausen.

In an earlier women's race (not a National title race), Debbi Lawrence showed she is still a force to be reckoned with, easily beating Canada's Janice McCaffrey. The race started at 8 am in a light rain with the temperature in the low 60s. A lead pack of Michelle Rohl, Lawrence, McCaffrey, Holly Gerke, and Pascale Grand went through the first kilometer in 4:33. By the end of the first lap, Rohl and Lawrence pulled ahead, with McCaffrey following closely.

On the second lap, Rohl and Lawrence pulled ahead, going through 3 Km in 13:41. McCaffrey was solidly in third, ahead of the other two Canadians (Gehrke and Grand). By 5 km, Lawrence moved ahead of Rohl, hitting the halfway point in 22:39. On the fourth lap, Rohl moved back up and pulled slightly ahead through the fifth lap. However, with just over half a lap to go, Rohl was pulled by the judges, leaving Lawrence all alone as she finished unchallenged in 45:47.

Results:


Results:
OTHER RESULTS

Sat. July 29
5 Km, Colorado Springs (H)
5 Km, Indianapolis (V)
3 Km and 1 Mile, Libertyville, Ill. (Y)
Sun. July 30
3, 5, and 10 Km, Dearborn, Mich. (E)
Thu. Aug. 3
2.8 Mile, Seattle, 6 pm (C)
Sat. Aug. 5
Pac. NW Masters 5 Km, Tacoma, Wash. (C)
Sun. Aug. 6
Metropolitan 3 Km Championship, New York City, 9 am (F)
Sat. Aug. 12
5 Km, Indianapolis (V)
5 Km, Marietta, Georgia (D)
5 Km, Denver (H)
10 Km, Red Bank, N.J. (A)
Sun. Aug. 13
3 and 5 Km, Dearborn, Mich. (E)
Sat. Aug. 19
Maine RW Carnival (400, 800, 1500 m, 3 Km, 5 Km, Orono (T)
USATF National Jr. 5 Km (Men), 3 Km (Women), Orono (T)
Sun. Aug. 20
5 Km, Pasadena, Calif., 7:30 am (B)
Sat. Aug. 26
5 Km, Indianapolis (V)
5 Km, Atlanta (D)
5 and 10 Km, Grand Junction, Col. (H)
Sun. Aug. 27
10 Km Racewalk Relay, New York City, 9 am (F)
3 and 10 Km, Dearborn, Mich. (E)
Aug. 25-27
Portland-to-coast walk. Men's, women's, mixed teams walk 122 miles (O)
Sat. Sept. 2
5 and 10 Km, Lansing, Mich. (W)
Sun. Sept. 3
Louis Drazin Memorial 5.2 Mile Handicap, Interlaken, N.J. (A)
Sat. Sept. 9
5 Km, Indianapolis (V)
3, 5, and 10 Km, Dearborn, Mich. (E)
5 Km, Atlanta (D)
5 Km, Larkspur, Calif., 9:30 am (P)
Sun. Sept. 10
USATF National 40 Km Championship, Ft. Monmouth, N.J. (A)
1 Hour, Marin, Calif., 8 am (P)

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L--Randy Williams, 12651 Cloverlawn, Detroit, MI 48238
M--NOTC, P.O. Box 52003, New Orleans, LA 70152
The other Center of Excellence in racewalking

(From Sal Corrallo) Recently, there has been some well deserved publicity on the LaGrange Center of Excellence in LaGrange, Georgia. However, we need to note that it is just one of two in the nation being supported by the National Racewalk Committee on a pilot basis. There is another located in the Washington, D.C. area. Bob Ryan is the resident coach with Sal Corrallo acting as an administrator. Currently, Philip Dunn and Steve Pecinovsky are the two senior athletes in residence. However, the emphasis of the Washington program is more on long-term development. In residence are three of the nation's top junior athletes: Allison Zabranski, 16, winner of the National Invitational Junior Women's Racewalk (24:59 for 5 km); Corrie Colling, 16, winner of the Penn Relays 5 km Junior Women's 5 km; and Will Leggett, 18 (also of Parkside), winner of the Penn Relays Junior Men's 10 km. Also in residence is a new walker, Mary Kirk Cunningham, the first American and second overall in the Penn Relays senior women's 5 km (24:55), her first major competition outside the Washington area. She also qualified for the Olympic Trials a month later with 49:43 at a race in Washington on May 28. (Ed. Note that she finished ninth in the National.) In addition to the resident athletes, Coach Ryan is working with 12 other athletes around the nation, including Lisa Sonntag and Kim Wilkinson, current and former senior national team members.

While the “East Zone Center of Excellence for Racewalking” (EZCER) as it is known, does not currently have the level of community support available to the South Zone Center in LaGrange, working relationships have been developed with local massage, sport physical therapy, and nutritional groups for the elite athletes. In addition, an excellent indoor facility is available, as well as a number of outdoor tracks and road courses. The area also has an active racewalking club and program (Potomac Valley Club), which offers both competitive opportunities and support services.

As noted, this is a long-term program with the 2000 Olympics the primary goal of a large portion of the EXCER racewalkers. Developing a program such as this, where volunteers and outside support are needed, can be difficult. EXCER now has the momentum and with the support of the National Racewalk Committee, the long-term prognosis for the program is exciting, given the recent success of its developing athletes. Serious competitive athletes are encouraged to consider relocating to the Washington, D.C. area for long-term schooling, professional job opportunities, and training under coach Ryan. It is expected that several college level athletes will be attending colleges in the D.C. area next year. For more information call Bob Ryan (703-569-3063) or Sal Corrallo (703-243-1290). They need your walking feet.

Following is a brief outline of the elements of a Center of Excellence as envisaged by the planning group of the National Committee.

The Center of Excellence. The USA T&F Race Walk Committee has adapted and is supporting the establishment of two pilot Centers in the East and South USOC Olympic Festival Zones. Currently, the East and South Zone centers have a coach in residence and two or more National Team members in residence. Each Center provides year-around coaching and support facilities for participating athletes, is responsible for the recruitment of new athletes and the promotion and enhancement of existing and development of new programs in other communities in the Zone. However, the principal focus is on the group of committed elite athletes working together within the area. Each Center will require funds for coaching expenses and travel, athlete zone travel, athlete support functions such
as testing, therapeutic medical services, training facilities, and administrative costs. Partial
funding is being provided by the National Committee. Private support will be solicited.
The critical, but not limiting, components of a Center include:

Qualified coaching: Each Center of Excellence (COE) must have in residence at
least one fully qualified coach, recognized by the National Committee. The coach must be
available as necessary for each athlete in residence. The COE coach is encouraged to work
with non-resident national class athletes, as requested. Coaches are provided with a small
stipend to cover expenses for travel within the zone, administrative expenses, coaching aids,
travel to major races in which a COE athlete is competing, and telephone expenses. If
funds are available, a coaching stipend will be provided.

Administrator: Each COE has a volunteer administrator concerned with finances
and administrative matters. The administrator, along with the coach, will encourage and
assist athletes and other executives outside the COE area to consider relocating. The administrator will also, with the assistance of the coach, help the athletes identify schooling and job opportunities.
The COE administrator will work to assure that each COE member athlete obtains the
necessary support. USA T&F will be asked to work with the COE administrator to identify
Olympic Job Program opportunities and other USOC support services and programs.

Facilities and programs: Athletes should have access to a weight training room,
indoor and outdoor tracks, safe roads, and trails. Access to training equipment, such as
heart rate monitors and video filming, should also be available. Athletes supply personal
equipment, that is, shoes, uniforms, all-weather gear, etc. Personal equipment may be
supplied by a sponsor.

Medical and other insurance: Each registered athlete is covered under the USA
T&F Medical Plan. Elite athletes are also covered by USOC sponsored insurance for non-
sports injuries and medical needs. (Note that the national class athletes have access to
massage and physical therapists and medical and clinical assistance.) Nutritional and sports
psychology assistance is also available at the national level. However, athletes must travel
to one of the USOC training sites to secure this assistance. The COE will be eligible for
liability insurance under the USA T&F organized practice program for national class
athletes.

Eligibility: Senior athletes residing in the area, who are members of the U.S.
National team or have been in the past year, are considered resident members.
Intermediate or Junior National Team members who have finished in the top six in the most
recent junior nationals or have one of the top six times the previous year are considered
associate members. National team members residing outside the area are considered non-
resident members. Participating athletes continue to represent their own clubs.

Direct athlete financial support: No direct financial support is provided to athletes
for room and board other than funds provided by the USA T&F Athlete Support Program.
A small grant will be available for the purchase of use of facilities, and other training
services for senior athletes if they are not available through donations.

Accountability: The COE Administrator is accountable to the National Race Walk
Committee for activities funded by the Committee. The COE Administrator will be
expected to file a quarterly report to the National Chairperson with a copy to each
association chairperson in the Zone. A final report will be presented to the body at the
yearly convention and shall serve as the fourth quarterly report. In addition to information
on program activities and use of funds, the report will include a report from the resident
coach with a listing of all participating athletes, and their goals and performances for the
past year.

Additional activities: Each COE is expected to administer two mini-camps per year
in the zone for elite senior, intermediate, and youth athletes, if asked. COE participating
athletes will also be invited to participate in the camps and to work with the Zone coach.
Funding for the mini-camps is the responsibility of the National Committee.

Beijing: An athlete's view

by Lynda Brubaker

(From the newsletter of the USATF Race Walk Committee) After an exhausting 17-
hour flight from Los Angeles with what seemed like that many time zones to go through,
the USA World Cup Racewalk team arrived in Beijing, China on Tuesday, April 25. We
were warmly greeted by an efficient delegation of three individuals who proceeded to escort
us smoothly past Chinese customs agents. The 20-minute ride to the Continental Grand
Hotel was our introduction to Chinese nightlife—dim street lights, deserted highways, an
occasional bicycle laden with boxes, and people scurrying to and fro.

Bruce Douglass, U.S. Racewalk chairman, and his wife Cynthia awaited our arrival
at the hotel. They assured us the accommodations were complete with modern
conveniences, the people were courteous, food was adequate...and the air quality was
poor.

Wednesday morning, a few team members hopped a city bus to Tiaman Square.
Bicycles, people, and taxis were weaving their way through the streets like threads in a
tapestry. People acknowledged our presence with watchful stares and controlled smiles—
"the white Europeans with the big noses." Bruce and Cynthia pointed out sites of interest
around Tiaman Square as well as landmarks by which we could gauge our location
(such as McDonald's). The Square was immense with memorials to great leaders and
heroes, but void of any remembrance of tanks rolling into the Square during the "student
unrest." Markets were primitive with displays of silks, pottery, and jewelry mixed with
food vendors selling steaming rice, breads, and organ meats.

Meals consisted of selections of rice, dry cereals, waffles, fruits, eggs, meats,
meat, vegetables, and desserts. Breakfast was the same everyday. Lunch was the same
everyday. And dinner was the same everyday. Some athletes ate conservatively, shying
away from the fruits and vegetables that were reportedly fertilized...well, never
mind. The eggs, which were only partly cooked, reminded me of Salmonella "time
bombs." McDonald's started sounding very appetizing.

On Thursday, the U.S. team with coaches and support staff toured the Great Wall.
Immense would be the best way to describe that 40-foot-high, 25-foot-wide stone wall that
literally ascends and descends the mountain ridges as far as the eye can see. Chinese
vendors seemed to pop out of the stone wall looking for buyers for their fabrics, books, postcards, quilts, and musical balls. "You buy?" "Give you good price." "How much you pay?" "Very nice!" These phrases would haunt us in our sleep by the time we departed China for home.

Refrigeration capabilities were limited; consequently, the cages containing live chickens, ducks, pigeons, snakes, and fish located outside restaurants served an important purpose—fresh food, cooked to order. Public restrooms were purely functional—do what must be done, then get out as quickly as possible. But BYOTP. Also, the Chinese don’t queue for anything, so pressing forward, pushing aside, and extending your arm farther than the next was the way to get needs met the quickest.

The post-event banquet Sunday evening was a celebration for athletes to share racing experiences, trade pins, and discuss upcoming events. The buffet meal was a variation on the rice, meat, and vegetables we had eaten all week. (Where was the McDonald's when we needed it?) After the meal, tables were pushed back for "an evening of dancing," except, the "evening" lasted less than an hour until an announcement came on that the party was over, and we were all to leave.

On Monday, about half the U.S. team left for home, while the rest stayed for more sightseeing. We visited the Summer Palace, ventured into more alleys for shopping, and strolled through the beautifully landscaped parks. As we were ready to leave, one member commented that we had seen no dogs—only heard one barking behind the wall at the Palace. Hmmmm.

The flight home was long, but the memories of Beijing were positive. The U.S. team performed well. The air quality, food choices, and familiar customs of the United States have taken on a new level of appreciation for me.

Looking Back

30 Years Ago (From the June 1965 ORW)—Aer Mark covered 34 1/2 laps up and down a shopping center mallway to win the McKeesport (Pa) International 20 Km in 1:33:06 with your editor 53 seconds back. Jack Blackburn finished in just over 1:40 and Don Denoon was distant fourth. Dean Rasmussen, fifth in the McKeesport race, won the National 50 Km in extreme heat, struggling through in 5:03:33. Bruce MacDonald, Elliott Denman, Paul Schell, and Goetz Klopfer followed. The National 30 Km in Los Angeles went to Ron Laird in 2:41:17 and Jack Mortland captured the National 10 Km on the Stagg Field track in Chicago on another very hot day in 48:19. Mark, DeNoo, Rasmussen, Ron Daniel, and a sluggish Laird followed.

20 Years Ago (From the June 1975 ORW)—Tom Dooley, in a comeback year, won the National 20 Km in San Francisco in 1:35:52 with Bob Henderson 25 seconds back. John Knifton, Dave Romansky, and Bill Ranney also finished under 1:38. Andy Kaestner and Gary Morgan followed. The women's National 10 Km at the same site, Maryanne Torrellas ruled in 48:38. Teresa Vaill (49:26), Debbi Lawrence (50:26), and Esther Lopex (50:55) were next. The National 5 Km was held in Denver with Torrellas (23:52.8) and Jim Heiring (20:21) winning the titles. Lopex, Vaill, and Lawrence trailed Torrellas. Dave Cummings (20:40) beat Lewis (20:56) for second in the men's race. Ian McCombe captured the British National 20 Km in 1:22:37.

5 Years Ago (From the June 1990 ORW)—National titles went to Debbi Lawrence and Tim Lewis. Lawrence pulled steadily away from Teresa Vaill and Sara Standley over the second half of the 10 km to win in a National record 46:14.4. Vaill finished in 46:54.2 and Standley in 47:08.5. Wendy Sharp, Debora Van Orden, and Victoria Herazo followed. Lewis was never challenged as he won the 20 in 1:27:28. Doug Fournier (1:28:27) beat Steve Pecinovsky (1:29:02) for second. Don Lawrence, Paul Wick, and Carl Schueler also finished under 1:30. Allen James was seventh and Herm Nelson 23rd.

The lead pack in the women's 10 km at Niagara Falls. From left to right: Debbi Lawrence, Holly Gehrie, Pascal Grand, Janice McCaffrey, and Michelle Rohl. (Photo courtesy of Dave Lawrence.)