Eastler Makes Successful Debut At 50 Km

Chula Vista, Cal., Jan. 28—Having established himself as the country’s top 20 Km racewalker in recent years, Kevin Eastler tried the 50 Km distance for the first time today, and did it with some success as he captured the National title. Kevin has twice won the U.S. title at 30 Km (2004 and 2006) and holds the U.S. record at that distance (2:12:53), but that was the furthest he had raced until today. After today’s race, he said, “Never again!”

After flirting with the 4-hour Olympic standard for much of the race, the 29-year-old Eastler finally succumbed to the unfamiliar distance in the final stages and finished in 4:05:44. In the process, he beat defending champion Philip Dunn, who at 35 had his fastest race since the 2004 Olympic Trials with a 4:09:44. Dunn, twice an Olympian at the distance, also won the title in 2001 and had his best performance in 2002 when he walked 3:56:33.

While he won the National title, Eastler did not win the race. That honor went Norway’s Erik Tysse, who crossed the line in 3:57:35, just 18 seconds of Ecuador’s Javier Moreno. Another Ecuadorian, Mecias Zapata finished not far behind Eastler in 4:06:19.

In third place in the U.S. Championship race was another 20 Km specialist, John Nunn, who like Eastler made his 50 Km debut today. A member of the U.S. Army’s World Class Athlete Program, John held up well to finish in 4:14:16.

The 47-year-old Ray Sharp, second to Dunn last year was fourth in 4:26:07, five minutes slower than last year when he matched his personal best dating back to 1981. The semi-retired, 39-year-old Curt Clausen was next in 4:27:41. Clausen, seven-time National Champion at 50 and three-time Olympian, holds the American record at 3:48:04. In sixth, Mark Green dropped one spot from last year, but walked nearly two minutes faster as he set an new American record for the 50-54 age group. And, not far behind him was 48-year-old Marco Evoniuk, in his first 50 since 1997, when he competed on the eighth World Cup team. Evoniuk, with an all-time best of 3:56:55 in 1988, competed in four Olympics (and was a member of the 1980 team that did not compete) and two World Championships, in addition to all those World Cup appearances. Assuming that Eastler and Nunn will opt for the 20 at the World Cup, Evoniuk might be on his team, matching the record of Dan O’Connor.

In the women’s race, Heidi Hauch defended the title she won last year, finishing in 5:42:55 ahead of three women walking their 50 Km races.

The results:

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Varsano's Chocolates; Michael Kazmierczak (20), U. Of Rhode Island; Fausto Quinde, Ecuador. DQ-Stephen McCullough (450), un.; Tim Berrett (42), Canada; John Constantino, Cyprus.


Past Winners National 50 K

1931 Harry L. Clark 5:26:42 1964 Chris McCarthy 4:45:31
1932 Philip Jachelski 5:27:05 1965 Dean Rassmussen 5:03:33
1933 Philip Jachelski 5:11:30 1966 Larry Young 3:48:25
1934 Henry Clia 4:58:56 1967 Larry Young 3:34:04
1935 Henry Clia 5:47:29 1968 Larry Young 4:12:12
1937 Al Mangan 5:00:03 1970 John Knifton 4:35:02
1938 Leo Schnepel 5:18:51 1971 Larry Young 4:18:30
1942 William Mihalo 5:75:46 1975 Larry Young 4:18:56
1943 William Hihalo 5:19:28 1976 Larry Young 4:11:08
1945 John Abbate 5:35:20 1978 Marco Evoniuk 4:24:05
1946 George Wieland 5:17:25 1979 Marco Evoniuk 4:18:56
1947 John Abbate 5:12:51 1980 Carl Schueler 4:06:07
1948 Ernie Crosbie 5:04:30 1981 Vince O'Sullivan 4:12:11
1954 Leo Sigren 4:43:45 1987 Carl Schueler 4:00:19
1955 Leo Sigren 4:30:57 1988 Carl Schueler 4:02:55
1957 James Hewson 5:06:39 1990 Tim Lewis 4:10:46
1959 Elliott Denman 5:07:47 1992 Carl Schueler 4:02:10

Results of Other Races


Matthew Forgues 7:26.75. 3. Thylor Campbell 7:40.4. Taylor Burns 7:53.


High School Girls 1 Mile, Allison Chin, Tipp City, Ohio 8:51.32. 1. Ali Berry, un. 8:59.27. H.S. Boys 1 Mile-1. Christoph Roschinsky, Washington Court House, Ohio 6:40.77. (That's impressive for an unknown, but don't get too excited. He's not our next Olympic medalist since he is an exchange student from Germany. But then, if he can be persuaded that his future is in this country and that he should continue to develop his obvious racewalking)
It’s 2007 and the Races Go On

Fri. Feb. 2   National USATF Indoor 1 Mile, New York City (Milrose Games)
Indoor 3 Km, Kenosha, Wis. (F)

Sun. Feb. 4   5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)
Bates College Indoor 1 mile and 3 Km (K)

Fri. Feb. 9   5 Km, Goshen, Indi (Q)

Sat. Feb. 10   College Track Conference Indoor 3 Km, New Haven, Conn. (K)
2.8 Miles, Seattle (C)

Sun. Feb. 11   5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)
Philadelphia Masters Indoor 1 Mile (V)

Indoor 1 Mile and 3 Km, Brentwood, N.Y. (U)
Indoor 3 Km, Kenosha, Wis. (F)

Sat. Feb. 17   Indoor 3 Km, Columbia, Missouri (AA)
North Region Indoor 3 Km, Ada, Ohio (M)
Indoor 3 Km, Sioux Falls, S.D. (Z)

Sun. Feb. 18   5 and 10 Km, Laverne, Cal (R)
5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)
New England Indoor 3 Km, Cambridge, Mass. (X)

Indoor 3 Km, Mill Walk, Milford, Conn., 9:30 am (B)

Fri. Feb. 23   3 Km, Bristol, Virginia (BB)

Sat. Feb. 24   National USATF Indoor 3 Km Women and 5 Km Men, Boston (D)
Mid-Atlantic Indoor 3 Km, , Bethlehem, Penn., (W)

1 Hour, Los Gatos, Calif (J)
5 Km, Alamo, Texas (O)

Sun. Feb. 25   Indoor 3 Km, Colorado Springs (H)
Florida 15 Km, Clermont (N)

Fri. March 2   Indoor 3 Km, Bethel U., Minn. (I)

3 Indoor 3 Km, Kenosha, Wis. (F)
Indoor 3 Km, Louisville, Kentucky (E)

Sat. March 3   Henry Laskau 5 Km, Coconut Creek, FL (N)
The 2006 Elite Racewalk Camp in Pharr, Texas was held from Dec. 27 through Dec. 31, and was a great experience for all involved. We had 25 young men and women from eighth graders right on through some young college stars in attendance. In addition, there were about 10 to 15 of the local clubs (mostly the South Texas Walking Club) who participated in a concurrent day camp that shared some of the same resources.

As everyone hopefully saw from the results of the 1 Mile and 5 Km races there were some superb performances. Among the boys, the Vergara twins from Edinburg, Texas and Trevor Barron, an 18-year-old boy from Alburquerque, posted fantastic times in the 5 Km. On the women’s side, collegiate frosh Le’erin (Wisconsin Parkside), Tina Peters (Goshen College), and Laurne Forgues (U. Maine) all had times that would have placed them second overall in the open women’s 5 Km Nationals.

I think every last athlete went home with memories of some great times, some fast times, and new skills they have gained from the camp. From the parents holding cookouts for the athletes, including the great New Year’s Eve party.

A.C. Jaime and his club did a fantastic job of hosting the camp. A.C. had an incredible group of coaches and volunteers who really went over and above to make sure the camp was a success. In addition to the bus drivers and custodians at the high school, to the restaurant and hotel staffs. And the parents of all the kids in the South Texas Walking Club were absolutely fantastic. In addition to helping with the two races, the parents held several cookouts for the athletes, including a great New Year’s Eve party.

Tom Eastler, Gary Westerfield, Diane Graham-Henry, Ray Kuhles, and Tim Seaman did an excellent job as instructors. I also want to single out Rachel Lavellee and Maria Michita, who were immensely inspirational to everyone present. These two friendly rivals bode well for racewalking in North America.

A big thanks goes to Elaine Ward and the North American Racewalk Foundation and USATF for their financial support. Those wanting to help fund such efforts in the future can make tax deductible contributions to NARF designated to the Youth Development Fund. Send them to: Elaine Ward, NARF President, 358 W. California Blvd., #110, Pasadena, CA 91105.

A few comments from those attending:

Stephanie Martinez, Illinois: My experience in Texas has been a turning point in my life and I will never forget it. This camp did not only teach me a lot about racewalking that I didn’t know, but it gave me a great deal of confidence. Thank you for letting me train with...amazing racers from around the country.

Le’erin Voss, Wisconsin: I really enjoyed the ‘‘Biomechanics of Racewalking and Applied Mechanics’’ on the track. It made me aware of areas I can improve upon and I felt it was most applicable.”

Amanda Johnson, Kentucky: “It was a unique opportunity that I was happy to be part of. I not only gained knowledge of correct racewalk form and training strategy, but also received individual attention from some of the best racewalk coaches in the country. My favorite...
Development Fund now total $21,183.70. The Raffie winner was Bob Hickey who donated the money back to NARF.

NARF President Elaine Ward also announced results of the recent American Gold Eagle Heppner Award. The total for that fund is now $24,713.50. Each year, that fund is tapped to support an outstanding collegiate racewalker with expenses toward their sport and their future in it.

Along with his athletic accomplishments, Patrick is an outstanding student. Chair of the Division of Humanities at Central Methodist had this to say about Partick: "I was delighted to be part of the camp in Texas. I felt it went wonderfully. I'm impressed how well the campers got along, participated and seemed to come away with a truly positive attitude toward their sport and their future in it."

Diane Graham-Henry, instructor and USA Track and Field Illinois Racewalk Chair: "I was delighted to have the privilege of participating in the Texas Largest Racewalk Annual 5 Km. I was impressed with the quality and number of well-known and well-respected racewalk coaches and administrators who made it there to help make the seminar for young athletes a success, and a tremendous success it was! We need more programs like the South Texas Walking Club's if we are going to get more young persons involved in racewalking."

From Heel To Toe

Heppner Award. We mentioned the NARF Development Fund above. Another pocket of the North American Racewalking Foundation is the Al Heppner Memorial Fund. Each year, that fund is tapped to support an outstanding collegiate racewalker with expenses of training and travel. NARF has announced that this year’s winner is Patrick Stroupe, a senior at Central Methodist University. Patrick has won several NAIA collegiate titles, indoors and out. He has best times of 23:04.63 for 5 km, 48:19 for 10, and 1:38:44 for 20. Along with his athletic accomplishments, Patrick is an outstanding student. Dr. Frank Pisano, Chair of the Division of Humanities at Central Methodist had this to say about Patrick: "Patrick has evidenced academic and artistic talent as well as exemplary intellectual discipline. Stroupe was enrolled in two of my courses—Introduction to Cinema and Expository Writing—in which he consistently earned honors grades in addition to skills markedly superior to most of the undergraduates at CMU, he possesses a conscientious attitude that disallows his resting content with strong grades... This affable young man is witty and pleasant. He is one of the most impressive students with whom I have worked in 25 years of college level teaching."

Together with the announcement of the Heppner Award, NARF President Elaine Ward also announced results of the recent American Gold Eagle Raffle held to raise money for the Foundation’s efforts. Total donations through the raffle were $84,500, $3675 of which went to the Heppner Fund. That fund now totals $24,713.50 after making the $2500 award to Stroupe. Another $4825 of the Raffle proceeds went to the Youth Development Fund mentioned above. In 2006 that fund was tapped for $2500 to the South Texas Walking Club, $2500 to the Elite Junior Camp, $2600 to Maine Racewalkers, and $500 to coach Mike Rohl at Mansfield State University in Pennsylvania. The Development Fund now totals $21,183.70. The Raffle winner was Bob Hickey who donated the money back to NARF. In his honor, the Bob Hickey Youth Travel Fund has been established as another arm of NARF. Name (but not fortune) comes to your editor. Not being much of a web browser, I have never visited the famous Wikipedia site, but something (I don’t remember what) took me to the Wikipedia entry on Racewalking. It includes a rather well done page describing the sport and its rules, links to other sites, reference to films, and lists of the top 10 all-time performers at 20 Km (men and women) and 50 Km (men). Finally, there is a list of “Other famous racewalkers”, other I guess being those not included in the lists. Lo and behold, among the 20 “others” listed is Jack Mortland. Is this my promised 15 minutes of fame? Not sure how I landed there, but at least I have heard of me. I have no idea who a couple of others on the list might be. But, it is an interesting collection drawn from who knows where. It reads: Capt.Berkeley (Robert Berkeley-Allardice), Ernesto Canto, Yueling Chen, Andrej Chylinksi, Marizio Damianno, Vladimir Golubnichiy, George Goulding, Joy Gregory, Jerzy Hausleber, Bengt Kannenberg, Jack Mortland, Dave Romansky, Henry Laskau, Ron Laird, Kerry Saxby, Ron Weigel, Larry Young, Ron Zinn, and Taylor Burns. Can anyone tell me who Joy Gregory and Taylor Burns might be? (Well, to answer my own question, I just input the result of a 1 mile race in New Hampshire—you’ve seen it earlier in this issue—and Taylor Burns of the Maine Racewalkers, was fourth. Not particularly a claim to fame, but there he is.) Other than those two and that Mortland guy, the list is composed of walkers of some fame, although there are many others I would include on such a list before some of these individuals. Seeing more speed? Martin Rudow, a national class racewalker in the 60s and the author and producer of well-respected books and videos on racewalking, has turned to racing sports cars in his dotage. Heart transplant survivor. One of those who certainly deserves a spot ahead of many on that list above is Hartwig Gauder, who competed for East Germany for nearly 20 years. With bests of 3:39:45 for 50 and 1:20:51 for 20, Gauder won gold at the 1980 Olympics and 1987 World Championships. He also had a gold and two silvers in World Cup competition, all his medals coming in the 50 Km. He began to experience health issues in 1993 when his heart was weakened and structurally thinned as a result of a viral infection. He was given an artificial heart in 1996, with near disastrous results and, having survived that, a transplant in 1997. Gauder had competed in the New York City Marathon several times before his heart problems. One of his hosts there had been Ron Barber, a transplant survivor who had competed as runner following his transplant. While on the wait list for his transplant, Gauder learned that Barber has died and vowed to return to New York to run “with the speed of Ron Barber.” Receiving his transplant in January 1997, Gauder was walking three days later and started running within 6 months. He fulfilled his vow, competing in the 1998 New York City Marathon. In 2003, he scaled Mt. Fuji in Japan and has now reached 10 years as survivor leading a productive life. Later in this issue, I repeat a telephone interview I did with Hartwig and his compatriot Ron Weigel when they were in New York for the 1992 NYC Marathon... On Deakes record. In last month’s issue, we reported on Nathan Deakes’ new world record at 50 Km. Nathan walked 3:35:47, bettering Robert Korzeniowski’s record by 16 seconds. However, on June 13, 2004, Russia’s Denis Nizhnygorodov did a 3:35:29 in Cheboksary, and some have questioned why this is not the world record. That record was never accepted since the required EPO testing was not conducted following the race. Correction. To date the only correction I have received regarding last month’s World and U.S. rankings and lists regards John Souchek. John had a best of 1:43:29, not the 1:45:07 I credited him with. However, he still remains in 16th spot on the list, 6 seconds behind Mark Green. Good News. National RW Chairman Vince Peters sends some good news, as follows: “The lead has been taken by the National HIS Foundation to promote the racewalk as a high school event (finally). NHFHS has added the racewalk to the 2007 High School Rule Book—see Rule #8, Section 1. This means that all high schools and junior highs can add the racewalk to their local track and field meet.” Of course, that doesn’t mean that they will, but it is a big step. Sponsors. The USA Track and Field Committee is looking for a corporate Title sponsor for both the entire Grand Prix Circuit and for the Women’s Indoor Mile at the Millrose Games. The Women’s mile will disappear if a sponsor is not found. If you have any ideas, contact Vince Peters, 607 Omar Circle, yellow Springs, OH 45387, my tc@sbgclocal.net. Outstanding Masters. The Masters Track and Field Committee of the USA Track and Field has selected the following as the Outstanding Racewalkers for each age group for 2006 (but note that I have two sources of this information and there are some differences, thus some parenthetical insertions where there
are two choices): Age 30—Deborah Huberty and Tim Seaman Age 40—Jolene Moore and Curt Clausen Age 45—Terresa Vail and John Soucheck (Bill Vayo) Age 50—Heidi Hauch and Ray Sharp Age 55—Debbie Topham (Lyn Tracy) and Mark Green (Steve Pecinovsky) Age 60—Jolene Steigervold and Leon Jasnowski Age 65—Janet Higbie (Elton Richardson) and Paul Johnson Age 70—Bev McCall (Grace Moremen) and Jack Bray Age 75—Kate Marrs (Claire Elkins) and Jack Starr Age 80—Marilyn Gordon and Bob Mumm. Age 85—Fan Benno-Curtis and Tony Grove. Higbie and Sharp (Vail and Sharphoffman) won the Overall Walker of the Year Awards. I would imagine someone will clear this up for me by the time I publish the next issue. **Starr honored.** Jack Starr, who has been setting records and winning titles in Masters events for many years, received two USATF awards at the annual Mid-Atlantic USATF Awards Luncheon on Jan. 21. Jack was formally inducted into the National Masters Hall of Fame for the class of 2006. He also received the Frank Percival Award for Outstanding Athlete of the Year for the Mid-Atlantic USATF. He beat out every single runner and thrower in the association... **50 Km opportunities.** There will be several opportunities for walkers to meet the 4:45 qualifying standard for the 2008 Olympic Trials, which will be on Feb. 10, 2008 in Miami (Palmetto Bay). Races now on the schedule in Ocean, New Jersey on Sept. 16; Minneapolis, Minn. on Oct. 7; Hauppauge, New York on Oct. 28, and Houston, Texas on Jan 6, 2008. There will be more details as the races come up...

**2007 IAAF World Racwalking Challenge Races**

March 10—Tianepantia DeBaz, Mexico (20 Km Men and Women, 50 Km Men)
March 24—Kunshan, China (20 Km Men and Women, 50 Km Men)
April 14—Rio Major, Portugal (20 Km Men and Women)
May 1—Sesto San Giovanni, Italy (20 Km Men and Women)
June 2—LaCoruna, Spain (20 Km Men and Women)
June 23—Krynkov, Poland (20 Km Men and Women)
Sept. 29—1st IAAF Racewalk Challenge Final, Saransk, Russia (20 Km Men and Women, 50 Km Men)

(Note: The distances to be contested at each site are assumptions on my part based on previous years.)

**Other Upcoming International Racewalking Events**

2007
April 21-22—Pan American Racewalking Cup, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
July 6-8—Junior Pan American T&F Championships (10 Km Men and Women)
July 23-25—NACAC T&F Championships, San Salvador, El Salvador (20 Km Men and Women)
July 11-15—5th IAAF World Youth T&F Championships (10 Km Men and Women)
July 23-29—Pan American Games, Rio de Janeiro (20 Km Men and Women, 50 Km Men)
Aug. 12—NACAC U23 Racewalking Cup, Hauppauge, New York (10 Km Men and 5 Km Women)
Aug. 8-19—World University Games, Bangkok, Thailand (20 Km Men and Women)
Aug. 24-Sept 2—IAAF World T&F Championships (20 Km Men and Women, 50 Km Men)
Sept. 4-15—World Masters T&F Championships, Riccione, Italy (5,10, and 20 Km Men and Women)

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Columbian came from nowhere to win 1972 Olympic bronze in 50K racewalking

by Jennifer Langosch

The case sits inconspicuously in the back corner of the foyer of Larry Young's Columbia home. Young comments on how one of the gold medal needs to be shined. The National Track and Field Hall of Fame says there should be 30 of them, but Young can only find 25, each denoting a national title that he captured. (Actually, Larry seems to have them all since he is credited with 25 Senior titles. So it appears to be his memory, not his collection, at fault.)

Above those 25 medals are two others, these being Olympic bronzes. They're not quite as flashy and likely wouldn't catch more than a swift glance from an ignorant passerby. That is, until Young tells his story.

Ironically, the distance runner in high school never had Olympic ambitions. Just after the start of his senior year, Young turned on the television at his parents' home and saw England's Don Thompson win a gold medal in the 50K racewalk at the 1960 Olympics. Young was hooked.

"The next day, I went to school and was mimicking what I saw," Young said. "My coach said 'Young, you look pretty good.' They joked, 'Young, you can walk as fast as you can run.'"

It wasn't until 1965, after Young finished serving in the Navy, that he decided to enter a racewalking competition. Three years later, he was walking in the Olympics.

As the Games approached, not a single track and field magazine had Young named as a medal contender. He wasn't even mentioned as a darkhorse. The conditions on the morning of the race were less than ideal. Extensive heat and dense fog made the high altitude (Mexico City) course even more grinding.

He had dined earlier that week with Paul Nihill, an English racewalker who had finished second in the 50K race four years before, and the two talked about the race. They talked about the conditions and the pace. Despite the change in altitude, Nihill insisted the typical 4-hour 10-minute pace would still hold true. Young wasn't so convinced.

"You guys go out at your 4:10 pace and I'll see you at 40 Km," Young told Nihill.
Sure enough, around the 35 Km mark, Young surpassed Nihill.

"I went out at a conservative pace," Young said. "I just let them go. I knew what I was capable of, and I wasn’t going to get sucked into that pace." Young took the podium later that day after finishing in 4 hours and 20 minutes. (Ed. Actually, Christoph Holm of East Germany won in 4:20:13.6 with Young finishing in 4:31:15.4 behind Hungary’s Antal Kiss (4:30:17). Nihill did not finish and Goetz Klopfer finished 10th for the U.S. in 4:39:17.8.)

After the race, teammates congratulated him. But then there were the whispers that the finish was a fluke. It was the mistakes of other racewalkers that opened the path for Young, they told him. Young thought of only one way to dispute that claim: Do it again.

He qualified for the Munich Olympics in 1972 and once again finished third. After the race, he walked into the team room to deliver a message: "There’s another fluke you guys." Those 1972 Olympics would be the last for Young. (Ed. Larry undoubtedly would have been on the U.S. team at 50 in 1976, but the event was dropped for that edition of the Games.)

Young retired when the U.S. boycotted the 1980 Games in Moscow, but he still holds the distinction of being the only American to win a long-distance racewalking medal in the Olympics.

Soon after Young replaced walks around the track with hours in his art studio. Young, who majored in art at Columbia College, began to sculpt. One of his sculpturesstands at the intersection of U.S. 63 and Broadway. There is one in the University Hospital and clinics atrium and others at Columbia College and Stephens College.

Young no longer racewalks. The gravel roads in front of his house aren’t suitable for walking long distances. And he would prefer to spend his time in the studio adjacent to his stone home, anyway.

But inside that home, a man still speaks with pride. He remembers the details and his times in nearly every race during his 15-year career. Young reached an echelon of success in a sport where he and his fellow walkers were viewed as the "ugly ducklings of track and field". And it’s what is in that trophy case, situated in the comer of the foyer, that tells the end of the story.


A German Duo For the Ages
From the November 1992 Ohio Racewalker.

During the ‘80s, the names Hartwig Gauder and Ronald Weigel became synonymous with excellence in 50 Km walking and they were at their zenith when they traded one-two finishes at the 1987 World Cup and World Championship races. Weigel won the Cup race in New York, but Gauder came back later in the summer to beat him in the World Championships race. Before and since that banner year, they have been dominant in 50 Km. He was ranked number one in the world that year and also earned number one rankings in 1985, 1986, and 1987, along with several other rankings in the top five. He was ranked third at 20 Km in 1986. He was unable to defend his Olympic title because of the 1984 Eastern bloc boycott, but finished third in 1988 and was still good for sixth this summer at age 37. In World Cup competition, Hartwig was second in 1981, first in 1985, second in 1987, and sixth in 1991. And, he had that 1987 World Championship along with a third in 1991.

Born November 10, 1954 in Vaihingen in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), Hartwig moved with his family to the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) at age 5. Standing just over 6 feet tall and weighing about 160 pounds, Gauder has a 50 Km best of 3:39:45 and 20 Km best of 1:20:51. He was a European Junior champion at 10 Km (1973 in 42:27) and is one of only three athletes to have won European Junior and Senior, Olympic, and World Championships titles. (Decathlete Daley Thompson and triple jumper Khrisito Markov are the other two.) He retired briefly in 1989, but came back to competition in 1990.

Nearly five years younger than Gauder, Ronald Weigel emerged as a force at 50 Km in 1983 when he won the World Championships. The following year, he earned a number one world ranking in the event. He had number two rankings in both 1987 and 1988, and was ranked fifth last year. He also had number two rankings in 1980 and 1981. In the Seoul Olympics (1988) he captured silver medals at both 20 and 50 and has continued strongly with third place finishes in the 1991 World Cup and 1992 Olympic 50s. Weigel, at 5' 9" and 135 pounds, has a 50 Km best of 3:38:17 and 20 Km best of 1:19:19. He was born August 8, 1957 in Hildburghausen.

When Helene introduced Hartwig to me on the phone, she noted that the two of them had given a clinic that morning (the day before the marathon), which had been excellent. She quoted his as saying at the clinic that they do more than 200 miles a week in training and that is why they have stayed on top. Well, it turns out that many been some what of an exaggeration, but they certainly have done a tremendous volume of training through the year.

When I asked Hartwig about training, I didn’t get any real specific answers (A telephone interview in his second language—he speaks very well, but I wasn’t always sure he completely comprehended my questions—is not the best situation). However, I got the numbers of 30 to 34 hours a week in training. This consists of walking, running, and "gymnastics". In fall and winter, activities include ski-rolling, mountain bike riding, and cross-country skiing. About 2 hours a week involve what he termed "athletic training." He threw out the figure of 230 Km in a typical week, and I think, indicated that this includes about as much running as walking. He also mentioned 35-40 km in the morning and 15-20 km in the afternoon, which, of course, would come to much more than 230 km a week in training. He does more running and skiing in the winter and starts specialized racewalk training in February. I got the idea from both that their training is mostly pounding it on the roads, and includes little interval work. Hartwig noted that he also enjoys volleyball and football (soccer to us).

Gauder does most of his training alone, except when he is in a training camp situation, where he might train with Weigel or others. They usually get to Mexico in the spring for several weeks. Hartwig is coached by former 1500 meter running great Siegfried Hermann. Ron’s coach, Hans Joachim Pathus is also the national coach—and his father-in-law. (I competed against Pathus way back in 1967 at the Lugano Cup in Bad Saarow, GDR—or, I should say, was in the same race.)

Hartwig started in sports competition at age 12 with ski jumping and did not find racewalking until age 17. He then turned out to be natural at the sport, walking a 10 Km in 53:00...
in his first race with little training and improving to 49 minutes just three weeks later. His first international race was a year later (1972) when he won at a seven-nation meet in Pris. In 1973, he captured that European Junior title. His first 50 km wasn’t until 1979 and was walked as a joke, he says. Some joke, as he did 4:01. The next year he finished third in the German trials with a 3:49 and then on to win the Olympic gold.

I asked why they have dropped back a bit the last few years (if battling for a medal rather than battling for the gold in dropping off). Gunder now being 38, I gave him the option of age as an excuse, and he felt that was part of it. He also mentioned the problem of incentive, which obviously gets tougher once you have conquered the mountain. Ron turned more to problems with organization since German reunification. The same support structure is not in place now that they had grown used to. Hartwig also noted this as a problem. Ron expressed confidence that things are getting better and will continue to do so, and both look forward to challenging the likes of Perlov and Mercenario in the future.

In talking to Hartwig, I tried to get into the question of how walking had been accepted by the general public in the DDR, wondering if they were subjected to the same sort of ridicule walkers elsewhere get, despite their stature in the sport. This was one question I couldn’t quite get across, however, and all I got was that all sports were and all athletes were treated equally by the sports authorities.

Hartwig is an architecture student in Weimar and hopes to be opening an architectural partnership in 1993. His wife is a dentist and they have a 9-year-old son. Formerly a major in the Army, Ron is a journalism student.

LOOKING BACK

40 Years Ago (From the January 1967 ORW)--The Athens AC (San Francisco) won a National Postal 20 Km walk with a total time of 5:03:43 for the 3-man team. The Ohio Track Club was nearly 9 minutes back. Taking individual honors was OTC’s Jack Blackbrun with a 1:38:12. Canadians Karl Merschend and Alex Oakley were the only others under 1:40, with your editor, also representing the OTC fourth in 1:40:30. The Athens group (Goetz Klopfer 1:40:49, Tom Dooley 1:40:59, and Bill Ranney 1:41:55) took three of the next four spots, Ron Laird finishing just ahead of Ranney. The races were walked on local tracks during a specified time in 1966 with results compiled by mail. Ron Daniel walked a series of four 1 Mile races in New York, all in winning times between 6:44 and 6:48.

35 Years Ago (From the January 1972 ORW)--Fast early-season miling–Ron Daniel had the third fastest mile in history (to that time) with a 6:12.8 in Philadelphia. Ron Kulik, Todd Scully, and Dave Romankski followed in 6:17.7, 6:21.7, and 6:28. Ten days earlier, Kulik had beaten Daniel 6:28.8 to 6:29. On the West Coast, Tom Dooley did 6:30.5 to beat Esteban Valles (6:38) and Larry Walker beat Don DeNoo 6:41.4 to 6:44. Bill Ranney was a close third in both races. San Rafael high school student Jerry Lansing won the National Junior 35 Km title in 3:18:21. On the local scene, your editor celebrated his 37th birthday (as I type this, I can say I made it to 72 days ago) by covering 6 miles 176 yards in 48:36, but failed by 66 seconds to make up a 17½ minute handicap on Doc Blackburn. The odd distance was because we did exactly four laps of an accurately measured natural loop (there was no official certification in those days, but we were meticulous)–the same course used to host the 1969 National 15 Km. In the Rockies, Jerry Brown showed fine form with a 13:55 for 2 Miles and Bill Weigle covered a marathon in 3:33:35. Ron Laird was wintering in England and did a track 20 Km in 1:33:35 as well as a couple of 7 milers in 50:05 (finishing first) and 50:53 (second).

25 Years Ago (From the January 1982 ORW)–Heiting was simply tearing around indoor tracks across the country. He had a 5:51 for the mile in Milwaukee, a world best 5:27.1 for 1500 meters in New York City, 1:24.0 for 2 miles in Chicago, and a 12:20.6 for 2 Miles in Kansas City. Todd Scully was just 5 seconds back in the 1500.

20 Years Ago (From the January 1987 ORW)--American records fell at the Hoosier Invitational indoor meet in Indianapolis as Maryanne Torrellas did 13:29.82 for 3 Km and Paul Wick 20:29.67 for 5 Km. Teresa Vaill was just 3 seconds behind Maryanne with Lynn Weikel third. Gary Morgan trailed Wick by 6 seconds and Doug Fournier also went under 21 minutes. At West Point, N.Y., Paul Schwartz did a mile in 6:06.8 ahead of Mike Stauch’s 6:17.65. The following week, Stauch edged Fournier 6:13.52 to 6:13.61. Marco Evonik captured the Hawaii Marathon Racewalk division in 3:33:35.

15 Years Ago (From the January 1992 ORW)--Walking at the Spectator Indoor Games in Hamilton, Ontario, Debbi Lawrence set a world indoor best for 1500 meters with her 5:54.31. She was 7 seconds under the old mark set by Maryanne Torrellas. Victoria Herazo missed the old record by less than 2 seconds, finishing just ahead of Canada’s Janice McCaffrey. Torrellas was sixth in the race. A week later, Lawrence did 5:56.29 in Toronto. In Oakland, Calif., Jonathan Matthews did 20 Km in 1:33:29, beating Richard Quinn by 42 seconds.

10 Years Ago (From the January 1997 ORW)--Victoria Harudo did 22:44 to win a mid-December 5 Km in Atlanta and Dave McGovern did 21:05 for a 5 in Miami on the same date. In a track 50 Miler in Yellow Springs, Ohio (which was really way back in September but unreported earlier), Chris Knotts did 10:59:23, ahead of Jack Blackburn’s 11:19:21. Jack reported that Sharp’s non-alcoholic beer worked well for his over the last 10 miles.


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