Balneario Camboriu, Brazil, April 21-22—With five races over the two days, honors at the Pan-Am Cup racewalking event were divided among five nations, but Ecuador took the lion’s share. Led by Jefferson Perez, one of the all-time greats of the international racewalking scene, Ecuador took three individual and two team titles. Mexico had one of each, and the other three winners were El Salvador, Colombia, and the USA. The USA title came in the 50 Km team race, where persistence paid off. With Phil Dunn leading the way in fourth place, the U.S. finished all four team members, while no one else could finish even the three needed for a team score.

For Ecuador, Perez, who was uncertain after his second place in last year’s World Championships if he would even be competing this year, won the Men’s 20 Km as expected. Probably not expected was the country’s dominance of the two Junior 10 Km races—individual and team titles in both the men’s and women’s events. Mexico had a team title in the women’s 20 and individual title in the men’s 50. El Salvador’s Cristina Lopez won the women’s 20 and Colombia took the team title in the men’s 20.

Conditions were not conducive to fast times with temperatures in the mid-to-high 80s. But, by and large, the races were quite competitive and the athletes were content to start conservatively and finish strongly.

With Perez apparently content to win as easily as possible in the conditions, the men’s 20 was a six-man race for most of the distance with no one willing to gamble on a fast pace in the hot conditions. The first 5 went in a leisurely 21:38, with Perez, Colombia’s Jose Restrepo and Luis Lopez, and Mexico’s Cristian Berdeja, Erick Guevera, and Eder Sanchez, together and well clear of the rest of the field. Holding that pace, the six were still together at 10 in 43:20. As the pace quickened a bit, Sanchez began to drop away, and trailed by 35 seconds as the other five went through 15 Km in 1:04:27. The other two Mexicans lost contact after about 17 Km. The two Colombians continued to stick with Perez and only after they passed 19 Km did Lopez find the pace too quick. Restrepo hung on to the finish, but yielded at the end, a second behind Perez’s 1:25:08—a 20:41 for the final 5.

"It was a tough competition. Entering the final 300 meters, I didn’t know if I would win. We prepare to compete under these conditions, and when we do succeed, it’s really rewarding”, Perez declared. Perez said he will skip the Pan-American Games that will take place in July in Rio to concentrate on the defense of his World title in Osaka. “Two tough races in such a short time will be hard to take for me”, he said.

For the U.S., Kevin Easter was pretty much by himself throughout the race as he finished seventh in 1:29:47, nearly 2 minutes ahead of the next walker. He walked a steady pace through 15 km, yielding 20 to 40 seconds to the leaders on each 5 km, but struggled through the final 5 in 23:39. Tim Seaman was 14th in 1:38:31 and Allen James 16th in 1:46:51. James, the team manager and coach, was added to the roster when John Nunn was
The early leader, however, was El Salvador's Ricardo Reyes through 15Km (1:06:53), but got his third red card between 17 and 18 km.

Ramon also had to yield and Lopez went on to a 21 second victory over Guerrero and Lopes lost ground and the others were together in 49:22. By 15, Lopez and Ramon were alone in 1:14:17, with the others now more than a minute behind. Finally, Ramon also had to yield and Lopez went on to a 21 second win. Ecuador's Yadir Guaman came from well back over the final 5Km to take the bronze.

The 24-year-old Lopez, the defender, was out of action for a while with a sciatic nerve problem. She is now gaining competitive form, but said she wasn’t expecting a victory. The U.S. team was hurt when Teresa Vaill decided not to make the trip. Samantha Cohen finished 13th and 14th and Maria Michta struggled the second half of the race in finishing 20th. Loreta Schuellein had to drop out early.

The 50 went to Mexico's Alvaro Garcia, 23, after a race-long battle with Colombia's Freddy Hernandez. The early leader, however, was El Salvador's Ricardo Reyes who went through 10Km in 49:14 and 20 in 1:38:57. At 10, Garcia and Hernandez had 50:46, 4 seconds behind Brazil's Claudio dos Santos. By 20, dos Santos had faded and Fausto Quinde of Ecuador had joined Garcia and Hernandez, with Garcia at 1:39:43 and the other two 1:39:47, still nearly a minute behind Reyes.

This trio quickened the pace to sub-49 and by 30Km, it was a three-man race—Quinde 2:28:21, Garcia 2:28:24, and Hernandez 2:28:35. Reyes was now nearly a minute back and the rest of the field was stringing out, two and more minutes further back. Garcia made his move on the next 10, doing a 47:56 to go through 40 in 3:16:20, leaving Hernandez 39 seconds back. Quinde was another 19 seconds behind.

Garcia stretched his lead to 54 seconds by 43Km, but Hernandez did not give up. Over the next 2Km, he closed the gap to 31 seconds and then caught Garcia at 47Km. He stayed there for another kilometer, but when Garcia accelerated to a 4:43Km, Hernandez had no answer and trailed by 24 seconds at the finish. Quinde held on for third, nearly 5 minutes back, but nearly 5 ahead of a charging Philip Dunn.

Phil, in a well-paced effort, came from eighth at 30Km. The 47-year-old Sharp stayed with Dunn through 20Km (1:42:16), but struggled from there to finish ninth in 4:33:00. The last 10 was a real effort for him, taking 62:07. The semi-retired Curt Clausen, nearing his 40th birthday, was eleventh in 4:40:27. Mark “ever”-Green, now 51, completed the U.S. winning team effort with a 4:45:07 in fourteenth.

The Junior women's 10Km was a five-girl race for the first 5Km. At that point Colombia’s Ingrid Hernandez led in 25:52 followed closely by Ecuador's Janeth Guaman, Colombia’s Leslie Guavita, USA's Lauren Forgues, and Ecuador's Gabriela Cornejo, all in 25:57. Hernandez then applied the pressure with kilometers in under 5 minutes and by 8Km had a sizeable lead with a time of 40:48. Guaman was next in 41:19, with Forgues and Guavita battling for third at 41:34. Cornejo had dropped completely away, coming through in 48:39, but still a solid fifth.

The spurt told on Hernandez as she slowed to a 5:17 on the ninth kilometer, but she still seemed in command with a 22 second lead on Guaman, who in turn was 19 seconds ahead of Guavita and Forgues. But, Hernandez was finished and when she struggled through 6:20 on her final kilometer she faded to a distant fourth. Guavita was the quickest on the last lap, but not quick enough to catch Guaman, who accelerated enough herself to hold onto an 8 second lead at the finish, crossing the line in 51:24. Forgues tried to hang on to Guavita, but slowly dropped away to finish just 7 seconds further back with a bronze medal. Le'erin Voss finished in eighth for the U.S. while Christina Peters was disqualified sometime after the 8Km mark. In the team battle Ecuador (first and fifth) and Colombia (second and fourth) were tied at 6 points, but the nod went to Ecuador off Guaman's first place finish. The U.S. was third with 11.

The junior men's 10Km saw eight walkers together in 22:17 at the halfway point. On the seventh kilometer, Mauricio Arteaga of Ecuador stepped up the pace with a 4:18 and the field began to break up. Only Panama's Yasir Carrera, Ecuador's Ricardo Lojan, and El Salvador's Victor Mendoza were still with him. At 8Km, Mendoza led Arteaga by a second with Carrera 3 seconds back. With 1 kilometer to go, Arteaga led Mendoza by two seconds with Carrera 14 seconds back and the rest of the field fading fast.

The pace proved too quick for Mendoza to maintain a legal style and he got his third red card. Arteaga blitzed the final kilometer in 4:06 to come home in 43:49, 20 seconds ahead of Carrera. Brazil's Djaimy de Oliveira came from seventh at 8Km to cop the bronze, just 8 seconds back in 43:57, which Lojan was also disqualified near the finish. For the U.S., the Vergara twins were below par from the start and finished in fifteenth and sixteenth, well off their bests.

All of the results:

Turava, Brugnetti Winners At Third Leg Of IAAF Challenge

Rio Maior, Portugal, April 14 (by Antonio Manuel Fernandes for the IAAF, with additions by your editor)-Ryta Turava, 26, Belarus, and Ivana Brugnetti, 30, Italy, came home winners over 20 Km at the 16th edition of the Grande Premio Internacional em Marcha Atletica today. The annual race was the third leg of the 2007 IAAF RaceWalking Challenge.

Considering the heat and strong wind that prevailed, the winning times of the pair, 1:20:21 and 1:28:01, were high class. Turava’s time was the fastest in the world so far this year.

There was disappointment for the home fans though as Susana Feitor, the 2005 World Championships bronze medalist, faltered after a good start and could not finish no better than seventh in the women’s race.

Brugnetti, the 2004 Olympic 20 Km champion, who had a low key opening to his 2007 Challenge campaign with a 1:25:46 for a distant 26th place in China on March 24, took the victory today by almost a half minute over another 30-year old, Austria’s Luke Adams, who had been fifth in China. The winner, who became a father a month ago, is once again “Focused on sporting goals”.

“After two years without great results, this performance gave me more motivation to think about Osaka (World Championships in August). But, first, I compete in Italy, in Sesto San Giovanni on May 1 (the next fixture of the Challenge),” confirmed Turava.

Adams was the only one to challenge the Italian as they went through the first 5 Km together 19:41, 40 seconds ahead of a pack of five others. But the Aussie had to give up the chase soon after and by 10 Km, which he reached in 39:43, Brugnetti was 19 seconds clear.

Adams had another 33 seconds on third place. Brugnetti was not able to hold that pace in the conditions, but continued to move gradually to 40 yards behind his 29 second win.

After Adams, came Norway’s Erik Tyse, who closed ground over the final stages to finish in 1:20:56. This was his season opener and his third fastest time ever.

In the women’s race, Feitor was in front in the first few laps, but Turava, the European Champion and World Cup titleholder, who won here two years ago, was very strong today in her seasonal debut. She chose to start at an easy pace (for her) and at 5 Km in 22:35, she was accompanied by Feitor, Norway’s Kjersti Platzer, Germany’s Melanie Seeger, and Romania’s Claudia Stef. But when she accelerated to cover the second 5 in 22 flat, she opened 23 seconds on Platzer, Seeger, and Feitor, with Stef another 9 seconds back. Covering the second half in 43:26, Turava continued to lengthen her lead, although Platzer was also moving much quicker the second half to finish in 1:28:54, nearly 40 seconds ahead of Seeger, Germany’s Sabine Zimmer, Italy’s Elisa Rigaudo, and Australia’s Jane Saville were also able to accelerate over the second half to take the next three spots ahead of Feitor and Stef.

Platzer, who won the opening leg of the Challenge in Mexico, walked much faster today, but was no match for Turava. Seeger was the defending champion, but had to settle for third on this day.

“This was my first competition of the year and I didn’t know how good I was”, confirmed Turava. “Besides, this was a very hard race because of the hot and windy day, and I’m pleased to have achieved this time. My goals for now are my presence in Sesto San Giovanni and I’m also looking forward to Osaka.”

Results:


Other Results


For Your Late Spring-Early Summer Racewalking Pleasure

Sat. May 5 3 and 5 Km, Sioux Falls, S.D. (BB)
Florida 8 Km, Coconut Creek (N)
2.8 Miles, Seattle (C)
Sat. May 6 2.8 Miles, Seattle, 9 am (C)
Sun. May 6 5 Km, Kentfield, Cal. 8 am (P)
10 Km, Albuquerque, N.M. (T)
North Region 20 Km, Jack Mortland 5, and 20 Km, Dayton, Ohio (M)
5 Mile, Carson, Col. (H)
10 Km, Ft. Collins, Col. (H)
Fri. May 11 3 Km Women, 5 Km Men, Cedarville, Ohio (M)
Women’s 3 Km, Men’s 5 Km, Concordia U., Nebraska (K)
Sat. May 12 Hayward Classic 5 Km, Eugene, Ore. (C)
Minnesota 20 km (also 5 and 10), Minneapolis (I)
Sun. May 13 5 km, Eugene, Oregon (C)
5 Km, Albuquerque, NM (T)
Sun. May 20 National Masters and West Region 15 Km, Riverside, Cal., 7:30 am (Y)
5, 10, and 20 Km, Point Pleasant, N.J. (A)
5, 10, and 20 Km, Kenosha, Wis. (F)
Met 15 Km and Empire State 10 Km Trial, New York City, 8:30 am (G)
5 Km, Thornton, Col., 4 pm (H)
5 and 10 Km Albuquerque, N.M. (T)
South Region 10 Km, Pharr, Texas (O)
Sat. May 26 Alongi in Maric 5 Km, Kentfield, Cal. (P)
Pacific Assn. 5 Km, San Mateo, Cal. (O)
Sanford Cal 9 Mile, Lakewood, N.J. (A)
5, 10, and 20 Km, Toronto (Q)
USATF National Masters 15 Km, Riverside, Cal. (Q)
Mon., May 28
Sun. June 3 Pacific Assn 1 Mile, Stockton, Cal. (J)
Sat. June 9 3 and 5 Km, Santa Fe, N.M. (T)
2.8 Miles, Seattle (C)
1 Mile, Holmdel, N.J. (A)
Florida 10 Km, Clermont (N)
Indiana 3 Km, Indianapolis (CC)
Sun. June 10 10 Km Kentfield, Cal. (P)
Ohio 10 Km Yellow Springs (M)
10 and 20 Km, Kenosha, Wis. (F)
10 and 20 Km, Eugene, Ore (E)
Sat. June 15 5 Km, New York City, 8 am (G)
Sun. June 17 Met. 20 Km and 10 Km, New York City, 9 am (G)
Mon. June 18 New England 3 Km, Cambridge, Mass. (X)
Sat. June 23 National USATF Men's 20 Km, Indianapolis, 6:30 am (D)
National USATF Jr. Men's 10 Km, Indianapolis, 8:30 am (D)
National USATF Women's 20 Km, Indianapolis, 5:30 am (D)
National USATF Jr. Women's 10 Km, Indianapolis, 8:45 am (D)
5 and 10 Km, Albuquerque, N.M. (T)
5 and 10 Km, Long Branch, N.J., 6:45 pm (A)
1 Mile, Oakhurst, N.J. (A)
Wed. Jun. 27 1600 meters, Van Nuys, Cal. (Z)
Sun. July 1 Pac. Assn. 5 Km, San Mateo, Cal. (J)
Sat. July 7 2.8 Miles, Seattle (C)
N. J. 5 Km, West Long Branch (A)
USATF National Club Championships 5 Km, New York City (D)
Mon. July 9 5 Km, Lang Branch, N.J., 6:45 pm (A)
Tue. July 10 1 Mile, Oakhurst, N.J. 6:30 pm (A)
Wed. July 11 1600 meters, Van Nuys, Cal. (Z)
Sat. July 14 Masters 10 Km, Seattle (C)
Bay State Games 3 Km, Cambridge, Mass. (X)
Minn. 10 Km, Minneapolis (T)
North Region 10 Km, Indianapolis (AA)
Sun. July 15 5 and 10 Km, Albuquerque, N.M. (T)
Mon. July 16 5 Km, Long Branch, N.J., 6:45 pm (A)
Tues. July 17 1 Mile, Oakhurst, N.J., 6:30 pm (A)
Wed. July 18 1600 meters, Van Nuys, Cal. (Z)
Thur. July 19 1500 and 3000 meters, Yellow Springs, Ohio (M)
Sun. July 20 Pac. Assn. 3 Km, Reno, Nev. (J)
Mon. July 21 New England 5 Km, Springfield, Mass. (T)

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APRIL 2007

From Heel To Toe

Sorry, I used up all the space before I put anything in here.

LOOKING BACK

45 Years Ago (From the April 1962 Race Walker published by Chris McCarthy) John Allen won the National 40 Km in Buffalo in 3:30:22, beating Ron Laird by more than 12 minutes. Laird was just 3 seconds ahead of Bob Mimm, with Ron Daniel, Carl Kurr, and Jack Blackburn taking the next three spots, just 2 to 2 1/2 minutes behind Mimm. The Penn AC 12 miler went to Ron Zinn, Minnie Minneapolis. Ron Laird (1:36:02) and Bob Mimm (1:37:00) followed... in the World Lists for 1961, McCarthy noted he would like to talk to Rein Leius of the USSR and ask him how it feels to turn in a 4:44:05 50 Km and finish in 55th place in a national. There was some depth in that field even 45 years ago.

40 Years Ago (From the April 1967 ORW) On the West Coast, Don DeNoon took the measure of Ron Laird by 22 minutes, winning a 30 Km race in 2:30:00. Then Laird turned the tables at 20 Km, winning by just 1 second in 1:33:23. The Ohio 20 Km went to Jack Mortland in a leisurely 1:41:13.

35 Years Ago (From the April 1972 ORW) The National 25 Km title was won by Larry Young in 1:57:28 following a race-long duel with Goetz Klopfte. Goetz hung tough until the final mile and finished a half-minute back, only to find that he had the old DQ. So second went to Bill Runney in 2:03:13 with Todd Scully third. The race was held in Seattle... The annual 50-miler in New Jersey went to Shaul Ladany in 7:23:10, with Bill Walker a half-hour behind. Shaul went through the 50 Km mark in 4:30:36. Young added the National 20 Km...
Belarus followed the Russians in the team standings. The U.S. finished 14th of the 31 teams, China's Yan Gu was third in the women's 10K race with the Czech Republic, taking both men's and women's titles. They finished one-two in the women's 10K race with Irina Stankina finishing in 41:52 and Olimpida Ivanova in 41:59. China's Yan Gu was third in 42:15, with Erica Alfridi of Italy fourth. Italy, China, and Belarus followed the Russians in the team standings. The U.S. finished 14th of the 31 teams.

10 Years Ago (From the April 1997 ORW)-Russia dominated the World Cup races held in the Czech Republic, taking both men's and women's titles. They finished one-two in the women's 10K race with Irina Stankina finishing in 41:52 and Olimpida Ivanova in 41:59. China's Yan Gu was third in 42:15, with Erica Alfridi of Italy fourth. Italy, China, and Belarus followed the Russians in the team standings. The U.S. finished 14th of the 31 teams.

25 Years Ago (From the April 1982 ORW)-Marco Evoniuk left Jim Heiring after 17 miles and went on to a decisive win in the National 35 Km title. Bryan Snazelle was just 40 seconds back. Shaul Ladany continued his domination of the ultras, winning the National 75 Km title in a record 7:04:48 (4:35:44 at 50). Martin Kraft was second in 7:27:15, Alan Price third, and Gerry Bocci fourth. In Turku, Finland, Reima Salonen did an indoor 3 Km in 11:05:1, passing 1 mile in 5:53:2.

The Discussion Continues

Last month, we published an internet letter written by two-time Olympic bronze medalist Larry Young outlining his problems with the judging of modern racewalkers and suggesting that records should not be accepted without video review. We also published a reply from former IAAF Racewalking Chair and International Judge Bob Bowman. Both competed in the same era and were at one time training partners in Southern California. We also indicated the discussion was ongoing and suggested we might include further letters in this issue. Here they are.

Larry replies to Bob.

Bob continues to DENY the key problem in the sport. Most of the top competitors are not in contact with the ground! Video evidence proves it! Lifting is a normal mode of progression today. However, while Bob's letter overall denied this problem, I was surprised that he stated, "The contact rule clarification has NOT lessened loss of contact". "The technique used today by leading walkers has contributed to this. This illegal technique used today began long before the so-called rule clarification; in my opinion the rule clarification has just condoned it. The fact that Bob admits not viewing video frame by frame suggests that he has not carefully looked at the very evidence I have been describing in my communications. Let me make it clear; I would not have a problem with the style walkers are using today if they were in contact with the ground.

Bob insists that the rules still require walkers to maintain contact with the ground and that judges are tested by video to determine if they are capable of seeing loss of contact. This is certainly a step in the right direction. But to accurately assess this, the examiner must know whether or not the walkers in the test video are obeying the rules. The only way for the examiner to definitively know if the rules are being obeyed, is to preview the test video frame by frame. Otherwise how would the examiner be able to grade the test results accurately? I used this frame by frame observation in my training to study the sequential movement of racewalking, and it helped me to develop a technique that was legal and efficient. This is an excellent way to teach judges about the loss of contact, how deceptive it can be, and how it is next to impossible to see it at regular speed.
I agree with Bob, that “the body is propelled forward by the feet when in contact with the ground”, that’s a given. But loss of contact does facilitate a faster turnover. If you analyze the video frame by frame you will see that the emphasis by most walkers today is on “pushing off instead of “pulling through,” resulting in loss of contact. The consequence of the flight phase is that the heel is landing later in the stride perpetuating loss of contact. This gives the walker a floating look. It’s very deceptive even when the walker is inches off the ground and thus requires video-assist to confirm this actual loss of contact.

Bob’s argument about the 1972 films having fewer frames/second than today’s videos, makes my argument even stronger. When the film is stopped, if the walker is off the ground at the double contact phase, he or she is in violation of the rules no matter what the speed of the film is. It is more difficult to isolate double contact when viewing 8mm film because there are fewer frames per second. But when watching films of the top walkers before the late 70s, I haven’t had any problem finding continuous contact by most walkers. The video of today, which capture many more frames per second, should make it easier to find the instance of double contact because there are more frames per second. But in fact it is more difficult to find top walkers in double contact in video today. Instead, you find them convincingly off the ground. For judging, we would ideally use a video speed on the order of 500 frames per second—the speed used by biomechanic researchers for analysis of the physics of human movement.

I think the “clarification” of the rules, as Bob calls it, was more of a capitulation to accommodate what was already out of control by 1996. It’s interesting that Bob thinks the new knee rule has made such a big difference. I wonder if it hasn’t actually contributed to the lifting problem so prevalent today. Coming down with a straight knee makes it much more difficult to have a smooth transition from toe to heel and to maintain contact. In the video of NBC’s 2004 Olympic 50K, there is not only mass lifting, but also failure to straighten the knees by the silver medallist during the late stages of the race and the 5th place finisher throughout the race. This is easy to see even at regular speed. Where was the great judging, is that the walkers today (just like any other athletic event) are stronger athletes using a better technique. '

Contrary to what Larry says, I’m not denying anything that isn’t true. The fact is race walkers have always broken contact with the ground. They did it when he was walking and they are doing it today. The rules today are the same as when he was walking in regards to loss of contact. Loss of contact must only be seen by the human eyes of judges. Video has never been allowed. This was the case when he and I were competing in the sport and it is the same today.

Larry seems to feel that walkers today are all illegal or certainly less legal than when he was walking. This is simply not the case. The walkers today are judged the same as walkers 30 or 40 years ago. If loss of contact can be seen, it is called by the judges. Contrary to what Larry states, I never stated that I never viewed video frame by frame. Of course I have. However, it has never been allowed to be used for judging purposes. It wasn’t when he was walking and it isn’t today either.

Larry simply wants a different judging standard today (i.e. video) than was used when he was walking. He apparently feels that the walkers in his day were in contact with the ground at all times and today they are not. This is of course nonsense. Video at the same speed will clearly show he is wrong.

Using video analysis (frame by frame and real time) is certainly a good coaching tool, but to try and use this for judging is impractical. And it certainly wasn’t used for this when Larry was walking.

Larry continues to insist that comparing 18 frames per second video from 1972 to 60 fps video of current walkers is valid. He is comparing apples and oranges. This does not make his argument stronger. The fact remains that it is more than 3 times likely to catch a walker off the ground with 60 fps video than 18 fps. If you analyze 60 fps video from the early 70’s, the probability of seeing loss of contact is 3 times greater than viewing 8mm film. His discussion on trying to find double contact is not covered in the rules. Again, it is visible (by human eyes only) loss of contact that is against the rules. That is it! It is a very simple concept.

The current bent knee rule certainly has eliminated the creeping style that was often used in former years. It has not contributed to loss of contact. It is just the opposite. The old creeping style of walking often led to jogging. The smallest flight phases measured in video analyses have been registered by some of the current fastest 20K walkers such as Jefferson Perez. It should also be pointed out that in analyzing video, Larry fails to take into account the actual judging of the races (i.e. 2004 Olympic 50K). Just because you see a possible violation in a video does not mean a judge also didn’t see it and gave a red card. And remember it takes three such violations for a disqualification (The same as when Larry was walking). Therefore, to have a credible analysis, you also need to check the judging summary sheet for any race in which you are analyzing the video.

I also never overstated today’s judging as being “great”. However, it is clearly better than 30 or 40 years ago when judges were never tested or even required to have 20-20 corrected vision. In the 1968 Olympics, a walker literally ran into the stadium for a silver medal. You didn’t need video to see it. This would never happen today. 30 or 40 years ago you had international judges who could never pass today’s standards. You had a judge with only one eye! You had international judges in their 70’s who were a joke. The same USA judge judged every Olympics during the 60’s and 70’s and rarely made a call.

I know Larry believes that only he was walking fairly within the rules and that all the walkers before and since are illegal. This of course is complete nonsense. The reason walkers are walking faster today using the same rules regardless of contact, with better judging, is that the walkers today (just like any other athletic event) are stronger athletes, using a better technique.

Here is Larry again:

I think we have pretty well exhausted this debate. However Bob’s latest response demands an answer. Im glad that others who are receiving these e-mails have a written record of the discussion, because Bob’s characterization of the debate does not resemble what is in writing. I have never stated nor given the impression that all walkers 30 or 40 years ago were always legal. I have never stated that all walkers today are not legal. In fact I have been careful to avoid absolutes and have never stated, nor given the impression, that I was the only one who walked legally. I have tried to focus only on examples of the top walkers from both time periods to make my point. They were the medal winners and obviously made it through the race. Maybe I should have left myself out of it, but the film I have from that era has me in it. In addition, I was one of the walkers that Bob claimed had a greater flight phase than
walkers do today (something he said to my face in 1998), and I felt it was important to provide him with evidence that his assertions ARE NOT TRUE!

By focusing on the medal winners it was possible to narrow the discussion to walkers who were allowed to finish the race. Thus the red card issue Bob references does not apply. Anyone who has viewed video frame by frame from both time periods, can see the convincing evidence that the majority of walkers today are less legal than the majority of walkers from the 60s and 70s. If you have proof to the contrary, show it to me. I have provided evidence to back up my claims, and I'll be glad to review the video proof with anyone.

I agree with Bob that it is better to have film at 60 fps than at 18 fps. It makes it more likely to catch people OFF the ground and ON the ground. However, since my older films at 18 fps were able to catch the walkers ON the ground, his argument does not make sense. Bob uses the example of Padrasa running into the stadium in the Mexico City Olympic 20K when Rudy Haluza was ripped off for a bronze medal. Yes, it was a blight on the sport, but the time is now to insure fairness through diplomacy to bring technology into the international walking community to change the way we judge the sport. We can and must produce photos of walkers off the ground has never been accepted because it has always been against the rules to do so. It has always been human eye judging. I made the argument that today's judging is far superior to when you & I were competing. For example, a number of your old friends and fellow competitors have in fact been the judges at the recent world championships and Olympic Games. You have challenged the judges at these events. They have all been copied on these emails. Marty Rudow was Chief Judge in Atlanta in 1996 when Jefferson Perez won the gold medal at 20Km.

I was Chief Judge in 1992 when we indeed did dq a Russian in the stadium who had run past the eventual winner in the Women's 20Km. Ron Daniel judged the 2004 Olympics and I'll leave it to him to explain the situation with the Men's 50Km. Gary Westerfield will be judging the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Both Ron and Gary are current members of the IAAF Level III Panel of International Judges and are excellent judges who have continually scored high in their evaluations, and therefore are among the very best in the world.

Various studies by a number of the major walking federations have been conducted which show with actual measurements that the faster walkers usually have the smallest flight phase. However, when they relax or get tired the flight phase increases. Quite logical. You obviously still must disqualify someone for lifting if clearly seen by the judges even if in last place to protect the integrity of the sport. If it is against the rules, it must be called. And obviously, if you had no loss of contact rule, people could just run or straighten-leg run. Race walking needs to look like walking to remain an unique event inside the Olympic program. But yes, minimizing the flight phase is consistent with fast walking. And that, believe it or not, is one of the reasons walkers are walking faster today.

And again, producing still frames of walkers off the ground from 60 fps video and comparing to that with still frames of walkers on the ground from 18 fps is not a valid comparison. Had they also been filmed at 60 fps, you might also be able to produce stills of them off also.

Ed. Note: I have often thought about putting together an ORW Anthology in which one part would be discussions on judging issues. This is far from the first dialogue such as the above. As a matter of fact, the volume over 42 years might be sufficient for a separate volume. In any case, I welcome any commentary, opinion, diatribe, or whatever regarding the above. For now, I will remark briefly. As I have said many times in the past and reiterated in a note to Larry, I can see no way that video judging could be practical. If you are going to disqualify one person on the basis of a video view it would seem you would be required to view every competitor throughout the race. A few days later, the result can be announced. Not having the evidence that both Bob and Larry refer to (other than a few images that Larry included in one of his e-mails), I find it hard to accept Bob’s premise that there was a greater flight phase in our day than today. (And, I don’t indict today’s walkers in any way.) I have many still photos from that earlier era showing a double contact phase—and it isn’t easy to catch that instance, even with a high-speed camera. And, I have a few similar photos of today’s athletes. I also have plenty of photos from then and now clearly showing both feet off the ground, but, in general, I seem to see as much or more “air” in recent photos than in those of the past. For me, I was always willing to place my fate in the hands of the judges and trust their integrity and abilities. I never worried too much about what others were doing but just tried to go as fast as I could as legally as I could and accept the outcome. Well, no more room.