Eastler, Dow Dominate 20 Km Title Races

Indianapolis, June 24-25—No stopping the grand dames of racewalking. Joanne Dow at 42 and Teresa Vaill at 43 once again proved to much for the youngsters as they finished one-two in the USASTF National 20 Km racewalk. On this occasion, Dow was the master as she beat Vaill by more than 4 minutes to win her third title at the distance in 1:35:76. She also won in 1998 and 2002. Vaill, who won the last two years, was seeking her sixth 20 Km title, dating all the way back to 1984, but could match strides with Joanne on this day.

In a stirring race for third, Sam Cohen prevailed by just two seconds over Jolene Moore, just over a minute behind Vaill. Maria Michla was well back in fifth.

That was on Saturday morning. On Sunday, Kevin Eastler mastered a field that was spread far apart by the finish to take his second 20 Km title in 1:25:09.67. John Nunn was more than 2 minutes back in second, he was about 2:40 ahead of Tim Seaman, the the winner of the last two years and five-time champion, and Tim was about 1½ minutes ahead of Matt Boyles, who continues to improve with a personal best. Veteran ray Sharp was another 3:40 back in fifth Ray, at 46, improved by one spot and 20 seconds on his performance last year, when he came back from many years of retirement. However, he was 10 minutes off his best way back in 1986.

Junior titles at 10 Km went to Katy Hayes, who prevailed in a good race with Lauren Forgues and Tina Peters, and Jared Swehosky, runner-up last year, prevailed over Roberto Vergara, third last year. Both were slightly slower than last year, but the humid conditions in Indianapolis might have contributed to that. The results:


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1:55:06.40 8. Heidi Hauch, un. 2:01:45 DNF-Deborah Huberty, NYAC and Loretta Schuellein, Walk USA


10 Km Titles To Seaman, Moore

Niagara Falls, N.Y., June 3-Tim Seaman defended his National 10 Km Racewalking title today and took his 29th Title overall in the process. His winning time of 42:23 left second-place Matt Boyles 42 seconds back. Boyles was closely pursued by Mike Tarantino for the first half of the race but pulled well clear over the final 5 Kms as Tarantino finished in 43:56. Nearly another minute back was Allen James, who won this race at age 42 in 2004 in 45:54. He bettered that by 65 seconds today, but those younger guys had to show up. Another old guy-Ray Sharp—was fifth in 47:06.

In the women's race, Jolene easily bested Maria Michta, 46:47 to 48:56, as they finished fifth and eighth overall. Canad's Rachel Lavalle was third in 50:10. Moore, a distance runner at Michigan State before she took up racewalking, led from the start and was never challenged.

James led the Niagara Walkers to the team title, putting the vaunted old men of Varsano's Chocolates to shame. The team of James, Mel McGinnis, and Dave Lawrence, with a combined age of 138, had a combined time of 2:27:07, more than 3 minutes ahead of Varsano's Sharp, Ian Whalley, and Dave McGovern who finished in 2:30:21 with a combined age of just 134. Pegasus (O'Brien, Knight, Phillip) was third in 2:56:01. Pegasus (Topham, Heinlein, and Tichy) won the women's team title with 3:05:20 ahead of Niagara Walkers 3:20:40.

John Soucheck, Zach Pollinger, and Joe Trapani continued on to 20 Km with times of 1:43:29, 1:46:42, and 1:56:04, respectively.

The results:


Other Results


June 2006

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Some Places With Races For Old and New Faces

Sun. July 2  5.3 Miles, Brunswick, Maine (D)
Mon. July 3  5 Km, Long Branch, N.J. (A)
Tue. July 4  5 Km, Evergreen, Colo., 8 am (H)
       8 Km, Washington, D.C. (S)
Sat. July 8  3 Km, Arlington, Vir. (S)
       5 and 10 Km, St. Louis Park, Minn., 7:30 am (I)
       Masters 5 Km, Edmonds, Wash. (C)
Sun. July 9  1 Mile, Davis, Cal. (E)
       5 Km, Lakewood, Colo., 8 am (H)
       5 Km, Tinton Falls, N.J. (A)
Mon. July 10  5 Km, Long Branch, N.J. (A)
Sat. July 15  Pac. Assn. 3 Km, Reno, Nev. (J)
       5 Km, Sterling, Ill.
       2.8 Miles, Seattle, 9 am (C)
       1 Mile, Pharr, Texas (O)
Sun. July 16  10 Km, Napa, Cal. (J)
Mon. July 17  5 Km, Long Branch, N.J. (A)
Sun. July 23  3 Km, Arlington, Va. (S)
Mon. July 24  5 Km, Long Branch, N.J. (A)
Fri. Aug.  4  5 Km, Littleton, Col., 6:30 pm (H)
Sat. Aug.  5  3 Km, Arlington, Va. (S)
Sun., Aug.  6 National USATF Masters 10 Km, Charlotte, NC
       5 Km, Evergreen, Col., 8 am (H)
       5.3 Miles, Brunswick, Maine (D)
       Canadian National 20 Km, Ottawa (open to foreign athletes) (R)
Mon. Aug.  7  5 Km, Long Branch, N.J. (A)
Sat. Aug. 12  2.8 Miles, Seattle, 9 am (C)
Mon. Aug. 14  5 Km, Long Branch, N.J. (A)
Wed. Aug. 16 Colorado Masters 5 Km, Fairmount, 6:30 pm (H)
Sat. Aug. 19  3 Km, Arlington, Va. (S)

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From Heel To Toe

NACAC Team. National Chairman Vince Peters has announced that the collegiate racewalkers named to the US Team competing at the NACAC (North America, Central America, Caribbean Islands) track and field meet on July 7-9 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic are: Maria Michta, C.W. Post; Lauren David U. Of Wisconsin-Parkside; Patrick Stroupe, Central Missouri; and Zachary Pollinger, Harvard. The women will race at 10 Km and the men at 20 ... Fadejevs a marathoner. Latavia's Aigars Fadejevs who won the silver medal in the Sydney Olympics 50 Km and ranked as high as third in the world at 20 Km (1998), ran a 2:28:30 for 10th in the Stockholm Marathon in early June. He started fast and went through the halfway point in sixth place with 1:09:05. He ran his fastest marathon in Milan in 2001 with a 2:27:20, a year in which he was still ranked fifth in the world at 50 Km. He walked his last race in September of last year, but apparently decided he has achieved all he could as a racewalker. He had a best 20 of 1:20:55 last year, so was still walking well ... Laird honored. Each year the Mt. San Antonio Relays in Walnut, Cal. Names one athlete to
its Hall of Fame. This year, Ron Laird, who 20 years ago became the first Racewalker to enter the USA Track and Field Hall of Fame, became the first to enter the Mt. SAC Hall of Fame. Their citation read: One of history's great walkers, Ron won eight Mt. SAC titles during the years 1964 through 1973. He captured the 5 Km walk in 1968, '69, '70, and '73, the 2 Mile crown in 1964, and the 10 Km in 1969, '71, and '73. Laird's great career spanned three decades during which time he won an astounding 65 national championships. His first title came in 1958 and his last in 1976. Ron was a member of four Olympic teams, competing in the 50 Km in 1960 and the 20 in 1964, '68, and '76. He was the Pan American Games champion in the 20 Km event in 1967. Laird held 81 American records at distances ranging from 1 Km to 25 miles and was named the outstanding US racewalker on six occasions. Ron was inducted in the USA Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1986. He is a great addition to the Mt. SAC Hall of Fame and we salute his efforts here in Walnut as well as his amazing national and international career. (They didn't mention his two bronze medals in World Cup 20 Km races).... Erickson book.

Last month I had a note about a book by Tim Erickson on the history of Australian walking. I was asked about the price. All I can tell you is that I remember a figure of $15 and then another of $20 in parentheses, but I'm not sure what that means in AU$. So again I refer you to Tim: Phone 03 9379 2065, terick@melbourne.org.au.

Some results, some of them important, that got lost in a stack of stuff while I prepared the May issue:


Wither Jefferson?

For 10 years, Ecuador's Jefferson Perez has proven himself the world's premier 20 Km walker. In 1996 he was a surprise winner of gold at the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1:20.07. He followed that up with three World Cup wins-1997 in 1:20.34, 2002 in 1:21.26, and 2004 in 1:18.42 (he did not compete in 1999)--and two World Championships-1:17.21 in 2003 and 1:18.35 in 2005 (he was second in 1999 and did not compete in 2001). He holds the World Record for the event. While he was not as successful in successive Olympics (fourth place, 2000; third and fifth place, 2004), he has been ranked number one in the world three times and number two four times (he will probably get a number two ranking again this year). However, he was disappointed with his second place finish in this year's World Cup and is contemplating his future in the sport. The following IAAF release discusses his thoughts on the future.

After La Coruna Silver, Perez Mulling Over Decision To Walk Away

Paul Warburton for the IAAF, May 20 2006

What national radio station besides Ecuador's reports the entirety of a race walk as if it were a World Cup final? None is the short answer, because there is not other country whose sporting fame revolves around a single walker like Jefferson Perez. (Ed. Although I am sure they got quite excited over their soccer team who went through group play in the World Cup and gave England a tussle before falling 1-0 in the second round.)

The man who brought Ecuador their first, and to date, only athletics Olympic Gold has hinted he will finally quiet a relatively poor showing in the IAAF World Racewalking Cup in La Coruna. Such a final declaration would be enough to take the commentator's decibles off the register, were it announced in the next week or two. But the athlete, 32 in July, has gone away to lick his wounds and decide whether the suffering that saw him helped from the podium after picking up second in the Spanish port is worth it.

Following his 1996 Olympic triumph in Atlanta, Ecuador issued a postage stamp in Perez's honor. Since then, fans have sent cards from three subsequent walking World Cups and two World Championships telling everyone their man was still King. Not in La Coruna. By his own admission, he prepared well, pushed for all his worth, and still didn't come within a half a minute of Spanish winner Francisco Fernandez. And the to gasps from Ecuadorians whose flags suddenly went limp, he admitted maybe it was time to go.

"This result was very important because in some respects it will determine whether I was going to continue racewalking or not," he said. Perez has now suffered two major setbacks since he broke the world record at the 2003 World Championships in Paris with a scintillating 1:17.21. He was an odds-on favorite to decorate his mantelpiece with a second Olympic title when he lined up in Athens two years ago. He faded badly to fourth, and the race went to Italy's Ivan Brugetti, who was as much a surprise as Perez had been when he
Ladany Does Solo 100

Ashtabula, Ohio, May 20 (by Warren Dillaway, from the Ashtabula Star Beacon.)

The support crew appeared out of nowhere Thursday evening and into Friday as Shaul Ladany competed his 100 mile walk in 21:45:34. Ladany, an Olympic racewalker from Israel, completed his mission around 9:45 am Friday as a small crowd applauded his efforts.

The record will be sent to the Guinness Book of Records for inclusion, but the experience is reality for Ladany and those who helped him “The last 10 miles was very tiring”, he said. (Ed. A note of explanation. Shaul was already U.S. Centurion #90, having done 100 on the track in Columbia, Mo. On Oct. 1973, finishing in 19:38:26. He was endeavoring to become the first age 70 Centurion—one who walks 100 miles in 24 hours or less and the oldest. However, it turns out that Larry O’Neil was 70 when he walked the last of his six centuries in 1977 and he was nearly 4 months older at the time than Shaul was when he finished the Ashstalita century. However, Larry had just 21:53:26, so Shaul is probably the fastest 70-year-old Centurion on record.)

Only brief spells of sprinkling rain challenged Ladany who maintained a focus from beginning to end. “I can tell you something. My success is due not only to my efforts, but all the helpers who helped exceedingly well in the night”, Ladany said.

The luckless crew appeared out of nowhere Thursday evening and into Friday as Shaul Ladany, an Olympic racewalker from Israel, completed his mission around 9:45 am Friday as a small crowd applauded his efforts.

Ladany held court on a chair as media interviewed the 70-year-old who is training to walk more than 180 miles in June from Paris to a suburb of Brussels, Belgium.

Some of the helpers just meandered into the unique world record attempt. “I was out for a walk last night and I saw a bunch of cars and I just got interested”, said Corey Tadsen of Ashstalia who spentfrom 6 pm Thursday to 10 am, except for a 2-hour break, Friday at Smith Field handing out food and drink to Ladany.

“I came down just to watch this guy make history. It’s incredible”, said Cyndy Sleigh.

It’s just an exceptional event in our town of Ashstalia. It’s a priceless moment”, said Chris Henshaw, who also stopped down to be a part of history.

Mallory Dragon, a cross-country runner University of Toledo and a graduate of Lakeside, walked most of the last 4 hours with Ladany and was amazed at his pace. “He’s amazing. I had a tough time taliying with him.”

(Ed. Shaul had been staying with Ron Laird in Ashstalia for several weeks as he trained for the effort, doing about 11 ½ hours every other day and about 3 hours on the in between “rest” days.)

LOOKING BACK

(Note: Last month’s Looking Back showed everything coming from March issues, when, of course, it should have shown May issues. My apologies to anyone who was hopelessly confused by my blunder.)

45 Years Ago (From Chris McCarthy’s May 1961 Midwest Walker) – Ron Laird copped two national titles— the 40 Km and the 25 Km. The 40 was held in Los Angeles where Laird’s 3:48:05 effort left Bob Hendrickson more than 23 minutes behind with Hans Aune third. Laird had more of a challenge in the 25 in Chicago two weeks later. Jack Mortland took control of the race after 3 laps (each about 50 yards under a mile) and started lapping in around 7:50. He moved away from Rimas Vacaitis and Laird and after 13 laps, led Laird by more than 2 minutes. Then he hit the wall and went from a 7:59 lap to a 9:41. Laird hauled in with less than a mile to go and moved on to victory in 2:11:36 with Mortland second in 2:12:49 and Vacaitis third in 2:16:56. Chris McCarthy was fourth. … A week before the 40 Km, the well-traveled Laird was third to Ron Zinn and Ron Daniel in a Philadelphia 12 miles—1:34:07, 1:37:53, and 1:39:17. Bob Mimm was fourth.

40 Years Ago (From the June 1966 ORW) – Rudy Haluza dominated in a couple of steamy Midwest races. First he toured the Stagg Field track in Chicago in very sultry weather to win the National 10 Km in 46:52. Don DeNoon was second in 47:42, after leading through the first mile in 6:53, Jack Blackburn beat Ohio TC teammate Jack Mortland for the next spot 48:29 to 48:38 with Ron Laird nearly another minute back and Ron Daniel and Larry Young capturing the next two spots. … Six days later, it was the sizzling, shadeless blacktop at Eastland Shopping Plaza in McKeesport, Pa. For the National 20. Again, DeNoon shot into the lead, and was about 30 seconds up on Haluza at 2 miles. However, Rudy hauled him in by 4 miles and went on to another victory in 1:36:16. DeNoon dropped out around 8 miles. Laird handled the heat much better this time and cruised to second in 1:37:48. Mortland tooled into what he thought was an easy third in 1:40:40, only to find Ron Daniel, who he
didn't realize was anywhere near, threatening to barf over his shoulder about three strides past the finish. A young newcomer, Bob Kitchen, was very impressive in fifth, followed by Bob Bowman, Blackburn, and Young. On the Ohio scene, Blackburn pulled away in the second half to win the Ohio AAU mile over Mortland, 6:30:2 to 6:58:7. Chuck Newell had his all-time best in third with 7:23. With cooler weather than for National Ten two weeks earlier, Mortland won the Ron Zinn 10 K on a dusty track in Chicago in 47:38 with Matt Rutyna a minute behind. In California, Halaza blasted a 1:12:38 for 10 miles on the track, with Laird well back. However, Laird did win the National 2 Mile in New York with a 13:52.6, followed by DeNoo, Daniel, and Young. (Walkers kept a busy schedule back then).

35 Years Ago (From the June 1971 ORW) -- The first sentence of the lead story reads: "Larry Young quickly disproved some of the doubters, such as your editor, who figured he might have a tough time getting back to his 1868 form." Yes, it read 1868, typos were no stranger to the ORW in those days either. Anyway, Larry won a highly competitive National 50 in Nutley, N.J. in 4:18:29. John Knifton, a newcomer to the long distances at that time, was second in 4:19:23, Gary Westerfield third in 4:21:05, Goetz Klopfer fourth in 4:21:31, host Ron Kulik fifth in 4:28:29, and Bob Kitchen sixth in 4:30:17... In Rouen, France, England's Colin Young covered 134 miles 202 yards in 24 hours for a world's best, which qualified him for the 520 Kms Paris-to-Strasbourg donnybrook...Ron Daniel did 1:13:15 for 10 Miles on Long Island, but lost to Kulik over 1 Mile in Bristol, Pa, 6:39 to 6:43... Larry Young proved his versatility by adding the National 2 Mile crown. He did 13:49.5 to beat Ron Larid, Jim Hanley, Ray Parker, Bill Ranney, and Steve Tyrer.

30 Years Ago (From the June 1976 ORW) -- The Olympic Trial at 20 Km had everyone there since the 50 had been eliminated from the Olympic program as part of a move to reduce the number of participants (it was back in 1980). Unfortunately, the race came up about 7/8 of a mile short when an official directed the runners back to the Stadium a lap too soon. Todd Scully won the loss-than-19 Kms race in 1:25:29, with Ron Laird (1:25:44), and Larry Walker (1:25:57) capturing the other two Olympic berths. It was Laird's fourth Olympic team. Two-time Olympic 50 Km bronze medalist Larry Young won the disappointing fourth in 1:26:41. Jim Heiring, Goetz Klopfer, Dan O'Connor, Tom Dooley, Bob Henderson, and Jerry Brown rounded out the top 10... A week earlier, Laird had won his sixth National title of the year at 5 Kms in 21:09.4, Scully had been close to the win, and had his 21:15.4. Larry Walker, Wayne Gusk, John Knifton, and Ron Daniel followed. Sue Brodock won the women's National 5 Kms in 25:29, with the Ohio TC's Laurie Tucholski second in 25:56. Susan Liess was third and Carol Mohanco, from Kettering, Ohio, was fourth. Mexican Daniel Bautista walked an impressive 2:22:53 for 20 miles in England, leaving Raul Gonzales nearly 4 minutes back. Gonzales had won a 20 Kms in Bergen, Norway a week earlier in 1:25:06...

25 Years Ago (From the June 1981 ORW) -- Overcoming a drizzle and Seattle chill, Vince O'Sullivan won the National 50 Km in 3:12:11. He controlled the race all the way. Jim Heiring was a lonely second in 4:15:29 and young Ray Sharp third in 4:21:06... The National Junior 10 Kms went to Tim Lewis in 50:56 with both temperature and relative humidity in the 90s in Knoxville... In Mexico's Walk Week, Soviet Valeriy Surisov won the 50 in 3:54:14 ahead of Canada's Marcel Jobin (3:56:25). The 20 went to Ernesto Canto in 1:24:32 ahead of Soviet Andrei Perlov (1:26:18)... Italy's Maurizio Damilano, the 1980 Olympic gold medalist won an international 20 Kms in 1:22:26.

20 Years Ago (From the June 1986 ORW) -- Canada's Guillaume Leblanc scored an impressive win in the Canadian International Racewalking Classic. The Canadian beat Mexico's Ernesto Canto, winner at the 1984 Olympics, 1983 World Championships, and 1981 World Cup, over the final 5 Kms to win in 1:23:17. Canto was 15 seconds back at the finish. Tim Lewis was with the leaders at 15 Kms, but was beaten for third by Martin Bermudez. Tim finished in 1:23:58. Bermudez won the 30 Kms three days later in 3:42:34, 24 seconds ahead of Felix Gomez. Marco Evonik was fourth in a sparkling 2:18:06... Four weeks later, Lewis won the U.S. Title in 1:25:22, but Carl Schueler, in his best ever 20, was closing at the finish to take second in 1:25:45. Ray Sharp had 1:26:46 in third... Debbi Lawrence won the women's National 10 Kms in 50:28:9 with Teresa Vail second in 50:56... Ron Laird became the first racewalker named to the U.S. Track and Field Hall of Fame, which no new class, number 1868.

15 Years Ago (From the June 1991 ORW) -- The World Cup, held in San Jose, Cal., produced some dramatic races. In the men's 20 on the first day, Mexico's Ernesto Canto tried to break loose from the USSR's Mikhail Schennikov and France's Thierry Toutain at the start of the final 2 Kms lap, establishing a quick 6 or 7 second lead. But Schennikov's finishing speed was too much and he won in 1:20:43, 3 seconds ahead of the Mexican. Toutain had 1:20:56, 4 seconds ahead of Spain's Daniel Plaza. Tim Lewis led U.S. walkers with 1:28:04 in 54th... The Women's 10 Kms saw Irina Strakhova, USSR, winning in 43:55 ahead of Mexico's Graciela Mendoza (44:09) and the USSR's Elena Sako (44:11). With Olga Kardopolova in fourth, the USSR was an easy team winner over Italy and Mexico. The U.S. was sixth, led by Debbie Lawrence (46:13) in 15th... In the 50 on the second day, the USSR met disaster when Andrei Perlov, leading by nearly a minute with a lap to go, was disqualified about 600 meters from the finish, giving Mexico's Carlos Mercenaro the win in 3:42:03. Mercenaro, who had won the 1987 World Cup 20 Kms at age 19, made a strong international debut in the longest distance. The USSR's Aleksandr Potashov crossed the line after Mercenaro, only to find he too had a third red card. Thus, Australia's Simon Baker took second and Germany's veteran Ronald Weigel third. The Soviets seemed to have the team title sewed up at the 45 km mark, but faded to sixth with the two red cards. Italy, the surprise leader after the 20, took the title ahead of Germany, who had a third, four, six finish at 50, and Mexico. National titles went to Tim Lewis in 1:29:55, with Gary Morgan second and Dave McGovern third, and Debbi Lawrence in 46:37, ahead of Lynn Weik and Victoria Herazo... Lewis (1:02:35) and Herazo (1:11:13) took national titles at 15 Kms in Portland, Ore. Lewis was followed by Andrzej Chylinski and Gary Morgan and Heraso by Wendy Sharp and Eebby Van Orden.

10 Years Ago (From the June 1996 ORW) -- The Olympic Trials for both men (20 Kms) and women (10 Kms) were held in Atlanta on the same course to be used in the Olympics a couple of months later. On a very warm, humid day, Curt Clausen was a convincing winner in the 20, his 1:29:50 putting him 47 seconds ahead of Tim Seaman. Gary Morgan was another 33 seconds back and Allen James 17 seconds behind him. As it turned out, Clausen, who had already met the B standard of 1:26:00 was the only U.S. qualifier, as no one approached the 1:23:50 A standard... The women's race saw a repeat for the three 1992 Olympians as Debbi Lawrence won in 46:05 with Michelle Rohl (46:37) and Victoria Herazo (48:12) following. Debbi Van Orden was another minute back in fourth... Earlier, Rohl had done an American record 44:06 on the track at UW-Parkside... In the Naumburg 50 Kms, which served as the German Olympic Trial, Russia's Viktor Gino won in 3:42:52 followed by Valentin Kononen, Finland in 3:45:19, and Mikhail Schennikov, Russia in 3:47:27. Ronald Weigel was fourth in
5 Years Ago (From the June 2001 ORW)—Curt Clausen won the U.S. 20 Km title for the fourth time in six years, easily beating an under-the-weather Tim Seaman in 1:24:50. Seaman, who had won the event in 1998 and 2000, was second in 1:26:15, just 19 seconds ahead of Sean Albert. Al Heppner beat Philip Dunn for fourth. In the women’s National, Michelle Rohr scored an easy win in 1:32:49, nearly four minutes ahead of Amber Antonia (1:36:37). Jill Zener (1:37:10), Debby Lawrence (1:38:41), and Joanne Dow (1:38:52) followed. Rohr and Seaman won titles at 15 Km in 1:09:10 and 1:02:27, respectively. Lawrence (1:11:42), Zener (1:11:49), and Antonia (1:12:33) followed Rohr. Sean Albert (1:03:00) was second in the men’s race, ahead of Al Heppner (1:07:11), and Dave McGovern (1:08:22). Junior 10 Km titles went to Ben Shorey in 45:18.01 and Robyn Stevens in 53:18.50. Shorey managed to get by Matt Boyles in the stretch drive, winning by just .02. NAIA titles went to Sara Stevenson in 14:09.39 and Lachlan McDaid in 21:20.33 at 5 km. In Europe, Australia’s Nathan walked 1:18:14 in Ireland, Andreas Werm did 1:19:32 in Germany, and Mexico’s Alejandro Lopez had 1:20:59 in Finland.

In 1997, Ron Laird self-published a book The Art of Fast Walking, which he has updated several times since. Here is an excerpt from his April 2006 revision. He says that he has finally realized that racewalking is also a push—something he used to argue against, so the book now includes the push part of the technique in many places that were ignored previously. This excerpt is from his section on Correct Technique. For information on purchasing the book, contact Ron at 4706 Diane Drive, Ashtabula, OH 44004.

It is important to achieve and maintain proper body balance at all times. Keep an upright posture with hips directly underneath you before it may be bent. Hip motion must be uninhibited because it performs the most important part of the race walking movement. The rolling and forceful setting back into the hip joint pushes you forward and makes it possible for you to move your legs quickly and efficiently. You must master this hip action in order to walk your fastest. Good flexibility and some back-and-forth hip turning improves stride length and helps you hold better ground contact during fast race walking.

Keep your head up and facing forward. Don’t let your chin drop down toward your chest. Keep jaw, face, and neck muscles relaxed. These muscles may be the first to tense up during times of stress. Stay aware of what they are doing so you can keep them under control.

Wearing sunglasses on hot sunny days can help you feel cooler because you don’t see the sun at its strongest. Shading the eyes also helps keep your face and neck muscles relaxed by helping to eliminate squinting.

The arms are moved as in regular walking, swinging counter to the legs. Hold the elbows at a 90-degree angle and pump them vigorously. Their angle should close a bit when going fast, and open a little more when moving at a slower pace. Let them come across your chest in a pattern most comfortable for your body structure and the speed you’re moving. When an arm comes across the chest it helps bring the opposite hip around thus increasing your stride length a little. Swinging your arms straight back and forth in a pattern that is parallel to the sides of your body can restrict the natural front-to-rear turning of the hips if overdone.

The faster you move your legs, the stronger and more economical your arm pumping wants to be. A shorter and quicker arm swing will always help speed you up. If you’re going to walk at a slower pace, bend your arms more and swing them easier.

Driving the elbows back gives good lift and tone to the chest area. Extra exercise to this area is appreciated more by women because it helps firm and strengthen their breast muscles.

Hip motion must be uninhibited because it performs the most important part of the race walking movement. The rolling and forceful setting back into the hip joint pushes you forward and makes it possible for you to move your legs quickly and efficiently. You must master this hip action in order to walk your fastest. Good flexibility and some back-and-forth hip turning improves stride length and helps you hold better ground contact during fast race walking.

Push straight forward with toes and ankles. Try not to twist your heel inward as your back foot comes up on its toes. Hip flexibility helps reduce much of the inward twisting of the heels as the toes push off. If the heel torques inward too much, the leg will be in a slightly twisted position when it comes forward. This could eventually cause strain, pain, and injury to hip and hamstring areas.

Most of the pulling back of the ground is done with the large muscles on the backs of your legs (hamstrings). You can really feel the work they do when race walking uphill, especially when using proper leg straightening, hip action, and upright posture with each step. Hill work is great for building hip and hamstring power and stamina.

Pulling your heel back just as it contacts the ground helps eliminate any breaking action of the leg as it lands out in front of you. This "digging in" at heel strike is also a good way to quickly straighten out the knee joint. Be careful not to overdo heel pulling at high speeds because it can easily bounce you up and off the ground.

Early snatching away of the rear foot before the advancing foot has had the extra instant it needs to contact the ground may also get the fast-moving race walker into trouble. Premature leg swing will cause a loss of contact that may be detectable to experienced race walk judges. Always stay in control of your technique and how you apply it to your fitness and effort.