Russians, Chinese Dominate at World Cup

Naumburg, Germany, May 1-2—In two classic 20 Km races, Ecuador's Jefferson Perez and Russia's Yelena Nikolayeva lived up to their favorites roles with devastating finishes to capture gold at the 21st edition of the World Cup of Racewalking. And, while Russia and China dominated the results, there were some positive signs of parity in the sport, as well.

In the five races—Junior 10 Km for men and women, 20 Km for men and women, and 50 Km for men—the Russians and Chinese each won two team titles and each had two other top three finishes. The Chinese were first in both 20 Km races, second in the 50, and third in the Junior Men's 10. The Russians won the Junior Women's 10 and the 50, and were second in both the Junior Men's 10 and the Women's 20. Mexico was the only other nation to score a team triumph—in the Junior Men's 10. However, five other nations—eight nations, in all—had a top three finish.

Individually, Russia captured five medals—three gold, one silver, one bronze—and China four—one gold, two silver, and one bronze. But five other nations shared the remaining six medals with Spain capturing two.

The two 20 Km races, which came on the second day of the competition, proved to be the most interesting and exciting from a competitive viewpoint, although each in a different way. The 2003 World Champion, Yelena Nikolayeva, was out to destroy the field and earn another gold. A 5 Km, a lead group of 13 women went through in 22:05 to 22:10 with the rest of the field already disappearing in the distance. Nikolayeva, teammate Tatiana Gudkova, Italy's Elisa Rigaudo, and China's Hongjuan Song were at the front.

After another kilometer, just as Gudkova received a second warning, Nikolayeva threw down the challenge and only Song attempted to go with her. But the Russian's acceleration was too much even for the 20-year-old Chinese girl, who had the year's fastest time going into the race. Covering the second 5 in 21:24, Nikolayeva passed 10 km in 43:29 with Song 15 seconds back. The same group of 13 was still well clear of the rest of the field, but split up themselves by the surge up front. Germany's Melanie Seeger and Rigaudo had 43:52, Russia's Yuliya Voyevodina 43:53, Australia's Jane Saville and Ireland's Gillian O'Sullivan 44:06, China's Aihui Xu, Liping Wang (2000 Olympic winner) and Jiajing, along with Spain's Maria Vasco 44:07, Gudkova 44:08, and Russia's Tatyana Kozlova 44:09.

Nikolayeva moved relentlessly away over the next 2 laps (2.5 km laps) and, though slowing to 21:44 for that 5, increased her lead to 32 seconds as she passed 15 km in 1:05:13. Rigaudo had passed Song during that lap, but the Chinese girl came back on her and they were together in 1:05:45 at 15. Saville and O'Sullivan were locked in battle another 8 seconds back, with Jiajing and Vasco on their heels. Seeger and Wang led the rest, but were fading fast at 1:06:07 and 1:06:22. Gudkova was out with three red cards.
With a lap to go, Nikolayeva began to show the effects of her effort and her lead was down to 25 seconds as the bell lap began. Her stride was shortening and she was showing expressions of pain. O'Sullivan and Saville were the chasers, but both had two warnings.

Shortly into that lap, Jiang made her move past those two, with Vasco on her heels. With a kilometer to go they had sliced the lead to just 9 seconds and it looked like a race after all. But, as Nikolayeva made the final turn into that last kilometer, a look across alerted her to the danger. "I was a little curious, so I looked behind. I saw the Chinese coming so I decided to give every last bit of power I had in the last few meters," she said. That was enough and she even managed to add a second lead as she hit the finish in 1:18:42. Deakes was another 9 seconds back of Nikolayeva after a brilliant effort that left Han another 47 seconds back in fourth. The Australian had been out for two years and is coming back from surgery a year ago, so he was particularly pleased with his first major medal.

China won the team title with three in the top nine, a mild surprise, with the Russians favored. Even had Markov not been DQd, however, it would still have been a Chinese. The real surprise was Ecuador taking second as Perez's influence has now put together a strong group of walkers. Ecuador and Italy both scored 35 points, with Ecuador getting the second based on the first place finish of Perez.

The US had a strong team effort, finishing ninth of the 20 full teams. Kevin Eastler had another very strong race as he finished 26th in 1:22:51. He already had an Olympic "A" qualifier from last year's World Championships, but going under the "A" standard again here gives him a qualifier for next year's World Championships. Tim Seaman was 36th in 1:25:39 and John Nunn 50th in 1:26:19. On the basis of time, this was a very good effort.

The only other time we had four under 1:30 was 1987 when Tim Lewis finished 13th in 1:28:48. There have been better performances based on place, but those were when fields were smaller—1970 with 8th, 9th, 23rd, and 24th and 1973 21st 3rd, 7th, 14th, and 27th. The results:


Team Scores:
Chinese continued at near that pace and by the halfway mark, where there is usually a large pack still accelerate, but who could slow the least. That was Voyevodin who beat China's Caohong Yu with champion. The race came down to the final 5 km, but this time it was not a question of who could gain only a second. They were now nearly 3 minutes ahead of third.

2 minutes back and a two-man race was on. Yu slowed to 2:32 on the next 5, but Voyevodin could now 16 seconds back and was soon to receive his third red card. Everyone else was now more than Russia's Stepan Yudin another 20 seconds back. The rest of the field was strung out well back.

As the heat and pace began to take their toll, Fadejevs moved in front by 30 km in 2:12:04, 14 seconds ahead of Yu who had 2 seconds on Voyevodin. The 22 minute 5 km pace was gone and the death march began. Zhao was at 2:12:52 and Xing at 2:13:36, with Lovkin, Skurygin, and Germany's Xiaoyan Liu (22:29) and Russia's Svetlana Vasilyeva (22:30). Both were more cautious, hitting 5 in 22:47, 11 seconds ahead of China's Nan Zhang. She was able to build on the death half and was more than a minute ahead of Zhang at the finish. So the two young Russians were easily the class of the field. With only two walkers scoring (as opposed to three in the senior races), the Russians one-two finish was a sure winner in the team battle. Poland and Greece were second and third. The U.S. girl's finished 14th, led by Maria Michta who was 29th in 53:04. The results:


Kunaykin blasted the first 5 in 19:40 and was well out in front. Ortega had 20:01, Sanchez 20:02, and Sun 20:06 at that point. With a commanding lead, the Russian did not back off when a couple of cards came out and he got the third 100 meters before he entered the final lap. Sun himself had two red cards, but nonetheless went by Ortega with about 400 meters to go and Ortega then got the DQ as he tried to get on back terms. In a close team race, Mexico captured the title.

For the US, Zach Pollinger and Troy Clark both had subpar races, Pollinger slowed by two warnings, and they finished last in the team race. The results:


"B"standard, too. It was a perfect day. The results:


Nunn, Seaman Both Achieve Olympic "A" Standards at 20

For the first time since standards for Olympic and World Championship participation were introduced in 1991, the U.S. has three men under the Olympic "A" Standard at 20 km. That's the pace that must be achieved for a nation to enter more than one competitor in an event. For the 20 km walk, the "A" standard is 1:23:00. (The faster "B" standard — 1:24:30 — allows a single entrant.)

Kevin Eastler had achieved the standard in last year's World Championships with his 1:22:25 effort. Tim Seaman and John Nunn both had hopes of achieving the standard in the intense competition of the World Cup, but still short. But both have since taken advantage of good racing opportunities and have now joined Kevin.

Nunn traveled with Curt Clausen and Philip Dunn to Birstonas, Lithuania a week after the World Cup for a 5 race. They outclassed the field and John walked a well-paced race to win in 1:23:31. He followed Clausen and Gintaras Andriuskevicius through 5 km split of 20:42 (20:45 pace equals a 1:23:30). John then took off on his own, hitting 10 km in 41:16 (20:33), and 15 km in 1:01:58 (20:42), adding another 20:33 at the end for the final time.

"It was a wonderful race for me," Nunn commented. "The crowd was very supportive and the conditions were great. I couldn't have done it without the help of the U.S. Army, my coach Enrique Pena, and my teammates, Curt Clausen and Philip Dunn, who joined me in Lithuania after last week's race in Germany. The time moved Nunn to third on the U.S. all-time list behind Eastler and Tim Lewis (1:21:48 in 1986).

Clausen was excited for Nunn and with his own second-place finish. "We really did well as a team. John had a phenomenal race and I was able to meet my goal of hitting the Olympic "B" standard, too. It was a perfect day." The results:


Chinese Take Advantage of Home Court in Fourth Challenge Leg

Kunshan, China, May 22-23—The fourth leg of the IAAF Racewalking Challenge held here was dominated by Chinese athletes. Both men's and women's 20 km races were held. Actually, dominance wasn't too difficult as there was little participation from outside of China.

In the women's race, China's 20-year-old Houji Peng won the World Cup, which was introduced in 1991, the U.S. has three men under the Olympic "A" Standard at 20 km. That's the pace that must be achieved for a nation to enter more than one competitor in an event. For the 20 km walk, the "A" standard is 1:23:00. (The faster "B" standard — 1:24:30 — allows a single entrant.)

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Rohr Wins 1 Hour, Clausen Takes 2 Hour

Kenosha, Wis., May 23--Both Michelle Rohr and Curt Clausen successfully defended national titles in races held today--Rohr at 1 Hour and Clausen at 2. With high humidity and winds gusting up to 30 mph, conditions were not conducive to fast performances, but both champions easily prevailed. Rohr was in command in the first five minutes and had nearly a minute on second-place Cohen as she passed 10 Km 47:32. She continued to lengthen her lead and covered 12,600 meters in the hour--96 meters over her 2003 performance in California, Penn. Cohen held off Joline Moore by 56 meters. The first three lapped the rest of the field.

Chuaus was unchallenged in the 2-Hour race and finished with 26,109 meters, 316 meters short of his last year's performance and well off his U.S. record of 27,360 meters set in 2000. Dave Doherty beat Bill Vayo for second. Master's titles went to Lynn Tracy for the women and Leonard Jansonowski for the men, who walked just 1 Hour in the master's division.

A non-championship 1 Hour race for men saw Ben Shorey edge Mike Tarantino by 6 meters with a 12,870 meter performance, which is about 5 yards short of 8 miles. Mike Stanton was fairly close to those two through 10 Km, but faded from there to the finish. All the results:


Other Results


May 2004


Pick A Place, Get Out and Race

Sat. June 5  Senior Games 5 Km, Los Angeles (Y)
Masters 3 Km, Seattle (C)
10 Km, Royal Oak, Mich. (W)

Sun. June 6  5 Km, Cambridge, Mass., 10 am (AA)
Pacific 5 Km, Sacramento, 8:30 am (R)

Sat. June 12  Colorado Masters 10 Km, Waterton Canyon, 8 am (H)
FROM HEEL TO TOE

Old info on old men. Way back in December, Richard Harper responded to an item in that month's issue as follows: "In the December issue, Colin Young writes of the amazing feats (and feats) of Gerhard Weidner with his world record in his forties and his great times into his sixties. The longevity of excellence in the sport of racewalking is something we need to celebrate and advertise. The list of "elder" walkers is endless: Nick Borda qualifying for the Olympic Trials at 55, our three best female walkers, Michelle Rohl, Joanne Dow, and Teresa Vail (41) making the Olympic "B" standard 35+. Nor is such excellence a recent phenomena. In the same December issue you note the Olympic silver medal of 41-year-old John Ljunggren. But we could have also included in the post 35 group the accomplishments of Regeney Ievenko (Olympic bronze at 42), Tebs Lloyd Johnson (Olympic bronze at 48), John Deni (U.S. Olympian at 52), Henry Laskau (U.S. Olympian at 40), Ernest Webb (Olympic silver at 40), Mary Nilsson (Women's World Cup gold at 40), not to mention the relative youngsters Yelena Nikolayeva (World Cup champion at 38), Vladmir Golubnichiy (ranked number I in the world at 38)." (Ed. And we might add Jonathan Matthews, second U.S. finisher in 1999 World Cup 20 Km at 42 and fourth in U.S.Olympic 50 Km Trial a year later at 43). "I don't know if bragging about this will get more youngsters or schools interested, but I don't think it could hurt. Well, that's my soap box." "- Clinic. Another Dave McGovern racewalking weekend is scheduled for Frankfort, Illinois June 25-27. Lectures, individual video-taped technique analysis, racing strategy, proper training methods, and more in one of Dave's highly praised clinics. Contact Jacquie Picha at schwider@aol.com for more information...

LOOKING BACK

40 Years Ago (From the Late Spring 1964 issue of the Midwest Race Walker, published by Chris McCarthy in Chicago)--Ron Laird was an easy winner in the National 30 Km in L.A. His 2:26:27 left Bob Bowman nearly 10 minutes back (2:36:16) in second. Rudy Haluza was third in 2:38:03. Two weeks later, Laird went on a record rampage. On May 15, he broke the American record for 1500 meters at the LA Coliseum Relays with a 3:57.0. Don DeNoon was second in 3:57.2. On May 15, he broke the American record he had set a few weeks earlier in Chicago for 500 meters at the LA Coliseum Relays with a 5:57.0. Don DeNoon was second in 6:02.2. The next day in Walnut, Calif., Laird easily broke the American record he had set a few weeks earlier in Chicago for 1 Hour, covering 8 miles 420 yards. On the way, he took out the 10 K record with a 44:58 and continued to records at 15 K (1:18:17) and 20 K (1:46:51). Dean Rasmussen was dominant on the other side of the country, winning the Penn AC 12 Mile in Philly with 1:37:06, 2 seconds ahead of Bob Mimm. Two weeks later he took a 15 mile on Staten Island in 2:00:35. Ron Daniel was 30 seconds behind in that one... In a close race, Alex Oakley won the Ontario 10 Mile title in 1:17:08, ahead of Felix Cappella (1:17:15) and Nick Marrone (1:17:44).

35 Years Ago (From the May 1969 ORW)--This issue featured the first photos ever published in the ORW, and guess what? They showed several athletes in full flight phase as we launched the first of many series of commentaries on judging issues. And here was Laird again, winning the National 10 Km in Chicago in a championship record 45:14.2. Ron Daniel and Steve Hayden followed... One day later, Tom Dooley had no need to hang down his head as he set an American...
record for the same distance in California, recording 44:26.9. Goetz Klopfer covered 15 miles in 1:54:32 at the same site. The Zinn Memorial 10 Km in Chicago won by your editor in a blazing 49:29. Blazing only because it was hot in Chicago that day. Passing 3 miles 4 seconds ahead of his pace of a week before (when he did 48:40 for seventh in that National 10), he then wilted, but not nearly as much as teammate Jack Blackburn, 15 seconds ahead of him the week before, but 4 1/2 minutes behind him on this day... Paul Nihill won British titles at both 10 Km (44:07) and 10 Miles (1:11:14).

30 Years Ago (From the May 1974 ORW)–John Knifton overcame a challenge from Floyd Godwin in the National 25 Km in Des Moines, Iowa, to win with a 1:56:03 effort. Floyd Godwin was just over 2 minutes back at the finish, followed by Jerry Brown and Bob Henderson. Larry Walker won the National 15 Km in California in 1:00:09, 5 minutes ahead of Carl Swift, who wasn’t swift enough on this day. Ed Boudinot (1:11:43), Bill Ranney, Rudy Hauser, and Steve DiBernardo filled out the first six... Goetz Klopfer covered 15 miles in 1:54:32 at the same site. The Zinn Memorial 10 Km in Chicago won by your editor in a blazing 49:29. Blazing only because it was hot in Chicago that day. Passing 3 miles 4 seconds ahead of his pace of a week before (when he did 48:40 for seventh in that National 10), he then wilted, but not nearly as much as teammate Jack Blackburn, 15 seconds ahead of him the week before, but 4 1/2 minutes behind him on this day... Paul Nihill won British titles at both 10 Km (44:07) and 10 Miles (1:11:14).

25 Years Ago (From the May 1979 ORW)–It was open season on the World’s 20 Km record, which had been held by Mexico’s Daniel Bautista at 1:23:22. On April 22, Anatoliy Solomin, USSR, did 1:23:20. One week later, Frenchman Gerard LeLievre took the record down to 1:22:29 in Epinay. Then on May 19, Bautista said “Enough!” Walking on the track in Valencia, Spain, he recaptured his record of 1:22:25 effort... Jim Heiring’s American record of 1:30:04 set on April 22 didn’t last long either. Todd Scully turned in a 1:28:33 in Seattle on May 17... Chris Hansen won the U.S. 15 Km in Kenosha, Wis., tying Canadian Marcel Jobin in the process, as both returned 1:06:58. Heiring was nearly a minute-and-a-half back with John VanDenBrandt following him... Scully whirled Hansen in the National 10 Km in Chicago in 43:14. Hansen beat Hansen this time, 43:55 to 44:16. VanDenBrandt was fourth. Scully discouraged the field with a 6:26 opening mile. The next day, Jobin beat Scully in the Zinn Memorial 10 Km, blasting 41:32. Todd had 42:15... The Women’s National 15 Km event went to Paula Kash-Mori in 1:21:21, with Jeanne Becce second... Alan Price was an easy winner in the National 100 Km in 10:36:35, with Tom Wilkinson 47 minutes behind in second. Jack Blackburn finished third, catching Sal Corallo in the final 20 miles to take the master’s title.

20 Years Ago (From the May 1984 ORW)–Denver had a weekend festival of National Walks. On Saturday, Tim Lewis (20:53) and Teresa Vaill (25:27) won titles at 5 Km. Mel McGinnis (21:27) and Vincent O’Sullivan followed Lewis and Mexico’s Maria Colón was second in the women’s race. On Sunday, O’Sullivan came back to win the National 30 Km in 2:22:48. Carl Schueler, better than 4 1/2 minutes back, edged Tom Edwards for second. Fabian Kniazko was fourth... Jim Heiring was an easy winner in the National 15 Km, held in New York City. Jim’s impressive 1:03:07 led Tim Lewis 52 seconds back. Ray Sharp was just 5 seconds behind Tim and well clear of Marco Evoniuk. Ten athletes bettered 1:10. Teresa Vaill won the women’s title in 1:17:27, 4 minutes ahead of Carol Brown... Marcel Jobin pulled away from Heiring after 5 Km to win his own Invitational 20 Km in Quebec with a 1:24:59. Heiring had 1:26:16 with Guillaume LeBlanc close behind in third... In Norway, Mexico’s Ernesto Canto shattered the world record at 20 Km in a 1:18:39. Daniel Bautista held the old record of 1:20:03. Marco Evoniuk was 10th in the race in 1:26:30, and also turned in times of 1:25:13 and 41:13 (10 Km) in Copenhagen the next week.

15 Years Ago (From the May 1989 ORW)–National 15 Km titles went to Rene Haarpainter (1:06:06) and Victoria Herazo (1:16:30) in races held in Long Beach. Steve Pecinovsky trailed Haarpainter by just over a minute, with Richard Quinn third and Allen James fourth. Kim Wilkinson was just 5 seconds back in the women’s race with Sara Stanley third... Tim Lewis won the National Invitational 20 Km in Washington, D.C. in 1:26:52, leading Doug Fournier 2:14 back. Mark Manning, Gary Morgan, Steve Pecinovsky, and Curtis Fisher were all under 1:30 in the next four spots... Lewis also won the Penn Relays 10 Km in 41:22, followed by Fournier (42:33) and Morgan (43:00). The women’s 5 Km went to Teresa Vaill in 22:38 with Lynn Weik second in 23:03.

10 Years Ago (From the May 1994 ORW)–Daniel Garcia beat Ecuador’s young Jefferson Perez by 3 seconds in 1:23:24 to win the Mexican Walk Week 20 Km. Bernardo Segura (1:23:30) and Hector Moreno, Columbia (1:24:03) were next. Al Heppner lead a U.S. contingent with 1:32:49 in 39th... In Durham, N.C., Dave McGovern beat Curt Clausen in a 20 Km, 1:32:06 to 1:33:21. Ian Whatley was just 3 seconds behind Clausen. In fourth was Mark Kautz, reportedly a 29 minute 10 Km runner just getting into racewalking who did 1:33:51—never to be heard of again by this reporter.

5 Years Ago (From the May 1999 ORW)–In the World Cup, Curt Clausen made a tremendous breakthrough, taking 6 1/2 minutes off his personal best (also the National best), as he finished 11th in the 50 Km in 4:48:04. Clausen moved up at least 10 places over the final 10 Km. The race went to Kazakhstan’s Sergey Korepanov in 3:39:22 with Tomasz Lipiec, Poland, and Nikolai Matyukhin, Russia following. Russia beat Spain and Germany for the team title, with the U.S. in 10th, just 1 point behind Slovakia. Philip Dunn also had a breakthrough, becoming the ninth U.S. walker to go under 4 hours with 3:59:53 in 45th... Andrew Hermann (4:08:47) in 60th completed the U.S. scoring. In the Men’s 20 Km, Mexico’s Bernardo Segura (1:20:20) edged China’s Guohui Yu and Russia’s Vladimir Andreyev for the gold, with Robert Korzeniowski in fourth. Mexico, Russia, and China took the first three spots in the team race. The U.S. was 16th, led by Tim Seaman’s 1:27:20 in 35th place. China’s Hongyu Liu won the women’s 20 in 1:27:32, ahead of Natalya Fedoskina, Russia, and Norica Cimpen, Romania. China, Russia, and Mexico finished in the top three spots. For the U.S., Michelle Rohl had 1:36:50 in 46th and Joanne Dow 1:38:08 in 53rd as the team finished 6th... A week later, Grand Prix races in Eisenhufenstadt, Ger. went to Guatemala’s Julio Martinez at 20 Km with 1:17:46 and China’s Wang Yan at 10 Km in 41:16. Mexico’s Leandro Lopez had a 1:17:56 for second in the 20 and three others went under 1:20. Tim Seaman had 1:24:33 in 15th... Another week later, Romania’s Claudia Iovan won a Grand Prix 10 Km in La Coruna, Spain with 43:04, the same name as second-place Maria Vasco of Spain. The LaCoruna 20 Km went to Spain’s Francisco Fernandez in 1:21:55. National 15 Km titles were decided in Oak Grove, Ill., with Michelle Rohl (1:33:09) and Al Heppner (1:08:02) on top. Teresa Vaill was just 4 seconds behind Rohl and husband Mike Rohl just 16 behind Heppner.