

USATF National Race Walker

Volume II, Issue III

November 2002

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Team USA: (l to r)

Men– Matt Boyles, Enrique Pena, Dan Pierce, Philip Dunn, John Nunn, John Soucheck, Kevin Eastler, Sean Albert, Steven Quirke, Theron Kissinger, Curt Clausen, Tim Seaman, Tom Eastler.

Women– Gina Maggio, Amber Antonia, Susan Armenta, Joanne Dow, Jill Cobb, Teresa Vaill.

Pre-Convention Edition Notes

Dan Pierce, Chair

The USATF Annual Meeting, in Kansas City, Missouri, is upon us. This year's edition will be held from December 2nd through December 8th. Many important issues will be dealt with that affect the direction of our Race Walking program on all levels, from Youth development through the selection of our International teams that will represent the USA at the World Championships in Paris and the Pan American Games in the Dominican Republic. Also of particular importance, is the election of the legendary Larry Young to the USATF Hall of Fame. Larry is the last US Race Walker to win an Olympic medal, picking up Bronzes in the 50 km in 1968 and 1972.

Highlights of the Annual Meeting Agenda:

- € Selection of National Championship Events & Regional Championship Events
- € Election of the US Nominee to the IAAF Race Walking Committee
- € Decision of Standards of Performance necessary to represent Team USA in 2003



Team USA
2002 IAAF World Cup
Turin, Italy

Convention Meeting Schedule

This Listing consists of Race Walking Meetings and others of interest.

Wednesday, December 4, 2002

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|----|
| 8 am - 6 pm | Registration | East Lobby Alcove | LL |
| 9 am - 10:30 am | Race Walking Executive Committee | Chouteau A | ML |
| 10:45 - 12:15 pm | Race Walking Executive Committee | Chouteau A | ML |
| 2 pm - 3:30 pm | USATF Board or Directors #1 | Chouteau B | ML |
| 3:45 pm - 5:15 pm | USATF Board of Directors #2 | Chouteau B | ML |
| 5:30 pm - 10 pm | AAC Event Leaders | Liberty Westin | BL |
| 7:30 pm - 9 pm | Race Walking | Empire B | ML |

Thursday, December 5, 2002

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|-------------------|----|
| 7:30 am - 6 pm | Registration | East Lobby Alcove | LL |
| 11:15 am - Noon | High Performance Programs | Empire A | ML |
| 1 pm - 4 pm | Race Walking | Chicago B | BL |
| 5:30 pm - 8 pm | Race Walking Site Selection Subcommittee | Van Horn C | ML |
| 7 pm - 8 pm | IAAF Candidates' Forum | Pershing | ML |

Friday, December 6, 2002

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----|
| 8 am - 5 pm | Registration | East Lobby Alcove | LL |
| 9 am - Noon | Athletes Advisory | Liberty Westin | BL |
| 9 am - Noon | Race Walking | TBA | |
| 10:30 am - Noon | Men's Development Workshop (End/RW) | D Chouteau | ML |
| 1 pm - 4 pm | Race Walking | Empire B | ML |

Saturday, December 7, 2002

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----|
| 7:30 am - 9:30 am | Awards Breakfast Buffet | Atlanta/New York | BL |
| 9:30 - Noon | Race Walking | Empire C | ML |
| 1 pm - 4 pm | Race Walking Judging Seminar | Pershing Place East Westin | BL |
| 2 pm - 3:15 pm | High Performance Programs | Empire B | ML |

Sunday December 8, 2002

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 9:30 am - 11 am | USATF Closing General Session | San Francisco/NY/Atlanta | BL |
| 11:30 am - 3 pm | USATF Board of Directors | Chouteau B | ML |

The full schedule of committee meetings and all other Convention information is available at the USATF website, www.usatf.org

Race Walking in the Olympic Games

Bob Bowman

Dear Craig,

Thank you for your letter of September 3rd concerning the future of the race walking events in the Olympic Games. Those of us involved in race walking appreciate the initiatives of USATF, the USOC, PASO, the IAAF to counter the recommendation of the IOC Commission.

Having served as Chairman of the IAAF Race Walking Committee from 1991-99, Referee for the race walking events at the 1984 & 1996 Olympic Games, and a race walking judge at the 1988 & 1992 Olympic Games, I can speak with some authority on the conduct of the race walking events at recent Olympics. In reviewing Section 3.1.3 of the Report of the IOC Commission in which they recommend the exclusion of race walk events from 2008 Olympic Program, the stated reasons are factually incorrect. The Report states that "the Commission reviewed the judging difficulties experienced in the recent editions of the Olympic Games, and noted the resulting poor image of the race walk events." It also states that "the operational difficulties for OCOGs in conducting race walk events were noted." What is so disturbing about the first statement is the fact that there were no judging difficulties experienced in the recent editions of the Olympic Games!

In 1984, 1988, 1992 & 1996 all the walking events were conducted as perfectly as humanly possible with no complaints or protests. In fact they proved to be very exciting events with great spectator interest. I certainly would know, I was either the Referee or Chief Judge at all four of these Olympics. In 2000 there was a significant problem with the technical management of the walking events but it had nothing to do with the judging.

The problem was one of communication. The late communication of a disqualification during the men's 20Km walk resulted in an embarrassing situation for one competitor and his country. However, the competitor and his federation always supported the decision of the judges. Their complaint centered of the tardiness of the disqualification. There was also expected controversy during the women's 20Km walk when a walker from the host country was disqualified while leading during the final stages of the race. This is quite a normal reaction. However, the disqualified walker supported the decision of the judges as did her federation. Never was the decision of the judges in all three walks in the 2000 Olympics challenged by any federation, its athletes or officials.

The communication problem experienced was quite unique and will not be repeated as evidenced by the very successful technical operation of the 2001 World Championships. Therefore, the second statement in the Report is also quite misleading. Contrary to the Report, the IOC Commission obviously did not review these competitions as they claim. They obviously based their statements on biased false opinions against one of the most popular and successful athletic events in Olympic history.

The Straightened Leg

Gary Westerfield

THE STRAIGHTENED LEG: The Intent of the Rules and Use of Biomechanics to Make "Bent-knee" Calls in Race Walking

By Gary Westerfield--November 2002

Prior to 1995 there were more infractions for illegal walking due to loss of contact than for not straightening the advancing leg. Judges who made an abundance of calls for failure to straighten were considered out of line and were criticized and even sanctioned. Now, more calls are made for "bent knees" than in the past. On the international level the ratio of "loss of contact" to "bent knee" calls according to former IAAF race walk committee chairman Bob Bowman, has changed from 2.5 to 1 to 1.6 to 1 for the 20km and from approximately 1 to 1 to 0.5 to 1 in the 50km. In the extreme, one experienced judge at the 2001 Pan Am Cup gave nothing but bent knee calls. Domestically I have witnessed many more "bent knee" calls than in the past. Athletes who appear to be efficient and appear to be race walking get disqualified. Why? There are essentially two reasons.

The first is a matter of the meaning and intent of the words chosen to write the definition of race walking. The definition was amended in 1995 to satisfy those who wanted to drop the contact rule while preventing running-like movements by race walkers. IAAF rule 230.1 is copied for your reference:

Race Walking is a progression of steps so taken that the walker makes contact with the ground so that no visible (to the human eye) loss of contact occurs. The advancing leg shall be straightened (i.e., not bent at the knee) from the moment of first contact with the ground until the leg is in the vertical upright position.

Why was "shall be straightened" chosen over "shall be straight"? (Note' straightened was carried over from the pre-1995 definition.) Mr. Bowman recently wrote, in response to an earlier draft of this paper, that "straightened" was chosen "in order not to encourage analogies with stick figures. In other words, human legs are not sticks." I have argued that "shall be straightened," prescribes motion, and that "shall be straight" does not. Bob goes on to state that the word straightened is defined in the parenthetic inclusion "not bent at the knee," "'Not bent' means straight." Canadian coach and linguist Roger Burrows responded to my draft that "straightened" and "straight" mean essentially the same thing. However, when judges look for "not bent" their minds think "straight." Here is the problem. Many, including Spanish-speaking judges, use the static parameter "straight" to pick out instances of infraction. In fact, the Spanish rulebook (secondary to the English rulebook--IAAF rule 9) uses the word "straight (*rectar*)" instead of "straightened (*enderezada*)" in the definition. Guess what their judging manual uses- rigid stick figures with straight or bent legs.

My eyes, corrected to 20/20 vision, and my brain, giving me normal intelligence have real difficulty stopping the action of walkers at precise moments. It cannot reduce moving bodies to stick figures. Accordingly, I have always judged race walkers while in motion, as a process. How can human legs ever be straight? Knobby-kneed, bow-legged, and walkers with pleasant to look at muscles and/or curves are at a distinct disadvantage when being judged using "straight" as a reference. I have often times asked my judging colleagues what they saw when they made bent leg calls. Invariably they said, "I didn't see the leg straight on contact." Remove the word straight from their explanation and substitute the word straighten, and we can begin to correct the problem.

The second reason for so many "bent leg" calls is essentially that many judges do not know the process, the mechanics, of how the leg is straightened at the knee. Since the straightened leg clause of the definition is there to prohibit running, I would propose that judges need to look at what runners do with their advancing leg and then say, "race walkers may not do that." First, a runner rarely straightens at the knee. And they do not lock the knee on or after contact. The knee bends with body weight at contact. Runners rely on large eccentric contractions of muscles in the leg to keep the knee from further bending. The most visible of the eccentric contractions is that of the quadriceps group at the front of the thigh. This contraction is very visible from the side.

A legal race walker, when in contact with the ground does not demonstrate eccentric contraction of the quadriceps, on the other hand, the knee is locked to stabilize the leg. What is the process of extension (straightening)? At the end of advancing leg flexion (forward swing), a concentric contraction of the quadriceps occurs to initiate extension of the knee. The quadriceps then shuts off and relaxes at contact. With contact the knee locks intrinsically, preventing flexion. This process is evidenced by a slight outward rotation of the tibia, a "screw home" between the tibia and meniscus, and a tightening of the ligaments of the knee. Keep in mind that stabilization of the knee is not instantaneous. It begins at the moment of first contact and is completed shortly afterwards. When body weight is felt, many walkers go beyond 180-degrees-straight as they hyperextend. During the extension (straightening) maneuver and while in contact with the ground, the quadriceps remains shut off. Compared to running mechanics, the difference is obvious. What matters here is that this process does not make the leg "straight" at contact, rather that it becomes straightened at contact, becoming completely so and even beyond straightened after contact. This does not mean that walkers may flex their legs (bend) at contact. The initial concentric contraction of the quadriceps (felt at the top of the thigh) must occur before contact. If not, there will be insufficient pull on the patella. The knee will not lock, and the knee joint will flex like a runner.

In summary, how can spurious bent-knee calls in race walking be reduced? Judges must have an understanding of the intent of the definition as written in English. To accomplish this there should be one definition of race walking, using unambiguous biomechanical terms descriptive of joint movement. Judges should look at the advancing leg as part of a flowing action, not as disconnected instances illustrated by stick figures. Most importantly, judges must compare race walking to running when making calls. If so, and most importantly for the continuation of our discipline within athletics, some of the amazement of non-race walkers as well of those who have spent many years in the sport will be reduced, and our discipline will have more credibility in the athletic movement.

US World Cup Wrap-up

Al Heppner

American 50 km Record Holder Curt Clausen was battling an infection and was gone after 20 km. Tim Seaman, owner of the US 20 km record, also had been under the weather and missed some training. Seaman badly wanted to finish, but after taking 35 minutes to walk from 35-40 km, his body could take no more. The hopes of the red, white, and blue at the World Cup 50 km (31 miles) Race Walking Championships in Turin, Italy were suddenly pinned solely on Philip Dunn's neatly trimmed singlet.

Despite uneven footing on the course and the elimination of a US Team score (Steve Quirke had been disqualified leaving the US with less than the required three finishers), a confident Dunn used a more aggressive race strategy to get a personal best at the biggest meet of the year for the second straight time.

Last year, Dunn had an international breakthrough, finishing 16th at the World Championships with a personal best time. However, that mark was overshadowed by Clausen's 7th-place finish. In the center of the spotlight this time, Dunn lowered his best another 20 seconds to 3 hours, 56 minutes, and 13 seconds.

"My plan was to go out at 3:53 pace (2003 World Championships "A" Standard) or a little faster and hold it. I really wanted to work with a pack and was able to find one with 5-6 walkers for the first 35 km. I had been walking between 4:36 and 4:40 per km until 34 km. I was still on 3:53 pace until 40 km and needed a 46:30 for the last 10 km to nail it. Unfortunately, I couldn't hold pace and really started to pay the price in the last 4 km, slowing to about 5:10 per kilometer," said the 31-year-old Dunn.

The course wasn't much of a help in his quest. It was challenging at best, according to Dunn.

"It was in the center of downtown Turin. The surface was two-inch by two-inch cobble stone or one-foot by two-foot flagstone at various parts of the course."

There was also the problem of railroad tracks.

"They tried to put Mondo (track surface) over the tracks, but you could feel the gaps. Also, the ramps were spring loaded so we bounced up and down walking over them."

But the course wasn't as much of a factor for Dunn as it could have been.

"If you let it get to, the conditions were bad. Some guys were careful with each step and it slowed them down. I wasn't."

Although none of it was directed at Dunn, the US Team took a lot of criticism from the racewalk community for their performances at the World Cup. Since only Dunn and John Soucek finished, the US didn't get a team score in the 50 km, while both the men's and women's 20 km teams finished out of the top ten. So what did Dunn think of the team's performance?

"Obviously, I was disappointed, but considering everyone's individual circumstances, I thought everyone gave it their best shot. If Curt has even a normal day, finishing a little ahead of me and Tim just gets into the top 30, we finish among the top 2-6 teams in the World."

Dunn was able to avoid personal disappointment with consistent training and a change in strategy.

"I've been real healthy, with no sickness or injuries. I had a lot of confidence coming off of the National Two-hour Championships (which he won), so I went out aggressively. It was fun to really race it."

When Dunn really began to tire at the end of the race, he hung in there. What happened just after the race was a clear indication of how much effort he expended.

"I was able to walk about 20 feet before I collapsed. Thankfully, my wife and brother were there to carry me back to the hotel. That's as tired as I've ever been in my entire life."

In his last four 50 kms over the past two seasons, Dunn has displayed his trademark consistency, walking between 3:59:59 and 3:56:13. Going back to his last World Cup appearance in 1999, Dunn walked 3:59:53. He also had experience on his side. This was Dunn's fourth World Cup appearance.

On the flip side of that statistic is 22-year-old Amber Antonia, who made her first World Cup appearance or first international appearance for that matter at this year's meet. Her breakthrough performance came at the 2001 US Championships where she finished second and allotted her several US Team opportunities last year. But Antonia turned down the World University Games, Goodwill Games, and Pan Am Cup in order to fulfill her obligations as the University of Wisconsin-Parkside's number one cross country runner. In that event, Antonia is a two-time All-American.

"About a month before the World Cup, I did a time trial in our park and tweaked my knee. I couldn't even walk out of the front door for three days, let alone racewalk. To make a long story short, I didn't do any racewalking a month before the World Cup," Antonia said.

When she got to Turin, Antonia cross-trained the first few days and then was able to walk "a little bit." But the same course that didn't give Dunn too many problems, caused Antonia fits.

"If the course had been smoother then it may have been a different story, but the changing, uneven surfaces played havoc on my knee. I think it was a good idea to put the race on the main road of the city, but it's too bad that it was not a quality road."

Antonia certainly had envisioned a different international debut, but here's how her 20 km (12.4 miles) race went down.

"Right off of the start we had to go down a ramp to another level and I totally slammed my knee right away. Then we walked past the water station where it was very slippery. After the first 2 km loop, the pain became worse and it hurt every time my left leg planted. So to break it down, the course was not conducive to walking with an injury. Eight kilometers was all I could handle."

Although her result simply says DNF (Did Not Finish), Antonia got a lot more out of her first World Cup experience than just three letters.

"This was a great learning experience. It was inspiring to see the biggest studs of the walking world compete. I had a great time, met some awesome people, and I look forward to doing better next time."

Men's Development Report

Philip Dunn

2002 REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

ARCO/USOTC Center of Excellence

Another successful year for the Center of Excellence and Coach Enrique Pena was punctuated by the performance of Philip Dunn (50km) at the IAAF World Race Walk Cup in Turin, Italy (Olympic 'B' Standard and PR). Other highlights included the 'B' Standard (20km) performance of youngster John Nunn (3½ minute PR), American 30km Record by Curt Clausen, and the winning of all nine USATF Racewalk National titles by five members of the ARCO training group.

Total Dollars allocated: \$15,000

Total Dollars Spent \$15,000

Elite Athlete Funding

Funds allowed athletes with Olympic 'A' and 'B' time standards and those who qualified for the IAAF World Race Walk Cup to meet training and competition expenses.

Total Dollars allocated: \$4,000

Total Dollars Spent \$4,000

Junior Dual Meet – USA vs. Canada

A long-standing tradition, this meet has helped numerous USA Olympians develop their international racing potential. Leading this year's USA squad to a convincing victory was Ben Shorey. Shorey began the summer at the USATF Junior T&F Champs with a very promising win, American Junior record, and Athlete-of-the-Meet honors.

Total Dollars allocated: \$3,750

Total Dollars Spent \$3,750

Junior Regional Training Camp

An essential element of development for the young walker, this camp gave Junior athletes the opportunity to train with each other and compete against one another in a supportive environment. Useful information on sports science, technique, and training was shared. It was held in Connecticut to keep travel costs down for the predominantly East Coast Junior walkers.

Total Dollars allocated: \$1,250

Total Dollars Spent \$1,250

A one-time \$10,000 grass-roots development grant from the City of Chula Vista allowed us to distribute some of the ARCO allocated funds to other necessary development programs for both men and women. Without this grant, many of these programs would have been greatly diminished or entirely absent from this year's development activities. The above numbers are, at this time, merely estimates as the budget year ends on the December 31, 2002.

2003 PREVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

The ARCO Racewalk Center of Excellence remains the number one objective of the Racewalk Development Committee. However, we also recognize the need for and will strive to provide funding for other projects that include: a Multi-level Elite Camp to determine critical biomechanical, technical and physiological elements for race walking; Elite Athlete Support; National Collegiate Championships; and a grass-roots promotional and educational project targeted specifically at US high school track and field programs.

Women's Development Report

Maryanne Torrellas

2002 Race Walking Accountability Report

In the US, and in many other countries women are still going through an adjustment to the longer 20K distance. It is encouraging to see the average for the PB of the elite American group on its way to improving. At the World Cup, veteran, Theresa Vaill put herself on the line pushing with the top group for 3/4 of the race and was unfortunately disqualified. Our other veteran, Joanne Dow turned in a solid performance, while the younger members of the team gained valuable experience.

The recent switch of the Jr. race from a 5K to a 10K should augment the feeder system which does not have the advantage of High School nor College participation. A promising young Jr, Robyn Stevens set the 10k road record this year and qualified for the World Jrs along with Anne Favolise. Over the past 5 years the elite athlete resident program at US Olympic training center in Chula Vista has had proven success. Under the guidance of Enrique Pena, coach of Olympic and 2002 World Cup Champion, Jefferson Perez, the athletes have shown improvement. This model has worked well for the men, and needs to remain in place so the women can get the full benefit of Coach Pena's expertise. Much of the foundation he has laid down with these elite athletes will bear fruit in the years to come. At one point there were 5 women at the training center, for various personal reasons, job, family etc. many had to move elsewhere, leaving Susan Armenta as the sole female. Even without the benefit of having other elite women to train with Susan fared well this year, winning the Women's 50K, 40K, 30K and 1 Hour National title and on the International scene, she was the second American to cross the finish line.

Racewalk Development projects:

-San Diego Center of Excellence-Olympic Training Center, Chula Vista CA:

Funds towards Enrique Pena's salary to keep one of Race Walkings most valuable assets coaching at the training center. Pena has cracked the code of Olympic gold, he has a full understanding of the critical zone that he imparts to athletes under his guidance. ARCO Race Walking Center of Excellence - \$4,500

-Senior Elite Support Program:

Grant funds available to athletes achieving the International ÒAÓ or ÒBÓ standards allowing them to compete at major international and domestic competitions. Note that our top level athletes must travel to Europe to face international level competitions and there is little support from event promoters for expenses.

Having the World Race Walking Cup so late in the year athletes are still submitting their expenses

Elite Athlete Support - distributed to 9 athletes who have met A < 1:36 - (4) or B < 1:40 (5) standards in past two seasons (2001 or 2002). Total amount awarded - \$6,000

-Training Camps:

A Jr. Eastern Regional camp was held in New Haven CT. July 7-11. 18 boys and girls participated. The camp covered physiology of training, sports psychology, nutrition, strength training and technique work. This camp was held regionally on the East coast rather than the Arco Training Center to reduce travel costs as most of the top Jrs are from Maine and New York. \$1,000 towards the \$3043 total cost of the camp.

-Jr. USA/ Canadian Duel Meet:

This item should really come from the competition budget, and will in the future. This years meet was held on US soil, Wilkes Barre PA. This annual meet dates back to 1987 and provides the Jrs with much needed international racing experience. Travel costs were reduced to a minimum by having several of them travel by car. The US Jrs took the top spots. USA versus Canada Jr. duel meet - \$3417.50 (\$3,500)

**A PUBLICATION OF THE
USATF NATIONAL RACE WALK COMMITTEE**

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**IAAF Standards—Revised
2003 World Championships—Paris**

| | A | B |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 20 km W | 1:33:00 | 1:36:30 |
| 20 km M | 1:22:30 | 1:24:00 |
| 50 km M | 3:57:00 | 4:03:00 |

Adam Staier in Maine Running Hall of Fame

Tom Eastler

Adam Staier, a freshman at Mansfield University in Mansfield, PA, and a resident of Farmington, Maine, received the first "Presidents Award" at the twelfth Induction Ceremony of the Maine Running Hall of Fame in Waterville on Sunday. Staier, captain of the Cross Country and Track and Field teams in his junior and senior years at Mt. Blue high school was honored for his spectacular performance in race walking which included 6 All-American awards, several National championships, invitation to compete at the prestigious Millrose Games in Madison Square Garden in NYC, and his National high school record in the 1600 meter racewalk (6:01.48).

The President's award is new to the Maine Running Hall of Fame, and is designed to honor a promising elite young athlete of national significance. It was very fitting that an athlete of Staier's calibre, and a race walker at that, was named as the first recipient. Staier was unable to attend the ceremony because of his cross country schedule at Mansfield, and the award was presented to his mother, Joline Staier, by the citationist and one of his coaches, Tom Eastler from Farmington.