



OHIO RACEWALKER

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We hope you have enjoyed many blessings in this Christmas season and wish you the happiest of New Years as we present our:

Annual ORW Rankings

I suppose not all the world has been waiting with baited for the Ohio Racewalker's Annual Rankings, 36th edition, but may I hope that some few of you have been panting in eager participation. At any rate, the moment has nearly arrived.

Late in 1970, I received a communication from Bob Bowman that, surprisingly, *Track & Field News* had seen the light and was adding the 20 and 50 Km racewalks to their annual World Rankings for track and field events. Bob was asking England's Colin Young and me to lend our supposed expertise on racewalking to his in coming up with rankings for the racewalks. *T&FN*'s panel of experts had little knowledge of and probably little interest in these events. I accepted the invitation, as did Colin, and through our consensus, which wasn't too difficult to reach, we gave the "bible" of track and field what it wanted. And we continue to do so, with Ireland's Pierce O'Callaghan replacing Colin in 2002. If you get *T&FN* you have already seen the results of our work for this year. Now, you get the ORW version.

Back there in 1970, I decided to publish the rankings I had sent to Bob in my own humble newsletter, then in its sixth year. In the process, I would scoop *T&FN* since my year-end issue preceded theirs. Of course, as is still true, my own rankings differ to some degree from the consensus of three great minds. Somewhere along the way, *T&FN* started publishing their Rankings earlier, no doubt disturbed by the fact that the prestigious *ORW* was beating them onto the streets, but so be it.

In 1972 I added U.S. Rankings and in 1979 Women's Rankings, both world and U.S. Prior to 1979, it was not the ORW that was being sexist, but the racewalking world itself. We supported women's racewalking in our pages and included it in the Ohio Track Club annual Distance Carnival, but there simply was not sufficient activity to justify any rankings prior to 1979. The first Women's Rankings were at 5 and 10 Km, the primary competitive distances for many years. After 1985, we ranked only 10 Km as international competition at that distance proliferated and significant activity at 5 waned. In 1999, the Women's Rankings shifted to 20 Km when that became the distance for international competitions. Should there ever be a significant increase in women's competition at 50 Km, we will gladly add that event to the rankings.

The ORW Rankings are based strictly on the opinion of your editor..arbitrary, but with close attention to the year's entire performance for each athlete. All gripes are accepted, but once in type, the rankings are most unlikely to change. Even if we do, as with the 1999 World 50 Km Rankings when number one German Skurygin had his World Championship lifted because of a doping charge nearly two years later, I can't go back and republish the

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issue, but merely announce the change later, as I did.
And now, the envelopes please.

2005 World 20 Km Rankings—Women

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Olimpiada Ivanova, Russia | 1:29:26 (3) Euro Cup 5/21 |
| 1:28:18 (1) Euro. Cup 5/21 | 1:29:52 (7) World Champ 8/7 |
| 1:25:41 (1) World Champ. 8/7 | 1:33:46 (1) Piacenza 10/2 |
| 2. Ryta Turava, Belarus | 7. Claudia Stef, Romania |
| 1:27:19 (1) Rio Maior 4/2 | 1:30:41 (5) Rio Maior 4/2 |
| 1:28:43 (1) Sesto San Giov. 5/1 | 1:29:54 (3) Sesto San Giov. 5/1 |
| DNF Euro. Cup 5/21 | 1:30:11 (4) Euro. Cup 5/21 |
| 1:30:10 (2) La Coruna 6/4 | 1:30:12 (3) La Coruna 6/4 |
| 1:27:05 (2) World Champ. 8/7 | 1:30:07 (8) World Champ. 8/7 |
| 3. Susana Feitor, Portugal | 8. Athina Papayianni, Greece |
| 1:32:46 (4) Tijuana 3/19 | 1:36:44 (4) Prevaza 4/23 |
| 1:29:33 (2) Sesto San Giov. 5/21 | DNF Euro Cup 5/21 |
| 1:29:01 (2) Euro Cup 5/21 | 1:29:21 (6) World Champ. 8/7 |
| 1:28:44 (3) World Champ. | 9. Jing Jiang, China |
| 4. Maria Vasco, Spain | 1:27:19 (1) Nanning 2/25 |
| 1:32:18 (2) Span. Champ. 2/27 | 1:29:31 (2) Dudince 3/26 |
| 1:28:51 (4) World Champ. 8/7 | 1:27:56 (1) Cixi 4/23 |
| 5. Barbora Dibelkova, Czech Rep. | DQ World Champ. 8/7 |
| 1:31:01 (1) Sochi 3/12 | 1:28:14 (2) Nanjing 10/20 |
| 1:29:05 (5) World Champ. 8/7 | 10. Hongjuan Song, China |
| 6. Elisa Rigaud, Italy | 1:28:26 (3) Nanning 2/25 |
| 1:32:24 (3) Tijuana 3/19 | 1:28:37 (1) Dudince 3/26 |
| 1:30:48 (6) Rio Maior 4/2 | 1:29:01 (2) Rio Maior 4/2 |
| 1:30:13 (4) Sesto San Giov. 5/1 | 1:30:32 (9) World Champ. 8/7 |
| | DNF Nanjing 10.20 |

Ivanova won the year's two major races and had the fastest time in the world. She needed nothing more to establish her as No. 1. . . The next four are rated as they finished in the World Championships. Turava had a blemish in not finishing the Euro. Cup race, but she also won two IAAF Challenge races, beating Feitor in one of those. Feitor had two solid races besides her World second place and neither Vasco or Dibelkova did much other than their World Championship races. . . Rigaud and Stef are ranked ahead of Papayianni, who beat them at the

Worlds, off their good finishes in the Euro Cup and consistent performances and the Greek Lady's failure to finish the Euro Cup race. . . Jiang and Song are difficult to separate; they were two-and-two head-to-head and Song did better at the Worlds, but Jiang beat her at the start and finish of the season and had two faster times, so she gets my nod for ninth

2005 Top 50 Performers

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1:25:41 Oliampida Ivanova, Russia | 1:29:26 Elisa Rigaud, Italy |
| 1:26:28 Irina Pudovkina, Russia | 1:29:33 Jane Saville, Australia |
| 1:27:05 Ryta Turava, Belarus | 1:29:39 Hong Liou, China |
| 1:27:19 Jin Jiang, China | 1:29:40 Yingtang Pang, China |
| 1:27:24 Liping Wang, China | 1:29:43 Larisa Yemelyanova, Russia |
| 1:27:30 Tatyana Kozlova, Russia | 1:29:51 Nan Zhang, China |
| 1:27:37 Hanmei Bai, China | 1:29:51 Lyudmila Yefimkina, Russia |
| 1:27:56 Irina Stankina, Russia | 1:29:54 Claudia Staf, Rumania |
| 1:27:58 Yawei Yan, China | 1:29:57 Irayuda Pudovkina, Russia |
| 1:28:01 Qiuyan Jiang, China | 1:30:03 Tatyana Korotkova, Russia |
| 1:28:02 Yuliya Voyevodina, Russia | 1:30:08 Cristina Lopez, Spain |
| 1:28:07 Yinghua Tang, China | 1:30:13 Svetlana Tolstaya, Kazakhstan |
| 1:28:26 Na Shi, China | 1:30:14 Mingming Ha, China |
| 1:28:26 Hongjuan Song, China | 1:30:15 Xiaoling Song, China |
| 1:28:35 Dan He, China | 1:30:16 Lihua Sun, China |
| 1:28:44 Susanna Feitor, Portugal | 1:30:18 Irina Petrova, Russia |
| 1:28:51 Kelian Gao, China | 1:30:19 Lijun Zhai, China |
| 1:28:52 Maria Vasco, Spain | 1:30:21 Melanie Seeger, Germany |
| 1:28:52 Lyudmila Arkhipova, Russia | 1:30:35 Tongmei Zhou, China |
| 1:29:02 Tatyana Gudkova, Russia | 1:30:44 Lijun Zhai |
| 1:29:05 Elena Ginko, Belarus | 1:30:45 Lyudmila Yegorova, Ukraine |
| 1:29:05 Barbora Dibelkova, Czech Rep. | 1:30:49 Xiaoyan Liu, China |
| 1:29:07 Sabine Zimmer, Germany | 1:31:18 Tatyana Sibileva, Russia |
| 1:29:21 Athina Papayianni, Greece | 1:31:19 Yevdokiya Korotkova, Russia |
| 1:29:25 Olga Kaniskina, Russia | 1:31:23 Kristina Saltanovic, Lithuania |

2005 World 20 Km Rankings—Men

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Jefferson Perez, Ecuador | 3. Nathan Deakes, Australia |
| 1:28:57 (64) Cixi 4/23 | 1:19:23 (1) Canberra 2/6 |
| 1:22:56 (1) So. Amer. Champ. 7:23 | 1:19:39 (1) Sydney 3/6 |
| 1:18:35 (1) World Champ. 8/6 | 1:21:28 (1) Tijuana 3/19 |
| | 1:19:15 (2) Rio Maior 4/2 |
| | 1:17:33 (1) Cixi 4/23 |
| 2. Francisco Fernandez, Spain | 4. Juan Manuel Molina, Spain |
| 1:19:02 (1) Rio Maior 4/2 | 1:21:53 (4) Tijuana 3/19 |
| 1:19:54 (1) Sesto San Giov. 5/1 | 1:21:09 (7) Rio Maior 4/2 |
| 1:17:52 (1) La Coruna 6/4 | 1:20:59 (2) Lloret de Mar 4/10 |
| 1:19:36 (2) World Champ. 8/6 | 1:20:54 (2) Euro Cup 5/21 |

1:19:44 (3) World Champ. 8/6
1:24:06 (1) World Univ. Games 8/16

5. Andre Hohne, Germany
1:21:49 (1) Dresden 4/24
DQ La Coruna 6/4
1:20:0r (4) World Champ. 8/6
6. Ilya Markov, Russia
1:18:17 (2) Sochi 3/12
1:20:46 (1) Lloret de Mar 4/10
1:20:32 (2) Sesto San Giov. 5/1
1:20:50 (1) Euro Cup 5/21
1:19:36 (2) La Coruna 6/4
DQ World Champ. 8/6

7. Vladimir Stankin, Russia
1:18:22 (3) Sochi 3/12
1:21:28 (3) Euro. Cup 5/21
1:20:25 (6) World Champ. 8/6

Perez had an inauspicious start to his year, losing to what must have seemed to be half of China, but winning the race that counted by 61 seconds certainly earned him his third No. 1 ranking. The others were in 1996 and 2003. He was ranked second in 1997, 1998, 2002, and 2004, fourth in 1999, and fifth in 2000. . Fernandez had a remarkable season with three decisive wins over strong fields and had he been able to stay close to Perez in the World Championship race would certainly have won strong consideration for No. 1. . Deakes was nearly as impressive, losing only a close race to Fernandez, but had his season cut short by injury. But, despite not competing in the Worlds, he is clearly No.3 over Molina, who got stronger as the season progressed. . Hohne had only threeraces, but his fourth place finish at the Worlds earns him the fifth spot. . Though suffering a DQ at the Worlds, Markov won the European Cup, had two other good wins and beat World's fifth place finisher, Ghoulia twice. . Stankin gets the nod over Ghoulia for seventh off his good Euro Cup race and fast time in Sochi, plus Ghoulia's two eighth place finishes in earlier races. . Zhu and Sanchez edge out Worlds seventh-place finisher Benjamin Kucinski, who dropped out of the Euro Cup race and was a distant fifth at Sesto San Giovanni.

2005 Top 50 Performers

1:17:33 Nathan Deakes, Australia
1:17:41 Hongjun Zhu, China
1:17:52 Francisco Fernandez, Spain
1:17:53 Zhide Cui, China
1:18:06 Vladimir Parvatkin, Russia
1:18:07 Gaobo Li, China
1:18:17 Ilya Markov, Russia
1:18:22 Vladimir Stankin, Russia
1:18:27 Shucai Xing, China
1:18:30 Chaohong Yu, China
1:18:31 Yucheng Han, China

8. Hatem Ghoulia, Tunisia
1:22:04 (8) Rio Maior 4/2
1:26:30 (8) Sesto San. Giov. 5/1
1:20:48 (3) La Coruna 6/4
1:20:19 (5) World Champ. 8/6

9. Hongjun Zhu, China
1:18:37 (1) Dudince 3/26
1:17:41 (2) Cixi 4/23
1:21:01 (9) World Champ. 8/6
1:19:00 (2) Nanjing 10/19

10. Eder Sanchez, Mexico
1:22:18 (5) Tijuana 3/19
1:19:02 (11) Cixi 4/23
1:20:45 (8) World Champ. 8/6

1:18:33 Yungeng Liu, China
1:18:35 Jefferson Perez, Ecuador
1:18:39 Ronghua Lu, China
1:18:45 Stephan Yudin, Russia
1:18:48 Viktor Burayev, Russia
1:18:51 Noe Hernandez, Mexico
1:19:02 Eder Sanchez, Mexico
1:19:08 Pengfei Fang, China
1:19:19 Luke Adams, Australia
1:19:21 Chuang Pei, China
1:19:21 Rolando Saquipay, Ecuador

1:19:22 Cristian Berdeja, Mexico
1:19:29 Xuejin Bai, China
1:19:34 Jianbo Li, China
1:19:44 Juan Manuel Molina, Spain
1:19:51 Alguo Bian, China
1:19:58 Andriy Yurin, Ukraine
1:20:00 Andre Hohne, Germany
1:20:05 Tianfeng Si, China
1:20:08 Dmitry Yesipchuk, Russia
1:20:08 Zhiping Wang, China
1:20:15 Hongguang Li, China
1:20:16 Igor Yerohin, Russia
1:20:19 Hatem Ghoulia, Tunisia
1:20:20 Yohan Deniz, France

1:20:20 Chengliang Zhao, China
1:20:25 Omar Segura, Mexico
1:20:26 Luis Fernando Lopez, Columbia
1:20:27 Aleksandr Yargunkin, Russia
1:20:28 Xingde Xu, China
1:20:28 Wenjun Liu, China
1:20:33 Andrei Talashko, Belarus
1:20:34 Benjamin Kucinski, Poland
1:20:41 Jimin Dong, China
1:20:45 Yong Shi, China
1:20:47 Roman Magdziarczyk, Poland
1:20:55 Aigars Fadejevs, Latvia
1:20:59 Chao Sun, China
1:20:59 Ke Meng, China

2005 World 50 Km Rankings—Men

1. Sergey Kiryapkin, Russia
3:41:11 (2) Euro Cup 5/21
3:38:08 (1) World Champ. 8/12

2. Aleksey Voyevodin, Russia
3:41:03 (1) Euro Cup 5/21
3:41:25 (2) World Champ. 8/12

3. Alex Schwarzer, Italy
3:56:59 (1) Augusta 1/30
3:49:42 (6) Euro Cup 5/21
3:41:54 (3) World Champ. 8/12

4. Trond Nymark, Norway
3:46:05 (1) Tijuana 3/20
3:44:04 (4) World Champ. 8/12
3:49:36 (1) Kobenhavn 10/8

5. Chengliang Zhao, China
3:38:56 (3) Nanning 2/27
3:44:45 (5) World Champ. 8/12
3:36:13 (2) Nanjing 10/22

6. Yuriy Adronov, Russia
3:42:34 (3) Euro Cup 5/21

7. Chaohong Yu, China
3:44:45 (6) Nanning 2/27
3:36:06 (1) Nanjing 10/22

8. Omar Zepeda, Mexico
3:50:17 (3) Tijuana 3/20
3:49:01 (6) World Champ. 8/12

9. Roman Magdziarczyk, Poland
3:49:55 (7) World Champ. 8/12

10. Yucheng Han, China
3:36:20 (1) Nanning 2/27
3:40:30 (1) Dudince 3/26
DNF World Champ. 8/12
DNF Nanjing 10/22

Kiryapkin and Voyevodin traded wins in the two big races, but Kiryapkin's very decisive in the World Championship race give him the No. 1 spot. . The next three are ranked just as they finished in the Worlds. . Adronov had an impressive race in the Euro Cup, hanging close to the top two, which earns him the sixth spot, although he had no other races. . Yu, ranked fourth last year when he was second in the World Cup and fourth in the Olympics, concentrated on the 20 this year, but a DQ in the Worlds cost him a ranking there. However, he started and finished his season with fast 50s, earning seventh place. . Zepeda and Magdziarczyk with their sixth and seventh place finishes in the Worlds get the next two spots. . Han had a spotty record but his two fast races early give him tenth over Yuki Yamazaki,

who was eighth in the Worlds.

2005 Top 50 Performers

3:36:06 Chaohong Yu, China	3:47:51 Nathan Deakes, Australia
3:36:13 Chengliang Zhao, China	3:48:15 Santiago Perez, Spain
3:36:20 Yucheng Han, China	3:48:19 Jesus Angle Garcia, Spain
3:37:58 Shucui Xing, China	3:49:01 Omar Zepeda, Mexico
3:38:08 Sergey Kiryapkin, Russia	3:49:20 Jose Antonio Gonzalez, Spain
3:39:17 Jimin Dong, China	3:49:55 Roman Magdziarczyk, Poland
3:40:23 Gadasu Alatan, China	3:50:39 Yuki Yamazaki, Japan
3:40:40 Vladimir Kanaykin, Russia	3:51:09 Jose Ignacio Diaz, Spain
3:41:03 Aleksey Voyevodin, Russia	3:51:30 Peter Korcok, Slovakia
3:41:30 Liang Ni, China	3:51:34 Vladimir Potemin, Russia
3:41:47 Mikel Odriozola, Spain	3:51:40 Francisco Pinardo, Spain
3:41:54 Alex Schwarzer, Italy	3:51:40 Andrey Stepanchuk, Belarus
3:42:34 Yrriy Andronov, Russia	3:51:46 Guangjun Liu, China
3:42:55 Tianfeng Si, China	3:52:03 Yong Shi, China
3:44:04 Trond Nymark, Norway	3:53:57 Horacio Nava, Mexico
3:44:20 Zhide Cui, China	3:54:24 Miguel Solis, Mexico
3:45:05 Ronghua Lu, China	3:54:40 Yinhang Wang, China
3:45:13 Jianbo Li, China	3:54:41 Xuejim Bai, China
3:45:17 Yohan Diniz, France	3:54:49 Milos Batovsky, Slovakia
3:45:23 Zhiping Wang, China	3:54:59 Defu Zhang, China
3:46:44 Yongjian Yang, China	3:55:11 David Boulanger, France
3:47:02 Jianguo Zhao, China	3:55:18 Diego Cafagna, Italy
3:47:02 Yongjuan Zhao, China	3:55:22 Viktor Ginko, Belarus
3:47:19 Chunhu Chang, China	3:55:30 Marco De Luca, Italy
3:47:31 Denis Langlois, France	3:55:35 Guoping Yu, China

Make it 51 with: 3:55:48 Tim Berrett, Canada

2005 U.S. 20 Km Rankings—Women

1. Teresa Vaill DNF Hauppauge 4/3 1:33:29 (1) USATF Champ. 6/25 DNF World Champ. 8/7	4. Jolene Moore DNF Hauppauge 4/3 1:40:36 (1) Copenhagen 5/14 1:38:49 (4) USATF Champ. 6/25
2. Amber Antonia DNF Tijuana 3/19 1:38:47 (1) Hauppauge 4/3 1:38:42 (8) Pan Am Cup 5/7 1:36:04 (2) USATF Champ. 6/25	5. Bobbi Jo Chapman 1:42:21 (4) Hauppauge 4/3 1:39:47 (10) Pan Am Cup 5/7 1:41:16 (5) USATF Champ. 6/25
3. Joanne Dow 1:37:04 (1) Hauppauge 4/3 1:37:15 (3) USATF Champ. 6/25	6. Deborah Huberty 1:40:58 (3) Hauppauge 4/3 DNF Pan Am Cup 5/7 1:46:27 (6) USATF Champ. 6/25

7. Margaret Ditchburn DQ Tijuana 3/19 1:49:31 (6) Hauppauge 4/3 1:46:56 (7) USATF Champ. 6/25	9. Loretta Schuellein 1:51:22 (7) Hauppauge 4/7 1:46:20 (1) Dayton 5/15 1:50:08 (8) USATF Champ. 6/25 1:52:18 (1) Empire Games 7/30 1:55:17 (2) USATF Masters (11/13)
8. Sarah Standley-Gonzalez 1:45:44 (5) Hauppauge 4/3 DNF Pan Am Cup 5/7	10. Maria Michta 1:49:43 (1) Niagara Falls 6/3

The first seven are ranked just as they finished in the National Championship race; nothing else in their summaries seems to justify any moves from that finish. . . Standley-Gonzalez earns the eighth spot off her finish in the Pan AM Cup qualifying race in Hauppauge. . . Seven and eighth in the two major races earns Schuellein the ninth spot and Michta is ranked tenth off her one effort at the distance, which was faster than Carolyn Kealty's one race in the US Masters (where she beat Schuellein making it a close call for tenth.)

2005 Top 14 Performers

1:33:29 Teresa Vaill	1:46:20 Loretta Schuellein
1:36:04 Amber Antonia	1:46:56 Margaret Ditchburn
1:37:04 Joanne Dow	1:49:43 Maria Michta
1:38:49 Jolene Moore	1:50:26 Carolyn Kealty
1:39:47 Bobbi Jo Chapman	1:50:55 Dorit Attias
1:40:58 Deborah Huberty	1:54:04 Lynn Tracy
1:45:44 Sarah Standley-Gonzalez	1:56:15 Laura Feller

2005 U.S. 20 Km Rankings—Men

1. Tim Seaman 1:27:05 (14) Tijuana 3/19 1:28:32 (1) Hauppauge 4/3 1:27:18 (16) Pan Am Cup 5/7 1:26:43 (1) USATF Champ. 6/26 1:29:58 (31) World Champ. 8/6	5. Matt BOyles 1:34:49 (5) USATF Champ. 6/26
2. John Nunn 1:33:06 (2) Hauppauge 4/3 1:29:44 (17) Pan Am Cup 5/7 1:27:16 (2) USATF Champ. 4/3 1:27:10 (30) World Champ. 8/6	6. Ray Sharp 1:35:19 (6) USATF Champ. 6/26
3. Ben Storey 1:30:40 (1) Kenosha 5/22 1:32:29 (3) USATF Champ. 6/26	7. Theron Kissinger 1:38:41 (4) Hauppauge 4/3 1:35:45 (26) Pan Am Cup 4/3 1:35:54 (7) USATF Champ. 6/26
4. Kevin Eastler 1:33:16 (4) USATF Champ. 6/26	8. Michael Tarantino 1:34:33 (3) Hauppauge 4/3 1:39:18 (8) USATF Champ. 6/26
	9. Patrick Collier 1:37:22 (2) Kenosha 5/22

See Jan. 2006 for revision

10. Dave McGovern
DNF Hauppauge 4/3
1:45:25 (9) USATF Champ. 6/26
1:42:35 (1) Empire Games 7/30

As with the women, the National title race pretty well decided the rankings. The few other races supported the results there. The only change is Patrick Collier whose lone race was fast enough to earn a spot in the rankings. Tarantino did beat Kissinger at the Pan Am Cup Trial in Hauppauge, but Kissinger reversed the result with an equally decisive margin at the National Championship race and had a good result in the Pan Am Cup itself.

2005 Top 14 Performers

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1:26:43 Tim Seaman | 1:35:45 Theron Kissinger |
| 1:27:10 John Nunn | 1:37:27 Patrick Collier |
| 1:30:40 Ben Storey | 1:42:35 Dave McGovern |
| 1:33:116 Kevin Eastler | 1:43:49 Ed Parrot |
| 1:34:33 Michael Tarantino | 1:45:59 John Soucheck |
| 1:34:49 Matt Boyles | 1:46:25 Leon Jasionowski |
| 1:35:19 Ray Sharp | 1:47:34 Leo Romero |

2005 U.S. 50 Km Rankings—Men

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Curt Clausen
4:09:35 (1) USATF Champ. 2/13 | 5. Ed Parrot
4:57:52 (5) USATF Champ. 2/13
4:45:03 (13) Pan Am Cup 5/8 |
| 2. Philip Dunn
4:18:32 (8) Pan Am Cup 5/8
4:15:52 (2) USATF Champ. 2/13
4:25:37 (22) World Champ. 8/12 | 6. Steve Pecinovsky
5:02:03 (6) USATF 2/13 |
| 4. Ray Sharp
4:40:53 (4) USATF Champ. 2/13
4:38:53 (12) Pan Am Cup 5/8 | 7. Mike Bartholomew
5:13:08 (7) USATF Champ. 2/13 |
| 4. Dave McGovern
4:38:13 (3) USATF Champ. 2/13
DNF Pan Am Cup 5/8 | 8. Chris Rael
5:15:50 (8) USATF Champ. 2/13 |
| | 9. Bill Vayo
5:21:10 (9) USATF Champ. 2/19 |
| | 10. Max Walker
5:25:45 (10) USATF Champ. 2/13 |

The only change from the results of the National race is moving Sharp ahead of McGovern on the basis of the Pan Am Cup race, perhaps not completely fair to Dave who was ill, but so be it.

Some comments: Perhaps this is getting to be an annual diatribe, but still I cry, "Where are all the racewalkers?" In the men's events, we see only nine athletes under 1:40 and only five under 5 hours. These numbers have been on a steady downward slide for the past 15 years,

with only occasional spikes upward. Admittedly, this was a post-Olympic where there is usually a fall-off, but not like this. Just last year we had 18 under 1:40 and 11 under 5 hours, the best year since 1999 when there were 20 and 15. But those two years, anomalies in comparison with the dearth of the rest of the past 10 years, do not compare at all favorably with the more distant past. While the very elite are walking much faster than 30 years ago, no one else seems interested in trying to keep up.

We can go way back to 1968 when Jim Hanley first published a booklet on US Racewalking Statistics. That year, there were 17 under 1:40 and another 20 under 1:50, compared to just 14 under 1:50 this year. And 18 walkers bettered 5 hours for 50 km, with 10 under 4:30. These numbers dropped the next couple of years, but in 1971 returned to 23 under 1:40 and 14 under 5 hours. And in 1972, another Olympic year, there were 20 under both 1:40 and 5:00. The peak year was 1979, with 37 under 1:40 and 32 under 5:00. As we noted last month, there were at least nine 50 Km races in the U.S. that year with elite participation and three or four other opportunities abroad. There were probably an equal number of 20 Km opportunities.

From there, the number under 1:40 was constantly in the mid-20s and above through 1995, except for 1981 with just 17. The peak 20 Km year was 1988 with 43. (There were 24 under 5 hours that year, so 1979 was better overall.) In the 50, the number under 5:00 never approached that 1979 figure, but stayed mostly in the 20s through 1988, and has ranged from 7 to 15 since, until this year. Nothing against Ray Sharp, Steve Pecinovsky, and Max Walker, but should we have to rely on guys 45, 50 and 59 to fill out a top ten? (Of course, we at least had 10 guys finishing a 50; in 1997 there were only 7 (but all under 5:00).

I won't go into the women's side; we only have a history at 20 km since 1999, but there obviously aren't many women walking at an elite level and two of our top three are in their 40s.

Is our sport slowly disappearing? Or, not slowly. Comments are welcome.

Results from round and about:

USATF National 1 Hour, Jacksonville, Florida, Dec. 3 Women—1. Jolene Moore, NYAC 12,523 meters 2. Amber Antonia, NYAC 12,271 3. Maria Michta, Walk USA 11,284 4. Loretta Schuellein, Walk USA 10,669 5. Wilane Feliciano (15), Puerto Rico 10,402 6. Dorit Attias (43), Walk USA 12,253 7. Kathy Frable (60), Niagara Walkers 9050 8. Sandra DeNoon, Florida (50) AC 8902 11. Sandra Hults (63), Central Florida 8572 10. Darlene Backlund (64), RW Northwest 8382 DQ—Teresa Vaill (43) Walk USA **Men**—1. Noel Colon (19) Puerto Rico 12,128 meters 2. Allen James (41) Niagara Walkers 12,842 3. Jose Ososia, Puerto Rico 12,353 4. Ed Parrot, Florida AC 12,049 5. Dave McGovern, Varsano's Chocolates 11,834 6. Luis Bermudez (19) 11,570 7. Leon Jasionowski (61), Pegasus 11,550 8. Max Walker (59), Indiana Walkers 11,084 9. Bill Vayo (41) Walk USA 10,991 10. Norm Frable (6), Pegasus 10,813 11. Vince Peters (51), Miami Valley TC 10,757 12. Steve Renard (44), Florida AC 10,630 13. James Carmines (622), Potomac Valley 10,292 14. Michael Roth, Walk USA 10,086 15. Paul Johnson (68), Florida AC 10,010 16. John Frederick (57), Shore AC 9953 17. Ray Funkhouser (55), Shore AC 9953 18. John Backlund (65 RW Northwest 9685 19. Aaron Carroll (16), Maine 9386 20. Bruce Leasure (56), Twin Cities 9273 21. Bob Fine (74), Florida AC 8643 22. Winston Crandall (650, New Mexico 8471 23. Gary Westerfield (60), Walk USA 8377 (Haven't typed that name into a result for a long time; stepped out of the coaching judging ranks for a brief moment in time—or is it a big comeback.) 24. Herb Taskett (57), Jacksonville 7623 25. Joseph McCoy (51), Florida AC 7087 DNF—Jack Starr, Phast

5 Km, New York City, Dec. 4. —1. Jussi Koski 26:49 2. Vlado Haluska (53) 28:26 3. Bruce Logan (40) 30:47 4. Emilija Vaskyte (14) 30:50 5. Alexis Davidson (50) 32:05 6. Eleana Osdoby 32:39 7. Panse Geer (59) 32:47 8. Luanne Pennesi (50) 32:54 (17 finishers, 30 F, snow.) **5 Km, New York City, Dec. 11**—1. Leo Romero 24:47 2. Jussi Koski 25:21 3. Bruce Logan 26:25 4. Tim Davidson (18) 26:29 5. Vlado Haluska 26:36 6. Dana Vered (17) 28:11 7. Rasheeda Mohammed 28:18 8. Shani Brown (17) 29:18 9. Luanne Pennesi (5) 30:43 10. Elanna Osdoby 30:43 11. Seth Kaminsky 65) 40:47 12. David Lee (50) 30:49 13. John Gersh (48) 30:50 14. Shequita Henery (25) 32:18 15. Jessica Chen (16) 32:25 16. Maria Ferraro (48) 32:31 17. Alan Sangeap (45) 32:51 18. Elyse Mallin (50) 33:23 (31 finishers) **Indoor 1500 meters, St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 4**—1. Jeanne DeMartino (53) 9:40.1 2. Anita Macias-Howard (51) 9:47.2 **Men**—1. Feliz Ato-Davies 7:27.1 2. David Daubert (60) 8:38.1 **South Region 1 Mile, Pharr, Texas, Dec. 9**: 1. Tim Seaman 6:49 2. Roberto Vergara (15) 6:51 3. Ricardo Vergara (15) 6:53 4. Doug Johnson (45+) 6:59 5. Abraham Villareal (150) 7:41 6. Alex Chavez (12) 8:09 7. Ernesto Vergara (17) 8:34 8. Jorge Roman (60+) 9:30 (15 finishers) **Women**—1. Jessica Reybal (12) 8:36 2. Nicole Gomez (13) 8:44 3. Reyna Vicente 9:24 4. Diana Mejia (10) 10:18 5. Josie Vargas (9) 10:19 (7 finishers) **5 Km, Pharr, Texas, Dec. 10**—1. Tim Seaman 21:06.61 2. Alberto Medina (45+) 23:46 3. Roberto Vergara 23:49.17 4. Ricardo Vergara 23:49.87 5. Doug Johnson 25:17 6. Abraham Villareal 26:21 7. Ernesto Vergara 28:02 8. Alex Chavez 29:06 . . 11. Roman Herrera (60+) 31:15. . 14. Steven Veladez (10) 32:27 . . . 16. John Knifton (65+) 32:57 **Women**: 1. Susan Brooke (40+) 29:04 2. Jessica Reybal 30:10 3. Reyna Vicente 31:25 4. Nicole Gomez 31:38 **5 Km, Seattle, Oct. 12**—1. Bob Novak (57) 57:29 2. Stan Chraminski (58) 26:06 3. Bart Kale (49) 26:06 4. Simon Locke (46) 27:23 5. Coco Beuchet (57) 27:25 6. Ann Tuberg (45) 27:27 7. Richard Zerbe (67) 28:14 8. Mitchy Young (42) 28:26 9. Gordon Hartwig (61) 28:38 10. Jim Everett (57) 30:23 (13 finishers). **Southeast Asia Games, Manila, Nov. 29-30: Women's 20 Km**—1. Yuan Yu Fang, Malaysia 1:42:52 2. Darwati Indonesia 1:52:14 3. Tanaphon Peamsakun, Thailand 1:53:53 **Men's 20 Km**—1. Mohn Sharrylhaizy Abd Rahman, Malaysia 1:35:45 2. Thiru Kumaran Balay, Malaysia 1:36:28 3. Verrapun Anunchai, Thailand 1:42:40 **Pacific Schools Games, Melbourne, Australia Nov. 29**: Boys 14-14 3 Km—1. Rhydian Cowley, Aust. 14:29:30 2. Jordan Mulhearn, Aust. 14:51 3. Chase Richardson, Aust. 15:06 Girl's 13-14 3 Km—1. Paige Hooper, South Africa 14:10.85 2. Yu Zang, China 15:01 3. Regan Lambie, Aust. 15:15 Boy's 15-16 3 Km—1. Brendon Reading, Aust. 13:07 2. Brook Keys, Aust. 13:13 3. Grzegorz Wolszczak, S. Afr. 13:22 4. Daniel Coleman, Aust. 13:25 5. Jared Loi, Aust. 13:46 Girl's 15-16 3 Km—1. Tingting Wang, China 13:49 2. Jessice Rothwell, Aust. 14:42 3. Cassandra Staples, Aust. 15:02 Boy's 17-19 3 Km—1. Ian Rayson, Aust. 12:37 2. Blake Egelton, Aust. 14:17 Girl's 17-19 3 Km—1. Tanya Holliday, S. Afr. 13:25 2. Susan Knapton, Aust. 14:35 Boy's 10 1500 meters—1. Michael McDonald, Aust. 8:04 Girl's 10 1500—1. Amy Bettiol, Aust. 7:44.35 2. Anna Laman, Aust. 7:48 Girl's 11 1500—1. Amy Burren, Aust. 7:40 Girl's 12 1500—1. Shannon Jennings, Aust. 6:55.66 2. Kini Chapple, Aust. 7:10 3. Rachel Tallent, Aust. 7:23 4. Kate Fitzsimons, Aust. 7:25 5. Courtney Sorensen, Aust. 7:25 **Australian Schools Championships, Dec. 8-9**: Boy's Under 17 3 Km—1. Brendon Reading 13:27.74 2. Daniel Coleman 14:05 Boy's Under 18 3 Km—1. Ian Rayson 12:34.90 2. Brook Keys 13:25 Girl's Under 17 3 Km—1. Jess Rothwell 14:21.96 2. Nicole Fagan 14:43 3. Natalie Laurie 14:49 Girl's Under 18 3 Km—1. Tanya Holliday 14:03.42 2. Fiona Alldis 14:35 Girl's Under 14 1500 meters—1. Paige Hooper 6:19.33 2. Shannon Jennings 6:35 3. Rhearne Ryan 7:04 Boy's Under 14 1500—1. Jordan Mulhearn 6:58.67 2. Ben Connolly 7:04 3. Aaron Jelfs 7:05 4. John Tilden 7:11 Girl's Under 20 5 Km—1. Susan Knapton 24:14.17 2. Jessice Heazlewood 24:21 3. Jess Rothwell 24:23 **Francophone Games (for Frenchspeaking nations) 20 Km, Niamey,**

Niger, Dec. 12—1. Denis Langlois, France 1:30:47 2. David Boulanger, France 1:31:16 3. Hassanine Sbai, Tunisia 1:32:36 4. Nicolai Perrier, Switz. 1:36:56 5. Jocelyn Ruest, Canada 1:39:21 6. Mukwa McGambene, Congo

Quenching Sites for Your Racewalking Thirst

Sun. Jan. 1	5 Km, Aurora, Col., 10 am (H)
Sun. Jan. 8	50 Km, Houston (L)
Sun. Jan. 14	2.8 Miles, Seattle, 9 am (C)
Sun. Jan. 15	USATF National 30 Km, Chula Vista, Cal. (D) South Regional Masters 15 Km, Clermont (B) 1500 meters and/or 5 Km, Clermont, Fla., 10 am (B)
Sat. Jan 2	5 Km and 10 Mile, Pasadena, Cal. (Y)
Sun. Jan. 22	5 Km, Denver, 10 am (H)
Sat. Jan. 28	USATF National Indoor Women's Mile, Men's/3Km, Findlay, OH (M)
Fri. Feb. 3	USATF National Indoor Men's Mile, New York City (T)
Sun. Feb. 5	5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H) Henry Laskau 5 Km, Coconut Creek, Fla. (N)
Sat. Feb. 11	2.8 Miles, Seattle, 9 am (C)
Sun. Feb. 12	5 Km, Denver, 9 am (H)
Sun. Feb. 18	USATF National 50 Km, Clermont, Fla. (B) 1500 meters and/or 5 Km, Clermont, Fla., 10 am (B)
Sun. Feb. 19	5 and 10 Km, Laverne, Cal. (Y)
Sat. March 11	2.8 Miles, Seattle, 9 am (C)

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 D—www.usatf.org
 E—Sierra Race Walkers, P.O. Box 5221, Fair Oaks, CA 95628
 F—Mike DeWitt, uwpcoach@yahoo.com
 G—Stella Cashman, 320 East 83rd St., New York, NY 10028
 H—Bob Carlson, 2261 Glencoe St., Denver CO 80207
 J—Art Klein, 3035 Arlington Drive, Aptos, CA 95003
 K—Maryanne Daniel, 1 Rose Marie Lane, Clinton, CT 06413
 L—Dave Gwyn, 6502 Briar Bayou, Houston, TX 77072
 M—Vince Peters, 607 Omar Circle, Yellow Springs, OH 45387, 937-767-7424
 N—Florida Athletic Club, 3250 Lakeview Blvd., Delray Beach, FL 33445
 P—Jack Bray, Marin Racewalkers, P.O. Box 21, Kentfield, CA 94914
 Q—Daniel Koch, 3331 NW 22nd Street, Coconut Creek, FL 33066
 S—Potomac Valley TC, 3140-D West Springs Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043
 T—Gary Westerfield, garyw@optonline.net
 U—Robert Carver, 1002 Catalpa Lane, Orlando, FL 32806
 V—Justin Kuo, 617-731-9889
 W—Frank Soby, 4157 Colonial Drive, Royal Oak, MI 48073
 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
 AA-A.C. Jaime, 800-383-5733
 BB-Kalamazoo Valley Walkers, P.O. Box 19414, Kalamazoo, MI 49009
 CC--Laura Cribbins, 2937 El Sobrante Street, Santa Clara, CA 95051

2006 USATF Nationals and Racewalking Grand Prix Races

Jan. 15 National 30 Km, Chula Vista, Cal.
 Jan. 28 National Indoor Women's Mile/Men's 3 Km, Findlay, Ohio
 Feb. 3 National Indoor Men's Mile, New York City
 Feb. 12 National 50 Km, Clermont, Florida
 Feb. 25 National Indoor Women's 3 Km, Men's 5 Km, Boston
 April 9 World Cup Trials, Men's and Women's 20 KM, Hauppauge, N.Y.
 June 3 National 10 Km, Niagara Falls, N.Y.
 June 24 National 20 Km, Indianapolis, Indiana
 July 15 National Club Championships 5 Km, Azusa, Cal.
 Aug. 6 National 15 Km, Minneapolis, Minn.
 Sept. 10 National 40 Km, Ocean Township, N.J.
 Oct. 7 National 5 Km, Kingsport, Tenn.
 Oct. 15 National 1 Hour, Waltham, Mass.

(All races men and women except as indicated.)

Overall Grand Prix prizes, based on points garnered from all races, will be \$300 for first, \$200 for second, and \$100 for third. The first three in the World Cup Trials and 10 Km Championship will receive \$400, \$250, and \$100, respectively..

The final 2005 Grand Prix Standings showed: Men--1. Tim Seaman 70, 2. Dave McGovern 53, 3. Zach Pollinger 42, 4. Bill Vayo 31 5. Curt Clausen, Ed Parrot, and Ray Sharp 29
 Women: 1. Jolene Moore 63 2. Dorit Attias 61, 3. Joanne Dow 47 4. Deb Huberty 45, 5 Loretta Schuellein 42 6. Maria Michta 38. Varsano's Chocolates (men) and WalkUSA (women) were the team winners.

From Heel To Toe

USATF Awards. At the USATF Convention in Jacksonville in early December the following racewalking awards were presented. Ron Zinn Awards to the outstanding athletes: Tim Seaman, men's 20 Km; Philip Dunn, men's 50 Km; Teresa Vaill, women's 20 Km. The Mike Riban Award for the Outstanding Contributor went to A.C. Jaime of the South Texas club. The award for the outstanding association went to Long Island. Henry Laskau Awards for outstanding juniors were presented to Maria Michta and Zachary Pollinger. . . **Coaches.** Also named at the convention were U.S. team coaches and managers for 2006. For the IAAF World Cup in Spain, Tom Eastler is the head coach, Bill Pollinger the manager, and Susan Armenta the assistant coach. A.C. Jaime is head coach and Heide Hauch manager for the US-Canada Dual Meet in Edmonton. . . **Peters honored.** Among 12 persons honored with President's Awards at the convention was National RW Chair Vince Peters, Ohio's own. Vince was honored as an athlete, youth and racewalk coach, official, USATF board member, and committee leader. . . **100-milers.** In last month's report on the 100 mile race in Texas, we raised a question regarding the relaxed judging rules in force for that race. Joe Duncan, who conducted the many 100 milers held in Columbia, Missouri from 1967 to sometime in the

1980s responded as follows: "The Columbia 100-milers were all conducted in accordance with then existing racewalking rules. We had no "relaxed" rules either expressed or unexpressed. However, I should mention that we never had any certified race-walking judges on hand serving in a judging role. On a 400-meter track judging would have been easy--but for 24 hours? Since "speed" in a 100-miler is not a factor, we always felt we would never have a problem with "near-running". Toward the latter stages of a 100-miler, no doubt, there were many bent knees, so there was a certain laxity from that standpoint. No one was ever DQ'd. There was never any question, however, about the elite 100-milers, viz. Young, Price, Blackburn et al who truly racewalked and were always in accordance with the rules. Many of the others "street-walked", but were still generally in compliance." . . **IAAF Challenge.** The schedule for 2006 IAAF Challenge races is: Marach 25-26 Tianepantia de Baz, Mexico; April 1 Rio Maior, Portugal; April 22 Kunshan, China; May 1 Sesto San Giovanni, Italy; May 13-14 IAAF Racewalking World Cup, La Coruna, Spain. All venues will have both men's and women's 20 Km races. Mexico, China, and the World Cup will include men's 50 Km races. The World Cup includes Junior 10 Km races for both men and women.

Heppner Scholarship to Michta

Maria Michta is the 2005 Al Heppner Memorial Award winner. The award is sponsored by the North American Racewalking Institute in Pasadena. Maria, who was presented with a \$2400 check, follows Ann Favolise as the second winner of the scholarship in honor of racewalker Al Heppner, who died in 2004. The award goes to a collegiate athlete with the potential and dedication to become an Olympian.

Maria, born June 23, 1986, lives in Nesconset, N.Y. Her coach is Gary Westerfield of WalkUSA. She attends C.W. Post U. On Long Island. In 2005, she participated in the USATF Junior Nationals winning first place in the 10 Km with an American Junior Record 50:24.54. She was fourth in the USATF Senior Indoor 3 Km in 13:56.03. She has a best 20 Km time of 1:49:43 and a 10 Km best of 48:03, which she did in the Pan Am Cup in Lima, Peru. Maria received strong letters of recommendation from Westerfield, Maryanne Daniel, and Tom Eastler. In fulfilling the requirements of a candidate for the Award, Maria wrote the following personal essay of her goals.

"Life is a journey, not a destination, which does not mean that there cannot be direction and goals. Over my racewalking career there have been many destinations, however, there have been many more experiences and adventures. Racewalking began as another activity on my list of many and through high school grew into a passion, becoming perhaps the biggest focus in my outside my family and academics. It has become a passion full of potential.

I was always an aficionado of the Olympics as long as I can remember. A part of me has always imagined being there among the best, walking out at opening ceremonies. The dream at first lived only in my fantasy as an Olympic soccer player. The 2000 Sydney Games came along and, due to Australia's climate, the summer games were in September during school. But there I sat till midnight each night watching, imagining, and swept up in awe.

At that moment, little did I know that my ticket to the Olympics was just about to be discovered. That winter, I began racewalking. Now, when I think of making it to the Olympics, it is not just a dream, but a real, obtainable goal. It is a goal that I strive for each day I go out on practice. Each breakthrough I have gets me one step closer to living the dream.

This past year, I began college at CW Post where I was able to compete for the college team in both running and racewalking. I was able to introduce the event to many for

race. Well, it's all a long story, all about the good old days of racewalking. Anyway, it's great to know Rimas is doing so well. I have exchanged e-mails with him, and can also report that he has two daughters, both teaching with MA degrees, and a 2 1/2-year-old grandson. Hey, a regular feature along these lines would be neat. Who can tell me about other competitors from the past, not forgotten, but current status unknown? We know about all those still active in the sport in one way or another, such as Elliott, Ron Laird, Bob Mimm, Bob Bowman, Ron Daniel, Bruce MacDonald, Gary Westerfield, Jake Jacobson, Dave Romansky, Mike DeWitt, Martin Rudow and on and on. And we had a nice article on Larry Young a year or so ago. But there are a lot that I don't know what they are up to now. Do you? Let me know? Maybe I can come up with a list of guys and gals I would like to know about by next month and maybe some of you can help out. And you don't have to wait if you have someone you want to tell me about now. . . **The Denman Anthology.** Elliott Denman's *Anthology of the Olympic Games*, which we mentioned last summer, is now in its second printing, Elliott having added material from his sojourn to the Sydney Olympics. Elliott not only competed in the 50 Km walk at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, he has covered most of those since as a writer for the *Asbury Park (N.J.) Press*. And he has written many columns and articles on Olympic athletes between Olympics. The book is a compendium of all these Olympic-related columns and articles. It's great reading and there are even some racewalkers included. You might recall we have pulled a few items from it already. It's yours for just \$25. Order from Elliott Denman, PO Box 381, West Long Branch, NJ 07764. . . **RWI Benefit Dinner.** Racewalking International will hold its 2nd Annual Racewalking Benefit Dinner on Saturday, June 30 at the New York Athletic Club. A feature will be the announcement of the first inductee into RWI's Racewalking Hall of Fame. Members of the 2001 US Olympic Racewalking Team will be present to present awards to the country's top youth racewalkers, from bantam up through intermediate age groups. Proceeds from the event are used to fund the salary for an elite coach, Enrique Pena at present, to train and build a program for athletes across America and to support a nationwide youth development program. You can make reservations or get more information by phoning 775-833-2121, faxing 775-833-2122, or sending an e-mail to rw-international@msn.com. Or you can write to Racewalking International, Inc., 745 Kelly Drive, Incline Village, NV 89451. Also, on April 4, the walkers from the Olympic Training Center arrived in Bishop, Cal. to train for two weeks at that city's new high altitude training camp. The facility was developed through the desire of RWI and the City of Bishop to offer America's elite racewalkers the opportunity to train at altitude in the U.S., rather than going out of the country to obtain this "live high, train low" type of environment. Living accommodations at Cardinal Village Resort are in Bishop Creek Canyon at an altitude of 8500 feet. The training area, consisting of miles of unpaved paths and very lightly traveled roadways, is at an altitude of 4100 to 4500 feet. Additional training facilities in the city range from strength/fitness centers to Keoughs Hot Springs, a natural pool that is fed from a natural hot spring. The Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce will be negotiating with Norwegian, German, and Canadian teams to join the US team to train at the Western States High Altitude Training Camp in Bishop.

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From time to time we get queries about the proper shoes for racewalking. Through the years, we have published some of our own comments and those of others with more expertise than ours and with more research into the subject. But, of course, we have a moving target in the rapidly growing sport shoe market. Here is the most recent commentary we have seen, although not real recent. Dave McGovern put this article on the Active.com website last November. Dave is a member of the National Team, author of well-conceived and well-received books on racewalking, and a well-known presenter of racewalking clinics and camps.

How to Choose the Right Shoes for Walking

by Dave McGovern

Used to be there was pretty much one shoe choice for running, walking, skipping, jumping, tiddly-winking, etc.: Converse Chuck Taylor All-Stars. They weren't flashy, but they were cheap and they could handle anything a 12-year-old kid could throw at them.

Times have changed. Today, there's a mind-numbing variety of shoes for every possible activity. But why? Do walkers, for example, need different shoes for strolling vs. racewalking vs. hiking? Does it really matter?

Well, in a word, yes. All walkers were not created equal. Just as Cinderella's slipper fit only her foot, your shoes may fit only one fitness activity. Different ways of walking require different shoe designs and materials. The lightness and flexibility of a racewalking shoe would spell disaster on a tough hike over rough terrain. *(Ed. I can't resist an insert here. These practical answers to the question above--But why?--are correct. But, of course, the main reason there are so many, many, many varieties of shoes for every conceivable niche is---sales!!! Many of those varieties just sucker people into buying a highly specialized, but not necessary shoe, at an inflated price. But, you knew that. On with Dave's story of why you need to be selective.)*

Here's a rundown, er, walkdown, of the things you should look for in your shoes:

Casual walking

For casual fitness walking, anything goes. . . almost. Fitness walkers, as opposed to racewalkers, who aren't planning to cover more than three to five miles at a time are safe using anything from lightweight running shoes to cross-trainers to real racewalking shoes.

Walkers generally impact the ground with less than half the force of runners, so they don't need excessive cushioning. In fact, too much fluff in the heel can lead to shin pain and other problems. A good rule of big toe (as opposed to thumb) is that any comfortable running, walking, or racewalking shoe that doesn't give you blisters is probably okay for casual walking.

Racewalking

An increasingly popular fitness and competitive activity, racewalking is not just fast walking. Olympic-style racewalking uses a lot more muscles and relies on the feet much more than fitness walking does. Consequently, the right shoes are critical.

Racewalking shoes need to be very flexible to allow the feet to roll from heel to toe, and they should have a very low heel to reduce leverage that can cause the feet to slap the ground after heel contact. Real racewalking shoes or running racing flats or a trainer-racer are your best bets.

Marathon walking

Walking marathons or even-three day ultra-marathons is another form of athletic challenge that is growing in popularity. How you walk one of these events will dictate what you should wear.

Most marathon walkers use everyday fitness walking technique, so walking shoes or lightweight running shoes are appropriate. But a growing number of marathons (Los Angeles, Disney, Honolulu, Portland, and Mardi Gras, to name a few) include competitive racewalking categories. If you plan on racewalking a marathon, you'll need a good racewalking shoe, or a stable runner's racing flat, as mentioned above.