Seventeen Years Later Sharp Repeats

Kingsport, Tenn., Oct. 9—Back in 1980, 20-year-old Ray Sharp won the national 5 Km race, his second national title (his first had come earlier in the year at 30 Km). He repeated the next year and then waited until 1988 to take his third national at the distance. Today, 17 years later, at age 45, he made it four national championships at 5 Km as he sped to a 22:34 victory, 48 seconds ahead of walker-up Matt DeWitt. Joining atop the victory stand was youngerster (age 39) Jolene Moore, who scored a decisive win in the women’s race. It was Ray’s 14th national title overall.

Sharp explained the hot pink shorts he was wearing. “I’m sponsored by Varsano’s Chocolates of New York City and their colors are pink and brown,” Sharp said. “My teammate Jan Whatley (third today) have been working on a clothing design for our team. I think we found it.” Sharp now lives in the northern Michigan town of Atlantic Mine. Another Michigander, Leon Jasionowski, age 61, created a stir with his fourth place finish in 25:19, bettering Dave Romansky’s national age group mark by 9 seconds. Dave had set the mark in 1999.

Moore was also unchallenged in winning the women’s title. Her 24:00 was just 2 seconds off the course record set by Bobbi Jo Chapman last year. “I’m just beginning my season so I basically just wanted to win. This was a great way to start,” she said. “I was by myself for the first 3 Km, which is unusual, because I’m usually around a number of elite athletes. It was lonely out there.”

Both winners were impressed with the race site and organization. “It was a lot of fun,” Sharp said. “I had heard how great it was and how much fun everyone had down here. They were right.” Moore agreed, “It was incredible. It’s a beautiful place with great people. What more can you ask for.”

Second-place Matt DeWitt, 25, a graduate of the U. of Wisconsin-Parkside, where he was coached by his father Mike, is now assistant track and cross country coach at Virginia Intermont College, where he also coaches racewalkers. He brought three of his athletes to the race. Amanda Gorst, from New Zealand, and Alex Lo, from Hong Kong, were not eligible for the title but were allowed to walk exhibition. They both finished ahead of second-plaaccr Lynn Tracy. The third Intermont athlete, Raven Pilgrim, was seventh in the women’s race.

Just for comparison, when Sharp won his first title at the distance as a young whippersnapper, he was a bit faster—20:27.8. His time today would have placed him seventh in that race. The next year, he won in 20:47.52 and would have finished fifth with today’s time. By 1988, he had slowed to 20:56.50. He would have been sixth with his 22.34, just ahead of young Curt Clausen. (Actually, he would have been one place higher in all of those earlier races, since we probably couldn’t have two Ray Sharp’s in the same race.) But, as the results show, these were essentially master’s races.
The results:

**Men:**

**Women:**
- Jolene Moore 24:00 (Guests: Amanda Gors, Ndz New Zealand 24:49 and Alex Lo, Hong Kong 26:31).

**Other Results**

**East Regional 1 Hour, Waltham, Mass., Oct. 16:**

**Women:**

**Other Results**

**Wisconsin Senior Olympics, Milwaukee, Sept. 10:**

**Other Results**

**Other Results**

**October 2005**

**20 Km, Welland, Ontario, Oct. 1:**

**Weinacker Cup (Michigan vs. Ontario), Dearborn, Mich., Oct. 16:**

**Michigan 16:**
- (Morgan, O’Brien, Craig, and Reed would certainly have helped the Michigan cause. Of course, if I had the attitude of many in the home of the Buckeyes that all things Michigan are evil, I would rejoin in their demise.) Wisconsin Senior Olympics, Milwaukee, Sept. 10:

**Other Results**

**Other Results**

**October 2005**

**20 Km, Piacenza, Italy, Oct. 2:**
Centurion. To date, just five U.S. women have achieved that status—Elsie McGarvey in 1978, World Masters Championships, San Sebastian, Spain, Aug. 22-Sept. 3: Women's 5 Km:
For those with a competitive bent, opportunities abound

Sun. Nov. 6 5 Km, Littleton, Col., 9 am (H)
Sun. Nov. 13 5 Km, Boulder, Col., 9 am (H)
Thur. Nov. 24 4 Mile, Denver, 10 am (H)
Sun. Nov. 27-5 Km, New York City, 8:30 am (G)
Sat. Nov. 26 5 Km, Aurora, Col., 10 am (H)
Sat. Dec. 3 USATF National 1 Hour, Jacksonville, Fla. (T)
Indoor 3 Km, St. Paul, Minn. (Z)
Sun. Dec. 4 5 Km, Ft. Collins, Col., 9 am (H)
Sat. Dec. 9 1 Mile, Pharr, Texas, 5 pm (AA)
Sun. Dec. 10 South Region 5 Km, Pharr, Texas (AA)
Sun. Dec. 11 5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)
Sat. Dec. 17 5 and 10 Km, Washington, DC (S)
Sun. Dec. 18 5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)
Sat. Dec. 31 42nd Annual Polar Bear 10 Mile, Asbury Park, NJ (A)

From Heel To Toe

Derek. As reported last month, our son Derek finally got into rehab after 33 days in the hospital, including two surgeries. Unfortunately, shortly after I wrote that note, he had further x-rays taken prior to an appointment with his surgeon. At that appointment, he was told that the screws attaching the rods to his spine were pulling out. That was on Tuesday, Oct 4., while we were on a few days of home leave. We went back to Morgantown on schedule two days later and were there for another 10 days. During that time, he had another scan taken and another appointment with the surgeon. The news given at that appointment was that, not only were the screws pulling out, but that the vertebra below his most recent spinal fusion (L4 to be specific) was deteriorating. A condition known as Charcot spine. The pictures show a hole in the vertebra and fragmentation of bone even into L5. A biopsy was taken two days later to determine if the infection, for which he had been on intravenous antibiotics since the original surgery in late August, was clear. We came home for the weekend (mid-October) and I returned on Tuesday (Oct. 18) to accompany Derek to another appointment with the surgeon. They took further x-rays. Dr. France told us that the biopsy results were clear and that the x-rays showed no further movement of the hardware or deterioration. At some time,
Race walking's gold medalists at the 2005 World Championships of Track and Field held in Helsinki in August. Top: Olimpiada Ivanova, Russia, winner of the women's 20 Km. Lower left: Jefferson Perez, Ecuador, winner of the men's 20 Km. Lower right: Sergey Kirdyapkin, Russia, the 50 Km winner. (IAAF photos.)

Top: Ivanova on her way. The Russian leads Jiang Jing, China, and Cristina Lopez, El Salvador, both disqualified before the race was finished.

Bottom: One-two at 50. Kirdyapkin and countryman Aleksey Voyvodin, the silver medallist, pull away from the field. (Harry Siitonen photos)
however, further surgery to fuse the rest of his spine (L4 and L5—she was fused from T5 to T12 from his original surgery eight years ago and then down to L3 in August) is inevitable.

However, he sees no immediate need and wants to monitor the situation. The regimen of antibiotics having been completed on Monday, Derek was released from rehab on Wednesday and I took him back to his house in Morgantown. Marty and I traveled places on Thursday—she to Morgantown and me back to Columbus—and we will repeat that process on Monday so she can be back to her part-time night manager post at Olympic Indoor Tennis Club. Derek is not yet ready to live completely independently. His plan since early in this whole process has been to return to Columbus. He now has an appointment scheduled with a surgeon at the OSU Medical Center for Nov. 2. He wants a second opinion and also feels that when further surgery is necessary he would rather have it done here. Whether that appointment will be a visit back here or the start of his permanent return is not certain at this point. He has a home to sell in Morgantown and many matters to be settled, including whether he can, or even wants, to continue his consulting work, at least part-time, from Columbus. He has been working for a company that consults on architectural design for accessibility and on matters concerning ADA compliance, which involves seminars, trainings, in-facility assessments, and so on. A lot of travel, which may be more difficult for him as he is less mobile and flexible—let that anyone with no use of their legs is particularly mobile. His transfers are more difficult, and will probably be even more so if the spine is fused the rest of the way, but he can still get in and out of the chair for whatever purpose, including into our van. (Dat, let us remember, Derek is very independent and had made two lengthy trips to Australia on his own in the past three years.) He had started working for the firm last August and moved to Morgantown in January of this year. A plus is that he can still play his guitar and actually is a little more comfortable doing so, as he is sitting straighter in his chair. After his original surgery eight years ago, he needed about a year to learn to play comfortably and capably from a wheelchair. Well, that's a longer explanation of the situation than I intended when I started out, so back to racewalking matters... Clinic. A Dave McGovern World Class racewalk is scheduled in sunny South Florida for Dec. 9-11. As always, the clinic will include detailed technique analysis, training methods, and fun things to help you learn to racewalk or racewalk faster. Worthwhile for beginners or seasoned racewalkers. For further information send an e-mail to chopsone@earthlink.net.

Dow Moves On

(The following article appeared in the New Hampshire Union Leader, published in Manchester, on August 2 after Joanne Dow learned she would not be on the team for the World Championships. It was written by Carol Robideaux.)

Six-time national championship racewalker and Manchester native Joanne Dow is determined to go the distance—it's just hard to know which path she's going to have to take to get to the big finish line.

She's had bad luck every step of the way. First, she missed a shot at the Olympics last summer on a technicality. Then after qualifying in June for a spot to compete in the women's 20 Km race during this weekend's International Association of Athletics Federations World Championships in Helsinki—Dow learned yesterday her ticket to fly was rescinded. Another technicality.

Turns out a judge during the qualifying race back in June had to rescind himself after the fact, leaving the USA T&F Championship event a few certified judges short of a valid race. Despite efforts on Dow's behalf over the last few weeks to fight the ruling and secure her spot for the Helsinki race, the decision was made final yesterday. (Ed. To clarify for those not familiar with the situation: In order to send more than one athlete to the Olympics or Worlds, each must have met the "A" standard. In this case, Joanne had an "A" standard going into the National Championships. When Teresa Vaill won that race with an "A" standard time, it appeared both were on the team. Then it was realized there were not enough IAAF certified judges at the race. Thus, Vaill's time was not recognized by the IAAF as valid. Winning the Trial race trumps an "A" standard every time, just as it did last year when Vaill made the Olympic team over Dow's "A" standard, provided the winning athlete has a "B" standard time, which Vaill did in both cases.)

With that the Bedford athlete was forced to do the one thing she does so well: accept her fate gracefully and focus on the road ahead.

"One of the reasons I'd kept going after last year's disappointment was the opportunity to go to the World Championships in Finland. To put all that work in and then have this happen is what's so frustrating," Dow said.

She could have gone on the trip along with her husband, Tim, as planned. But she would've had to pick up most the tab—and become a spectator in a race she was primed for. Dow at 41 is at the top of her game. A former championship swimmer for Trinity High School and lifelong athlete, Dow discovered the joy of racewalking a little more than a decade ago, when her two children, Hannah and Timmy, were still preschoolers.

Last year she made it through the Olympic Trials with a tumor on her ovary—since removed—and she's fought back hard for any ground she might have lost in the interim. Leading up to last summer's Trials, Dow was feeling the pressure of her quest for Olympic gold. Not only had she just moved to a new home, but she was serving as coach for her daughter's cross-country team, rooting for her son's baseball team and cross-training hard to make her best time in the Olympic Trials.

She even dropped out of a race in Rhode Island, because of fatigue. For a moment she even considered giving up racing altogether, said her coach, University of New Hampshire's Rob Hoppler. He sensed Dow was feeling pulled in too many directions, but as all good coaches do, Hoppler managed to say all the right things to keep her focused.

"You see a lot world-class athletes and the only thing they're concerned about is their sport. Her main concern is her family. That's really special, and it's unique," Hoppler said of Dow last summer.

Although she went on to finish second in the 20 Km for the U.S. Olympic team—and should have been on her way to Athens—she was bumped by first-place finisher, Teresa Vaill, on a technicality. (Ed. The writer goes on to describe what I have related above—not really a technicality, just the way qualifying had been set up and there were similar situations in other events.)

Looking back, Dow said her 2004 season was a mixed blessing. "It was a little bittersweet. I had my fastest season ever. I had my best time in every distance I raced, so I can't look back and be totally disappointed," Dow said in January. "Certainly I would've loved to make the Olympic team, but it wasn't in the cards, I guess."

Yesterday, Dow expressed similar sentiments over her canceled trip to Finland, and the way her path has taken yet another unexpected turn—in the direction of the USA T&F 15 Km racewalking championship this Sunday in Watertown, Mass.

"I've done all this training and I'm prepared to race," Dow said. "I might as well try to win another national championship." (Ed. And she did, as reported in the August 2005 ORW.)
Training in the USSR

(OK, so there is no USSR anymore and this is training from 50 years ago. It's still interesting to see what was in vogue back then. This is from an article compiled by Soviet athletic trainer D.I. Kozlovskii, which appeared in a 1935 issue of a journal called "Race Walking.")

A year's training involves a gradual building up from strolling to fast walking. Winter training includes taking up the sport of skiing to its full capacity to exercise the legs while having a virtual break from walking. However, even in this period, morning strolls and runs are included to the individual's discretion. In the spring, a large amount of cross country running is included in the morning sessions while long strolling and easy pace road training is the basis of the main workouts. This is built up to medium paced walks on road and track, and fast interval training in the summer. The autumn sees a tapering off to include long hikes and hunting trips in the country. Typical year round training schedules for 20 and 50 kilometers are shown below.

Training for 20 Km

Preparation period:
- Mon. Walk--exercises in gym play basketball, etc.
- Tue. Track (or road) training (winter time run on flattened snow, or on track in a few inches of snow. 1 to 1 ½ hours to own satisfaction.
- Wed. Continuous walk at easy limit.
- Thur. Rest.
- Fri. Skiing on undulating country up to 4 hours medium pace with some fast bursts of 1 to 2 km.
- Sat. Rest.
- Sun. Skiing on hills and flat for 30 to km, including 8 to 10 km at high speed, until you feel the strain of your efforts.

Early Season:
- Mon. Interval training on road or track building up form 5 or 6 X 1 km at 4:35 pace to 10 to 15 X 1 km at 4:35 pace, followed by fast spin of from 3 to 10 km at 4:45 to 4:50 pace.
- Wed. Varied workout of walking, running, in woods, exercises, running, jumping, and javelin throwing.
- Thur. Rest.
- Fri. First week—20 to 25 X 200 meters with 200 meters recovery and 20 to 25 X 100 meters with 200 meters recovery, followed by 3 to 4 km style training and finish up with 1 to 2 km run. Second week—15 X 200 meters with 200 meters recovery and 20 X 100 meters with 200 meters recovery. Third week—50 X 100 meters at about 21 seconds with 100 meters recovery. 2 to 3 km run. Fourth week—2 X 3 X 400 meters, 5 to 6 X 200 meters, 10 X 100 meters, 3 to 4 km run.
- Sat. First week—20 to 25 km varying fast and slow walking and running. 5 to 7 km easy run. Second week—15 to 16 km on road at 4:50 to 5:10 pace with fast 1 km every third km. Third week—20 to 25 km easy run in woods. Fourth week—5 km at 4:45 pace.
- Sun. 5 to 6 hour walk in woods.

Diet: A substantial meal prior to any event over 1 ½ to 2 hours is recommended. A liquid refreshment used by most Soviet walkers in training and in competition consists of strong tea made with hot water (not boiling) adding 200 to 300 grams of sugar per liter and the juice of 2 to 5 lemons. After drinking, rinse the mouth out with plain water or swallow a mouthful of water.

(OCTOBER 2005)
LOOKING BACK

40 Years Ago (From the October 1965 ORW)—An easy winner of the National 15 km in Atlantic City was Ron Laird, who led the American race walker. On his first 50 km race, Laird pushed hard for the entire distance. He finished the race in 3:31:12, nearly 9 minutes ahead of the second-place finisher, Dr. Eugene Kitts. Laird was followed by three other Americans—Ronald Bond, in third place, with a time of 3:37:03; Dr. John Slavonic, in fourth place, with a time of 3:38:33; and Dr. James McGovern, in fifth place, with a time of 3:45:05.

25 Years Ago (From the October 1978 ORW)—Ray Sharp walked 100 km in 10:59 in Longmont, Colorado to win the National title over Alan Price. Alan's time was 11:15. That was two weeks after Price had won his third straight 100 km race in Columbus, Ohio, this time in 19:28:16. Bob Chapin pulled clear of Len Busen in the final 10 miles to take second in...