Nunn, Vaill Tackle 40 Km Successfully

Ocean Township, N.J., Sept. 11 (From Elliott Demman)--Olympians John Nunn and Teresa Vaill showed their heels to a pack of 55 pursuers, taking old medals in the 67th Annual USA T&F National 40 Km Racewalk by wide margins.

Nunn, the 28-year-old Evansville, Indiana native now based at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, Cal., with the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, easily took the men's title, covering the distance in 3:18:43. Vaill, 42, a Pine Plains, N.J. product now living and training in Gainesville, Fla., led the women's field in 3:37:51, second overall. Both are specialists at the Olympic 20 Km distance who had no trouble going twice that far.

"This is longer than I've walked in training or a race, so I've got to be pleased with this performance," said Nunn. "If I can get in the training, I know I can walk a pretty good 50." Vaill said she has always wanted to race this event, but now that she has, she says she will never do it again.

Comebacker Paul Schwartzberg, the young man of the venerable Varsano's Chocolates team, was second to Nunn in 3:42:15, 5 minutes ahead of teammate Dave McGovern. In the women's race, Loretta Schuellein was nearly 27 minutes behind Vaill in second.

In lieu of t-shirts, race officials donated this budget expense of $350 to Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. The results:


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Note: The results include a mix of professional athletes and amateur participants, reflecting the inclusive nature of the racewalk event.
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Other Results


Derek update. In last month's issue, I reported on our son Derek's serious infection and subsequent surgery. I anticipated his being out of the hospital and into rehab the following weekend - i.e., September 3-4. Well, I went back to Morgantown on that Friday and recovery was not going well. His temperature was still spiking up - though not back to 104° - and the incision in his back continued to have considerable drainage. So on Monday (Sept. 5), he was back in surgery to clean things out some more. That meant reopening the incision in his back, which runs from just below his neck to near his tailbone. But recovery was still slow and he wound up spending 2 ½ more weeks in the hospital. He was finally moved to a rehab center on Thursday, Sept. 22 (33 days after arriving and having celebrated his 37th birthday there on the 14th). We came back to Columbus on Saturday, Sept. 24, Marty having spent 5 full weeks there. I got the three days at home in which I got the August issue on the way to loyal readers.) It's now Monday, and we will be going back down on Thursday 5 days and then back forth on a similar schedule until he gets through his rehab. He is doing well now and finds he doesn't have as much limitation as he thought he might from the further fusion of his spine. But, he is still weak from five weeks of fever and two surgeries. And is still on intravenous antibiotics for a few weeks. An irony is that he had dropped in at the rehab center a couple of times before this all started just to visit and encourage patients. He can still continue some of that and we know will be an inspiration to many people struggling with recovery form spinal cord and other injuries. His spirit remains as strong as ever... Bob Barrett. We reported on Bob Barrett's heart valve surgery and subsequent stroke in the July issue. Here are a couple of reports on Bob's progress, which, as expected of such a fit athlete, is progressing well. On Aug. 20, his wife reported: "Bob is doing well considering the damage done by the strokes. He gets around, but needs help dressing, cutting food, and all the other things that go along with trying to work with the use of only one arm and hand. He progresses well with the special hand/arm therapy he is getting and the physical therapy as well... He is anxious to visit the cardiologist in a couple of weeks and hear good news. The mitral valve repair was successful, now we have to recover from the damage that occurred right after surgery. Bob misses his racewalking friends so very much. He always talks of his comeback." On Sept. 15, this from Bob himself: "I am doing quite well. Good doctor's report today and will be seeing specialists in next few weeks. The therapies are going well and the OT is almost as hard as speed workouts. However, I would trade it for the speed workouts any day. I am getting stronger every day and hope to see some of my racewalking buddies well within a year. I will be attending an 8K road race in Montgomery, N.Y. tomorrow in which my daughter Elizabeth will racewalk the distance. She has been training for this race to represent me. I have won this race in the past and Shawn Frederick won last year."... The Varsano update. Varsano's Chocolates Racewalking has announced the addition of Ian Whatley, 46, to their USATF Racewalking Grand Prix-leading team. Whatley, currently homeless, meshes perfectly with the Varsano's philosophy of "age before athleticism." As are all Varsano's team members, Whatley is a former USA World Cup Team member from way back when, having raced in the red, white, and blue in Monterrey, Mexico in 1993. Ironically, "Doc" Whatley - a former British citizen - also competed for Team USA at the USA vs. Great Britain dual meet in 1993. Marc Varsano, namesake and inspirational brainchild behind VCR and a 93 World Cup teammate of Whatley feels that Ian and VCR are a perfect fit: "Whatley? I thought I was old... But cute as a button. I'd like to dip him in some mile chocolate." Coming off their first-place team title at the USATF 40 Km, next up for the ubiquitous washed-up has-beens of VCR is the USATF 5K in Kingsport, Tenn., where Whatley will make his debut for the squad. (Do you think they could use a really washed-up 70-year-old member of the first USA World Cup team? As the oldest member of that team, I must be the oldest US World Cupper alive. A perfect fit! If only I could get that left leg to function properly. Actually, I have occasional dreams about having, by some miracle qualified for a national team, and realizing I am going to make a fool of myself, not being able to break 2 hours for 20. I am very optimistic in those dreams, as 2:30 would probably be a significant accomplishment for me now. Not that I am unfit - just can't
get the legs moving quickly or correctly). ... Speaking of World Cups. Here is the schedule for next year's event in La Coruna, Spain on May 13-14. Sat. May 13: 4 pm-10 Km, Junior Men, 5:15 pm-20 Km, Women: 7:30 pm-20 Km, Men. Sunday, May 14: 8 am-50 Km. Men, 1 Pm-10 Km, Junior Women. On the subject of international events, the qualifying standards for next year's World Junior Championships 10 Km in Beijing, China, August 15-20 are 44:05 for men and 50:55 for women. ... Racewalking Challenge. Here is the lineup oft he 2006 IAAF World Racewalking Challenge: March 18-19, Tiujana, Mexico-Men's and Women's 20 Km, Men's 50 Km. April 1, Rio Maior, Portugal-Men's and Women's 20 Km. April 20, Kunshan City, China-Men's and Women's 20 Km. TBA, Sesto San Giovani, Italy-Men's and Women's 20 Km. May 13-14-World Racewalking Cup (see above) Also on the International scene, the NACAC Under 23 T &F Championships, including a men's 20 km and women's 10 km, will be Santo Domingo Comunica Republic, July 7-9, 2006. ... Nationals. The USATF Indoor T &F Championships will be in Boston, Feb. 24-26. The outdoor nationals are scheduled for Indianapolis, June 23-26. Of interest. The 1991 World Champion in the 10 Km racewalk, Alana Ivanova, finished 20th in the World Championship Marathon in Helsinki this summer. She has a personal best marathon of 2:25:34 in 2001. Ivanova also reached the finish line first in the 1992 Olympics 10 Km racewalk, but was disqualified. Apparently, that outcome caused her to turn to running. ... N A RF Raffle. Elaine Ward's North American Foundation, which oversees the Al Heppner Memorial Fund for grants to racewalkers, is conducting a raffle to encourage donations. A supporter of the Institute has donated a beautiful Gold American Eagle worth approximately $450 today. But that is not all. This same gold eagle could well become worth $1000 or more in the next two or three years. Elaine notes that we are in an long-term bear market for gold for many reasons—one being the depreciation of the purchasing power of the paper dollar. The gold eagle can be cashed in, held as an investment, or made into a gorgeous necklace. The American eagle is one of the world's truly beautiful coins, a treasure in its own right. Raffie activities were tame by comparison, but for Morgan, 45, a 1988 Olympic racewalker from an 8-hour limit. From that article, we repeat the following: 

Gary Morgan, Sharp seeks other avenues. Gary Morgan's racewalking career has seemed to be on a downward spiral the past couple of years, judging from results (maybe he needs to join up with the Varsano crew), but he must be enjoying himself. An article in the Detroit News earlier this year described the Spring Fling, which, as part of the four-race Salomon/Moosejaw Adventure Race Series in Michigan, drew 221 competitors. The races involve four disciplines of adventure racing—mountain biking, trekking (running or walking over varied terrain), paddling, and fixed ropes (pulling, climbing). Navigation is part of the scheme, so map reading is also an important skill. Nothing was said about how long racers were out there, except that there was an 8-hour limit. From that article, we repeat the following: "In March, Gary Morgan completed an African adventure by scaling 19,340-foot Mount Kilimanjaro. Saturday's activities were tame by comparison, but for Morgan, 45, a 1988 Olympic racewalker from Clarkston, they were no less enjoyable. "The key is being in the great outdoors with a lot of nice people," Morgan said. "Everybody here is an outdoor enthusiast fitness nut. It was a great way to spend the day." And another current Michigan resident, international racewalker, and current Varsano's team member, Ray Sharp, is getting his kicks in triathlons. In the Copperman Triathlon on August 6, Ray finished sixth in 1:41:11.3, 8 minutes behind the winner and was tje first over-40 finisher. He was only twenty-sixth after the swim, but moved through the field on the bike ride and run. His wife, Wendy, also a superior racewalker a few years back was just 7 ½ minutes behind him. He was the first finisher. She led Ray by nearly a minute after the swim. And daughter Kim, age 12, finished in 2:12:01.6, first in the under 14 age group. ... Flood victim. One of those driven from their New Orleans home by Hurricane Katrina was Ruby Cheney who has been a great friend of racewalking in the New Orleans area. Ron Laird, Jeanne and Gerry Bocci were in New Orleans last summer officiating at the Junior Olympics and got to know Ruby, who has directed the racewalking branch of the New Orleans TC and has a good program going there. Apparently she lost much to the hurricane, as did so many. She is now at 6858 Stimpney Road, Fayette, MS 39069 and Ron suggests it might be a good specific cause for anyone looking for ways to donate to survivors.

... The 2005 World Championship 20 Km winners, Jefferson Perez and Olympiada Ivanova, are profiled in the following two articles.

Perez Credits Teammate For Help in Attaining Gold

Helsinki, Finland (AAF release). National heroes can arrive in all different shapes and with all different styles and attitudes, but modesty's not always their most striking trait. Here in Helsinki, the first athlete to win gold at the 10th IAAF World Championships in Athletics dispels that theory.

The rain had not quite started as Jefferson Perez of Ecuador came charging into the Olympic Stadium to win the 20 Km racewalk. It was an outstanding performance, a race where he bided his time, had a little help from his friends—something he did not forget—before Retaining his title with victory by more than 100 meters.

There were doubts whether he could do it again, and particularly Olympic champion Ivano Berugnetti looked a strong contender to beat him. But Brugnetti failed to finish the race, though Perez may have passed him anyway.

The help from this teammate Rolando Saquipay was endorsed not long after his victory. "He sacrificed himself for his country," said Perez, 31, after Saquipay established a fierce pace that many of the walkers could not contend with.

It allowed ,arguably the biggest superstar in Ecuadorian sport to take advantage moving through to retain his title in 1:18:35 ahead of Spaniards Francisco Javier Fernandez, who was second in 1:19:36' and Juan Manuel Molina, third in 1:19:44.

In this commercial age of sport, where iconic figures play such important roles, Perez remains anything but your stereotype. He is quiet spoken and he talks with a calm manner that almost suggests his is honored to be treated this way.

Catholicism plays a huge part in his life. He once walked 460 km through the Andean mountains in Ecuador as a religious promise and he says that despite all his success, it is the family background he has—where he was allowed to progress into a career where he has become one of the sport's greatest advocates—that will always remain so important to him.

"It can be good to be a relative of someone who has this kind of popularity. But then there are other times when it can be heavy. The greatest gift that God has given me is my family. That arrived after an upbringing where he had to work selling newspapers to help a family where he was one of five children.

He became a national hero in 1996. He won the Olympic title in Atlanta and the
honors bestowed upon him were immense. A stamp was made with his picture on in recognition of his achievements in becoming Ecuador’s first Olympic champion. Never mind that additionally he was also given a pension for life along with cars and other rewards for bringing such glory to the South American country.

But perhaps his triumph here was his greatest of all. At the World Championships in Paris in 2003, his victory in 1:17:21 was a world record which still stands. But prior to the walkers starting on their first lap in the stadium before heading out onto the streets of Helsinki, he was not even among the world’s top ten this year on times. A survey in Ecuador had produced the results that 80 percent of people thought he would not win. “I wanted to prove them wrong,” said Perez.

He did that in style. As he takes each step, he seems to say something to himself. Occasionally, the pain etched in his face produces a smile. In Helsinki, he had much to be happy about. “Everything went really well, but it was not quite a perfect race,” said Perez. “But, I am very satisfied with my gold medal.”

Ivanova—”I Will Continue As I Have No Rivals”

Helsinki, Finland (IAAF release)—When they named their daughter, a dream must have lain deep in the hearts of the parents of Olympiadia Ivanova. “I had no choice—they chose that name themselves,” she said, laughing all the way to the bank after her World record breaking victory in the women’s 20 Km racewalk at the 10th IAAF World Championships in Athletics.

“I don’t know why they called me that. Yes, they were sports people, but amateurs. They did not compete in the Olympics. My mother is a physical education teacher. She was a gymnast and an athlete. My father was a freestyle wrestler.”

She was bitterly disappointed not to live up to her name in last year’s Olympics, though her World record in Helsinki, and $160,000 that she collect will surely assuage that. Her record time in Helsinki, 1:25:41, was only surpassed by men for the first time in 1972. The East Germans subsequently won gold and silver that year at the Munich Olympics, with times slower than Ivanova in Finland. When she set a world best at 20 Km in 2001, it was inside the qualifying standard for the men’s World Championships.

Today’s performance wrote out the official World record of China’s Yan Wang, which stood at 2:26:22, from November 2001. That was the standard officially accepted when world walks records were introduced by the IAAF in January 2004. And that was the time Ivanova had so meticulously targeted, consigning it to history.

The long walk to the top of the world accomplished, but Olympus still beckons for Olympiada. She dreams of fulfilling the parental destiny bestowed on her.

Advice To Live By
(With thanks to Bob Carlson)

1. If at first you don’t succeed, skydiving is not for you.
2. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.
3. If you lend someone $20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
4. If you tell the truth, you don’t have to remember anything.
5. Don’t worry, it only seems kinky the first time.
6. Good judgment comes from bad experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
7. Duct tape is like the the Force. It has a light side and a dark side, and it holds the universe together.
8. There are two theories to argue with women. Neither one works.
9. Experience is something you don’t get until just after you need it.
10. Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.
How They Used To Train

The book "Training for Race Walking", written by Frank McGuire, was published in Australia in 1962. It included training schedules of many of the top walkers of the day. One of these was Australia's Noel Freeman, whose name you will see in the 1970 part of the Looking Back feature below. Noel was a silver medalist at 20 Km in the Rome Olympics and then took fourth in Tokyo four years later. Here is his summary from McGuire's book.

Noel Frederick Freeman


Pre-race warm-up: Runs until perspiration flows freely and body is up to racing temperature, then solid training, followed by a few exercises to loosen up and aid relaxation, followed by a few minutes rest before event.

Pre-training warm-up: As above, but without exercise.

Training for 3000 meters or 2 miles: One night 3/4 pace up to 5 miles. Two nights interval training-1/2 and 3/4 miles, gradually cutting rest periods as condition improves. One night of general training incorporating distance and sprints. Friday-rest. Saturday-race. Sunday-long distance.

Training for 10,000 meters: Similar to above with distances increased to 10 miles and on occasions 15 miles, plus few miles each week of medium paced running.

Training for 50 Km: Mainly distance training. 10 top 15 miles during the week. Saturday-Training for 10,000 meters: Similar to above with distances increased to 10 miles and on occasions 15 miles, plus few miles each week of medium paced running.

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Training for 50 Km: Mainly distance training. 10 top 15 miles during the week. Saturday race. Sunday-long stripped spin approximately 4 to 5 hours at about 9 to 9:30 per mile.

Trains alone and is coached by Percy Cerutty. Believes in developing upper body strength by weight or body resistance exercises. Says upper body strength develops power walking. He is a firm believer in massage. Recommends a variety of trainign venus and does not use a stop watch. Likes to split sessions into morning and evening workouts, separating strolling and running. Enjoys bush hikes. He says: "Challenging every mountain is a great morale builder and stimulant to the mind." Takes vitamin tablets. Plays no other sport. Pre-race meal: Raw oatmeal and fruit. During 50 Km-salted water and glucose.

Note: Body resistance exercises mentioned are isometric contractions (maximum resistance of the body against an immovable force). W/ercises carried out for 6 seconds for each movement.

(Interesting that he skips 20 km training since that was his primary distance.)

LOOKING BACK

40 Years Ago (From the September 1965 ORW)–Ron Laird overcame a muddy track (one huge puddle forced walkers into the fourth lane as they entered the homestretch) in Chicago's Riis Park to win the National 1 Hour, covering 7 miles 1432 yards. Taking a quick lead, Laird stretched it to as much as 56 seconds at 5 miles (37:39). Second place Jack Mortland then closed some ground, but was still 90 yards back at the finish. Mortland's Ohio TC teammate, Jack Blackburn, was another 127 yards back. Ron Daniel came fourth, covering 7 miles 953 yards.

35 Years Ago (From the September 1970 ORW)–John Knifton, better known for his exploits at shorter distances at that stage of his career, won the National 50 Km in Santa Barbara, Cal. in 4:35:02. John Kelly was nearly 3 minutes back and Bob Kitchen another minute behind him. Rounding out the top six were Goetz Klopfer, Jim Lopes, and Bryon Overton. Dave Romanowski survived a severe electrical storm during the contest to win the National 25 from Knifton in under 2 hours. The Canadian 50 went to Michigan's Gerry Bocci, ahead of Pat Farrelly in 5:45:57. Wife Jeane set American bests from 25 Km on, going the distance in 5:45:20.

Larry Young started on the comeback trail with his eye on the Munich Olympics and another bronze medal with a 1:25:09 10 Mile win in Ft. Osage, Kansas. In Australia, Noel Freeman turned in a 1:50:02 for 15 miles on the track, passing 20 Km in 1:30:10.

Eivor Johansson, Sweden, won the Women's International 5 Km in 24:40.

30 Years Ago (From the September 1975 ORW)–Larry Young, our two-time Olympic bronze medalist at 50 Km, added another national title to his list (his sixth of eight at the distance and 22nd of 25 overall) in winning, Smithtown, N.Y. in 4:18:56. Augie Hirt was 12 minutes back, with John Knifton, Tom Knatt, Ray Somers, and Paul Ide also finishing under 4:40. Sue Brodock was an easy winner of the Women's National 10 Km. Her 52:03 put her nearly 8 minutes ahead of Sandy Bisroe. Roland Weisser set a World Junior record for 10 Km in East Germany, winning in 41:46:8.

25 Years Ago (From the September 1978 ORW)–Dan O'Connor was an easy winner of the National 35 Km race in 3:00:31, with Dennis Reilly (3:11:28) and Bill Ranney (3:13:1) following. Alan Price won a 75 Km race in Springfield, Ohio in 8:31:41 ahead of Jack Blackburn's 9:00:25. In a 100-miler in Leicester, England, Dave Boxall did 17:45:10. Ten competitors bettered 20 Hours and 64 finished under 24 hours.

20 Years Ago (From the September 1985 ORW)–Paul Wick emerged as the National 15 Km winner, finishing in 1:10:24. Frederico Valerio (1:12:35) and Larry Walker (1:12:43) followed. The women's title went to Ester Lopez in 1:21:48 with Jolene Steigerwalt second. The men's World Cup title was captured by the German Democratic Republic, with China winning the women's title. The Isle of Man hosted the races. Hartwig Gauder led the GDR with his 50 Km win in 3:47:31. Andrei Perlov, USSR, and Axel Noack, GDR, followed. For the U.S., Marco Evoniuk had 4:11:03 in 16th and Carl Schueler 4:13:14 in 19th. Spain's Jose Marin won the 20 in 1:21:42, after apparent winner Josef Priblilinec, Czechoslovakia, was DQ'd. Maurizio Damilano, Italy, and Viktor Mostovik, USSR, captured the other two medals. The Chinese women took one-two individually in a very close 10 Km race. Hon Yan (46:11) and Guan Ping (46:23) just held off the USSR's Olga Kostop (46:24).

15 Years Ago (From the September 1990 ORW)–The European Championships saw some surprise winners. Italy's Annarita Sidoti took the Women's 10 Km in 44:00, as world record holder, Nadeshda Ryashkina was pulled by the judges at 8 Km. Olga Kardapoltseva, USSR, was right on Sidoti's back, finishing second in 44:06, with another Italian, Ilenea Salvador, third in 44:38. Russian favorites folded in the 20 Km and the titles went to the Czech Pavol...
Balzek in 1:22:05. Daniel Plaza, Spain, and Thierry Toutain, France, were next in 1:22:22 and 1:23:22. The 50 was walked at midday on a very hot day and only Soviet Andrei Perlov and German Bernd Gummelt seemed to hold up in the conditions. Perlov won in 3:56:33 ahead of Gummelt’s 3:56:33. Favorite Hartwig Gauder, Germany, took third, but couldn’t break 4 hours. Nearly half the field was on the sidelines at the finish... Dan O’Connor won the National 40 Km in New Jersey, his 3:26:57 beating Dave McGovern by 10 minutes. Nick Bidera was just 16 seconds behind McGovern in third.

10 Years Ago (From the September 1995 ORW)—In races at Elk Grove, Illinois, National 15 Km titles went to Victoria Herazo and Al Heppner. Herazo was unpressed, her 1:12:39 leaving Danielle Kirk 7½ minutes behind. The men’s race was much closer, if we ignore Will Van Axen, who broke the tape way ahead of the field, only to find that he was DQ’d. This led Heppner (1:12:07) to edge Paul Malek (1:12:11) and Paul Martino (1:12:12) for the title. The master’s title went to 51-year-old Jim Carmines in 1:16:21... The National 5 Km in Kingsport, Tenn, saw Herazo winning again in 22:48 with Cheryl Rellinger second in 25:05. Gary Morgan won the men’s race in 20:54, ahead of Dave McGovern (21:05) and Curt Clausen (21:15).

5 Years Ago (From the September 2000 ORW)—Robert Rules. Poland’s Robert Korzeniowski picked up his second and third Olympic gold medals in Sydney. After winning the 20 in 1:18:59, he came back a week later to defend his 50 Km title in 3:42:22. He became the first to win gold medals at both distances. Only Italy’s Ugo Frigerio, with golds at 3 and 10 Km in 1920 and at 10 Km in 1924, can match his three golds in racewalking. In the 20, Mexico’s Bernardo Segura led him across the finish line by a small margin, but had picked up his third red card before they entered the stadium for the final lap. Noel Hernandez was four seconds back in second, well ahead of Vladimir Andreyev, Russia, and Jefferson Perez, Ecuador. The 50 was a more decisive win for Korzeniowski as he pulled clear of Latvia’s Aigars Fadejevs over the final 20 to establish a winning margin of 1:18. Mexico’s Joel Sanchez was third. The women’s 20 went to China’s Liping Wang in 1:29:05, 28 seconds ahead of Norway’s Kjersti Platzer, with Spain’s Maria Vasco another 50 seconds back in third... The National 40 Km in New Jersey went to Dave McGovern in 3:38:36, better than two minutes ahead of John Soucheck. Chris Knotts was third.

First three at World Championship 50 Km in Helsinki. Top left: Gold medalist Sergey Kirchupkin, Russia. Top right: Silver medalist Aleksey Voyovodin. Bottom: Bronze medalist Alex Schwarzer, Italy. (Elliot Danman photos.)