

A History of Masters Track and Field 1968 to 1971

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By the Masters Track and Field History Sub-Committee

USATF Masters track and field has a rich history, Thousands of pages of documents can be found at the website mastershistory.org which the website includes World and American championship meet results and records. The site is continually growing and improving, resulting in a virtual online Masters Track and Field museum.

The following is focused on the United States and age-group competitions of Masters Athletes (age 35 plus) from the research that we have completed so far. Prior to July 1968 a Masters age-group track and field meet had never been held in the US. There had been mile races, distance races and race-walks in the 1960s and 1970s, but no Masters age-group track and field meets. Back then in the United States track and field athletes over the age of 35 competed as Open Athletes. Slowly this changed, and it took many to accomplish the feat.

June 1966 San Diego's **David Pain** and others organized the first [Masters Mile](#), which was held in San Diego. **July 1967** An Eastern [Masters Mile](#) was held.

Following is chronological listing of the evolution of Masters Track and Field:

July 19-21, 1968 Pain and others contested in the first USA Masters Track and Field National Championships in San Diego. (Imagine having no local Masters meets and just going straight to a National Champs as the first ever Masters Age-Group Track and Field Competition!) In the August 1969 *Sports Illustrated*, a paragraph detailed the "U.S. Masters Track Meet in San Diego." San Diego would hold other future USA Masters Track and Field National Championships: 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, and 1989.

Note: *Track and Field News* ran a few short articles written by **Alphonse Juilland** and later **Peter Mundle** (1975) on Masters Track and Field from about 1969 until about 1979. The articles were called, "Seniors, 30 & Up", "Seniors, 35 & Up", and "Masters Scene."

April 1969 *Sports Illustrated* included Masters Athlete Peter Mundle in its "Faces in the Crowd."

Note: In 1971 Pete Mundle began keeping annual Single-Age Records. Mundle published his last issue of Masters Age Records in 2006. In the 1970s Peter became the official Records Chair for Masters American Records, and Masters World Records.

August 1969 First east coast Masters meet was held at Randall Island, NY (Eastern Regional Masters Championships). The early 1970s saw many Masters Meets held on the east coast. The "Masters Sports Association" was started by Bob Fine in 1972.

November 5, 1969 Warren Blaney received approval for a 1970 Los Angeles meet from the Memorial Coliseum Commission. In 1970 Blaney created two Senior Meets which were the very first Senior Games or **Senior Olympics**. One was held at the Los Angeles Coliseum in June 1970 and the other at UC Irvine in California, later the same year. These two meets were contested annually through the 1970s and 1980s.

Note: A "Seniors Newsletter" by Augie Escamilla (San Diego) started July 1966, however we were not able to find past issues. Augie's primary focus was on distance running. Ohio Racewalker newsletter began in the 1960s. West Valley Newsletter (later Nor-Cal Running Review) started November 1969 and included Northern California Masters athlete's results in its newsletter. However Masters Track and Field were not there primary focus. In 1970 a Los Angeles Seniors Track Club newsletter existed (we were not able to locate any copies).

Sept 1970 David Pain's USMITT newsletters began focusing on Masters Track and Field. The final issue was 1979.

Late 1970 A "M40 plus" Outdoor World Records list was included in the January 1971 Track and Field News issue. This might be the first published Masters Track and Field World Records list. Prior to this, the USA Masters National Outdoor Championship programs included USA Masters National Championship Meet Records (1969 and 1970).

August 1970 Philadelphia started including Masters Track and Field meets. Also in 1970, North Carolina began adding Masters Track and Field meets.

December 12-13, 1970: The Decathlon at Glendale College, California included Masters Athletes competition (December 1971, the Decathlon event included Masters Specifications for the hurdles and throwing implements). Future MTF Chair **Rex Harvey** competed as an open athlete at the December 1971 meet. **John Tansley** continued organizing this meet through the 1970s and 1980s.

April 3, 1971 Bob Boal began an annual Masters Meet (Southeastern Masters) in Raleigh, North Carolina that was held until 2015.

April 3, 1971 George Ker started the Grandfather Games which were held at LA Valley College in Van Nuys, the meet was later renamed (and moved to Irvine) Anteatr Masters Games, and then Dan Aldrich Memorial Meet. The meet finally ended in 2004.

April 1971 Masters Events were included at the Mt Sac Relays in Walnut, Calif. Masters events are still included at the Mt Sac Relays, Penn Relays, Drake Relays, Kansas Relays, and other relays today.

May 1971 The Lilac Senior Men's Track Meet (3rd Annual) was held in Spokane, WA at Hart Field. The Events included 100yd, 220yd, 440yd, 880yd, Mile, HJ, LJ, SP, Race Walk, and a Relay. Also, The Spokesman Review newspaper states the 1st Annual May 1969 Lilac Senior Men's Track Meet also was held at Hart Field and included running events only.

June 1971 Connecticut (Connecticut AAU Masters Outdoor Championship) followed including Masters Meets.

July 17, 1971 Jim Puckett at Mt Hood Community College in Oregon started holding Masters Meets. Puckett held many Masters Meets after this. Later, Oregon held several Masters Track and Field National Outdoor Championships: 1974, 1976, 1979, 1984, 1987, 1994, 2000, and 2003.

February 19, 1972 1972 San Diego Indoor Games programs included Masters Meet Records: **Jack Barnes** over-50 60yd dash, **Peter Mundle's** over-40 one-mile from 1969, and **Jim Van Tatenhove's** over-40 880yd run from 1971. These Games included limited Masters Track and Field events. The 1976 San Diego Track Club's "Club Records" includes Masters Club Records, the oldest dating to 1968.

In 1971 Bob Fine assisted in creating a separate group for Masters within the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) organization. Some of this effort started during the December 1970 Convention at San Francisco. During the 1960s through the 1990s the AAU later evolved into USTFF, TFA, and TAC. Today Masters is a separate group under USATF.

Starting August 1972 David Pain and the USMITT team toured around the world. David Pain had started planning the tour in 1970. August 1975 a World Masters Championship was held. Due to these tours, the efforts of many, and one July 1968 San Diego meet, the movement we now call Masters Track and Field began.

Masters Mile: ([Masters Mile](#))

Addendum: 1968: Per May 17, 1968 Independent (Long Beach) newspaper: Three All-Comers meets age 40 plus were scheduled to be held at Costa Mesa High School (Calif.) Planned for May through July 1968. (Note: missing results).

References:

1. Track and Field News.
2. Book "Masters Track and Field a History"; Leonard T. Olson.
3. Archive of masterstrack website
4. USMITT newsletter. Dated: Sept. 1970, Feb 1971, May 1972, August 1972, and August 1978.
5. Sports Illustrated archive website: (External Link: <https://vault.si.com/vault/1969/08/11/faces-in-the-crowd>)
6. 1972 San Diego Indoor Games program.
7. Memorial Coliseum Commission on November 5, 1969 minutes. ([External Link](#))
8. West Valley Newsletter (later Nor-Cal Running Review). ([External Link](#))
9. 1976 San Diego Track Club's "Club Records."
10. December 1970 and 1971 Decathlon, Glendale College meet results.
11. 1970 USA National Outdoor Championship program.
12. Spokesman Review newspaper.

Thank you to National Masters News for allowing all issues from Summer 1977 through December 2006 to be scanned and made available on the internet. These issues provide valuable information (results, records, stories, pictures, and more) on Masters Track and Field. For National Masters News issues post December 2006 please refer to hard copies.

Invitation to share materials for archive:

Anyone with Masters track and field material that might be appropriate for this archive may contact any of the committee members or write Jeff Davison at P.O. Box 5653, La Quinta, CA. 92248, or email him at jeff@shr1.org.