



# Masters Racewalking

by ELAINE WARD

## Judging

At the USAT&F Convention, Ron Daniel chaired a meeting on the new Judging Rules. Standing by a display board, he drew a line down the middle. On the extreme of one side, he indicated an area of very legal walking (straight knee) and on the extreme of the other side, he indicated an area of very illegal walking (very bent knee). He then drew a column on the legal side but touching the line separating legal and illegal walking. He explained that this bordering area is the zone where walkers are still legal but moving towards being illegal. He further explained that this area was the zone where walkers should properly be cautioned.

Feeling uncomfortable with the idea of somehow foreseeing when a legal walker was, in fact, going to become illegal, I asked if a caution weren't better given when a walker had just become illegal so he or she could focus and become legal again.

Because there was confusion about the use of a "legal" caution zone, Coach Bohdan Bulakowski cut through the haze. Going up to the display board, he drew lines through the proposed caution zone. He then proceeded to draw a figure with a straight knee and one with a bent knee to represent legal and illegal walking for simple, fair judging.

I have always been a rule "purist" in that I consider that the straight-knee gait (particularly in the vertical, upright position) separates racewalking from the flexed-knee, running gait. As Stan Chraminski so aptly points out in his excellent article in the North American Racewalking Foundation's new book, *MASTERS RACEWALKING: American Coaches and Athletes*

*Share Ideas on Technique, Training and Racing*, "racewalking is an artificially limited form of running." To keep the sport legitimate, he states that it is essential to enforce a straight knee gait and not make rule adjustments for bent knees even when the motive is humane.

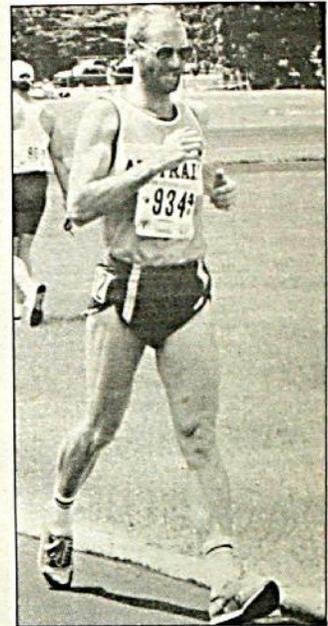
However, there seems to be an area for practical compromise. Because masters (and even young walkers) often show fatigue by their knees softening, I think a legitimate case may be made for using a caution to warn a walker when his or her knee is starting to soften, especially during a track race after walking legally for many laps. This allows a walker to re-focus on knee straightening and finish a race. However, once a caution is given, a red card should be immediately issued on the next perceived rule violation.

The only practical alternative to this instructional use of a caution is to eliminate cautions altogether and red card all forms of bent knees from slight to very. Such strict judging would be

simple, as it is easy to differentiate straight and bent knees. However, it would have severe consequences on masters racewalking. As racewalking is an endurance sport that demands good technique from beginning to end, a caution serves a useful purpose. Additionally, it removes some anxiety for new walkers.

In *MASTERS RACEWALKING*, Ed Kousky relates this story of how a caution was used constructively in a lifting situation (which usually involves bent knees). "In a race last year, one of my friends in my age group was trying to pass me. I was ahead of him, but he came on strong toward the end of the race. He was clearly lifting. A judge put a paddle in his face and he backed off. The caution served its proper purpose. My friend went back to being legal and finished second." □

(*MASTERS RACEWALKING: American Coaches and Athletes Share Ideas on Technique, Training and Racing*, \$14.95, can be purchased from the North American Racewalking Foundation, PO Box 50312, Pasadena, CA 91115-0312, or credit cards 1-800-898-5117. There is a \$2.00 shipping charge. Californians add \$1.23 tax.)



Clyde Riddoch, 41, Australia, was second overall (24:48) in the M40 5000 walk, 1995 USATF National Masters Championships, East Lansing, Mich. Photo by Jerry Wojcik

## Report from the RW Chair

by BEV LA VECK, *Racewalking Rep., Masters Track & Field Committee*

### Participation

Tallying the numbers of masters registering for or competing in National and WAVA Championships yields a whopping 900+ competitors, although, to be sure, these aren't 900 different participants. Generally, the age group 45-49 is the largest for both men and women, with M55-59 also being large in several events. Comparison of WAVA participation in 1989 (Eugene) and 1995 (Buffalo) suggests a 29% increase in the age 60+ participation for men and in the age 55+ for women, and a decrease in the younger ages. These figures are based on the 5000-meter event only, due to the effects of Buffalo's heat and humidity on the numbers of 10K and 20K finishers.

### Hall of Fame

Masters T&F is beginning a Masters Hall of Fame. The inaugural class will consist of up to three men and three women plus two contributors for T&F, LDR and RW. Beginning in 1996, each sports specialty can have one man, one woman and one contributor inductee. Athletes must be 40+ and must have competed at least five years in the masters program. The racewalking selection will be made by a subcommittee of Masters T&F headed by Marilyn Mitchell and a number of nominations have been made.

### Records

There are approximately 60 new USATF masters records to be approved for 1995. This is a modest decrease from 1994. Approximately half of the new submissions are for new categories — separating indoor from outdoor records, and adding submasters 35-39 records.

If masters T&F record-keeper Pete



Joe Rogers, M75, South Africa, finished eighth in the 5000 (36:32) and 20K (2:45:08) racewalks, WAVA Championships, Buffalo.

Photo by Leo Benning

## USATF MASTERS MEN'S AND WOMEN'S INDOOR RACEWALKING RECORDS

### MEN

3000 meters				
M35-39	11:29.87	Jonathan Matthews	Boston, MA	1/22/94
M40-44	12:25.9	Rav Funkhouser	Princeton, NJ	1/10/93
M45-49	12:38.71	Don DeNoon	Hillside, IL	2/20/93
M50-54	12:34.9	Don DeNoon	Carbondale, IL	2/4/94
M55-59	15:24.04	John Elwarner	Reno, NV	2/24/95
M60-64	14:44.51	Max Green	Columbus, OH	4/4/92
M65-69	16:52.0	Edward Gawinski	Columbia, MO	3/25/94
M70-74	19:40.7	Donald Colner	Columbia, MO	3/25/94
M75-79	19:45.31	Bill Tallmadge	Columbia, MO	3/25/94

### 5000 meters

M35-39	20:01.50	Jonathan Matthews	Atlanta, GA	3/5/94
M50-54	21:42.71	Donald DeNoon	Atlanta, GA	3/5/94

### WOMEN

3000 meters				
F35-39	13:11.76	Victoria Herazo	Atlanta, GA	3/4/95
F40-44	14:23.33	Viisha Sedlak	Columbus, OH	4/4/92
F45-49	16:29.54	Jeanne Bocci	Columbus, OH	4/4/92
F50-54	17:28.21	Elton Richardson	Columbus, OH	4/4/92
F55-59	17:35.06	Elton Richardson	Columbus, OH	3/25/94
F60-65	17:31.83	Ruth Eberle	Columbia, MO	3/25/94
F65-69	19:06.8	Ruth Leff	Columbus, OH	4/4/92
F70-74	22:32.091	Imogene Watkins	Reno, NV	2/24/95
F75-79	22:17.08	Phyllie Crews	Madison, WI	3/24/90
F85-89	28:47.11	Dorothea Roberts	Reno, NV	2/24/95