

TRACK NEWSLETTER

Vol. 3, No. 8, November 14, 1956

P. O. Box 296, Los Altos, California

By Bert & Cordner Nelson (Track & Field News)

\$6 per year (24 issues)

NEWS

UNITED STATES Olympic team meet in Los Angeles, Nov. 1 & 2, produced two new world records before team flew to Melbourne Nov. 5 & 6. Parry O'Brien heaved 63-2 and Hal Connolly did 224-10 1/2. 100- King 10.4, Murchison 10.5, Morrow 10.6, Baker; 200 Morrow 20.8, Baker 20.9, Stanfield 21.1, Davis, Johnson; 400 Jones 47.2, Jenkins 47.4, Lea 48.0; 800- Courtney 1:49.6, Sowell 1:49.8, Spurrier 1:49.9, Walters 1:51.3; 1500- Wheeler 3:52.5, Dwyer 3:53.4, Walters 3:54.6, Seaman; 5000- Dellinger 14:16.2 American record, Truex 14:16.7, Stone 14:47.1, Hart; HH- Davis 13.9, Calhoun 14.1, Shankle 14.1, Campbell 14.2; 400H Culbreath 51.6, Davis 52.1, Southern 53.2; St. - Jones 9:39, Coleman 9:44.3 (2 miles, no water jump); 400R- Murchison, King, Baker, Morrow 40.3; MileR- Jenkins, Spurrier, Courtney, Jones 3:07.3, world record; HJ- Dumas, Wilson, Reavis, Fendler 6-6 (Dumas did 7-3/4 later); BJ- Bennett 25-5 3/4, Bell 24-10, PV- Gutowski & Mattos 14-8, Morris 14-6, Graham 14-4; HSJ- Sharpe 50-2 1/4, Davis 48-6 3/4, Shaw 45- 3/4; SP- O'Brien 63-2, Nieder 58-10; DT- Oerter 182-2, Gordien 180-3 1/2, Koch 172-10 1/2; JT- Held 263-1, Young 244-6 1/2, Conley 233- 1/2, Garcia 206-5 1/2; HT- Connolly 224-10 1/2, Hall 201-4 1/2, Engel 186-9, Blair 183-2.

EUROPE Late season Russian marks include: Ignatyev 46.7; Mikhailov 14.1, tying USSR record; Krivonosov 219-3 1/2; Samotsvetov 208 5 5/8; Trusenyev 178-5 3/4, Bukhantsev 182- 1/4; Grigalka 179-11 1/2; Ovsepyan, 57-11 5/8, record; Ryakhovskiy 52-3 1/8 HSJ; Kobelyev 52-2 3/4; Chen 52-4; Lituyev 50.4 & 50.6; Yulin 51.8; Bogatov 14.2; Mikhailov 14.2; Bartenyev 21.0.

AUSTRALIA Halberg 8:54.2 from Stephens; Lincoln 4:04.8 from Halberg, Bailey and Chataway. Pre-Olympic meets scheduled for Nov. 14 and 17.

OLYMPIC THOUGHTS

(By Bert Nelson) As the Big Moment nears, conjecture increases, and fuel for a thousand hot stove sessions is at hand. How will the Hungarian situation affect the Games? Will the great Hungarian athletes be below par, or will the events at home give them added resolution? Will other countries withdraw? How will the Russians be treated? What effect will the late season schedule have on the northern hemisphere athletes, competing below the equator for the first time? Will the acclimatization problem prove too difficult? Will the great U.S. team regain its form in time for the Games?

Thursday, Nov. 22. The opening ceremony. A colorful event that only whets the appetite for the big show to begin. Some of the athletes miss the parade, notably the 10,000 meter men who have to run the next day. 110,000 fans pour out of the stadium, many to talk track far into the night.

Friday, Nov. 23. 10 a.m. The early birds are on hand to see the high jump trials. Nothing important happens, but you get a good look at the various athletes, note their style, pick out the ones to watch. The qualifying height is low and most of the entrants will be back in the afternoon. Women's discus trials too.

2:30 p.m. First final starts, the high jump. Will Dumas repeat at 7 feet, as he did so easily after missing at 6-8 in Los Angeles? How about Chilla Porter. He did 6-8 7/8 easily, just missed at 7 feet last week. Claims he can do 7 in the Games, because cinder take off is so much better than his customary grass. The Russian Kashkarov will be in tough competition for the first time, and there is the great Benke Nilsson. It will be a long afternoon, and who will wear best?

2:30 p.m. The 400 hurdie heats begin. Race after race, but little trouble for the goodies. Even a mistake can be corrected in time to qualify for the next round.

3:10 p.m. Start of the 100 heats. Now we see how fast is the track. Top times are possible. Probably 15 or more heats, with the three Americans the center of all attention. Lots of interest too in the Russians, with their fast times but poor competitive records. Is Agostini in the shape he displayed early last

spring? How about the speedy Germans, particularly the off form Futterer? Watch out for muscle pulls. And check the direction and intensity of the wind. It blows hard in Australia, and will be a major factor in some events.

4:15 p.m. The 800 men take the track, as the high jump starts to get interesting. Now we see some real racing, with the 1:49.2 Olympic record apt to fall in a heat. The real good ones should get through to the semis without too much trouble, but some good men will be left out. This field is loaded. Keep your eye on that first turn, it will be rough.

5:05 p.m. Here are the sprinters again, out for the second round. The best still won't be extended but some well known names will be missing in the semi-final round. This is all the sprinting for today, so if the track is fast somebody might cut loose.

5:40 p.m. 400 hurdles, 2nd round. The end of the first of two gruelling days for the intermediate hurdlers. Times pick up considerably throughout.

6 p.m. The first track final and one of the great events of the meet--the 10,000. Too bad Iharos is out of the Games. But watch Kuts set the pace, hard and fast. He can steal it if you don't hang on. Has Stephens returned to his world six mile record form, and how about his rapidly improving teammates, all taking advantage of home conditions. Pirie is a big question mark. He's the record man at lesser distances, and loaded here, too, but hasn't had a hard one for a long while. That plodding Frenchman is Mimoun, with two silver medals in this event, and better than ever at 35 years. Will little Max Truex be the first American under 30? Not much hope for a place, but a real battle will make the future brighter. Chromik, too, is untested, and tough. But so are most of the other entrants, what with 30 men doing 29:54 or better this year. Zatopek is missed.

Saturday, Nov. 24 10 a.m. Start of a busy day, with vault, hammer and broad jump trials. Vaulting will be meaningless, with a low height to be cleared for the afternoon trials. But the jumpers--the best crop ever--and the throwers--ditto--will have to hustle. Competition is tough, even though the marks don't count in the finals. Too many good men for something not to happen.

1:30 p.m. 50,000m walk gets underway, most of it outside the stadium.

2:30 p.m. Hammer finals. One of the great man-to-man duels of the Games between Krivonosov and Connolly. The world record in great danger. Mike is a proven fighter who does his best in the big meets, and will be tough for certain. Hal lacks the competitive background, but is confident and hasn't reached his limit yet. Hall is ready to go over 210, and this could be the day. Should take better than 200 to make the first six, and maybe a lot over.

2:30 p.m. 400 hurdle semi-finals. An all-out effort called for here, except possibly by the very best, and even Davis can't make a mistake in this field. Lituyev has been coming.

3:45 p.m. 100 semis. Again, class really counts here. All out running means good times, and a chance to predict the placers.

3:50 p.m. Broad jump finals. Too bad the Dutch withdrew and Europe's first 26 footer is missing. But the Americans can't let down against a crop of 25 footers. Will Rafer Johnson, the great competitor, be able to hack it with his favored leg? Owens 26-5 3/8 is the toughest mark in the book, but Bell could do it if the runway is favorable.

4:00 p.m. 800m semis. Too much happening at once. How can you watch these great 800s and yet not miss the best hammer throwing in history, and some mighty fine jumping? The times will be fast, although some will try to save energy. But beware playing it too close--somebody else has a better finish and you can watch the final from the stands.

5:10 p.m. 400 hurdle finals. A missed step is fatal in this competition, and Davis and Southern are the least experienced, although the fastest.

5:30 p.m. 100 finals. Will it be Morrow with a return to June form? Or Baker, who might not have been at his best in June? Or Murchison running 10.1 again. Possible surprier--Agostini.

Monday Nov. 26 Athletes and fans refreshed after a Sunday off.

10 a.m. Javelin trials. Will the Spanish throwers do their stuff?

1:30 p.m. Pole vault finals. How high will the record go? Can Gutowski match the consistent parson? Will Mattos atone for his Helsinki failure, or will Landstrom or another prevent an American sweep. U.S. has never lost this one.

2:30 p.m. 200m trials. Sprinters beginning to look familiar. Many heats.

3:25 p.m. Javelin final. Cy Young is beginning to come, cannot be counted out. First look for the Americans at all the great European throwers. This will be a battle of the giants. No Finns entered in a "Finnish" event, and no Held, but lots of Held type javelins.

3:30 p.m. 800 final. Forget the field events for a bit. Did Boysen's last minute decision to compete find him out of shape? Which of the great Europeans will rise to the occasion--there are too many good ones for form to prevail. Watch Sowell shoot for the lead, he doesn't like the rough stuff. But don't worry about Courtney, he's big enough to take care of himself on the corners.

3:50 p.m. 5000 heats. This is too much. Still breathing hard from the 800, the javelin and vault to watch, and now they give us this. Dellinger and Truex look like they might do 14, and it may take that to qualify, although a slower pace with tough finish is more likely. Still, with 32 men doing 14:12 or better this year you can't tarry long. Three races, all much better than any distance race seen in U.S.

5:40 p.m. The omnipresent sprinters, back for 200 meters, second round.

Tuesday, Nov. 27 10 a.m. Hop-step-jump, discus trials.

2:30 p.m. H-S-J finals. Three men over 54 feet. da Silva, an unrivalled competitor. Shcherbakov, unbeaten in experience; Kogake, the newcomer. Davis and Sharpe have comethrough potential, but are in awfully tough. No Devonish.

3 p.m. 200 semis. Pace picks up, but still no real test for the U.S. trio. By American standards, and omitting the Americans, sprint fields are lacking.

3:20 p.m. 110 hurdle heats. Only three rounds here, so some will have to hustle, but not the U.S. entrants.

3:25 p.m. Discus finals. Can Gordien do it on his third try? He hit 196 in practice, says he'll do 200. Oerter is consistent. Consolini is Consolini. And the Russians were great in late October.

4 p.m. Steeplechase heats. Now we get a look at Ashenfelter, who said he wouldn't compete unless in top shape. Top shape means better even than in 1952, but will that be good enough. Coleman and Jones will have to break their records to qualify. Is Chromik entered? If so, how is his form? Will Rzhishchin, the short time record holder, be able to qualify?

5:05 p.m. 200 finals. Anybodys race. All three U.S. runners have done 20.6. Looks like a sweep. Watch Ignatyev and the Germans.

Wednesday, Nov. 28 10 a.m. Shot put trials. Olympic record falls.

2:30 p.m. 110 hurdlesemis. Americans can qualify without pressure. Is Lauer really a 13.9 man? How about the new Russian, Mikhailov?

2:30 p.m. Shot finals. The three 60 footers, all in the best shape of their lives. Parry O. did 63-2 in tune-up meet, always does better under pressure. Nieder apparently better than ever, hit 61-6 in practice in Hawaii, had five straight over 59 in Australia. And there's that big cat, Bantum. Skobla and Ovsepyan might be over 58, but where will it get them? How many Europeans use O'B form?

2:50 p.m. 20,000 walk finals. On the road? Will Laskau be tossed out again?

3:00 p.m. 400 trials. Around and around they go. No pressure here.

4:05 p.m. 110 hurdle finals. It's Davis vs. Calhoun. They tied in the trials and it could be that close again. Calhoun sharper in October, but Davis wants this one very badly. Don't make a mistake, or Shankle will beat you. Others in the 2nd division, with an interesting battle to see who is best non-U.S. hurdler.

4:45 p.m. 5000 final. 15 of the greatest, all capable of better than Zatopek's 1952 Olympic record. A fast one in store, for Kuts and Pirie are pace pushers, among others. Watch them lose contact, one by one. Can four men reach the final backstretch together, as at Helsinki? Will Chataway of the tragic fall be at his best, despite lack of competition. The Aussies will be tough, and watch the youngster, Zimny. Hope Dellinger and Truex keep at it, they could be in the thick of it at Rome. And then there's Landy, the national hero, who could win it.

5:35 p.m. 400m, 2nd round. Pace quickens, but no trouble for the U.S.

Thursday, Nov. 29 10 a.m. You have to get an early start today. The decathlon starts with the 100. It will be a battle all day long, with every event a key one. Keep your eye on Johnson's leg. Watch out for Campbell's improvement. He's been working on the event for first time, could take it all with record total. Kuznetsov will be tough, too, but probably lacks over all natural ability of U.S. duo.

3 p.m. 400 semi finals. Now it gets tough. U.S. runners, who didn't look good in October, will have to be at best. How is Lea's tendon? Battles for place in finals will be hard and fast, and unpredictable. The Americans, 5 Europeans under 47, plus Gosper and Tobacco, Cruz and the Jamaicans.

4: p.m. Steeplechase final. A tough one to pick, but a great one to watch. Ash, the great British trio, three Aussies who are improving, the Scandinavians, Russians and East Europeans. World record might not be good enough.

4:30 p.m. 1500 trials. If no semis are added this could be all out all the way. Over 20 men have done better than 3:44 or equivalent. Somebody very good will be left out of the 12 man final. Look for best ever performances by American trio, but a qualifier will be a major surprise. Inexperience a big factor.

5:30 p.m. 400m finals. Another big occasion for Jones, who thrives on them. Looks like the first defeat since 1952 Games forignatyev, but how many will beat him?

Friday, Nov. 30 9 a.m. Second day of decathlon starts. Anything can happen.

3:30 p.m. 400 relay trials. Let's see if the U.S. can pass well for a change. Note the different styles. See how smooth are some of the slower but better trained teams.

4:35 pm. 1600 relay trials. Composition of U.S. team will be interesting. Quarter-milers just had 4 races in two days. Relayists will have three more in 2 days. No trouble in qualifying, but other countries pretty even, must go all out.

Saturday, Dec. 1 3:15 p.m. Marathon starts in stadium. Zatopek the incomparable starts his last race, favored to win fifth gold medal. Most unpredictable of events has best field ever. Weather will play important role. If it is one of Melbourne's hot days they will drop like flies. Keep an eye peeled for results from the check points. Lots of hope for Kelley? Is Mimoun running?

3:50 p.m. 1600 Relay semi-finals. More speedy heats, no trouble for U.S.

4:15 p.m. 1500 final. Here it is, the toughest of all to pick. Name a finalist and you name a possible winner. Watch the strategy. Will the mysterious Landy try to outrun this field? Can the kickers, who are numerous, hang on. Where will the final rush start? At the bell, on the backstretch, or not until the last curve? If Wood is in contention, look out. Unbeaten even though his best is 3:43.4. Has Delany regained his June form? How about Rozsavolgyi and Bailey, Herrmann and Richtzenhain the Germans, Ibbotson and Hewson the Britons, and Tabori and Jung-wirth, the late season comers. Has Nielsen come back to form? Can Waern and Ericsson, the young and old Swedes, do it? Salsola? Dohrow? You name it.

4:35 p.m. 400 relay final. Should be a world record for U.S. speedsters and baton changing will decide it. Germans are good enough to win on U.S. mistake. Yanks can be sloppy, still beat the others.

5:10 p.m. 1600 relay final. Watch the U.S. go after the world record they pushed Jamaica to in 1952. It can be done, but it won't come easy. Only fatigue or injury could beat them. Or the U.S. "second team" of Courtney, Spurrier, Sowell and Davis or Southern.

5:30 p.m. (approximately) Marathoners begin to finish. And, all too soon, it's all over.

Left over, for the long winter months and the years ahead, are the memories. Of great competition and great competitors. Come through boys and surprisingly few failures. Records galore. World, Olympic and national, even a sweep of the Games record by every placer in an event. Upsets. Tragic injuries. Good sportsmanship. The ever stirring victory ceremony, no matter who is on the stand. A full appreciation that track is the universal sport, that it is for individuals and that and that you root for all nations alike. And a confirmation, if any is needed, that track and field is far and away man's finest sporting pastime.

See you in Rome?