James captures 50 Km Trial; breaks 4 hours

LaGrange, Georgia, April 20—Allen James left no doubt about his spot on the U.S. Olympic team in today’s trials for the 50 Km racewalk. Needing only to finish in the top three, since he already had bettered the “A” qualifying standard of 4 hours, Allen easily won the race and went under 4 hours again for good measure. His 3:59:11 left him nearly 9 minutes ahead of runnerup Andrew Hermann, who still must meet the qualifying standard if he hopes to compete in Atlanta. Andrzej Chylinski did sew up a spot on team with his third place finish. He made the qualifying standard last fall with his 3:58:39.

In the early stages of the race, James stayed right on a 4-hour pace, accompanied by Hermann and 41-year-old Warrick Yeager, a neophyte to this distance and even to the sport. Marco Evoniuk, Hermann, and Chylinski followed, with other walkers strung out behind.

By mid-race, James was still on schedule, and Hermann had moved into second place about a minute behind, followed by Nelson, Evoniuk, and Chylinski. Knowing that he was in command of the situation and that there was a $2500 pot to be shared by all of those under 4 hours, James accelerated sharply as he moved past 30 Km. Covering the next 10 in 46:44, he sewed up the race and put himself 1:48 under schedule for 4 hours. He then coasted in to the victory and a $5500 prize ($3000 for the win and the entire $2500 pot).

Chylinski began moving up on Hermann, and Ian Whatley, who was added to the field just days before the race when injured Jonathan Matthews had to scratch, was moving through the field. Though not really prepared for the distance, he was walking very relaxed. In the final 10 Km, Chylinski caught, and briefly passed Hermann and Whatley moved into fifth while Evoniuk kept a firm hold on fourth. Hermann seemed to awake when passed and finished strongly to secure second place.

The race was held on a slightly rolling, 2 Km-loop under overcast skies, with the temperature rising from the 70s during the race. The sun broke through the clouds at midrace, but the tree-lined course provided some shade for much of the loop. Storms in the area brought 10 to 15 mph wind gusts in the final third of the race. The humidity was noticeable, but not extremely high. Several walkers noted that the combination of these conditions contributed to a slowing of the overall pace. Perhaps the conditions cost Hermann his chance at 4 hours. It may be tough for him now. He had just done a 4:05 in February and now has just over 3 months to try it again and then recover for the Games if he should make it. Of the 15 starters, four dropped out at some point, but we have no details on where or where they were placed when they dropped. It was a clean race, with only three warnings given, all to different walkers.
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Vaill, Huerta Dominate National Invitational Walks

Washington, D.C., March 24--Teresa Vaill and Canada's Arturo Huerta took command at the start and went on to easy victories in today's National Invitational Racewalks. In the women's 10 Km, the 33-year-old Vaill had a 7 second lead by the end of the first 2-Km lap. She was never challenged, as she covered the five laps in 45:20.4. Janice McCaffrey, Canada's 36-year-old star, was second all the way, but trailed by 46 seconds at the finish. The race saw 11 walkers under 50 minutes, with Danielle Kirk and Cheryl Rellinger adding their names to the list of Olympic Trials qualifiers by bettering 49:45.

Huerta opened up a similar lead on the first lap of the men's 20 Km and went on to beat runnerup Curt Clausen by nearly 3 minutes in 1:22:51.9. Clausen has nothing to be ashamed of, however, as his 1:25:40.9 makes him the eighth fastest U.S. walker all-time. He slipped past Dave McGovern at about 15 Km and widened the second place margin to nearly 40 seconds by the finish. McGovern was no slouch himself, moving into the tenth slot all-time.

In junior races, Alison Zabrenski won the women's 5 Km in 24:59.9 and Josh Ginsburg led the men at 10 Km in 46:22.3, just ahead of 15-year-old Brian Colby. The results:


49:25
FROM OTHER LANDS


The temperature was a near perfect 50 degrees and there was absolutely no wind when I arrived (at the track). Harold van Beek, Holland's No. 1 walker, immediately welcomed me and we chatted about racewalking stuff. (He had just returned from training in LaGrange, Georgia.) Van Beek was injured and could not compete in the race, but he shed a little light on the rest of the field. ...As the gun went off, I went out with Dirk Nicque, the Belgian National Champion and two other walkers from the Netherlands, Plasmam and Luc Nicque. Luc Nicque fell off the pack first and then Plasmam. I sprinted up to Dirk Nicque and tried to settle behind him. Although my dad was screaming his head off, I could no longer stay with Nicque after 8.5 km. The crowd, though small, was very supportive. They all knew my name by the second half of the race and they cheered loudly, particularly van Beek. In addition, I was amazed at the courtesy of the other walkers. Every time I was about to lap a competitor, he would quickly move out to lane two and let me pass on the inside. The last few laps were the hardest for me, but I had a kid running next to me for the last 300 meters. He had to mark where I stopped at the end of one hour. ...The race was my best in a while and I was happy. I was even happier when they gave me a really beautiful trophy and a certificate for finishing second. In Dutch, racewalking is called "snelwandelen" (snel-vonde-lin). Although the name is different, the state of walking in the Netherlands is similar to the U.S. One competitor told me that the sport is not very popular in Holland and they have very few young people involved. Irish 20 Km Championships, Sligo, March 31--1. Jimmy McDonald 1:25:51 2. Chris Maddocks, GB 1:26:15 3. Michael Casey 1:26:38 4. Pierce

APRIL 1996

A GRAB BAG OF RACING OPPORTUNITIES

Sat. May 11
5 Miles, Columbia, Missouri, 8 am (DD)
5 Miles, Larkspur, Cal. (P)
Master's 5 Km, Atlanta (D)
8 Km, Pokagon State Park, Ind. (V)

Sun. May 12
Jack Mortland 20 Km (North Region Championship); 5 and 10 km, Yellow Springs, Ohio (M)
10 Km, London, Ontario (O)
10 Km, New York City, 8 am (F)
3 Km, Alexandria, Virginia, 8:30 am (J)

Sat. May 18
5 Km, Miami, 7:30 am (Q)
5 Km, Indianapolis (V)

Sun. May 19
Western Regional Women's 10 Km and Men's 20 Km, Palo Alto, Cal. (G)

USATF Men's 10 Km, Niagara Falls, NY (R)

Inland Empire 15 Km and 5 Km, Riverside, Cal. (B)
1 Hour, Washington, DC area (J)
5 Km, New Orleans, 8 am (X)
5, 10, and 20 Km, Kenosha, Wis. (AA)

Fri. May 24
5 Km, New Orleans, 6 pm (X)
5 Km, Ann Arbor, Mich. (O)
Pacific Assn. 5 Km, (G)

May 25-27
USATF Youth Road Walk Championships, Bridgeport, Me. (S)

Sun. May 26
5 Km, Marin, Cal. (P)
20 Km, New York City, 8 am (F)
3 Km, Alexandria, Vir., 8:30 am (J)
North Zone 5 Km, Bridgeport, Missouri (S)

Mon. May 27
5 Km, Miami, 7:30 am (Q)
5 Miles, Boca Raton, Florida, 7:30 am (Q)
10 Km, Kentfield, Cal., 10 am (BB)

Sat. June 1
Senior 5 Km, Sacramento, Cal. (P)
5 Km, New Castle, Penn., 9 am (CC)
5 Km, Fontana, Cal. (B)

Sun. June 2
Weinacker Cup 5 and 10 Km, Windsor, Ont. (O)
5, 10, and 20 W Km, Kenosha, Wis. (AA)
2.8 Mile, Seattle, 6 pm (C)

Thur. June 6
1500 meters and 3 Km, Seattle (C)

Sat. June 8
Ohio 10 Km Championships, Cedarville (M)

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Together with the results of the Shore AC Postal 1 Hour was a note that Elliott Denman suffered a mild heart attack recently. Happily, he is recovering nicely and is back working. I am sure everyone in the racewalking community wishes Elliott fine health for many years to come. Steve Vai tones continues to dig in old issues of the Long Distance Log. This item from October 1964: "Phil Knight, ex-Univ. of Oregon 4:10 miler, started his racewalking career with a bang as he won a 3 mile Olympic Development race in 30:17 in July." "Who is Phil Knight?" queries Steve. "Oh, just the head honcho, president, and guru of Nike!" Steve replies.

I don't think his racewalking career ever took off, but his business did. This from Danny Vogel in New Jersey: "Some trivia for From Heel to Toe. On a recent edition of the TV children's science program 'Bill Nye the Science Guy', Bill Nye demonstrated racewalking technique after a discussion of how other animals walk (spiders, inchworms, seastars). This brief 10 second clip had Mr. Nye clipping himself (in perfect form) at a speed of about 15 kilometers an hour, according to him. A brief, but apt promotion of our sport. All this time and we didn't know that we were talking with the body. I think he knew what he wanted to say, but just didn't get it out right. But, he is no negatives we have experienced in the past. Larry Rawson has obviously done a lot of homework to learn about our sport. The major problem was that he was just doing a voice over of tape that had been cut from the 7 to 8 hours needed to finish all three races to a 1 hour program and the telecast didn't really follow the progress of the races too well. He never seemed to be sure just where they were in a race as he spoke, at least he wasn't telling us, although you could sometimes pick this up from occasional graphics. But, in the 50, for example, they flashed the standings at 5 Km as the race was nearing its finish. Also, the importance of the team standings was emphasized at the start of the telecast, but team results were shown only for the Women's 10 Km. Rawson occasionally referred to the "runners", but I guess we can live with that, and once he said the leg must be "bent" under the body. I think he knew what he wanted to say, but just didn't get it out right. But he is to be complimented for trying to put a very positive light on the sport. Unfortunately, probably no one but a few racewalkers who had ESPN2 on their cable at that time watched it. Expanding a bit on Andy Liles comments last month on the NY. high school program, a particularly successful program has been that of Frank Manhardt (now retired) at North Babylon H.S. That program produced both Tim Seaman and Dave Marchese, as well as U.W.-Parkside walker Margaret Ditichburn. Marchese qualified for the Olympic Trials at both 20 and 50. Seaman, already qualified at 20, reportedly walked 1:24:38 in Hungary (we haven't got a result yet), which would leave behind only Tim Lewis and Allen James on the All-Time U.S. list. Tim graduated form Parkside last May and is planning to enter law school (he has completed his law boards) while continuing his training.
20 Years Ago (From the April 1976 ORW)—Shaul Ladany was back, winning the National 75 Km for the second straight year in 7:13:46. He outclassed the opposition in the New Jersey race, with Tom Ambury second in 7:58:02, following by Alan Price (8:02:36) and Tom Knatt (8:14:07). The National 100 Km was also contested, this one in Colorado, with Paul Ide winning in 10:31:28, 14 minutes ahead of Augie Hirt. Jerry Brown was a distant third. Still going strong, Ron Laird won the National 25 Km in Seattle, outpacing Larry Young in the final 5 Km. Young went through 20 Km in 1:33:54 and led by nearly a minute, but hit the wall soon after and succumbed to Laird's strong finish. Ron had 1:59:09 to Larry's 2:00:33.

15 Years Ago (From the April 1981 ORW)—Jim Heiring set an American record for 5 Km (20:41) at the Dogwood Relays in Knoxville, Tenn. Todd Seulcy was second in 21:17. Tim Lewis, a student at East Tennessee, was third in 22:05. Australia's Sue Cook had two world's bests: 22:53.2 for a track 5 Km in Adelaide and 6:47.9 for 1 Mile in Canberra.

10 Years Ago (From the April 1986 ORW)—Tim Lewis and Lynn Weik scored double victories in the Rockport Regional held in the nation's capital. Lewis won the 5 Km on Saturday in a quick 19:54 and came back on Sunday to walk 20 Km in 1:25:43. Weik won a 5 and a 10 over the two days in 23:36 and 48:20. Carl Schueler followed Lewis on both days, at a respectable distance, in 21:09 and 1:28:43. Teresa Vailla also had two wins in 23:47 and 49:01. In Mexico's Race Walking Week, Czechoslovakia's Josef Pribilinsec won the 20 Km in 1:23:34, with Ernesto Canto second in 1:23:48. Canto took a 1 Hour race with 14,339 meters in torrential rains, with Czech Pavil Blazek second some 47 meters back. The 50 went to Felix Gomez in 3:56:25, with Martin Bermudez and Sweden's Bo Gustavsson also under 4 hours.

5 Years Ago (From the April 1991 ORW)—In U.S. World Cup Trials, held in San Jose, Debbi Lawrence and Tim Lewis turned in impressive performances. Lawrence took the 10 Km race in 45:32, 24 seconds ahead of Lynn Weik and Teresa Vailla, who were in a near dead heat for second. Victoria Herazo was 9 seconds behind them in fourth and Wendy Sharp captured the final Cup spot in 48:28. Lewis was unchallenged in the 20, walking 1:26:52 to beat Doug Fournier by 45 seconds. Allen James was third in 1:27:47, with Curtis Fisher (1:28:12) and Don Lawrence (1:28:53) taking the other two Cup spots. Fournier and Weik had won races at the National Invitational in Washington, D.C. Fournier's 1:32:31 for 20 Km put him nearly 2 1/2 minutes ahead of Marc Varano. Weik had a 48:48 to finish better than 2 minutes ahead of Maryanne Torrellas. World Indoor titles went to Germany's Beate Anders (3 Km in 11:50:90) and Russia's Mikhail Scheminov (3 Km in 18:23:55). Kerry Saxby (Australia) and Ileana Salvador (Italy) followed Anders. Italy's Giovanni DiBenedictis and Russia's Kostyukевич were 2-3 in the men's race.

Olympic Walking History

(Repeated and updated from several 1982 issues)

The first racewalking in the Olympics was at the "unofficial" Games held in Athens, Greece in 1906. (There was an 880 walk as part of the All-Around competition--10 events in a single day--in 1904, but that was not an event for racewalkers, as such.) Winners in Athens were George Bonhag of the U.S. at 1500 meters in 7:12.6 and Gyorgy Sztancisics of Hungary at 3000 meters in 15:13.2. Walking became an official part of the Olympics at London in 1908 and racewalks have been included in every Olympics since, except for 1928. They were dropped that year because of controversy over judging. Prior to that, the longest race had been 10 miles. When walking was reinstated in 1932, it was at 50 Km, only an attempt to avoid judging controversy. A 10 Km was put back in for 1948 and changed to 20 Km in 1956. In 1976, the 50 Km was dropped as part of an effort to streamline the program, but it was reinstated in 1980. The women's 10 Km was contested for the first time in 1992.

1908 Olympic Games, London

3500 meters (track)


10 Miles (track)


1912 Olympics, Stockholm

10 Km (Track)

1920 Olympics, Antwerp

10 Km


3000 meters

Heats, Aug. 19: 1. Donato Pavesi, Italy 13:46.4  2. George Parker, Aust.  3. Thomas Maroney, USA  4. Charles Dawson, GB  5. Niels Pedersen, Den.  Others: Joseph Seghers, Belg.; Charles Dawson, GB; the three above mentioned; and Joseph Pearman, USA


1924 Olympics, Paris

10 Km


50 Km, August 3


1932 Olympics, Los Angeles

50 Km, August 5