Dow Wins Pan-Am Cup 20 Km, Mexican Men Dominate

Miami, Oct. 3-4—Joanne Dow continued her outstanding season with her third win at 20 Km, this time over an international field in the Pan-American Cup. Joanne's 1:38:57 was her slowest of the year, but she won decisively and faced rising temperatures at the end of the race.

With Teresa Vaill second and Susan Armenta sixth, the U.S. women won their first Pan-Am Cup title decisively over Mexico and Canada. The 34-year-old Dow, from Bedford, N.H., had earlier wins in the National title race (1:34:46) and the Pan Am Cup Trials (1:35:45).

In the men's races, the Mexicans were dominant, sweeping the first three places at both 20 and 50 Km. In the 20, Ignacio Zamudio upset Daniel Garcia, No. 1 in the world last year and a dominant performer so far this year, winning in 1:28:33. Carlos Mercenario, World Cup champion in both 1991 and 1993 (as well as at 20 Km in 1987), but not heard from the past few years was an easy winner at 50 in 4:06:38, perhaps marking a comeback. Times were slowed in both races by high temperatures and a blazing sun on a shadeless course. U.S. 20 Km men have certainly not caught a break this year with sweltering conditions at the nationals, the Goodwill Games, and now this meet, where the temperature exceeded 90 by the finish. One only has to look at the performance of the Mexicans at the latter two meets--8 to 10 minutes off their usual times--to see the effects of the conditions. The best U.S. effort on the men's side was Philip Dunn's 4th place 4:25:30 in the 50. Another note on the conditions: A quick glance at the results of the two 20 Km races would suggest that Joanne Dow is challenging America's best men. However, the women's race started at 6 am with no radiant energy from the sun and temperatures in the mid 70s, so there is really no valid comparison of times.

Both Junior races went to Canada--Karen Foa at 5 Km and Jean Sebastian Beaucage at 10. Lisa Keutzting and Scott Brooks were second for the U.S. in the two races. Times in these races were also affected by the blazing temperature. Results:


Morgan, Rellinger Win at 40 Km

Fort Monmouth, N.J., Sept. 13 (From Elliott Denman)—For Michigan's Gary Morgan and Illinois' Cheryl Rellinger, it was a long, hard walk to glory. For Shore area stars Dorit Attias and John Soucheck, it was good going but not good enough.

As the USA T&F National Championship 40 Km racewalk reached its 60th edition at Fort Monmouth, Morgan and Rellinger passed a pair of their own milestones. Morgan, a U.S. Olympian from Clarkston, Michigan, won the men's title with a 3:21:37 clocking, while Rellinger, of Makanda, Ill., took the women's crown in the American record time of 3:40:38.

They're both among America's small corps of elite walkers and there were their first 40 Km National triumphs. Lakewood's Attias, the 1987 champion, walked home second to Rellinger in 4:12:41, while Little Silver's Soucheck claimed third place in the men's race with a career-best 3:38:43, leading Shore AC to the men's team title. U.S. national team member Philip Dunn was second, just 1:21 behind Morgan.

First staged in 1939, the 40 Km was held in a variety of sites in Ohio, Michigan, and Maryland before landing in New Jersey for the first time in 1964. Staged in the Shore area 33 of the last 33 years, this 60th 40 Km event was hosted by Shore AC and Delta Airlines.

Morgan dominated the show, breezing past early pacesetter Byaschlev Troshkin of New York, formerly of Russia, on the third of the 20 two-Km loops, and cruising to a clear cut win over Dunn. Morgan, a New York AC member who was named the club's 1997 athlete of the year, has 14 national titles to his credit (13 over shorter distances) and a hefty portfolio of honors. A decade apart, the 38-year-old walker was the first U.S. 20 Km finisher at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and the 1998 Goodwill Games.

Joining Rellinger as a women's record-breaker was Shore AC's Sherry Brosnan, Bridgewater, whose 4:20:14 was an American age 45-49 best.

Results:

**Women:**

**Men:**

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**Titles To Nelson, Eastater-Fishman**

Worcester, Mass., Oct. 4—The National 2 Hour title went to two-time Olympian Herm Nelson, who covered 23,694 meters. The 37-year-old Nelson had nearly a half lap on runner-up John Soucheck when time was called. Soucheck got his second top-three finish (podium finish as they say in motor racing) in 3 weeks.

In the women's 1 Hour race, Gretchen Eastler-Fishman was an easy winner, covering 11,656 meters and finishing better than two laps up on Maricia Gutshe.

The men's 1 Hour went to 40-year-old Cuban, Reynaldo Carazzana, now living in Glenmont, N.Y. He covered 11,501 meters just edge Dave Romansky, who settled for an American record for age 60-64, finishing just 7 meters behind. Justin Eastler, just 17, was on the same lap in third.

**Men's 2 Hour:**
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South Region 1 Hour, Myrtle Beach, S.C. (X) East Region 10 Km, Ocean City, N.J., 10 am (A) Florida State 20 Km, Cooper City (Q) 5 Km (or 1 hour), Los Altos, Cal. (P) 5 Km, Atlanta (D) 1 Hour, Fort Monmouth, N.J., 10 am (A) 5 Km, Denver, 10:15 am (H) 2.8 Miles, Seattle, 9 am (C) 5 Km, Denver, 10:15 am (H) 10 Km, Houston (Y)

More Results

From Heel To Toe

Walking behind the walls. Next time you’re out enjoying a beautiful park, the open roads, or even a nice track, consider one who must do all his walking while confined to a small prison yard. Just after completing the September issue, I received a letter from Glenn Wright in Huntington, Pa. Excerpts from that letter: “Good morning. I would like to know more about your organization. I just received a book titled Walking Fast by Mrs. Therese Ilkonian. She gave reference to your organization. By the way I do “walk fast” and being 42 and doing a 9 minute mile, (i.e., 9:54 and moving downwards). Our track is 4 1/2 laps (the worst track there is), and I just started walking in..."
continued with anywhere from 20 to 26 walkers bettering 5 hours through 1984. Then a decline began with spikes to 24 in 1988 and 23 in 1991. Since then we have seen yearly totals of 12, 13, 18, 12, and 7 because there are always only one or two domestic races available and few choose to participate. One problem might be the proliferation of 5 Km races, an almost unheard of distance 40 years ago, that leads people to think that is what the sport is about. But counter to that, we can look at a rather large participation in marathons, where walkers are lost amongst the runners. If people want to test their endurance, why go with the runners. We have our own marathon and it has real meaning in our lives. Also, we look at the great participation by Elliott Denman in the National 50. Why don't people turn out in equal numbers for 50 km races? Well, I don't have any answers. Just presenting some thoughts.

...If you are interested in participating, please contact us.

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15 Years Ago (From the October 1993 ORW)—Italy's Anamita Sidoti and Mexico's Bernardo Segura were winners of the Alongi Memorial races in Dearborn. Sidoti took the women's 10 Km in 46:06, ahead of Debora Van Orden (46:53) and Lynda Brubaker (47:46). Though unchallenged, Segura blasted the 20 in 1:21:55 with Italy's Giovanni Pericelli a distant second in 1:27:09. Gary Morgan led the U.S. contingent with a 1:29:31 in 6th, 18 seconds ahead of Andrew

10 Years Ago (From the October 1988 ORW)—It was Olympic time in Seoul, Korea, and veteran walkers dominated. In the 20, Josef Pribilinic, 1983 World Champion, blistered the finish 5 Kms in 1:27:55, with Carl Schueler second in 1:29:05 and coverd the final 1 K km in 1:34:32 in fifth. Herm Nelson was the first U.S. finisher with 1:34:32 in fifth. The U.S. team finished eighth. In the 20, Josef Pribilinic drew away from Mexico's Ernesto Canto in the finish 5 Kms to win by 11 seconds in 1:19:30. Anatoliy Solomin, USSR, was just 3 seconds back of Canto, and Italy's Maurizio Damilano came fourth.

Interview with Jonathan Matthews

(Last month in this interview by Rick Williams, U.S. international Jonathan Matthews discussed his start in racewalking, his training, and some of his experiences. In this conclusion to the interview, he offers impressions of various aspects of the sport.)

Q. Racewalkers obviously don't get the respect their athleticism deserves. How would you go about changing this?

A. More than any other sport, I believe that racewalking can be a litmus test of character. You find an activity to be valuable, are you willing to publicly practice this activity even though others are likely to think you odd, likely to ridicule you? I used to be one of the top bike racers in the U.S. Bike racing is very sexy. Cycling is full of people who spend thousands of dollars on fancy bikes and clothing and then stand around in groups reveling in the scene—they are into the form rather than the substance of cycling. They are sure that they look cool to all outsiders passing by. Racewalkers don't suffer from this potential character pitfall. They realize that most people think that racewalking looks absurd, effiminate, etc. This can cause racewalking to attract to it odd and absurd characters. (Ed. Each of us excepted, of course.) But if you yourself are neither odd nor absurd, you have probably learned to value true substance over superficial impression. At the Goodwill Games, I had dinner with World Champion Daniel Garcia and World Record Holder Bernardo Segura of Mexico. They said that people in Mexico used to make fun of racewalking, but that repeated international athletic successes had caused the average person to at least respect the sport, if not personally embrace it.

In Mexico, many hundreds of talented young athletes try to become top racewalkers. Until this happens over a number of years in the U.S., racewalking's status won't change. But why should this happen over a number of years in the U.S., racewalking's status won't change. But why should this happen over a number of years in the U.S., racewalking's status won't change. But why should this happen over a number of years in the U.S., racewalking's status won't change. But why should this happen over a number of years in the U.S., racewalking's status won't change. But why should this happen over a number of years in the U.S., racewalking's status won't change. But why should thousands of young people suddenly want to do what is currently ridiculed? It would take missionary commitment by dozens of dedicated racewalking leaders, armed with glossy publications and compelling videos that convinced young people of the benefits of committing themselves to a difficult enterprise. These individuals would have to meet with these kids daily to organize workouts. They would have to travel with them and promote races on weekends. Is this going to happen? I can't do this. Do you know of dozens of people who can? If all NCAA colleges with track programs gave scholarships for racewalking, the sport's profile in the U.S. would soon positively change. But this will not happen unfortunately. Track programs are being severely cut at the college level. (Ed. And let us remember that the average sports fan is only aware of track, let alone racewalking, every four years, and then on a very superficial level.)

Many people walk for fitness, and the numbers doing this will grow. Many of them will learn to bend their arms at 90 degrees and pick up their cadence. Few of them will actually racewalk, and few will have the desire to race or be interested in those who race. I believe that the lack of respect for racewalking will continue, and I believe that I will continue to racewalk. I like what racewalking gives me, and I don't need anything extra from outside or racewalking to continue to
do it. (Ed. All of this sort of echoes an ORW editorial of 32 or 33 years ago for which we received some chastisement, but little has changed.)

Q. Since my only contact with racewalking is as a judge, here’s my personal question. What do you think about the current level of racewalk judging and what, if anything, would you like to see done differently?

A. I have no complaints about racewalking judging. I wish it were possible to use slow-motion video to judge in real time, because occasionally I feel that a competitor is being given too much of the benefit of the doubt. But I realize that this is not possible. By large, I find our judges to be excellent. They do their difficult job well. I depend on them to ensure that my competitors are not taking unfair advantage.

Q. For almost all of this century, the U.S. dominated track and field, a domination which we appear to have lost in many events. If you were omnipotent and wanted to make the U.S. a world power in racewalking, what would do?

A. Racewalking is virtually a guaranteed pass to the Promised Land of competitive success and international competition for a motivated U.S./Canadian youngster. In no other athletic discipline will genuine hard work and dedication be more likely rewarded with success. For example, without any qualifications standard to meet, less than a dozen athletes competed in the Olympic-distance 50Km USATF National Championships this year. Simply entering and finishing the race would have put a young walker on the USA National Team! While I’m not recommending that juniors compete at 50 K, it becomes apparent that the competitive pool is pretty shallow. Rising to the top is relatively easy within the national context and compared to most other athletic disciplines.

Q. What are your future competitive plans now that you’ve moved to Montana?

A. This place is absolutely gorgeous and, at least in the summer, is ideal for training (well see how I do during the 6 months of winter.) I may be the only racewalker in Montana. I will probably miss regular contact with other walkers, but since I’ve always trained alone, this will not be an excuse for losing fitness. I may only race a few times a year; perhaps the National 20 Km, plus whatever international teams I can continue to manage to make.

Q. You’ve just completed the 20 Km at the Goodwill Games. What was your impression of the men’s race?

A. As you can see from the results, the best walkers in the world were in one race, and the U.S. walkers were in another. They were contested simultaneously. I wish this weren’t the case, but the results speak for themselves. Even when I was at my best (1993), I only finished 19th in the World Championships. That year, Allen James finished 17th. I hope the current crop of young walkers can improve on this, but the performances didn’t happen at the U.S. nationals in June or at the Goodwill Games in July. The weather at both of these competitions was brutal. At Goodwill Games, Olympic champion Jefferson Perez walked at 1:29:18, more than 10 minutes slower than his typical 20 Km time.

Q. If you care to, what about your personal life, job, family?

A. I’ve been lucky in walking but that good fortune pales in comparison to my good fortune in having Stephanie as a partner. We’ve been married over 10 years now, and our greatest pleasure is in experiencing the unfolding lives of our two boys, Kyle, 3 1/2, and Connor, 3 1/2 months. I’m very excited to now be a Professor in the teacher education program at Carroll College—less than 1,500 high-quality students, an emphasis on teaching relationships, and a very positive and friendly community.

Commonwealth Games notes

We had results of the three walks at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur in last month’s issue. Here are some interesting sidebars on the races.

Time to rock and roll. Nick A’Hern, Australia’s 20 Km winner is a 19-year-old Canberra hairdresser. He first represented Australia at the 1988 World Juniors and won the 30 Km at the 1994 Commonwealth Games. In 1995, he won the annual track 20 Km in Bergen, Norway and was 11th in the 20 at the World Championships. On returning home, he underwent shin surgery, and resumed training just 3 weeks before the National Championships in March 1996. Nonetheless, he performed well and was ready for the Atlanta Olympics, where he finished fourth in the 20, losing two places in the final 2 Km.

In the Commonwealth 20, he broke away from the field just over half way through and never looked like being caught as he won in 1:24:59, despite humid, overcast conditions. He said he had been inspired by the birth 6 weeks earlier of daughter Sian and the 27-hour labor his wife Jennifer went through. “I guess seeing my wife go through labor, I don’t think I’ll feel pain after that,” said A’Hern. “That was just unbelievable and I think I was drawn from that.”

A’Hern said he made a conscious decision to go hard early in the race to break up the field in the steady conditions. “Early on, the pace was slow and I had to break them up early. Around 5 K, I decided it was time to go, which is pretty gutsy in this weather. The wheels could fall off. So I just bit the bullet and thought it’s now or never. I knew it was tough enough, I knew I’d done the work and made sacrifices, so it was time to rock and roll.”

Another Aussie triumph. “Congratulations honey. Those were the first words from my dad back home after my victory in the 10 Km walk final today,” said gold medallist Jane Saville of Australia. “My family watched the race via live telecast and after I crossed the line my dad (Ron) immediately called and congratulated me for the victory,” she added.

Jane won the race in a record time of 43:57, beating the old mark of 44:25 set by compatriot Kerry Saxby-Junna at the 1994 Victoria Games. “That’s the call was the best prize for me although I won the event in a new Games record. My parents support gives me all the encouragement to excel,” she said.

June made her debut in the Commonwealth Games in 1994 and only finished eighth with a time of 47:14. She won the World Junior silver medal in 1992 and finished 26th in the Atlanta Olympics. Her personal best is 42:59, which she did in Athens last year. Asked about Malaysian walker Yuan Yufang’s failure (disqualification) in the race, Jane said, the athlete has accepted the judges decision. “It happens to everybody to all the walkers. Even to me and Kerry.” “In fact, she (Yufang) is the walker to watch. She defeated me and Kerry in Genriany early this year. I didn’t know who she was in the first place and after knowing she’s from Malaysia, I had to monitor her progress. She’s tough and after the meeting in Germany, we studied her performance as she would be the one to beat at the Games.”
A crazy ending to a walk on a very hot day. For the first 4 hours, little happened in the 50 Km walk, the deadliest of events held at these Commonwealth Games. And then there was 10 minutes of pure, undiluted madness.

With 1 kilometer to go to the finish line and with a 6 minute lead, New Zealand race favorite Craig Barrett came to a dead stop. His legs were locking up in the suffocating 95 F heat, so he rested for a moment before continuing. It was the beginning of the end. When he started again, his legs were wobbling; he began careering over the course, stopping, resting, and trying to recover and bravely pushing on like a demented drunk. Team officials rushed onto the course to encourage him. But Barrett was gone.

He sat down several times, his precious lead evaporating with his consciousness. Try as he might to make his overheated body take one more step, his spent legs struggled to manage even a shuffle. Four hours in the heat had melted his muscles and his brain. He was no longer capable of thought or motion. It was a tragic sight. After an agonizing 5 minutes of stopping and starting and staggering, a New Zealand official grabbed him as he fell to the bitumen. His race was over.

As Barrett was placed into an ambulance, the trailing Malaysian Govindasamy Saravanan cruised past. "I saw him collapse so I knew I had gold, I knew I just have to keep my pace and finish the race to win," Saravanan said. "In the last 300 meters my coach told me an Australian was 60 meters behind me." It was 25-year-old bank teller Duane Cousins and he was closing fast.

Bad news travels fast and the story of Barrett's demise swept through the Malaysian crowd, which exploded into a deafening roar. In the pandemonium that followed, people started thrusting screaming children above their heads so that they would witness a historic Malaysian victory—the country's first Commonwealth gold in track and field.

The din was made worse by the screaming of the sirens from the ambulance rushing Barrett to the medical tent, where he, too, proceeded to start screaming in delirium: "I am invincible, I will never die."

Back out on the track, there was a frightening crush of cameras and security and people and confusion as Saravanan came over the line first in 4:10:05. Then, he started howling, too. It seemed as if the whole world had gone mad.

And then more amazement, as two Australians came charging home for silver and bronze. Cousins, who had two warnings and would have been disqualified had he received a third, had jumped into second when Barrett collapsed. Melbourne carpenter Dominic McGrath had also moved into medal contention from fourth, but he did not know which medal he was racing for as he had been told incorrectly that Cousins had been disqualified.

The truth was that Cousins made it over the line in second in 4:10:30 and McGrath took the bronze in 4:12:52, crossing with blood streaming down his right leg from ill-fitting shorts, which had rubbed his inner thigh raw. (Ed. Don't forget the vaseline, my man.) Three hours after the finish, Barrett was back on his feet and tucking into lunch at the athletes' village. Another 50 Km walk was over.

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The final page is a handout that Ron Laird passes out at his clinics. It is also an example of the kind of good stuff you will find in his book The Art of Fast Walking. Order it from Ron at 4706 Diane, Ashtabula, OH 44004. Call him at 440-998-1371.