Kaniskina, Deakes Capture World Titles

Osaka, Japan—Following the Men’s 20 Km at the World Championships, reported last month, there were two racewalking title races to go. And the winners were Russia’s Olga Kaniskina at 20 and Australia’s Nathan Deakes at 50. Both had to overcome the continuing hot, muggy conditions that had slowed the men’s 20 Km race.

In the women’s race, the 22-year-old Kaniskina scored a comfortable win, but it took her 1:30:09, nearly 4 ½ minutes slower than her teammate Olpiada Ivanova needed in winning the 2005 title. Ivanova was on hand to defend her title, but dropped out early. With a starting temperature of 86°F and relative humidity at 65 percent, it was not a day for fast times.

The whole field seemed to recognize this and let Kaniskina go at the start, although she was going at a conservative pace—22:21 for the first 5. Her teammate, Tatyana Shemyakina trailed her by 20 seconds, with another Russian, Tatyana Sibilyeva, third in 23:00. Then came the pack, with 17 walkers within 7 seconds of Spain’s Maria Vasco, who went through 5 in 23:2.

Kaniskina accelerated slightly to pass 10 Km in 44:33, and stretched her lead to 44 seconds on Shemyakina. Vasco was now third in 45:53, three seconds ahead of Sibilyeva. And the rest of the field was already breaking up, with Norway’s Kjersti Platzer fifth in 46:23, just ahead of Jane Saville, Susana Feitor, Ines Henriquez, and Claudia Stef.

Holding a steady pace, Kaniskina went through 15 km in 1:06:46, 56 seconds ahead of Shemyakina, with Vasco a solid third in 1:08:09. Platzer and Feitor had moved ahead of Sibilyeva and Saville had received a third red card. On the final 5, Shemyakina was able to close slightly on Kaniskina, but never threatened, and still trailed by 33 seconds at the finish. Vasco made the strongest move, finishing just 5 seconds behind Shemyakina, covering the second half of her race nearly a minute faster than the first—45:53 and 44:54. Platzer came fourth and had even greater negative splits than Vasco—46:23 and 45:01. She was probably a bit too conservative in the early going and that may have cost her a shot at a medal.

Kaniskina is a product of the walking school of Saransk, the capital of the Republic of Mordavia where the IAAF Racewalking Challenge Final will be held on September 29. (Too late for the ORW, just as this race and the 50 Km were too late for the August issue). Saransk is a specialized center for preparation of walkers in Russia, where both Kaniskina and Shemyakina are coached by Viktor Chyegin. “This gold is for my coach, my family and all my relatives,” Kaniskina said. “It was great success for Mordovia and the city of Saransk. I went on my pace according to my plan. It worked very well. I felt in very good shape and the race was easy. I came here on Sunday, but that was perfect. Technically everything went well and I had no problems with the weather. Five days before the race, we prepared in Vladivostok and became used to the time difference. I won the world title for three reasons. I was well prepared, my family gave me a lot of support, and I was very lucky.”
Amazing is the right word. Deakes, who set the world 50-km record of 3:35:47 on home turf in Geelong last December 2, then fought through a series of injuries on the road in Osaka, showed ultimate strategic sense.

Others handled the early pace setting: Spain’s Santiago Perez, China’s Chaochong Yu, Russia’s Vladimir Kanyakin. By the midway point reached in 1:53:35 though, Deakes held a share of the lead with Kanyakin and Japan’s own Yuki Kamazaki—to the utter delight of the many uniformed, fan-waving supporters in Nagai Park.

Then Diniz crashed the party, only to see Deakes surge right back. And that’s the way it stayed, with Alex Schwazer’s late bid sufficing only for the bronze medal, but by then well clear of Nizhegorodov.

There were cheers for the special achievers—Nizhegorodov finishing fourth when his heralded teammates were succumbing to heat-induced wobble and heading to the sidelines; Canada’s Tim Berrett, the 19th placer, as the first man to compete in nine World Championships in any event; Portugal’s Jorge Costa, the 27th placer, at age 46 the oldest athlete in the whole meet, and Spain’s Jesus Angel Garcia.

But there were only commiserations and the deep regrets of the organizing committee, for Japan’s Kamazaki, who held sixth place after 35 km, only to be mistakenly waved into the stadium one 2-km loop too early, then being relegated to the DNF list.

Schwazer repeated his bronze medal performance of 2005, but apparently misjudged his ability. He covered the final 10 km in 43:12, gaining 1:36 on Deakes and 1:26 on Diniz, and was just 43 seconds back at the finish. His final kilometer of 4:08 was the fastest km split of the entire race and one might guess the fastest if 50 km history.

More on Deakes from Paul Gains for the IAAF:

As to Deakes, he set that world record last December just three days after sitting for a tax law exam. He is studying towards a double degree in law and banking and finance, so, he says, he has “something to fall back on.” In June, at the height of the competitive season, he completed a 10,000-word thesis on the Court for Arbitration in Sport, which looks at some of its landmark doping cases. Combining this with weeks where he covers 240 km in training can test one’s nerves completely.

His wife Antoinette, a first generation Italian-Australian, agreed to take a year off work so the couple could go to Europe where most the racewalking competition takes place. They have been renting an apartment in Tuscany.

“Though, we have been living on our savings. So this (world championship prize money of $60,000) is the only way we can make money,” he reveals. “It’s going to be an enormous help. It’s going to be fantastic for us. By coming over to Europe, we put a lot of other things on hold. We are making a mortgage back home and rent in Europe. Hopefully the money will ease the financial constraints the next 12 months leading into Beijing.”

Deakes reckons his race went according to plan except for the fact he found himself in the lead a little earlier than he wanted. But, he really didn’t feel the pressure of being the World Record holder. “The only pressure I felt was self expectations,” he explains. I think the Australian team, we always knew that the back end of the championships was the time when we would win medals. I think a lot of the focus has been on Craig Mottram (5000 meters) and Jana Rawlinson (400 meter hurdles) the last few days, that has allowed me to do my own job and concentrate on the race. In terms of pressure, being the World Record holder is really one of the more flattering things standing on the start line it might intimidate a few of the athletes more so than anything.

Suddenly he is the toast of Australia. Being in the limelight doesn’t necessarily thrill him and he is evidently not one to seek it either. But he is happy to be a position to help Australian athletics. “Racewalking is not a big sport in Australia,” he admits, “but hopefully just with Jana winning the other night, and myself, it will put athletics on the front page. Anything I can do for my sport I will do. I need to promote my sport.”

Interesting to note that the Chinese remain utterly unpredictable. So dominant at times, and so unnoticeable at others. In these Championships, the best they could manage...
Sharp Defends At 40 Km, Takes Seventeenth Title

Ocean Twp., N.J., Sept. 16—Twenty-five years ago, a young Ray Sharp won the National 40 Km title in 3:27:31. I suppose the years have caught up with him. He needed 28 seconds more than in 1982, winning in 3:27:59. Gosh, he's lost a little more than a second a year. On the other hand, he was nearly 10 minutes faster than last year. It was his 17th title overall and fourth since he launched a comeback in 2005. In this one he beat John Soucheck by almost 18 minutes. But, note that John was on his way to 50 Km, which he completed in 4:44:20 to qualify for the 2008 Olympic Trials. In a race that appeared to be limited to those over 40, Steve Pecinovsky beat Ian Whately for third, as both broke the 4-hour mark. Maria Michal made an impressive debut at races of over 20 Km, winning the women's title in 3:51:22. Here is how Mr. Sharp described the race on his web site.

A whirlwind trip. I woke up at 5 Saturday, flew out of Houghton at 7:05, landed in Newark at 2:14 p.m., drove with Steve and Ian to the hotel, got pizza on the way, went to the race course at 5 and did a lap, ate a grilled cheese sandwich, fries and a strawberry/hot fudge sundae at Friendly's around 8, went to bed by 11, up at 6, raced 40K (24.8 miles) at 8:11 a.m. Sunday, went with Uncle Art to his house, shower, hot tub, great lunch (cream of broccoli soup, salad, fresh corn on the cob, grilled chicken, chocolate cake with mint ice cream and fruit salad, coffee and mint ice tea — thanks Carol!!), back to Newark for the 5:34 to MSP, home to Houghton, in bed by 1, at work today before 8.

The race went well — 3:27:59. A young talent named Richard Luettrach led early, aiming for a 1:36 20K, and he managed to score a big PR in 1:38:40 or so. He'll make the Trials standard next spring. Curt (Claussen) put in an appearance and chased me for a few laps, but he had just returned from a vacation in France and was not there to race the full distance. Curt graciously worked the aid tables and cheered us on the rest of the way. Thank you Curt, and of course, Dave McG, for your help.

So with Richard about 40 seconds ahead at 10K, that left me all alone in second place (but actually leading the 40K by quite a lot, and more every lap). After a 5:13 first kilometer on the fast, partially shaded 2K loop, I slowed slightly through 3:24, and caught up to young Richard at 16K. I split 3:48:53 at 20K. It would have been more advisable, since I have only done two walks of greater than 2 hours since April, and very low mileage the last few weeks. But seeing Richard ahead got me rolling, and I tried to stay efficient and brace for the fatigue and pain that would surely envelope us somewhere past 20K.

I reached 25K in 2:03:47, more than satisfactory considering it was done mostly on cycling miles, considering that a 50:24 10K on Wednesday had left me feeling stiff and tired. I slowed from there, with some soreness and stiffness. But determined to improve on last year's time of 3:36 despite my lack of walking fitness (if it had been a bike race I would have been strong), I kept pushing and tried to minimize the slow-down. With two laps to go I thought I was slipping beyond the 3:30 target, so I accelerated some on the penultimate lap and then blasted a very good last lap for the 18-minute win. My approximate 2K splits (from memory): 10:16, 10:02, 10:01, 9:54, 9:46, 9:46, 9:47, 9:47, 9:49, 9:51, 9:43, 9:43, 9:47, 9:57, 9:58, 10:11, 10:40, 10:56, 11:03, 11:56, 12:21, 11:34, 10:16. If you take the first 28K and add the last 2K, you get 30K under 2:30. I'm satisfied. This was my best race of the year, and I think only the race in the last three years (or 20 years) where I've picked up the pace on the last lap.

The results:
1. Ray Sharp, Varsano's Chocolates RW Team 3:27:59
2. John Soucheck, Shore AC 3:45:52
4. Ian Whately, VSWR 3:59:30
5. Leon Jasonowsky, Pegasus AC 4:02:48
7. John Fredericks, Shore AC 4:22:45
8. Tom Quattrochi, Shore AC 4:24:49
11. Ron Salvio, Shore AC 4:39:51
12. Peter Bayer, Florida AC 5:10:21
13. Pat Bivona, LaVerne, Cal. (former Shore AC 5:26:42
14. Niall Mandal, Shore AC 5:34:05
2. Shore AC 12:23:42

Other distances:


Other Results


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**Pay Your Dues, Lace Your Shoes, and Then Just Cruise—At the Races**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<td>Minnesota and North Region 50 Km (also, 5,10,20,30, and 40 Km0, Minneapolis, Minn.) (V)</td>
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<td>Sun. Oct. 7</td>
<td>National USAF 5 Km (Z)</td>
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<td>Santa Barbara, Calif. (J)</td>
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More information is available in the document.
From Heel To Toe

Bob Brewer. The Southern Cal Walkers newsletter reports the death of Bob Brewer. They don't give Bob's age, but he was competing with some success in the middle '60s. Highlights were a third place finish in the 1965 National in 2:47:05, behind Ron Laird and Dick Ortiz. In 1965, he finished sixth in the indoor Mile with 7:07.6 and seventh in the 1 Hour with 7 miles 399 yards. This from the SCW newsletter: “For those of you who were active in Bob AA-Cheryl Sunman, ianms@iquest.net

From Allen James, Olympian and many times national champion and national member: The Southern Cal Walkers newsletter reports the death of Bob Brewer. They don’t give Bob’s age, but he was competing with some success in the middle ’60s. Highlights were a third place finish in the 1965 National in 2:47:05, behind Ron Laird and Dick Ortiz. In 1965, he finished sixth in the indoor Mile with 7:07.6 and seventh in the 1 Hour with 7 miles 399 yards. This from the SCW newsletter: “For those of you who were active in Bob AA-Cheryl Sunman, ianms@iquest.net

X-Steve Vaitones, P.O. Box 1905, Brookline, MA 02446 (617-566-7600)
Y-Walkers Club of Los Angeles, 233 Winchester Avenue, Glendale, CA 91201
Z-Bobby Baker, RL.Baker@charternet.net
AA-Cheryl Summan, iamms@iquest.net

The Fernandez phantom DQ. Here are some further comments on the disqualification, and Jury of Appeals reinstatement, of Spain’s Francisco Fernandez at last month’s World Championship 20 Km. From Allen James, Olympian and many times national champion and national member: The DQ in the men’s race and the subsequent appeal and reinstatement is a JOKE. Racewalking once again is the laughing stock of events. I thought the Pan Am Junior’s appeal was bad enough. Now we are the center stage and the Spanish jury member and Robert K’s athlete get the special treatment because he was favored to win the silver medal once again! Fernandez is a great athlete, no doubt, but this decision tarnishes his achievement and, in my opinion, makes him look like a three-time loser rather than a three-time silver medalist. As a side note-I hope our federation writes a letter of condemnation regarding the conduct of the Jury of Appeals in this matter. Allowing the Spanish juror to sit in, whether he says anything or not is a conflict of interest. He should have been recused from the process-meaning he can’t even be in the room. The fact that he participated in the discussion should be grounds for dismissal, to the extent that it’s treated like a doping violation or worse! To me this is no different than the NBA official fixing games. And this from Bob Bowman, member and former chairman of the IAAF Racewalking Committee, who was present at the race: As to the finish controversy in the Men’s 20 Km in Osaka, there really wasn’t any controversy until the Jury of Appeals overturned the Chief Judge, Ron Daniel. Clearly, if there ever was a situation that called for the Chief Judge to act, it was this. Fernandez threw caution to the wind and was airborne. In the last couple of strides, he actually ran to catch Ghoulia. As one can see from the IAAF video, Ron was in the correct position to make the call. If that is the video the Jury used to support their decision, they made a big mistake in that the camera angle cannot show the amount of loss of contact. No one who witnessed it track side disagreed with the call. In order for the Jury to overrule the Chief Judge, the video must show the Chief Judge to be wrong and it doesn’t. What is even more disturbing is that the President of the Spanish Federation, who was a member of the Jury pool, was allowed to argue on behalf of his athlete in an obvious conflict of interest. All the members of the IAAF Racewalking Committee, including Luis Saladié of Spain, felt the Ron acted properly. So did members of the IAAF Staff, other members of the IAAF Council, including Bob Harsh, various other officials such as ITOS assigned to the event, etc. Fernandez made up 30 meters in the last 100 meters! Ghoulia was slowing some but let say he was still walking close to 7 minutes-per-mile pace. He averaged 6:38 per mile for the race. In order to do that, Fernandez had to be going under 5 minutes-per-mile pace! At this time the IAAF Racewalking Committee does not feel the problem or solution lies in changing Rule 230 3(a). The problem lies with a Jury system that is subject to political pressure. We are considering proposing that Juries of Appeal for racewalking events include a racewalking official. Also that if video is used to review DQ decisions by the Chief Judge, that video must clearly show that the Chief Judge was wrong. The Jury in this case argued that the video was inconclusive. Of course a bad viewing angle is always going to be inconclusive. How convenient for them. And we must insist that the members of the Jury have no conflicts of interest regarding the matter at hand... About those 100 milers. You will notice a 100 mile walk on our schedule of races to be held in Dallas on Nov. 17-18 (yes it takes two days, unless you start at midnight since those who want to qualify as Centurions must complete the distance in 24 hours or less). Dave Gwyn provides a very brief history of this event in the U.S., with reference to the upcoming event: As with other Centurion walks of the last few years, the competition differs from racewalking mainly in that it has no rules about shoes. Joe Duncan of Columbia, Missouri, founded the Centurion program in the U.S.-recognizing those who walk 100 miles within 24 hours—in 1967 (Ed. Actually, there were 100 mile races in the U.S. in the late 19th Century, or at least one, since a 100-mile record was carried in the AAU Handbook—see the 100 mile record that Larry O’Neil, age 59, bettered in Joe’s initial “revival” race.) Although Centurion events were billed as racewalks, by many accounts an approximation of racewalking was allowed. Several other walks contested such events over the years, but the end of the Columbia series in 1991 brought the program to a near halt, with only Jack Blackburn in Ohio directing a Centurion event (in 1993) between them and the turn of the century. (Ed. Again. We should also note that there was an official National Championship at 100 miles from 1978 through 1987, with the exception of 1986 and in 1993. Allen Price won 8 of those races.) Two separate and cooperating initiatives resurrected the Centurion culture among US walkers. Ulli Kamm, an immigrant from the Netherlands, brought his love of ultrawalking to this country and both directed long walks in Colorado and encouraged inclusion of a walking division in a San Diego 24-hour run. Some of his activity is chronicled at www.ultrawalk.com. Ollie Nanyes of Illinois started an ultrawalking chat group at www.sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/ultrawalking in 2004 and members soon began soliciting other existing 24-hour runs to include a Centurion category.

More results.

Uncovered these as I was wrapping this up, and rather than renumbering pages, I will sneak them in here.

10 Km, Houston, Sept. 23-1. Susan Brooks (42) 59:11 2. Lojza Vosta (68) 59:50 (10 finishers) 20 Km, Salem Oregon, Sept. 23-1. Stephanie Casey 1:54:15.9 (A 2-minute plus improvement for this 23-year-old newcomer in her second race at the distance.) 2. Nana Bellurud 2:26:21 1 Hour, Banks, Oregon, September 2-1. Stephanie Casey 8907 miles

LOOKING BACK

45 Years Ago (From the September 1972 American Race Walker published by Chris McCarthy)-On Detroit's fabulous Belle Isle, on a course later measured to be at least 600 yards long, John Allen won the National 15 Km title at 1:16:07, beating Ron Laird by 16 seconds. Canada's Alex Oakley was third and young Ron Daniel of the New York AC upset the Ohio Track Club's dynamic duo of Jack Mortland and Jack Blackburn for fourth. Laird and Daniel led the NYAC to the team title over the Ohio TC. Future star Goetz Klopfer was 11th. Marty Wright, then my fiancee, by June of the following year Mrs. Mortland, was not particularly excited in witnessing her first walking race... Bob Bowman, later to become IAAF Racewalk Chairman, then a fledging competitor, won a 2 miler in Venice, Cal. In 16:19... Daniel was the publication's Pedestrian on the Month. The NYAC athlete was born in Maimi, but was then living in Fort Washington, N.Y. At that early point in his career, he had best times of 6:59.9 for a mile, 51.00 for 10 Km, 1:14.57 for 15 Km, and 3:44:35 for 40 Km. He went on the International status a few years down the line and is now an international judge, much in the limelight in last month's World Championships, as reported in these pages.

40 Years Ago (From the September 1967 American Race Walker published by Chris McCarthy)-Ron Laird won the National 15 Km in Berwick, Pa. With a 1:08:13, leaving Steve Hayden 3 ½ minutes in arrears. Jack Blackburn was a strong third. The first U.S. 100 miler of the 20th century was held on the track in Columbia, Missouri and Montana's 60-year-old Larry O'Neil broke the long-standing record with a 19:24:52, walking an amazingly even pace throughout the race.

35 Years Ago (From the September 1972 American Race Walker)-At the Munich Olympics, East Germany's Peter Frenek won at 20 Km in 1:26:42 and West Germany's Bernd Kuenenberg captured the 50 in 3:56:12. Vladimir Golubruchiy, USSR, took the silver at 20, his fourth Olympic medal at the distance—gold in 1960 and 1968, bronze in 1964. Hans-Gerog Reiman and Gerhard Sperling completed a near sweep for East Germany in the 20, with their third and fourth place finishes and the USSR's Veniamin Soldatenko took the silver at 50. For the U.S., Larry Young was brilliant with a 10th place finish at 20 preceding his second bronze medal performance in the 50. He missed the 4-hour mark by just 46 seconds. In the 20, Tom Dooley was 15th and Goetz Klopfer 19th. At 50, Bill Weigle took 17th and Steve Hayden 27th.

30 Years Ago (From the September 1977 American Race Walker)-Mexican walkers finished one-two at both 20 and 50 Km to score a decisive team victory in the World Cup, held in England. The 20 went to Daniel Bautista in 1:24:03 with Domingo Colin second and East Germany's Karl-Heinz Stadtmuller third. Raul Gonzalez won the 50 in a rather slow 4:04:20, 35 seconds ahead of Pedro Aroche. Gonzalez went through the first 20 in 1:29:50, an unheard of pace at the time, and paid the price but survived with the gold. In the 50, subpar Larry Young was 13th in 4:19:58, must 10 seconds ahead of Augie Hirt, who had a personal best. A hamstring injury had hampered Young's training. San Diego's Paul Hendricks, with only a year of racewalking experience, won the Columbia 100 miler in 9:45:17, 22 minutes ahead of Leonard Busen, who took an hour-and-half off his previous best. There were a record eight finishers in the 24-hour limit.


20 Years Ago (From the September 1987 ORW)-Italy's Mauricio Damilano won at 20 in the World Championships in Rome, defying high heat and humidity to record 1:20:45. He controlled the pace throughout to beat Josef Pribilince by 22 seconds with Spain's Jose Marin third. Tim Lewis was the first U.S. finisher with a 1:26:00 in 19th. The Women's 10 Km went to Irina Strakhova, USSR, in 44:12, 11 seconds ahead of Australia's Kerry Saxby. Hong Yan of China was third. Lynn Weik led the U.S. with 46:51 in 15th. Debby Lawrence was 40 seconds and five places further back. Just as they had earlier in the year at World Cup in New York, the GDR's Hartwig Gauder and Ronald Weigel finished on-two in the 50, but switched positions as Gauder took gold in 3:40:53 ahead of Weigel's 3:41:30. Vyacheslav Ivanenko, USSR was third in 3:44:02. Carl Schueler was 16th in 3:57:09 and Marco Evoniuk 17th in 3:57:43. Jim Heiring had a personal best 4:03:24 in 22nd, easily the most distinguished showing the U.S. team had ever made at 50 Km.

10 Years Ago (From the September 1997 ORW)-Curt Clausen won National titles at both 5 and 40 Km. At the 5 in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. On August 24, he scored an easy win in 20:33. In the 40 two weeks later at Fort Monmouth, N.J., he was virtually unopposed winning in 2:16:42. In the 5, Jonathan Matthews, tough as ever at 41, was second in 20:54 and Dave McGovern third in 21:27. Debby Lawrence won the women's 5 in 22:39, 15 seconds ahead of Joanne Dow, with Victoria Herazo third. In the 40, Ohio's Chris Knotts, also still going strong at 41, was second in 3:46:17 with John Soucheck third in 3:50:03.

5 Years Ago (From the September 2002 ORW)-Once again, Nationals were held at both 40 and 5 Km. Tim Seaman broke Carl Schueler's meet record by more than 7 minutes as he won the 40 in a blazing 4:06:17, Philip Dunn was just 2:34 back in second with Curt Clausen third in 3:12:23, still under Schueler's record. Al Heppner had 3:27:48 in fourth. Susan Armenta easily won the women's titles, finishing fifth overall in 3:32:08, 40 minutes ahead of Erin Taylor. Heppner won the National 5 in 21:51 with Ian Whately second in 22:36. The Women's title went to Marcia Gutsche 25:53 with Victoria Herazo second in 26:47.