

The Year In Racewalking

(At year's end the IAAF—the world governing body of track and field—released the following of racewalking in 2009)

Men

Perhaps even more so than the other endurance events race walking has been an event where the top echelon traditionally has been dominated by athletes in their 30's. But at least the 20 km distance has in recent years become a remarkably youthful event. In 2009 the average age of the top-10 statistically was a mere 24.7 years which in fact was e.g. about one year less than for the top-10 in the 100m dash!

But race walking is still an event where just a handful of nations - Russia, Spain, Mexico and China - provide most of the top athletes with France, Norway, Australia, Poland and Slovakia contributing some individuals to the mix. The absence of top walkers from Africa remains striking, especially in view of the success they have in the closely related long distance running events. The complete African presence on the top-100 of 2009 is one Kenyan at 20 km and one Tunisian and one South African at 50 km, all discrete positioned on the lower half of the list.

Although China has by far the greatest depth they are responsible for about a quarter of the top-100-lists— it is still Russia that comes up with the winners: Valeriy Borchin had full control over the 20 km in Berlin and Sergey Kirdyapkin even more so at 50 km. Borchin is at the tender age of 23 well on his way to create an era of his own as he now is the reigning Olympic and World Champion as well as the current European vice-champion.

Unfortunately all the top walkers only get to compete head-to-head at the major championships as not even the seven-event IAAF Race Walking Challenge manages to attract the top names more than on two or maybe three occasions. That the altogether nine races in the 2009 Challenge series had eight different winners illustrates the situation.

However, Erik Tysse of Norway provided proof that it is possible to do it differently. He competed in Chihuahua in mid March (4th at 20 km), in Rio Maior in early April (3rd at 20 km), in Sesto San Giovanni in early May (2nd at 20 km), in Krakow in late May (2nd at 10 km) and in La Coruna in late June (2nd at 20 km). And he competed well also in Berlin finishing 7th not more than about a minute from the bronze medal.

The Ohio Racewalker is published monthly in Columbus, Ohio. Subscription rate is \$12.00 per year (\$15.00 outside the U.S.). Editor and Publisher: John E. (Jack) Mortland. Address all correspondence regarding both editorial and subscription matter to: Ohio Racewalker, 3184 Summit Street, Columbus, OH 43202. E-mail address is: jmortlan@columbus.rr.com. Approximate deadline for submission of material is the 24th of each month.

Women

The tradition in the womens 20km walk went on with the fastest times in the world recorded at the Russian winter championships as usual. 24-year-old reigning Olympic Champion Olga Kaniskina walked a super fast world leading time of 1:24:56 missing the fastest ever result 1:24:50 by Olimpiada Ivanova from 2001 just by a mere six seconds. The conditions however were not suitable for World record purposes as there were not enough international judges in the competition so the official World record still stands at 1:25:41 by Olimpiada Ivanova from the 2005 World Championships in Helsinki.

Kaniskina, who was absolutely commanding in Beijing, had absolutely no problems in stretching her win streak to eight competitions in the 20km distance in 2009. After her fast winter win she went on to walk one more competition before the World Championships winning the IAAF Race Walking Challenge in Wuxi, China, clocking 1:28:00. In Berlin her victory was never in jeopardy with the clear race walking world No. 1 gaining another title in 1:28:09. Irishwoman Olive Loughnane came from the back to beat Chinese Liu Hong for the surprise silver medal in a 1:28:58 season's best and Anisya Kirdyapkina of Russia was fourth well behind in 1:30:09 (bronze for Chinese in 1:29:10).

The world all-time list was rewritten in Adler at the Russian winter champs with the first six of the 2009 annual list coming from this meet. The first five athletes in this competition entered the All-time Top 10 with Vera Sokolova and Anisya Kirdyapkina both clocking 1:25:26 for second and third places in this meet respectively. Olga Kaniskina's only loss of the season came in her only 10km race in Krakow, Poland, at the IAAF Race Walking Challenge where Norwegian veteran, 37-year-old, Kjersti Tysse Platzer narrowly beat her with a 41:41 season's best finish against 41:42 by Kaniskina, a personal best. In Berlin the double Olympic silver medalist from 2000 and 2008 was unlucky and was disqualified in the 20km race.

Russians have really dominated this event with the first 11 places and 14 out of first 15 in the world all-time list going to this country. In fact in the top 24 there is only one Belarussian, four Chinese and 19 Russians all-time. China has the best depth however with 29 athletes in the world top 100. Russia has 17 for the second place and Spain six for third.

Some results as we enter the New Year

Dartmouth Relays Indoor 1 Mile, Hanover, N.H., Jan. 9—1. Lauren Forgues 7:29.91 2. Abby Dunn 7:50.50 3. Maryanne Daniel 7:50.79 4. Amanda Johnson 8:02.11 5. Jenny Thuotte 8:10.65 6. Ni Court-Menendez 8:53.87 7. Emily Reed 8:54.84 9. Courtney Williams 9:08.57 (10 finishers) **Men**—1. Evan Vincent 7:21.45 2. Larry Epstein 8:56.58 3. Richard McElvery 9:17.01 4. Spencer Dunn 9:41.39 5. Jay Diener 9:46.14 6. Tom Knatt 10:08.30 (1 DQ) **Indoor 3 Km, New York City, Dec. 27**—1. Lisa Marie Vellucci 16:10.41 2. Crosby Tillman 16:19.55 **Indoor High School 1500 meter races, New York City: Nov. 29**—1. Sandy Chang 8:04.7

Dec. 5—1. Aimy Yu 8:24.73 **Dec. 6**—1. Sandy Chong 7:48.11 2. Diana Quinde 7:49.24 **Dec. 11**—1. Aimy Yu 8:32.04 (16 finishers, 2 DQ) **Dec. 11** (second race)—1. Diana Quinde 7:50.85 (24 finishers) **Dec. 26**—1. Diana Quinde 7:24.89 2. Sandy Chong 7:35.04 3. Yang Chan Dolma 8:00:06 4. Aimy Yu 8:11.12 5. Karen Zheng 8:11.5 (29 finishers, 3 DQ) **Jan. 9**—1. Amy Cheung 7:00.70 2. Destiny 7:11.29 3. Crosby Tillman 7:12.04 4. Suzy Farber 7:19.98 5. Diana Quinde 7:23.49 6. Molly Joseph 7:28.87 7. Sandy Cheng 7:41.73 8. Jean Halloran 7:42.12 9. Dayla Hazel 7:48.32 10. Courtney Garrison 7:50.13 11. Katie Michta 7:51.55 12. Jenny Sphuler 7:54.42 13. Deven Coulter 8:00.53 14. Yangchen Dolma 8:06.59 15. Kathryn Hoffberg 8:08.02 (63 finishers) **H.S. 1500 meters, Mew York City, Jan. 9**—1. Diana Quinde 7:35.17 2. Sandi Cheng 7:38.53 3. Yangchen Dolma 7:54.2 4. Aimy Yu 8:05.48 5. Karen Zheng, 8:06.08 6. Yuru Li 8:14.02 (41 finishers, 2 DQ) **Asbury Park, N.J. Polar Bear 10 Mile, Dec. 27**—1. Andres Chocho, Ecuador 1:10:18 (Polar Bear record bettering 1:11:18 by Ray Funkhouser in 1984) 2. Richard Luettichau 1:21:44 3. Dave Talcott (1st 40-49) 1:22:29 4. John Soucheck 1:26:58 5. Marin Perez 1:29:16 6. Bruce Logan 1:38:43 7. Tom Quattrocchi (1st 50-59) 1:46:22 8. John Fredericks 1:49:46 (16 finishers) **Women**—1. Erin Taylor 1:32:28 2. Panse Geer (1st 60-69) 1:53:06 3. Gail Warshaw (1st 50-59) 1:53:08 4. Maria Paul (1st 40-49) 1:53:52 **Indoor 3000 meters, Troy, N.Y., Dec. 27**—1. Dave Talcott (49) 14:13.92 2. Miranda Melville 14:27.75 3. Erin Taylor 14:53.53 4. Olivia Lapham (19) 15:24.64 5. Rachel Zoyhowski (18) 16:36.81 6. Chelsea Conway 17:08.70 7. Rachel Tylock (16) 17:51.27 8. Rachael Phillips (18) 18:56.77 **5000 meters, same place**—1. Allen James (45) 22:05.09 2. Dan Serianni (19) 22:59.40 **Indoor 3000 meters, Cedarville, Ohio, Jan. 15**—1. Josh Wiseman, Cedarville 12:45.79 2. Dan Serianni, World Class 12:55.48 3. Mike Mannozi, Notre Dame Col. (Ohio) 12:58.69 4. Pal Ikeda, Cedarville 14:28.07 5. Chris Schmid, World Class 14:30.93 6. Brad Sinick, Miami Valley TC 15:07.32 7. Jacob Gunderkline, Goshen Col. 15:11.31 8. Kyle Hively, Rio Grande 15:26.83 9. Grant Bacon, Cedarville 15:52.17 10. David Horst, Goshen 18:20.03 **Women**—1. Susan Randall, un. 15:02.64 2. Tina Peters, Goshen 15:16.49 3. Alex Lo, McKendree 15:23.15 4. Amanda Johnson, Lindsey Wilson 15:50.68 5. Katie Malinowski, Cornerstone 15:55.07 6. Janelle Brown, Cornerstone 15:58.10 7. Megan Furnish, Lindsey Wilson 16:49.15 8. Chelsea Conway, Lindsey Wilson 17:07.78 **H.S. 1 Mile, Cedarville, Jan. 16**—1. Erika Shaver 7:20.48 2. Allison Chin 8:22.55 3. Reine Brickson 8:51.80 4. Leanna Hartsough 10:35.05 (6 finishers, 1 DQ) **Boys**—1. John Randall 7:14.74 2. Mitchell Brickson 7:53.45 **3000 meters, Marshall Mo., Jan. 16**—1. Patrick Stroupe, un. 11:57.81 2. Peter Muldoon, Central Methodist 14:31.42 3. David Lindemann, Lindenwood U. 15:16.49 4. Dan Martin, Missouri Valley Col. 16:56.33 **Women**: 1. Jessica Ching, Lindenwood 15:21.50 2. Emily Hanson, Concordia 15:47.13 3. Alexis Gutterman, Lindenwood 17:59.90 4. Courtney Spann, Culver Stockton 18:00.19 5. Rachel Kettner 18:26.62 6. Carissa Eichmeyer, Hannibal Lagrange 19:38.26 **1 Mile, Pharr, Texas, Jan. 1**—Alejandro Chavez (15) 6:45.7 2. Julien Voyer (19), Canada 7:10.7 3. Rachel Seaman 7:11.4 4. Erin Bresnahan (19) 7:25.5 5. Kattie Burnett 7:29.1 6. Erika Shaver (17) 7:36.1 7. Tina Pegters 7:39.7 8. Susan Randall 7:42.9 9. Molly Josephs (15) 7:49.1 10. John Randall (17) 7:52.7 11. Nicolette Sorenson (14) 7:54.9 12. Maithe Moscoco (14) 8:18.1 13. Janelle Brown 8:20.0 14. Hannah Kisly (16) 8:21.9 15. Anne Voyer (16), Canada 8:32.3 16. Claudia Ortiz (16) 8:44.4 17. Lila Hoba (14) 8:47.8 18. Holly Cook (14) 8:49.5 19. Emily Reed (17) 8:50.8 20. Courtney Williams (16) 8:53.7 (41 finishers) **3000 meters, same place**—1. Tim Seaman 12:26.7 2. Tyler Sorenson (15) 12:39.6 3. Mitchell Brickson (16) 16:08.6 4. Allison Chn (17) 16:12.5 **5 Km, Pharr, Texas, Jan. 2**—1. Tim Seaman 21:32.7 2. Alejandro Chavez 23:20.3 3. Tyler Sorenson 23:34 4. Rachel Seaman 23:38 5. Julien Voyer (18), Canada 25:23 6. B runo Calliere (17), Canada 25:38 7. Erfin Bresnahan (19) 25:45 8. John Randall (17) 25:54.9

Erika Shaver (17) 26:08 10. Susan Randall 16:19 11. Nicolette Sorenson 2(14) 6:30 12. Allison Chin (17) 26:35 13. Mitchell Brickson (16) 26:45 14. Tina Peters 27:09 15. Molly Josephs (15) 27:09 16. Anne Voyeur (16), Canada 27:30 17. Hannah Kisley (16) 27:50 18. Katie Burnett 28:23 19. Janelle Brown 28:39 20. Maite Moscoca (14) 19:14 21. Lila Haba (14) 29:42 22. Holly Cook (14) 30:24 23. Claudia Ortiz (16) 31:05 24. Emily Reed (17) 32:04 25. Ariana Guzman (15) 32:58 (33 finishers) **10 Miles, Pasadena, Cal., Jan. 17**—Jose Moncada 1:30:33 2. Pedro Santoni (52) 1:34:46 3. Rick Campbell (63) 1:40:02 4. Wayne Wurzbarger (67) 1:45:49 5. Dave Crabb (64) 1:48:44 6. Deo Jaravata (44) 1:48:47 7. Ray Billin (52) 1:50:04 8. Carl Acosta (75) 1:50:22 9. Pat Bivona (68) 1:55:30 (13 finishers) **5 Km, same place**—1. Yoko Eichel (62) 29:58 2. Donna Cunningham (63) 32:32 3. Vin Kanchana (53) 32:41 4. Patsy Hurley (15) 32:47 5. Carol Bertino (62) 33:06 6. Vitoria Yap (13) 33:17 7. Julia Townsend (15) 33:19 (23 finishers) **2.8 Miles, Seattle, Dec. 12**—1. Bob Novak (6) 28:49 2. Stan Chraminski (62) 28:49 3. Rebecca Kettwig 29:00 4. Diane Thurman (62) 31:59

Report on the races In Pharr, Texas (see above)

(Gleaned from communications from National Chairperson Vince Peters)

The 1 Mile walk required three sections to squeeze in all of the competitors. And, while many of the contestants came from all four corners of the U.S. along with Canada and Mexico, most came from the elementary school physical education program in racewalking that the Pharr, San Juan, and Alamo School district (PSJA) has incorporated into their curriculum (through the efforts of A.C. Jaime).

That program is bearing results, not only in improving the fitness level of the school district's children, but in creating opportunities outside the valley for their athleticism to excel. Someday, one of these youngsters may represent Pharr in the an Olympic racewalking event.

This was never more evident than in the acclaim given the young man from the South Texas Walking Club who posted the fastest time of the day in the 1 Mile. Alejandro Chavez, a junior at PSJA high school, is the defending national high school indoor champion. And despite the stiff breeze and 40 F temperature, the speedster still cruised to victory in 6:45.7. The time qualified Chavez for the 103rd Millrose Games in New York, which will host the USA 1 Mile Championships. There he will match strides with many of the country's more notable walkers, including two-time Olympian Tim Seaman.

Seaman will be well aware of Pharr's up-and-coming talent. He and his Canadian wife, Rachel (nee Lavalee), are in Pharr as lead clinicians at the 2009-10 Elite Junior Racewalk camp for the top 14-22 year-old walkers in the country. The annual camp, supported by USA T&F, has attracted nearly three dozen of the top high school and collegiate male and female walkers in this country and Canada. The first day of competition also featured a 3 Km race where Seaman and one of his young proteges, Tyler Sorenson, achieved qualifying times for the National USATF Indoor 5 Km.

On the second day of competition, the Seaman's repeated as men's and women's champions in the 5 Km event. Here, Chavez bested Sorenson with a life-time best performance of 23:20.

"The big plus was that even after a very strenuous week of twice-a-day workouts, 14 of the 26 campers logged lifetime best in the 5 Km," said Time Seaman. "The hope is that they take home what they learned and continue to train with the energy and enthusiasm they had here."

Most of the athletes will have their indoor H.S. and Collegiate championships in early March. And then on April 11, USATF will conduct selection races at 10 and 20 Km for the national team that will represent the country at the IAAF World Cup in Mexico.

Thanks are due to Coach A.C. Jaime and the athletes and parents of the South Texas Walking Club and the city of Pharr for making it possible to conduct the Elite Junior Camp in Texas. Thanks also to the North American Racewalking Foundation and USA T&F for financial support.

Train Each Day and Find Your Way to . .

Sun. Feb. 7	National USATF 50 Km, Surprise, Arizona (D) 5 Km, Denver, 10 am (H) 3 Km and 1500 meters, Palm Desert, Cal. (U)
Sun. Feb. 14	5 Km, Denver, 10 am (H)
Sat. Feb. 13	Indoor 3 Km, Greencastle, Indiana, 9 am (W)
Sun. Feb. 14	Ohio Indoor 3 Km Championship, Ada, (M) Indoor Mall 3 Km, Milford, Conn., 9:30 am (E) 5 Km Denver, 10 am (H) 5 Km, Pasadena, Cal., 7 am (U)
Sat. Feb. 20	Indoor 3 Km, Greencastle, Indiana (12 am (W)
Sun. Feb. 21	50 Km, Houston (L)
Sat. Feb. 27	USATF National 5 Km, Albuquerque, N.M. (D)
Fri. March 5	NAIA Indoor Championships, Johnson City, Tenn.
Sat. March 6	Indoor 3000 meters and 1 Mile, New York City (G) Mason Dixon Games 3000 meters and Youth 1500 meters, Louisville (V) South Region 50 Km and open 5, 20, and 50 Km, Houston (L)
Sun. March 7	10 Mile, Yellow Springs, Ohio (M) 5 Km, Denver, 10 am (H) 5 Km, Portland, Ore.(C)
Sat. March 13	2.8 Miles, Seattle (C)
Sun. March 14	20 Km and 5 Km, Huntington Park, Cal. (Y) (The 20 will be National USATF Masters Championship, pending approval)
Sat. March 27	5000 meters, Cedarville, Ohio (M) 5000 meters, Raleigh, N.C., 9:30 am (T)
Sun. April 4	10 Km, Portland, Ore. (C)
Sun. April 11	3 Km and 5 Km, Seattle(C) Mt. SAC Relays 5 and 10 Km, Walnut, Cal. (Y) U.S. World Cup Trials, 20 Km men and women, 10 Km. Jr. Men and women), Ronkonkoma, N.Y. (R)

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From Heel To Toe

A diplomatic judge. Tom Knatt send us the following anecdote from an October 1979 race in Montreal, where Mexico's Daniel Bautista set a world 20 Km record: Bob Falciola and I were invited to this race as part of a Canadian racewalking week. We were not the best talent from the US at that time, but we were happy to go and meet all the top talent from Mexico, Sweden, and other places. The race was held on the practice track outside the Olympic Stadium. The start was particularly memorable. Bob and I line up to the outside of the track to avoid the rush of the pole sitters. The gun went off, and sure enough, the Mexicans tore off along the inside. Bob and I had barely gotten to the top of the curve, while the Mexicans were entering the back straightaway, having already completed the first 100 meters. All of a sudden, the gun was fired again, signaling a recall. I looked around. No one seemed to have fallen. The organizers were waving wildly, so everyone stopped. We walked back to where Nick Marrone (*Ed. A decent walker himself*), the head race organizer and judge, was talking animatedly to Michel Parent, his first in command. Michel spoke better English than Nick. Michel lined us all up again. Apparently, there had been no false start or incident. Then Michel explained in his Quebecois accent, the reason for the recall: "Meestair Marrone would like to warn you zhat zhees is a walking race, and not a running race. Pleez observe zhe rules." The we started the race again. Bob and I were lapped every five laps or so. Bautista did just over 1:20 while Bob and I were around 1:45 for the 20. But at least, we competed in a race where a major world record was set. I never before, or since, have been part of a mass caution given to the entire field. (*Ed. Here are the results of that race as published in the Nov. 1979 ORW--unfortunately, not the full results, as Tom and Bob are not listed: 1. Daniel Bautista, Mexico 1:20:06.8 (Bettering the world record of 1:20:59 set earlier that year by Mexico's Domingo Colin) 2. Felix Gomez, Mexico 1:21:24 3. Ernesto Canto, Mexico 1:21:52 4. Maurizio Damilano, Italy 1:22:59 (He won Olymmpic gold in Moscow the following summer) 5. Pedro Aroche, Mexico 1:23:22 (Still under Bautista's pre-1979 world record of 1:23:32) 6. Martin Bermudez, Mexico 1:24:54 7. Marcel Jobin, Canada 1:27:06).* . . . **Another Damilano.** According to a report from the Russian Federation, Maurizio Damilano's borthor

Sandro, has signed to assist with the training of Chinese walkers. Sandro, the elder of the three Damilano brothers, is a well-known coach and trainer of racewalkers. He will initially work with 53 walkers invited to a training camp. At the conclusion of the camp, Damilano will select five young Chinese walkers, who he will take to Italy for intense training. .
Russian walkers honored. The world's best women's racewalker, Olga Kaniskina, was honored as the top Russian track and field athlete for 2009, finishing ahead of the world's number one pole vaulter, Yelena Isinbayeva. On the men's side racewalkers Valeriy Borchin and Sergey Kiryapkin, both winners at the World Championships, were second and third behind high jumper Yaroslav Rybakov. .
Corrections. In the U.S. lists for 2009 in last month's ORW, I missed Dave Talcott who had a 1:44:45 and should have been listed in the fourteenth position at 20 Km. And in the 50, I erroneously said that only four U.S. walkers had finished a 50 during the year. There were actually seven. The three additional were Duane Staley 5:56:27, Bruce Logan 6:00:24, and Steven McCullough 7:00:21. .
Regarding 2012 Olympic Trials. Qualification standards for the 2010 U.S. Olympic Tirals are 1:36:00 for the Men's 20 Km, 1:48:00 for the women's 20 Km, and 4:45:00 for the men's 50 Km. The qualifying period for the 50 opened on Jan. 1, 2010. The qualifying for both 20s opens

Rubino Carries Momentum Into 2010

(IAAF news release by Diego Sampaolo)

Giorgio Rubino was the best Italian male athlete in 2009, the year which confirmed the 23-year-old from Ostia near Rome as one of the best racewalkers in the world. Rubino won the European Walking Racing Cup in Metz (France) in May on a historic day for Italian athletics which claimed a fabulous sweep, as Rubino beat Ivano Brugnetti and his close friend Jacques Nkouloukidi, leading to the European Cup victory for his country.

"The win at the European Cup in Metz was a great surprise, Rubino said. I came from a difficult period as I had not fully recovered from the efforts at Rio Major and Sesto San Giovanni but this win showed our very good work from the psychological point of view. It was a tough race and this made it more special. I thank my coach Sandro Damilano (now working with the Chinese, as reported above)for his advice and all those who are supporting me."

Rubino also finished second behind 2004 Olympic 20Km champion Brugnetti at the Mediterranean Games in Pescara and crowned his successful season with a fourth place at the IAAF World Championships in Berlin in 1:19.50.

Rubino also improved his lifetime best to 1:19:37 in Rio Major during the Portuguese leg of the IAAF Race Walking Challenge where he finished second behind Chinese Hao Wang, who went on to win the World silver in Berlin later in the summer. In the process the Italian walker smashed his PB of 1:21:17 set in Leamington during the 2007 European Cup.

His fourth place in Berlin improved his previous best result set two years earlier in Osaka where he finished fifth. He produced the best result for Italian athletics at the IAAF World Championships in Berlin where he missed the podium by 38 seconds after leading the race in the first half of the race together with his compatriot Brugnetti and Norwegian Erik Tysse. The trio held a clear lead at halfway. Rubino kept the lead going through at 10km in 39:48 with a gap of 11 seconds over the chasing group. At 13km a trio of chasers led by Valeriy Borchin, Hao Wang and Luis Lopez caught Rubino and broke away building up a solid lead at 15km.

"I am a bit disappointed about my fourth place at the World Championships in Berlin. I went

there with the goal to win a medal. It was a season with ups and downs," Rubino said. "A medal in Berlin would have been the icing on the cake but the results achieved in 2009 are the starting point to work harder in the future."

Rubino owes his recent good results to his coach change in 2009. After a difficult 2008 Olympic season plagued by injuries Rubino decided to leave Patrizio Parcesepe, the coach from Ostia who spotted his talent and guided him at the start of his career. Rubino moved to Saluzzo, where there is the famous School of Italian Walking, to be trained by Italian walking "guru" Sandro Damilano, the coach who won more than 40 medals in major events like the Olympic Games, the World Championships and the European Championships. The Damilano group notably features reigning 50 km Olympic champion Alex Schwazer and Olympic 20 km bronze medallist Elisa Rigaud.

"I benefitted a lot from training with Schwazer and Rigaud in Saluzzo," Rubino said. Walkers from all over the world come to Saluzzo to train for the major events. In the past former World and Olympic champion Jefferson Perez of Ecuador used the Saluzzo facilities to prepare for the World Championships in Osaka.

"I thank my first coach Patrizio Parcesepe who contributed to make me an international athlete but I realized that I could make a step forward in my career only by training with the best walkers."

"I have had the chance to learn a lot from training with athletes who are stronger than me. Chinese walkers have trained in Saluzzo. This has given me the chance to mature and grow as an athlete. I have improved my technique, and this year I increased my workload by walking 150 -170 km a week."

"Since I moved to Saluzzo, I have become more confident in my capabilities. I have full confidence in the training methods of my coach Sandro Damilano. There is a great relationship between us. We have created a great family in Saluzzo and I have met good friends here. I thank my parents who have always supported my decisions and encouraged me. I miss my family but I proved that my choice to move to Saluzzo was right."

Rubino began walking at the end of 1988 when he was contacted by former national team's walker Patrizio Parcesepe at the end of a school middle distance race. At the beginning Rubino tried all athletics disciplines.

"I chose race walking because I was not particularly gifted for other disciplines," he recalls. In 2003 he nearly missed the podium at the World Youth Championships in Sherbrooke, Canada, but in 2004 he had a bad year in which he was disqualified at the World Cup in Naumburg and finished tenth at the World Junior Championships on home-turf in Grosseto.

The turning point of his career came in 2004 when he joined the Fiamme Gialle, the Italian Customs Officers club. He benefitted from the conditions to train as a professional athlete and this paid off in terms of results. During those years he became the top walker of the youth walking school of the Fiamme Gialle. He won the bronze medal at the European Junior Championships in Kaunas 2005, finished eighth at the European Championships in Gothenburg 2006, and a remarkable fifth at the IAAF World Championships in Osaka at the age of 21 in 1:23:39 on a very hot and humid day.

The result achieved in Osaka made Rubino one of the top Italian male athletes. Many pundits have regarded the young walker as the man able to continue the proud tradition of Italian walking and follow in the footsteps of luminaries such as Damilano and Brugnetti. Unfortunately, he could not fulfill his Olympic dream in Beijing because of physical problems during the season.

Rubino looks forward to a successful 2010 season, an important season for the world of walking with two top events: the IAAF World Cup in Chihuahua, Mexico, on 15-16 May, and the European Championships in Barcelona from 26th July to 1st August.

"I will start the season on 24 January when I will compete in a 35 km race in Viterbo against Alex Schwazer and Marco De Luca, who finished eighth in the 50 km at the World Championships in Berlin. It will be a great race for which I will have to be well prepared to face two world-class athletes."

"I will take part in Rio Major before a period of preparation in Albuquerque where we stay for three weeks before flying directly to Chihuahua. There it will be more difficult than at the World Championships as five athletes from each country can be entered. We are working to be competitive for the World Cup against the best walkers in the world."

Apart from his hard training regime Rubino finds time to listening to music, his favourite pastime. "I enjoy to every kind of music from classical to Frank Sinatra and to disco music. I also enjoy meeting my friends in Saluzzo."

Junior Grand Prix Standings

Last month, we ran the Final 2009 U.S. Grand Prix Standings for Men and Women and for Masters Men and Women. These were based on points garnered through places won in the several Grand Prix races during the year. Here are the Final Standings for Juniors.

Women

1. Abby Dunn, Maine RW 37
 2. Allison Chin Miami Valley TC 30
 3. Olivia Lampham, un. N.Y. 28
 4. Claudia Ortiz, South Texas WC 24
 5. Molly Josephs, Walk USA 21
 6. Hannah Kislehy, Raleigh Walkers 20
 7. Nicole Court Menendez, Maine RW 18
 8. Erika Lamp, U. Of Wis. Parkside 14
 9. Erika Shaver, Miami Valley TC 10
 10. Amy Cheung, Washingtonville, N.Y. 9
- Rachel Tylock, Rochester, N.Y. 9
(A total of 22 scored points)

Men

1. Dan Serianni, World Class RW 37
2. Alejandro Chaves, South Texas RW 31
3. Matthew Forgues, Maine RW 27
4. John Randall, Miami Valley RW 26
5. Evan Vincent, Maine RW 21

6. Trevor Barron, South Park TC 20
 7. Charles Swerdlow, Maine RW 10
 8. Tyler Sorenson, Pleasanton Heat 9
Mitchell Brickson, Miami Valley TC 9
 10. Jacob Gunderkline, Miami Valley TC 8
Sean MacDonnel 8
Ricardo Vergara, Lindsey Wilson Col.
- (A total of 15 scored points.)

Since we have already featured Tom Knatt's little anecdote, let's make this the Tom Knatt issue. Here is something we have had on hand for sometime and it's about time we used it. This was first published in *Runner's World*, May 1973.

Walking the Southwest

by Tom Knatt

Tom Knatt, a 2:30s marathoner and racewalker of Olympic Trials caliber, set out last year to run and walk across the United States. The guitar maker from West Concord, Mass., encountered the harsh realities of being on the road alone in the Southwestern states.

Last March and April I was walking through the American Southwest with one main object in mind: to break the record for the crossing the U.S. on foot. California, Arizona, and New Mexico form about one-third of the journey—the most difficult part because this area is open and weather-beaten. Much has high altitude and little vegetation. I started out in high spirits and ended up injured and dejected. The Southwest had beaten me for the moment. It's always exciting to read a saga of success in spite of adversity. This is not such a story.

I'm asked: "When did you eat? How did you feel? What was each day like?" All this is very simple because life was reduced to its simplest terms. I ate, I slept. I walked and I tried to run whenever I was capable. I had one goal: to go as quickly as possible, as far as possible, without completely exhausting myself on any given day. A good marathon runner can run 26 miles lickety-split one afternoon. But don't ask him to do the same the following morning. Yet this is what I had to do to break the record. A marathon every morning and another in the afternoon, every day for two months. Of course, I had all day to do them!

Descriptions of where I ate and slept each day would convey unnecessarily one of the basic feelings I had during the trip: boredom. It was much more boring than I anticipated, although I like most runners, enjoy solitude. Yet, for all sameness, each day was unique. I can remember large portions of almost every day as I look back at my notebook.

Day 1: *"Left 9 am from Los Angeles City Hall. Don Johnson and Bob Wilson took pictures. Bob ran with me to San Gabriel mission. Then he and his wife Jackie bid me adieu and I started on my own. Bit of a blister on right foot inside of ball. Girl in an Orange Julius stand talked of going back to Alberta, Canada. No smog. At least you see the mountains. Here it is hot! Eight-four in shade outside lunch stand. Smog bad in afternoon; slightly sick to stomach. Blisters! In Hotel Casablanca that night someone in the lobby asked me if I had a joint."*

Fatigue, heat, and blisters extracted their price over the first three days. I foolishly let my tiredness get the better of me on the second night and found an old car to sleep in,

instead of a motel. Had I gone ahead, I would most likely discovered one that wasn't full. I had bad leg cramps all night as a result. At the end of the third day, I started to get shin splints in my right leg. It happened because I had a large blister on the ball of my right foot and was unconsciously lifting my toes upward to avoid coming down full force on my blister. This tensed the shin and made it injury-prone. By the end of the third day it really hurt.

Day 4. *"It's all uphill from Indio to the rest area 15 miles outside of town. Shin splints are awful! Desert is cool now with a following wind. No need to carry so much water. I dumped some of it."*

For the next several days across the desert in California and into Arizona, I learned how to carry just as much food and water as I needed by sometimes cursing the weight on my back and in my canteen and other times going hungry because I didn't want to carry too much.

Running in the desert is psychologically wearing because you can see 20-30 miles ahead and progress seems infinitesimal. I imagine starting a marathon and being able to see the finish line! The stretch of the Desert Center was the most discouraging of the trip. The shin splints were the worst, and there was a constant wind blowing sand into my eyes, ears, clothing, everything. I crouched in the open seat of caterpillar tractor in a wash under the roadway to eat peanut butter sandwiches for lunch. I thought about starting over again after my shin splints healed. I gave myself until Day 10 to make a decision: Go back, heal and try again, or continue.

Day 10. *Easter Sunday in Arizona. Don Tate, Don Stewart, and Steve Stephenson came out about 11 am to run with me. The first bright spot of the trip really. It's good to see runners again and people whom I can really talk to. Shin splints seem better, so it looks like all systems go."*

From here to New Mexico occurred some of the most memorable experiences. After feeling good on Day 10, but having to march through wretched heat in the afternoon, I made the following entry:

Day 11: *"10 miles. Sick as hell."*

Ah yes! That was a day. I didn't want to get out of bed, but thought, "Maybe if I walk, I'll feel better and shake it off. ..." I didn't. It was a terrible ordeal. After that, I slept round the clock. The next day, I awoke feeling much better. It was cooler and there were brooks running along the roadside. There was green grass to look at. I felt I could make good time.

According to the map, Wilhoit was about 25 miles along and seemed a good place to stop for lunch. When I got there my heart sank. The one gas station said "Wilhoit—Pop. 2" The two people seemed to live in a rather prosperous looking brick house and were, oddly enough, selling real estate. Across a cattle guard from the real estate office was a bar.

"We don't have any food here, only liquor," said Mrs. Jack. "Oh no", I said. "Where can I get something to eat? "There is nothing between here and Prescott and that's 17 miles away."

"Rats! I'm trying to walk across the U.S. and can't carry much food. If I had known you didn't have any, I would have eaten before now. Are you one of the two people in Wilhoit?"

"We aren't in Wilhoit," she said. "We're in government land. When you came across that cattle guard, you left Wilhoit. This place has got only my husband and I. He's a prospector and I run the bar, leastways when I'm healthy. My husband is in Prescott now getting food. You know what we have for Easter Sunday dinner? Fried potatoes." She lit up

a cigarette. I sat fascinated but with stomach growling.

"Is that all the food you have, this beef jerky and pickled pigs knuckles on the counter here? Don't you have any bread and peanut butter? I can pay you okay. I just can't walk 17 miles to Prescott on nothing.

I didn't want just jerky and pigs knuckles, but I was willing to make do. She seemed to soften a bit, probably because she decided that I was someone worth talking to, and that was better than sitting alone. Also, by now I was feeling and probably looking very forlorn.

"Oh, yes, we do have some peanut butter. I'll go and fix you a sandwich. She returned quickly with a very welcome sandwich even if it was on white bread. As I ate, she talked.

"Yes, we lived in the Midwest before we moved West; came here in the 1940s. We farmed for a while. my husband got into mining, though. First it was gold, now it's platinum. He thinks they've got a new way to work the low grade ore here to make it profitable. I don't know though; every time he tries to talk about it, it makes no sense to me."

"How come you decided to stay here?" I asked.

"My husband likes the mining. It's the only place he can do it," she answered. "We've been offered \$100,000 for the bar; the licenses are restricted you know--no new ones are being issued. Next year, we may decide to sell it and go to Colorado someplace."

I had to leave. I had spent over an hour on the bar stool and had to be off to Prescott. I said as I was leaving: "Give me your address so I can send you a post card about how I made out."

"Just send it to Mrs. Jack, Nowhere, Arizona. Where is 17 miles south of Prescott? Nowhere, that's where. We've got that on our check stubs and everything. We'll get it.

All the way to Prescott, I mused about Mrs. Jack. Fried potatoes for Easter Sunday dinner, the \$100,000 offer on the bar, a heart condition, maybe soon we'll move out of Prescott, contradictions....

It is 20 Miles, at least 10 of it uphill, from Granite Dells to the top of Mingus Mountain. I was somewhat relieved to find an inn at the summit with water out front. A country store was close though. I rapped on the front door.

"What do you want?" a youngish man asked. "I'm trying to walk across the USA. Perhaps you saw my picture in the *Arizona Republic* a couple of days ago. Right now, I've walked up here from Granite Dells and haven't had any food since early morning. I've got money all right. Do you have any food that I can buy?"

"Sorry we only have steak here," he said. "Don't you have any bread and something for a sandwich? I'll be glad to pay you," I pleaded. "Well we might have some burnt bread out back. Somebody left it in the oven by mistake."

Oh well, any port in the storm, I mused, and followed him through the plush dining room into the kitchen. He handed me three loaves of very hard, charred bread. I surveyed the room and saw fresh loaves of bread. "Couldn't I get some of that good bread and something for a sandwich?" I asked again.

"No," he said sharply. Somewhat annoyed, I replied: "How would you feel if you had just walked up Mingus Mountain and I was at the top and told that you couldn't have any food?"

With that, he drew up his fists and made like he very well might punch me in the

mouth. I shied away quickly and he tried to grab the bread away from me. I held onto one loaf. "I was just telling you how I felt," I said. "If you don't like it, you know what you can do," he retorted.

We both walked toward the door, and I kept a good distance ahead of him. I went around the back and talked to the people who worked for the man I had just encountered as I ate my burnt bread. They had few good words about him. (*We will conclude Tom's southwest odyssey next month.*)

Pearls of Walking Wisdom

(From the newsletter of the Marin Racewalkers. Tom Dooley is a two-time Olympic racewalker--1968 and 1972).

"Sure, I'll help you train for Sacramento," said Tom Dooley, at our first Sunday morning seminar with him, several months ago, "and this is what you need to start doing now to feel strong, racewalking fit, confident, and legal by July."

1. Warm Up, Waru Up, Warm Up. Tom says none of us have been warming up sufficiently, especially important in cold weather. He recommends a minimum warm up of one mile slow and easy. More is better. Wear layered warm up clothes that you can peel off as your body heats up. Warmed up muscles are less injury prone.

2. After warming up, head for the fence and complete the Tom Dooley Ballistic. (Moving as opposed to static stretching exercises.)

3. Be conscious of your alignment. Good technique depends on proper racewalking alignment; a vertical line from ear to shoulder to hip. Critiquing us individually at this seminars, Tom identified a lot of leaners in the group; both backward and forward. Even two inches off optimal alignment, he point out, can make a difference in forward propulsion.

4. Arms are a driving force in racewalking' don't let your arms just come along for the ride. Shoulders should be down, elbows and forearms at a 90 degree angle, elbow thrusting straight to the back not opening to the sides. Proper arm technique is predicated on strong triceps, which can be strengthened by holding a soup can behind you, bending your elbows to lift and lower the can to the rear. (Triceps are oft-flabby muscles on the upper backside of the arm. Out of sight, out of mind.)

5. Build a solid base during off-racing season. Walk at a moderate (for you) pace for longer distances enjoying the beauty and rich variety of walking venues. This is not the time of year to be thinking about speed.

6. During the winter spend more time doing fitness exercises and stretching. Improve your flexibility and strength in preparation for race training in the spring.

LOOKING BACK

40 Years Ago (From the January 1970)-- In Asbury Park, N.J., Dave Romansky blasted a 1:12:57 for 10 miles a week after a 6:29.8 Indoor 1 Mile. A week later, he improved to 6:28, but was tossed by judges as Ron Kulik claimed the victory in 6:33. Not discouraged, Dave went even faster with a 6:12.8 in Pittsburgh and a 6:23 in Philadelphia. . Colorado's Floyd Godwin, a recent convert from running, edged Larry Walker in Los Angeles as both recorded 6:35.9 for a mile. The next day, Godwin won the Rose Bowl 10 Mile Handicap race in 1:15:38. . Chicago's 10 Mile handicap was won by a young U. of Illinois student, Bob Henderson, in 1:36:30. Walking for only a few weeks at the time, Bob improved quickly and went on to international status. . Locally, we had what was called a 5 Km race. Walking

somewhere on a snow-covered track (the curb was not identifiable) in wind-blown 18 degree temperature, we covered 12 laps and figured this included a good bit of extra distance since we were probably well outside lane 1. Doc Blackburn, given a 5:10 handicap, recorded a good 30:24 to edge out Mortland's 25:24. Barry Richardson, who unsuccessfully tried to clear the track at the Ohio School for the Deaf, finished third.

35 Years Ago—(From the January 1975 ORW)—Ron Laird turned in the fast time at the Rose Bowl 10 Mile Handicap with a meet record of 1:12:26 and caught all but two of the field that had started at various times ahead of him. Steve DiBernardo had a 1:18:52 for second-fastest time. . . Karl Merschenz braved cold in Toronto to record a 1:38:36 for 20 Km and a 2:45:00 for 30 Km three weeks later. . . In the Mortland-Turns-Master 10 Mile in Worthington, Ohio, your editor stormed to a victory in 1:23:12 to celebrate his 40 years on earth. This year he did nothing special to celebrate three-quarters of a century.

30 Years Ago (From the January 1980 ORW)—Todd Scully won the Olympic Invitational 1500 meters in Madison Square Garden in a quick 5:41, better than 20 seconds ahead of Bruce Harland. . . In a Los Angeles 1 Miler, Ray Sharp was sharp indeed with a 6:13, 4 seconds of Larry Walker. . . Chris Knotts turned in the fast time in the annual New Year's Eve 6 mile handicap in Springfield, Ohio with a 46:27, but could finish only fifth as handicapper Jack Blackburn took care of his family. His father, Dr. John (64:36), crossed the line first, daughter Kathy (66:23) came second, son Tim (56:29) finished third, and Jack himself (52:57) was fourth. Chris had the consolation of a meet and course record, a good time on a cold, dark night.

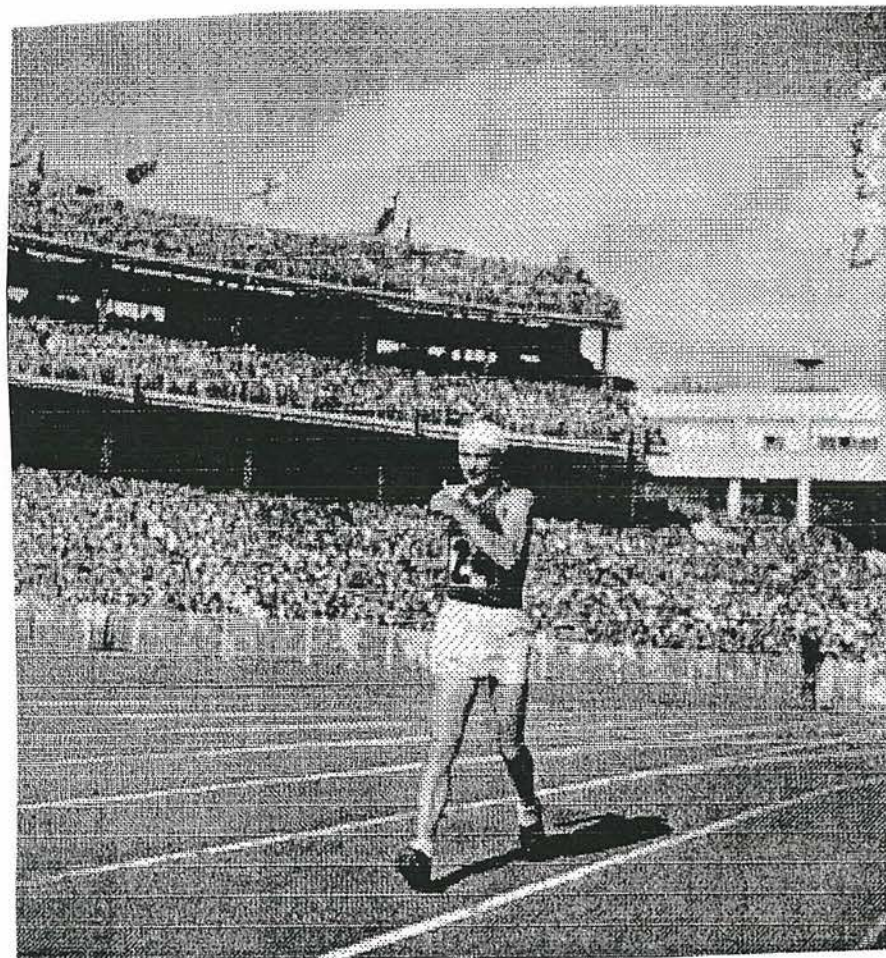
25 Years Ago (From the January 1985 ORW)—Jack Blackburn was faster 5 years later (at the advanced age of 49) as he did 51:19 in the New Year's Eve race, but his crooked handicapping had slipped, as he could only manage seventh. Chris Knotts also improved, breaking that course record with a 46:10, but he was just one place ahead of Blackburn at the finish.

20 years ago (From the January 1990 ORW)—Teresa Vaill blasted a 6:50.4 mile to win the Dartmouth Relays. . . In the men's 2 Mile race, it was Curtis Fisher winning in 13:26.2. . . In the New England Indoor 3 Km Championship, Canada's Tim Berrett left Dave McGovern nearly a minute behind as he won in 11:29.6. Vaill won the women's race in 13:07.8, 15 seconds ahead of Lynn Weik. . . The New Year's Eve race had now moved to Xenia, Ohio, along with Jack Blackburn (it had been in Columbus, Worthington, Van Wert, Continental, and Springfield through the years, depending on Jack's location.) This time, Tim Blackburn won in 55:13, 4 minutes ahead of his dad.

15 Years Ago (From the January 1995 ORW)—In a race held in Palo Alto on January 8, Allen James won the National 50 Km title in 3:59:46. Andrzej Chylinski was with him for 35 Km and hung tough for a 4:01:40, 62 seconds ahead of third-place Jonathan Matthews. Those two wily veterans, Carl Schueler (4:14:00) and Marco Evoniuk (4:14:19) waged a stout battle for fourth. There were 27 starters and 14 finishers, all under 5 hours. Paul Wick and Herm Nelson were well ahead of that pace when they stopped at 42.5 and 40 Km, respectively. And this year...?

10 Years Ago (From the January 2000 ORW)—In Chula Vista, Cal., Curt Clausen bettered the American record for 30 Km, finishing in 2:11:00.4, nearly 11 minutes under Herm Nelson's previous record. On the way, he bettered Allen James 2 Hour record, covering 27,360 meters in that time. Andrew Hermann was second in 2:12:31.2 and bettered the American at 25 Km, as he led Clausen at that point. Third was Al Heppner in 2:16:58, fourth was Xavier Moreno of Ecuador in 2:19:32.8, and fifth was Philip Dunn in 2:20:14. Yeuling Chen won an accompanying women's 20 Km in 1:35:45.7 with Danielle Kirk second in 1:39:27. . . Three weeks earlier, Mexico's Carlos Mercenario won a 50 Km in Houston in 4:00:14, but he was DQ'd in Chula Vista trying to keep pace with Clausen and Hermann.

5 Years Ago (From the January 2005 ORW)—In the National 30 Km, held in Chula Vista on Jan. 23 (celebrating your editor's 70th birthday, now doubt), Curt Clausen interrupted his law school studies at the U. of Wisconsin, to win in 2:28:00. Philip Dunn could not match Clausen's effort in the final kilometer and finished 12 seconds back in second. Heidi Hauch won the women's title in 3:04:24. . . At the Dartmouth Relays, Joanne Dow won the women's 1 Mile in 6:46.78, 20 seconds ahead of Canada's Rachel Lavallee (now Rachel Seaman). The men's race went to Zach Pollinger in a quick 6:15.33, just ahead of Patrick Gollier (6:16.59). . . Tim Seaman won a 3 Km in New York City with 11:38.71. Pollinger was second in 12:40.73.



1956 Olympics, Melbourne. Leonid Spirin nears the finish in a USSR sweep of the 20 Km medals. Spirin finished in 1:31:27.4. The picture is copied from a web site that you access at http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/1956_Olympics_Photo_Index. Thousands of photos from all the events, not just track and field, at the 1956 Games.