

Rich Clarkson—Topeka Capital-Journal

Miler Ryun racing over the Kansas prairies in a lonely morning workout: 'You get used to the pain'

Track: What Limit to Human Achievement?

One of the finest of all U.S. track seasons was speeding gloriously into the homestretch last week at a record clip. Coming out of nowhere, a group of swift, strong Americans—many too young to vote—had steadily chipped away at existing marks all during May and June. Kansas-bred Jim Ryun, 19-year-old marvel of the middle distances, raced to three records in a span of 29 days—a U.S. mark of 8:25.2 in the 2-mile, another U.S. mark of 3:53.7 for the mile, that missed the world record by a mere tenth of a second, then a world-record clocking of 1:44.9 in the half-mile.

Californian Bob Seagren, 19, flipped to a height of 17 feet 5½ inches in the pole vault in May—also a world record. And another 19-year-old Californian, unknown Lee Evans of San Jose City College, reeled off an unbeaten season and won the national title in the quarter-mile. Evans's neighbor, 21-year-old Tommie Smith of San Jose State, spun off world records in the 200-meter and 220-yard dashes. Charlie Greene, a University of Nebraska senior, exploded the 100-yard dash titles in both the national collegiate and national AAU meets. And Oregonian Neal Steinhauer, a 260-pounder, threatened to loft the 16-pound ball into orbit.

Iron Curtain: The hungry pack of young Yanks seemed bent on a smashing victory in the annual climax of the outdoor running, throwing, jumping campaign—the eighth international meet between the United States and the Soviet Union, set for Los Angeles this weekend. Then suddenly an iron curtain loomed ahead of them in place of the familiar finish line.

In Moscow, 86 loose-limbed So-

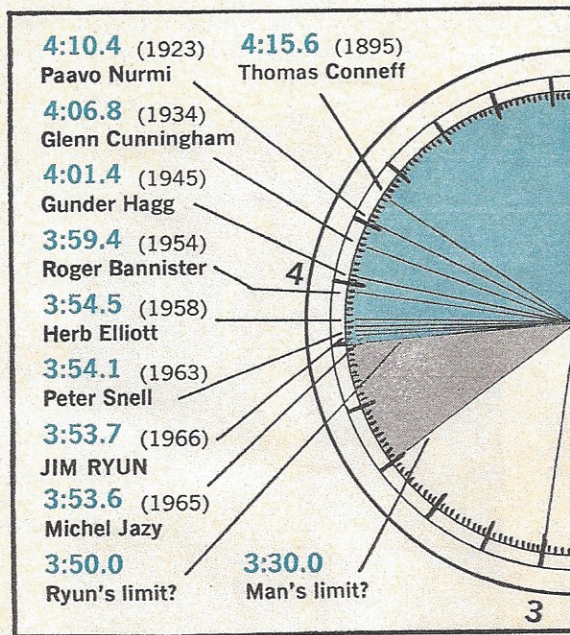
viet men and women athletes were on their marks to board an Aeroflot jet last week for the first leg of their flight to Los Angeles. But the Soviet government had something else in mind. A statement issued in the name of the track team announced that "our solidarity with the people of Vietnam who are fighting for their freedom and independence does not permit us to take part in a match with sportsmen of a country from which this aggression comes."

Not even carefully edited TV films of the so-called protest meeting could fool Muscovites; the faces of the Soviet athletes were glum, and when women's Capt. Taisia Chenchik called for a vote on the resolution, only a few limp, un-

certain hands were raised. Furthermore, U.S. Ambassador to the Kremlin Foy D. Kohler did some quick checking and found that the Soviet team's air tickets had been turned back to Sabena more than 48 hours before the athletes convened to condemn U.S. air strikes on Hanoi and Haiphong. It was obvious the Russian runners would rather have gone to the starting line in L.A. than toe the party line in Moscow.

'Disappointed': The Soviet pullout was followed swiftly by Poland's refusal to meet the U.S. team in its scheduled meet last weekend at Berkeley, Calif.—an act that was also presented as the spontaneous decision of aroused athletes. When U.S. star Jim Ryun heard about the news, he lamented: "I'm disappointed. I worked all year long for this one. And I'm not alone there, either." Ryun had run against the Russians in Kiev last summer and the memory of the 118-112 defeat suffered by the U.S. men's team had provided a powerful incentive—it was the only loss ever suffered by a U.S. men's team in an international dual meet. The mood of most Yanks in Berkeley last week—Ryun stayed on the Kansas campus in Lawrence until Friday—seemed a mixture of cynicism and boredom as they trained for what was abruptly transformed into an "All-American Invitational" meet. "We've been running against each other all season," pointed out Evans. "I just can't get all fired up for this one."

In Los Angeles, director Glenn Davis—former All-America half-back at West Point—renamed his meet the "International Games" and replaced the Russians with teams from Britain, New Zealand



Newsweek—Van Dyke

How mile records have dropped: Eventually, it will be run in 3:30, predicts Bannister

SPORTS

and Australia. At least that assured Coliseum fans of a world-champion long-distance ace, Aussie Ron Clarke, 29, now on a record binge rivaling Ryun's.

Although Ryun and the other young stars have no Polish or Russian competition to press them, they are nevertheless locked in continual battle with unyielding opponents—the stop watch and the tape measure. How fast the mile? How high the pole vault? How far the shot put? The old “insurmountable” barriers—the 4-minute mile, the 17-foot vault, the 60-foot throw in the shot—have long since been breached; today, trackmen take aim at faster and higher goals. What is the limit of human achievement? The rise of runner Jim Ryun suggests one surprising answer.

Schoolboy Feat: It was only twelve years ago that England's Roger Bannister, then 25, ran himself into total exhaustion at Iffley Road, Oxford, to clock 3:59.4 and break the spell of the 4-minute mile. Since then no fewer than 71 runners have achieved the impossible; two years ago, Ryun became the first high-school boy to clip 4:00. Now, the Kansas kid has done it nine times.

Bannister, now a doctor at St. Mary's Hospital in London, probably understands the physiology of the mile—pounding pulse, diminishing supply of oxygen, build-up of lactic acid in the tissues—better than any runner or coach. “The mile will be run in 3 minutes 30 seconds,” predicts Bannister. “But as man is constructed at the moment, that may be the human limit. Better shoes won't make any difference—or better tracks, or training, or pills. The only way I think anyone would be able to improve on that would be cheating—by breathing oxygen from a good face mask.”

'Motivation': Bannister credits the routine running of sub-4-minute miles to two factors: good coaching and the power of positive thinking. “Motivation,” he says, “is the key to it all.” Nor will today's run on records ease up, in Bannister's opinion. “With the rise in standards of living throughout the world,” he points out, “there are clearly more potential runners—and record-breakers.” One example: Kipchoge Keino of Kenya.

The world mile mark of 3:53.6 was set thirteen months ago by Michel Jazy of France. But Jazy, now 30, is already talking about retirement—if not after this season, almost certainly before the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. And Jazy would like to exit, in his own words, “*par la grande porte*”—with a record run in the European games at Budapest late this summer. But he has no illusions about keeping any of the middle-distance marks for long, not with Ryun already a stopwatch-tick away from his mile clocking and just 2.6 seconds shy of his 2-mile world record of 8:22.6. Just to keep his foot in, Ryun also tried some half-mile



Rich Clarkson—Topeka Capital-Journal

Jim, Kathy: Time out for fun

competition this past spring—and the seventh time he ran it in his life, he shattered the world record.

“I think Ryun will be the first man to run the mile under 3 minutes 50 seconds,” Jazy said last week. But he has no such ambition for himself. He dismisses Ryun's painful training methods—from 80 to 100 miles a week—as overwork. “If anything,” he said, knocking down the theories of most modern coaches, “the great milers of the past such as Gunder Hagg and Roger Bannister also trained too hard. All the records in the world do not make up for the small daily pleasures of life.” Then he added: “I have learned to appreciate a good wine, a good meal. This is incompatible with the rigors of the sport as it is now practiced on the national or international level.”

So far, the rigors of the sport constitute no more than a mild challenge for the dedicated Ryun. “You get used to the pain, doing it every day,” he says. And every day he gets up at 5 a.m. for



Presse Sports

Jazy: Taste for small pleasures

a 6-mile morning workout (the first of his daily two) that would have set milers of an earlier era to shuddering. But Ryun takes it in stride. “When I'm out running in the morning,” he reasons, “practically everybody else is sleeping.” And when reporters prodded him about missing the fun enjoyed by most teenagers, he replied, “How many of them have been to Kiev?”

'Tryer': Kansas sophomore Ryun is a B-plus liberal-arts student (A's in math, C's in English and speech) who never cuts a class. Despite a rigid schedule—three hours nightly on the books—he sometimes needs coach Bob Timmons' reassurance that his classroom work is satisfactory. “He's probably not a real good student,” says the coach, “but he's always going to get good grades because he tries. Jim is a tryer—in everything he does.” Adds Ryun's roommate, Gerry Wall: “Jim has only three things in life—track, school and his girl friend.”

He is also a conscientious member of the fundamentalist Church of Christ, and attends services every Wednesday night and Sunday morning. At a church social last September, he met pretty Kathy Farrier of Lawrence, who will become a K.U. coed this fall (“You could call her my steady,” he allows).

The surpassing concern in teen-ager Ryun's life remains his devotion to running. Ryun's lean (6-foot, 1½-inch, 155-pound), long-striding figure has long been familiar to farmers in the flat wheatlands near his Wichita home. During the past school year in rolling, tree-shaded Lawrence, he pounded through lonely streets to the accompaniment of rumbling milk trucks and yelping dogs, in temperatures that ranged from zero last winter to 100 last week. Ryun is far from husky, but regular weight-lifting and calisthenics have given him added muscle strength and stamina.

“I've been criticized about Jim's training,” says the 42-year-old Timmons. “But you have to punch through the fatigue barrier. This is pain. How would a baseball player, for example, or even a shot-putter understand the awful pain Jim goes through?”

Potential: Nobody understands more than Timmons, an ex-Marine who first recognized Ryun's potential as his coach at Wichita East High School three and a half years ago. In 1964, Timmons took a coaching job at the university; in 1965, Ryun accepted his offer of a “full” track scholarship—although \$15 a month less than the package offered to most K.U. football players.

Timmons believes so strongly in incentives that his runners are required to list their goals for each race on 3-by-5-inch index cards. In a long interview with NEWSWEEK's Jim Benagh, Ryun disclosed he had surpassed his own hopes for the past season in the quarter-

mile, half-mile and 2-mile distances. His one failure, if such is the word, came on the night early last month when he ran 3:53.7, narrowly missing Jazy's world record for the mile. Ryun was aiming for 3:53 flat.

Ryun was a skinny but serious 15-year-old high-school sophomore when Timmons first encountered him as a confident candidate for cross-country at Wichita East. Just one year earlier, Ryun had been cut from the junior high team. The coach prescribed the same sort of fatiguing physical and mental buildup for Ryun that swimming coaches demand of their unquestioning pupils. The youngster had little ego, and a lot of maturing to do. But he responded to training so rapidly that by the end of his junior year he had run a 3:59 mile.

Now he's a skinny but serious 19-year-old college sophomore who never drinks

heat, he failed to qualify for the final.

But one thing Ryun gained on the Tokyo trip was a more than adequate substitute for his morning and evening paper routes back home. His father, Gerald Ryun, a toolmaker on the midnight-to-morning shift at Boeing Aircraft, took over the entire task for his son—and has been running the route ever since. This summer young Jim is working as a \$1.75-an-hour photographer on the Topeka Capital-Journal, 26 miles from Lawrence, while his 49-year-old father obligingly moves the Beacon and the Eagle in Wichita. Still, the senior Ryun is happy to help out.

As young Ryun's fame grows, demands on him increase. Several times this past year, when Ryun wanted to vary his routine by running events other than the mile, promoters complained loudly. And at other meets, paying cus-

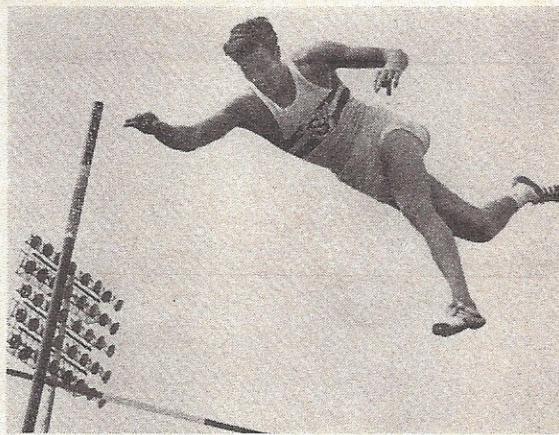
the soaring standards in Seagren's event represent a breakthrough as significant as the one in the mile. Only five years ago, before the swing to the fiber-glass pole, experts predicted flatly that no vaulter would ever top 17 feet. But last week Seagren confidently stated: "I think 18 feet is within my range."

9 Flat: The next time tall Tommie Smith improves on his best 220 yards that world mark will fall below 20 seconds. Smith also hopes to dash 100 yards in less than 9 seconds. Implausible? The record, set in 1963 by American Bob Hayes and tied last week by Canadian Harry Jerome, is 9.1.

The 260-pound Neal Steinhauer—whose teammates call him Odd Job after Goldfinger's immense bodyguard—ranks only third on the all-time list of world shot putters (his best mark: 67 feet, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch compared to record-holder Randy



Newsweek—James Healy



Newsweek—Tony Rollo

Smith (left), Seagren (above), Steinhauer: Titles and records, but no Soviets or Poles



Newsweek—Jim Benagh

or smokes, and the closest he comes to cussing is to repeat his favorite expletive: "Terrible . . . doubly terrible."

A close friend who is interested in handwriting observes that in the past year, the slant of right-hander Ryun's penmanship has veered perceptibly from left to right. Analysts profess to see a personality change in such a swing—an emergence from introvert to extrovert. But Timmons thinks Ryun still may lack the needed confidence. "In the mile and two-mile," comments Timmons, "he has been a front-runner against high-school athletes and a follower against others. He's not controlling the race. But with more experience, he'll know."

Naive: Ryun had little experience against world-class rivals when he was tossed into the crucible of Olympic 1,500-meter competition at Tokyo two years ago. He was overwhelmed by the atmosphere. "I really didn't know what it was all about when I made the team," he admits. He compounded his problems by getting a virus before the Games began. Finishing ninth in his semi-final

tomers complained simply because the weary boy didn't happen to oblige them with record performances. "We have to be careful about choosing a meet which is months off," explains coach Timmons. "We're getting requests now for next year's indoor meets, and if we say yes, they'll start promoting the meet around Jim. Then if for any reason he doesn't show, they say 'What kind of a kid is this?'"

So far, the coach insists, no promoters have offered extra inducements or under-the-table expense money. Perhaps not. But they undoubtedly will. And other pressures on Ryun are sure to grow. Already civic groups, track clinics and youth clubs want him to make speeches; a German TV station wants to film a show on his techniques; he has offers to write an autobiography; and he gets so many requests for training tips that he has sent out more than 100 copies of his practice schedule.

Ryun is the youngest of the U.S. champions. But pole-vault champ Bob Seagren is only six months older—and

Matson's 70 feet, $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches). But at 21, he is still a growing, growling boy. "He eats about six meals a day," explains Steinhauer's father, a comparatively scrawny 200-pounder. Young Steinhauer takes his weight-tossing so seriously that he lifts barbells, throws the shot and discus more than four hours each day except Sunday, and goes to bed every night at 9:30.

Not even gritty Jim Ryun trains that grimly. Ryun is feeling the strain of his 30-race season so strongly that he plans a six-week vacation right after this week's Los Angeles meet. His schedule includes a motor trip through Montana and Yellowstone Park with his parents and sister Jeanette, 14. He also plans some lengthy non-training in the easy chair at home in Wichita. "I'd just like to put my feet up for a while and watch TV," says Ryun.

If anybody deserves a little time off, Ryun does. At his age, he has plenty of opportunity ahead to lower every middle-distance record in the book—especially that magnificent mile.