Chinese Reemerge In Big Way In Chihuahua

Chihuahua, Mexico, May 15-15 (With help from IAAF correspondent Paul Warburton) - Chinese racewalking has become known for inconsistent performance. Races showing unbelievable depth of performance on home soil, periodic brilliant performances on the international level, and occasional dominating team performances at World Cup, World Championship, and Olympic events, interspersed with surprisingly complete failures at those same events. Not since 2004 have they shone at the World Cup and, at the Beijing Olympics, where they were expected to take full advantage of home soil, they could manage only two fourth place finishes and no medals. But they certainly reemerged in the 2010 World Cup held in Chihuahua, taking team titles in three of the five events along with second and third place finishes in the other two. Russia, who has been completely in recent years, did well with a first, a second, and two thirds in team scoring, but they were overshadowed by the dominating Chinese performance.

World Cup action led off with the men’s 50 Km race on Saturday morning. There was news even before the race. On Friday, favorite Alex Schwazer of Italy announced that he was suffering from a gastrointestinal condition and would not be competing. That was followed by news of a surprise winner, Matej Toth of the Slovak Republic, who turned a steady performance and a blistering finish (no pun intended—it was very hot) into a gold medal—one Mexico had hoped to keep at home.

Toth is the first Slovak medalist in World Cup history and he didn’t make it to the lead until the final kilometer. Horacio Nava, a hometown hero in Chihuahua, led much of the way, but was caught by pre-race favorite Jared Tallent of Australia at 40 Km. Nava did not fold as so often happens in these races when one builds a solid lead only to give it away. Nava just reopened the gap and it was Tallent who was left looking spent and pale.

With Tallent fading, it appeared to be Nava’s race. Toth, who was 3 1/2 minutes back in fourth place at 40 Km and still two minutes down at 45 uncorked a 21:44 for the final 5, despite the effects of heat and the 5000 foot altitude. He caught Nava at 49 Km and went on to beat him by 46 seconds in 3:53:30. Tallent just hung on for third in 3:54:55, some 11 seconds ahead of China’s Tianfeng Si.

Spain’s 40-year-old Jesus Garcia, who won this race in 1997 and was second as far back as 1994, captured fifth just ahead of Japan’s Yuki Yamazaki.

Nava took control of the race early and by 30 Km (2:20:25) had a 41 second lead over his teammate Cristian Berdeja and 1:35 over Tallent, who had to pause to toss whatever he had eaten in recent hours. Tallent then threw in a 44:02 for the next 10 to catch Nava, but soon paid the price. But Nava too was slowing, just enough to enable Toth’s spurt to overhaul him. Berdeja hung on for seventh and a third Mexican, Omar Zepeda, with the leaders early, was 13th, but that left them a point short of the Chinese for the team title. Lei Li and Faguang
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Xu were eight and ninth for China to go along with Si’s fourth. It was the slowest time since 1993 when the event was also held in Mexico. For the U.S. team of elderly gentlemen, Jonathan Matthews finished 47th and Ray Sharp 50th with the conditions slowing both considerably from their February times in the Trial. Dav McGovern did not finish.

Toth commented: “If the wind hadn’t picked up in the last 10 Km, I don’t think I would have won the gold. Horacio and Jared were tire as it played in my favor. My race plan was always to start easy like in training and to give everything in the last 10 km. I did not feel the hert, and when I realized I could be on the podium, euphoria took over.”

Nava admitted he might flake for going to the front in the difficult conditions. “I thought after working so hard for 48 km I would get a better result. But today was not about time—it was about getting on the podium. It was a big surprise to be passed in the last kilometer. I thought I had gold, but I’m still learning and maybe I’m not ready for first just yet.

Next up was the men’s junior 10 km, where U.S. hopes rode with 17-year-old Trevor Barron, spotting two years to many in the field. This race provided another nation with its first World Cup medal as Colombia’s Eider Arevelo, who like, Trevor, is just 17, taking the gold. Arevelo bided his time before launching a devastating attack that was too much for China’s Zelinf Cai, who was the only one with the Colombian over the last kilometer... Russia has been dominant in this event in the past, but here Valeriy Filipchuk had to settle for a distant third, which at least kept alive the Russian record of a podium appearance in all editions of the junior race first held in 2004.

The Russians were looking for more and all three of their walkers were together in the lead after 2 km in 8:33. At 5 km, Filipchuk led in 21:06 with his teammate Konstantin Kulagov at 21:07, Cai and Arevelo at 21:08, and China’s Fuding Cong at 21:11. Trevor Barron was in tenth at 21:55. By 4 km it was a race between Arevelo, Cai, and Brazil’s Caio Bonfim, who had joined the fray. When Bonfim was DOQ’d it became a two-man race and Arevelo proved the best. In the team battle, Russia and China both finished with 7 points (cross-country scoring based on the first two finishers for the team). Russia got the gold based on the best finish for the number two men on each team.

Trevor Barron was able to move up one spot to finish ninth in 45:17, well off his best, but that was not to be expected in these conditions. Tyler Sorensen walked well to finish 18th in 47:54 and Alejandro Chavez suffered through a 52:41. All three will still be in the junior ranks for the next World Cup in 2012.

The first day of competition ended with the women’s 20 km race. It was a breakthrough race for 34-year-old Maria Vasco of Spain who had bronze medals at the Olympics, the World Championships, and the World Cup to show for years near the top—but never before a gold.

In the torrid conditions, the early pace was conservative, but Vasco was able to accelerate and walk the second half of the race much faster than the first. Having predicted a winning time of 1:30 to 1:32 considering the conditions, she came home in 1:31:55. The first 10 km had taken 46:35 in what was a five-woman race at that point.

Even at that, Vasco had to come back from a 5 km sprint that had everyone around the course predicting a jump from third in 2008 to first for Vera Santos. The Portuguese veteran led from the start and gave it everything, only to run out of gas over the last 500 meters when Vasco used all her experience to hang on to her lead. Santos finished second in 1:32:06, well ahead of her teammate Ines Henriques, who had 1:33:28 for the bronze.

Russian favorite Vera Sokolova struggled home in fourth in 1:33:54.

The race started at a near crawl with a group of 23 together in 9:36 for the first 2 km lap. When the pace accelerated somewhat, most of those pretenders disappeared and 5 km was reached in 23:29, with nine women still in contention. At 10 km, there were only Vasco, Santos, Sokolova, Henriques, and Russia’s Aniisa Kirdiyakina. Over the next 5 km, Santos and Vasco made it a two-woman race, hitting 15 km in 1:09:22, 32 seconds ahead of Sokolova, who had another 4 seconds on Henriques. From there, there was a question of who would be strongest at the finish and that proved to be Vasco.

After the race, Vasco said: “My father died four years ago, and my goal was to make sure my mother who is sick doesn’t want for anything (the winner’s prize was $30,000). It was very emotional. I thought Vera would be favorite today but I was watching closely and although I was vomiting a little at one point, in the end I was stronger than her. This win was the best race ever for me, even though I have other important medals.”

Santos meanwhile also thought she had a gold in the bag, but agreed the better walker won on the day. “I was not able to push hard enough against such a talented and experienced walker like Maria. I came here with great confidence, but had to make do with second.” A consolation for Santos was the team gold she shared with Henriques and Ana Cabezas, who was eighth. Maria Poves and Beatriz Pascual, 10th and 11th, joined with Vasco for the team silver ahead of China. For the U.S., Solomiya Login finished 47th in 1:47:43, but Mirandela Melville and Stephani Casey did not finish.

The Junior Women’s 10 km kicked off the second day’s events. In that race, and 18-year-old Italian girl, Antonella Palmsano broke a six-year Russian stronghold on the title. The graphics student gambled on the third of five laps in the hour, and when noone could close the tiny gap she forged, she had just enough to make her country’s weekend turn from disappointment to joy in just under 48 minutes.

As in other races, the weather and altitude led to a very conservative start with Mexico’s Sandra Nevarez in front of a pack that included most of those who started, but in a time of just 10.04. And even though the pace did not quicken on the next 2 km lap, the lead group was down to just 11. By 5 km, Palmsano had taken the lead but the pace was still dawdling at 25:12, with ten others within 5 seconds.

At that point, Palmsano stepped out to reach 6 km in 29:53, with only the three Russians and two Chinese girls still challenging.

At the bell for the final lap, Palmsano had pulled out by 7 seconds, with China’s Air He and Russia’s Anna Lukyanova close. That lead proved just enough, and Palmsano came home in 47:52, 5 seconds ahead of He and still 7 ahead of Lukyanova. China’s Zhao Jing was just another 3 seconds back, sewing up the team title for her country, with Russia a close second and Italy third.

Shortly after the race Palmsano said: “I’ve already made the first call back home to my coach, and the second will be to my parents to thank them for all the support they give me. I wasn’t sure when I pushed hard it was the right thing to do, but it was good enough for me. I did not expect this because I had no real knowledge of my competitors. This is only the starting point of my career. I’m grateful for the amazing support I got around the course from the people of Chihuahua.”

He, though happy with a silver medal, said: “I thought I could have won, but I kept thinking that if it wasn’t this time, it would be next time if I keep training hard.” Less pleased, Lukyanova stated, “I had no idea it would be this hot, and felt the Russian team would have done better in different conditions.”

Wrapping up the 2010 Cup program was the men’s 20 km. In a race that saw nine walkers within 11 seconds of one another at 15 km, the Chinese duo of Hao Wang and Yafei Zhi were able to pull away in the final stages for a one-two finish and a very decisive team...
victory with the support of Ding Chen in sixth. Wang was able to break away from Zhu over the final kilometer to take the gold in 1:22:35 with Zhu 11 seconds back. Russia's Andrey Krivov was outpursuit Norway's Erik Tyssen in the final 200 meters to take the bronze in 1:22:54. Colombia's Luis Lopez, who was locked with them in a three-man battle for the bronze, withered away as they sprinted and had to settle for fifth in 1:23:11. Mexico's great hope for a gold, Edson Sanchez, on the lead at 10 km was left well back when the real racing began and finished a distance seventh. A small consolation for the Mexicans was a team bronze behind China and Russia. Even further back was another favorite, Italy's 2004 Olympic champion Ivan Brugnetti, who lead at 10 km. He struggled home in 12th place.

It was the first men's gold for China since 1995 when they were home in Beijing. Following his comfortable win, Wang said: "Since 1995, we've been working hard and developing, but you also need some luck and that's why our results have going up and down. However, we have great youngsters coming through. This result will promote the sport even more back home. 2012 is very much our goal. It will be difficult to maintain our form, but we'll work to get a medal there as well."

Krivov noted: "This was the most complicated journey for the Russian team to get to a World Cup. There was a long flight, and we were not at home and the weather wasn't ideal. We will work to get a medal there as well."  


Santo's and Chile's Yanfei Li took the lead early and went through 5 km in 22:09 with Seeger 3 seconds back and the rest of the field already strung out. (Why come all the way to Italy for a race that you plan to drop out of?) Santos was on her way to victory with a lead of 15 seconds over Seeger, which stretched to 29 by 15 km. Italy's Oliva Loughnane was third at that point but was then given her third red card. (Joining compatriot Robert Heffernan who was disqualified in the men's race.) When Santos finished, she was just 15 seconds off her career best.

"I am still working hard to be in top for Chihuahua. My biggest goal is the European Championships in Barcelona this summer," said Santos. Seeger noted, "I enjoyed this race. The course was fast and there were a lot of spectators to support. I have not set goals in my comeback year. I won't go to Chihuahua as the German Federation will not send a team." The results:


The results:

Tuberg (50) 29:27 .8 6. Bart Kale (53) 32:40
Miles, Seattle, April
Division and a Walk-Run division)
Qlsey (57) 28:57 4. Susan Fassett (47) 31:13
5 Km-1. Damon Clements (50 + ) , Indiana Walkers 27:45 2. Reini Brickson, Miami Valley
9. Jack Shuter (80), Buckley Striders 42:36 H.S. 9000 meters at Bulldog Invitational Track
Meet, Yellow Springs, Ohio, May 9--1. Reini Frickson 3:34 60. Keturah Fulton 4:80 3. Alisha Hamilton 5:04 4. Sara Fishbien 5:11 (12 finishers, in what was a scoring event in the
Robinson 4:29 5. Jerad Wilson 4:32 6. Zach Streee 4:42 (12 finishers, 3 DQ, 5 Km, Kalamazoo,
finishers in non-judged division) Marathon, same place--1. Will Loew-Bressler (55+) 4:52:23
(4 finishers, plus 13 in non-judged division. the event also included a Nordic Walking
Division and a Walk-Run division) 5 Km, Denver, April 22--1. Darl Graft (42) 30:57:4 2.8
Miles, Seattle, April 3--1. Bob Novak (60) 26:45 2. Stan Chraminski (60) 26:47 3. Michelle
Cunningham (49) 29:32 5000 meters, Seattle, April 11--1. Evan Dunfee, Can. 19:55 6.2
Tuberg (50) 29:27 6. Bart Kale (53) 32:40
Argentina Championships, April 25--1. Fabio González 1:29:00 20 Km, Bistrons,
Chmyznikov 45:44 4. Artur Mastiaica 45:59 20 Km, Portugal, Feb. 21--1. Bertrand
Lightman 1:17:54 7.32. John Padick 1:15:11 (I note these latter two because they are British
Internationals from back in your editor's era, i.e., the 1960s.) (44 finishers, 5 DQ Women-1.

Seeking A Race; There's Many A Place

Thu. June 3 1 Mile, Houston (G)
Sat. June 5 5 Km, Houston, Cal. (P)
National USATF 10 Km, Albany, N.Y. (D)
Sun. June 6 5 Km, Walnut, Cal. (P)
Thu. June 10 1 Mile, Houston, (G)
Sat. June 12 2.8 Miles, Seattle (G)
Sun. June 13 1 Mile and 3000 meters, Falls Church, Vir. (N)
5 Km, Stupler, Coll., 8 am (F)
Sun. June 13 5000 meters, Gleeley, Col. (F)
Mon. June 17 1 Mile, Houston (G)
Sun. June 20 SCA Masters 5 Km, Los Angeles area (P)
Mon. June 24 1 Mile, Houston (G)
Sun. June 26 USATF National Women's 20 Km, Jr. Men's 10 Km Des Moines, Iowa (D)
USATF National Men's 20, Jr. Women's 10 Km Junior 10 Km, Des Moines, Iowa (D)
Sun. June 27 1 Mile and 3000 meters, Falls Church, Va. (N)
5 Km, Denver, 8 am (H)
Sun. July 4 8 Km, Alexandria, Va., 7 am (N)
Thu. July 1 1 Mile, Houston (G)
Sun. July 4 5 Km, Evergreen, Coll., 8 am (H)
Sat. July 10 Weinacker Cup Ontario vs. Michigan, Port Huron, Mich. (F)
1 Mile and 3000 meters, Falls Church, Va. (W)
West Region Masters 5 Km, Los Angeles (P)
2.8 Miles, Seattle (C)
Sat. July 17 Masters 5 km and 1500 meters, Seattle (D)
1 Mile and 3000 meters, Falls Church, Va. (N)
5 Km and 1500 meters, Olynpia, Wash. (C)
Sat. Aug. 24 National USATF Masters Meet, Sacramento, Cal. (D)
Sat., Aug. 7 1 Mile and 3000 meters, Falls Church, Va. (N)
Sun. Aug. 15 USATF National 15 Km, Minneapolis, Minn. (S)

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Fernandez suspended. We reported a few months ago that Spain’s Francisco Fernandez was in trouble for involvement in doping. The IAAF has now announced that Fernandez has been suspended for 2 years for his part in a major drug distribution operation that was run out of his house. Fernandez ranked number one in the World at 20 Km and is probably second only to Jefferson Perez as the best 20 Km walker of the decade. 

$100,000 walking man. A life-size bronze sculpture depicting the figure of a man by Alberto Ciacometti was recently sold at auction for the world record price of 65 million British pounds (over $100 million). The sculpture “Walking Man” or “L’Homme qui marche” took just eight minutes for bids to reach the hammer price after opening at 12 million pounds at Sotheby’s in London. The winning bid—the highest for any work of art ever sold at auction—was made by an anonymous buyer over the phone. The 6-ft. tall sculpture, cast in 1961, is considered to be one of the most important by the 20th century Swiss artist. It had been estimated to sell for 12 million to 18 million pounds. Furious bidding saw more than ten rivals bump the price up to even higher levels. In so doing, it beat the previous record price held by Pablo Picasso’s Garçon a la Pipe, or Boy With A Pipe, which was sold in New York in 2004.

Bringing Racewalking To Elementary Schools

(The following press release from A.C. Jaime, coach of the South Texas Walking Club describes a successful program to introduce racewalking to elementary age children. A pattern for future development of racewalking?)

From Heel To Toe

The following press release from A.C. Jaime, coach of the South Texas Walking Club describes a successful program to introduce racewalking to elementary age children. A pattern for future development of racewalking?)

Tim Seaman of California, Gary Westerfield of New York, Dr. Tom Eastler of Maine, Rachel LaVallee of Canada, Dave McGovern of Alabama, Bert Pickell of San Antonio, Dave Gwyn of Houston, Janis Bluhm of George West and many others never dreamed that their trips to Texas to help teach the PSJA Independent School District Elementary School Coaches the sport of racewalking would someday help racewalking become so successful in those schools. These professors, racewalk Olympians, racewalk authors and master racewalk judges donated countless hours traveling, teaching and demonstrating the art of racewalking to the PSJA coaching staff.

The PSJA Elementary School District coaches now completed their second year of teaching a three week racewalking course to all their 3rd, 4th and 5th graders and held, what are believed to have been the first elementary school sponsored racewalks ever held in the USA. The top three girl and boy racewalkers in each 8, 9, 10 and 11 year age bracket divisions from twenty-four of the elementary schools were bused to the stadium. Eleven schools on Tuesday and thirteen on Thursday. The results were magnificent! The coaches determination and resolve to build a strong racewalking program at the PSJA schools was clearly evident this week. The form and technique demonstrated by the majority of the four hundred six nine young children participating was exceptionally good. The school administrations support of the program was also evident since many of the school staff were seen actively assisting during the races including the starter, Southwest High School head coach Jesus Reyes.

The four hundred sixty-nine students participated in seventeen 800 meter racewalks over the two day period with thirty-one coming back on Saturday for another three races. Over one hundred volunteers donated their time and energy to help make the twenty events as successful as they were. Among the judge volunteers were officers of the Texas Department of Public Safety plus officers from the Pharr, San Juan and Alamo Police and Fire departments. Other volunteers included many high school teachers, parents and members of the track team.

It was a joy to see three or four of the older South Texas Walking Club kids warming up thirty to forty of the elementary school kids while another three to four had another group of thirty to forty kids going through the drills and yet you could see another group of thirty to forty kids on the track walking their 800 meter walk at the same time. Many positive comments were heard from parents and other spectators that had never witness a racewalk before. The children looked very impressive.

The top six schools, their coaches and the points earned by each were:

North Alamo Elementary School coached by Hector Rios, Maricella Ibarra and Santos Flores—119
Carnahan Elementary School coached by Eric Yanez and Arturo Gonzalez—72
Bowie Elementary School coached by Eduardo Martinez, Gavino Villegas Jr. and Olivia Garza—58
Treviso Elementary School coached by Arturo Gonzalez and Tomas Martinez—57
Longoria Elementary School coached by Jaime Chavana and Manuel de la Garza—53
Reed-Mock Elementary School coached by Maria Garza and Cesar Escobedo—49

The schools with the most first place winners were North Alamo with three and Bowie, Carnahan and Palmer Elementary Schools with two each.

The fastest time achieved was a 3:50 by 12-year-old Amberly Melendez. Next were 4:16 by 11-year-old Crystle Florido and 4:19 by 10-year-old Bianca Garza... The fastest boy was 9-year-old Jonathon Aguilar. The girls were in general achieving faster times than the boys.
LOOKING BACK

45 Years Ago (From the May 1965 ORW)—In only its third month of publication the Ohio Racewalker was still a bit provincial and this issue featured a lot of the editor and publisher. One week, Blackburn beat Mortland in a 2 miler, 14:05 to 14:08, the next week it was Mortland better than 2 minutes ahead in a 1:17:36 10 miler. Finally, Mortland overcame high heat and humidity—or at least, so we boastfully reported—and Blackburn to take a 10 Km race in 47:51. Blackburn had 49:19. In the hilly hills, Ron Daniel won the Asbury Park, N.J. 10 miler in 1:20:04, 10 seconds ahead of Art Mark. Henry Laskau, in a rare appearance after his retirement nearly a decade earlier, walked a very creditable 1:22:04 in fifth. In fact another 10 miler, Paul Nihill took the British title in 1:14:55, with Ron Wallwork less than a minute behind.

40 Years Ago (From the May 1970 ORW)—Dave Romansky won the National 35 Km in Des Moines, Iowa in 3:13:13 on a 12-lap course that included one hill that had no place in a walking race since it was impossible to actually racewalk it up. A close and steadily closing second was Australian Bob Steadman, then living in Winnipeg, in 3:14:15. Ron Kulik and Canadian Karl Marschien captured the next two spots, followed by John Knifton, Goetz Klopfer, Canadian Marcel Jobin, and Ron Laird—a very classy field. Romansky also won the National 15 km in Nutley, N.J. in 1:14:09 on a very hot day. Ron Kulik, hosting the race beat Steve Hayden for second, with Ron Laird, Ron Daniel, and John Knifton following. The ORW postal 20 Km went to Laird in 1:33:25 with Tom Dooley just 21 seconds back. Romansky blazed the course record in the Zinn Memorial 10 Mile in Asbury Park with a 1:10:54. Ron Daniel was 4:54 minutes back. Wilf Welsch, a West German, walked a 1:29:02 for 20 Km in London. Gennadiy Agapov had a 1:29:15 in the USSR.

35 Years Ago (From the May 1975 ORW)—John Knifton won the National 15 Km in Chicago in 1:10:54 with Tom Dooley 42 seconds back. Bob Henderson, comebacking Larry Young, and Al Shirk followed. Mike Young, from the Colorado TC, won the Junior 15 in 1:25:50. The Mexican Revolution of our sport was really starting to blossom and was well demonstrated in a win over Canada Bautista won the 10 Km in 42:34 with Enrique Vera just 14 seconds back. The 20 went to Raul Gonzales in 1:27:50 with Pedro Aroche and Domingo Coin also well ahead of Canada's Marcel Jobin.

30 Years Ago (From the May 1980 ORW)—Carl Schueler won the 50 Km Olympic Trial and in the process, became the first U.S. walker under 4 hours. Schueler caught Marco Evoniuk on the last 20 laps and finished in 3:59:33. Evoniuk's 4:00:30 was also under Larry Young's previous U.S. best of 4:00:45 in the 1972 Olympics. Dan O'Connor passed Jim Heiring just after 40 Km and went on to take the third spot in 4:17:45. Jim finished in 4:17:43. Vincent O'Sullivan and Wayner Glusker filled the next two spots. A week earlier, Marcel Jobin had become the first North American under 4 hours, winning the Canadian title in 3:54:50. Jobin also came first in the U.S. 10 Km race in 41:47.3, nearly a minute ahead of Chris Hansen. O'Connor and Steve Pecinovsky were next. Jobin repeated in the Zinn Memorial 10 Km the next day with a 42:01 ahead of Ray Sharpe's 42:49. Pecinovsky edged O'Connor for third this time. The races were in Chicago. Sue Brodock won the U.S. 20 Km in 1:48:22, as Vicki Jones finished second and Lori Maynard third. The men's 20 was held in Seattle with O'Connor beating a relatively week field in 1:26:26. John.

25 Years Ago (From the May 1985 ORW)—With heat slowing the times, Carl Schueler defended his U.S. 50 Km title in New York City. Carl's 4:18:07 left Marco Evoniuk better than 7 minutes back. Randy Mimm was another 12 minutes back, then came Dan O'Connor, Dan Pierce, and Bob Davidson. Jim Heiring won the National 5 Km in Denver in a swift 20:21. Dave Cummings had 20:40 to beat Jim Lewis (20:56) for second. Marco Evoniuk, Gary Morgan, and Todd Scully were next. Maryanne Torrellas (23:52) took the women's title ahead of Esther Lopez (24:25) and Teresa Vaill (24:50). At the Mexican Walking Week, Marin Bervanu won the 20 Km in 1:23:50, Colombia's Quebrin Moreno the 1 Hour with 14,270 meters, and Norway's Erling Anderson the 50 in 3:59:34. Sweden's Ann Jansson won the women's 20 Km in 1:36:37. China's Hong Yan had a women's world best of 44:14 for 10 Km, with 15 more of her country women under 48 minutes in the same race. Two days later, she did 2:13:43 for 5 Km, but was beaten by Jungli (21:42).

20 Years Ago (From the May 1990 ORW)—National 5 Km races were held in Bethany, Oklahoma with Tim Lewis (21:06) and Teresa Vaill (22:45) winning. Dave McGovern and Ian Whatley were second and third in the men's race. Victoria Herazo and Susan Liers got the silver bronze in the women's race.

15 Years Ago (From the May 1995 ORW)—Chinese women completely dominated the World Cup 10 Km, held on their home turf in Beijing. They finished 1,3,4,12, and 25, beating Italy by 16 points in the team race. Hongmiao Gao won the race in 42:19, 13 seconds ahead of Russia's Elena Nikolaeva. With Michelle Rohl in 45:57 and Victoria Herazo 42nd, the U.S. women finished 14th. The Chinese men also did well, winning both races, taking four of the top 10 spots in the 20, and finishing third in the final standings (20 and 50 combined). Mexico was first and Italy second in the team standings. The 20 went to China's Zewen Li in 1:19:44, 14 seconds ahead of Russia's Mikhail Sennikov. Bernardo Segura was third for Mexico. In the 50, Yongsong Zhao led all the way to win 3:41:20 with Spain's Jesus Garcia 34 seconds back. Finland's Valentin Kononen was third. The U.S. men finished 13th. Allen James was 40th in the 10 (1:35:54). Those two grand vets, Carl Schueler (39) and Marco Evoniuk (37) led the way at 50, finishing 42nd and 47th. Carl had 4:06:45. In a fast Perm Relays 10 Km Nerm Nelson won in 42:06, with the Szela brothers, Kukasz and Wojtech) second and third in 42:15 and 42:55. Chad Eder had 43:02 and Tim Seaman and Curtis Fisher were also under 44. Eder had a 1:28:57 for 20 Km in Kenosha, Wis., beating Al Heppner (1:31:53). Debbie Lawrence had a 45:18 for 10 Km at the same venue.

10 Years Ago (From the May 2000 ORW)—In the Russian Championships, Valery Spitsyn had a world best for 50 Km with his 3:37:26 and Tatjana Gudkova bettered the World's best for the women's 20 Km by more than 2 minutes with her 1:25:18. Four others bettered the old record. The men's 20 went to Alexandr Rasskazov in a swift 1:17:46, 30 seconds ahead of Vladimir Andreyev. In the Naumburg Grand Prix, Russia's Andreas Erm covered 20 Km in 1:20:30 to beat China's Yunfeng Liu. China's Hongmiao Liu won the women's 20 in 1:29:20, 6 seconds ahead of Australia's Kelly Saxby and Viktor Ginko, Belarus, won the 50 in 3:47:53. In that men's 50, Curt Clausen was 15th in 1:28:43, Sean Albert had 1:31:12, Philip Dunn 1:31:58, Kevin Eastler 1:33:31, and Tim Seaman 1:37:13.

5 Years Ago (From the May 2005 ORW)—Ecuador's Rolando Saquipay won the Pan Am Cup 20 Km in 1:19:21, more than a minute ahead of Colombia's Fernando Lopez. Tim Seaman had a 1:27:18 in 10th. The women's 20 went to El Salvador's Cristina Lopez in 1:30:25. The U.S. was led by Amber Antonio (1:38:42) in eighth and Bobbi Jo Chapman (1:39:47) in tenth. The Junior Men's 10 Km went to Alex Tapia of Peru in 42:11. Zac Pollinger walked 44:47 in eighth. Canada's Rachel Lavallee won the Jr. Women's 10 in 47:37, 26 seconds ahead of Maria Michta. The 50 went to Mexico's Miguel Solis (3:54:24) with Horacio Nava second. Philip Dunn was eighth in 4:18:32. European Cup titles went to Russia's Vera Sokolova (44:09) in the Junior Women's 10 Km; Andrey Ruzavin (39:57) of Russia in the Jr. Men's 10; Olimpiada Ivanova (1:28:18) of Russia in the women's 20; Russia's Ilya Markov (1:20:50) in the men's 20; and Russia's Alexey Voyevodin (3:51:03) in the 50. Voyevodin won by just 8 seconds from Sergey Kirdyapkin. Racewalking Challenge races in Milan, Italy were won by Margaryta Turava, Belarus (1:28:43) and Francisco Fernandez, Spain 1:19:54.

I guess we have progressed. The drawing below, depicting racewalkers, is from the Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, June 12, 1980. We can hope this was drawn by an incompetent illustrator and does not accurately portray racewalking form of that era. Thanks to Steve Vaillone for submitting it.

Melbourne Olympics, 1956. U.S. T&F Hall of Fame member Henry Laskau, who finished 12th in 1:38:46.8, admires the medals of the three Russians who swept the 20 Km event (I think I have them properly identified from another podium picture). From the left, Laskau, gold medalist Leonid Spirin (1:31:27.4), bronze medalist Bruno Junk (1:32:12), and silver medalist Antanas Mikanaus (1:32:03). In those days of the Soviet Union, Spirin was the only actual Russian, Mikanaus being Estonian and Junk Lithuanian.