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JUNE, 1956. Vol. 11. No. 1 & 2.

Annual Subscription, 12/6 (U.S.A., 2 \$).

JOHN EMMET
FARRELL'S



NO doubt the athletes of Europe and the U.S.A. will soon be duplicating the brilliant feats of those of the Antipodes. For it is an old Olympic custom to expect these flashes in an Olympic year. With the Games being held in November instead of the usual July-August period, probables will be faced with the problems of conserving their peak and of competing in out-of-season unnatural climatic conditions.

Early Efforts of World Class.

Thelma Hopkins' great high-jump world-record of 5 ft. 8½ ins., raises hopes of the possibility of at least one gold medal for Britain, although record-holders do not always win the Olympic test.

For the 2nd time in the last three months, Mel Patton's 1949 figures for the 220 yds. of 20.1 have been trimmed. Agostini of Trinidad did 20.4 three months ago and this time has since been equalled by the young versatile fast-starting Olympic candidate—David Sime of North Carolina. Where were all these records broken?

why, California of course. No wonder the theme song of sprinters should be "California here I come" for its sunny, mild climate yet clear rarified atmosphere seems ideal for the "let me get at the tape men."

Russian hammer-men have again demonstrated their breadth of power at this event, when at Nalchik on 25th April, 5 of their throwers beat 200 ft., with Krivonosov improving his world-record mark to 216 ft. 0½ ins.

More Sub-4 min. miles and a Landy defeat.

John Landy at the start of his American tour was sensationaly defeated over his favourite mile distance by compatriot Jim Bailey despite beating the 4 minute mile. Bailey who ran above himself did 3m. 58.6s. to his rival's 3m. 58.7s. The circumstances of Landy's defeat were similar to that by Bannister at Vancouver. Again he was beaten in the last stride. Naturally Bailey comes into the reckoning as a serious Olympic contender but one wonders if the reports that Landy may tackle both 1,500 and 5,000 metres will gain weight as the

result of this defeat and that the mile record holder may aim chiefly for the longer distance.

The 'four-minute mile' has surely now lost its lustre as a 'magical' mark with the news that two others have 'broken the barrier.' Irishman Ron Delany, 3m. 59.1s. and Dane Gunnar Nielson, 3m. 59.2s. at Compton, California. It does seem strange but we must adjust ourselves to the fact that a 4m. 5s. or 4m. 6s. miler is 'loitering' as far as world standards go nowadays.

Landy's views on mile limit.

Landy believes the mile record will soon come down to 3m. 55s. but that in his view the ultimate time for the mile will be 3m. 50s.

Athletics becoming a Full-time Job.

Athletic limits may not be reached for some time yet but there is little doubt that saturation point is being reached by most athletes of world class in time devoted to training. The athlete holding down an ordinary job by sacrificing his leisure-time can achieve much but I still say that in the present era he is handicapped in comparison with others enjoying extraordinary jobs. Technically, Olympic amateur rules are of the strictest but in practice there are ways and means of preserving the amateur status whilst affording the fullest possible assistance for training. In some countries athletes receive army commissions in others they become university graduates, in others such opportunities are denied them but many receive jobs largely because of their athletic prowess that allow the maximum opportunity for training and time off for racing. On the other hand let a very young athlete even without knowledge of rules accept 5/- in cash and he is banned for all time from the possibility of Olympic selection.

Fred Norris for Marathon?

After Fred Norris's great 1 hour run during which he broke 11 records and became the first Britisher to cover over 12 miles it is not surprising to learn that he now intends to go for the marathon. Actual distance covered by Norris was

12 miles, 69 yards 1 feet which is a new English native British National, All-Comers and Empire record. Other new Norris marks were 9 miles in 44m. 57.8s. and 10 miles in 49m. 53.2s. He now joins the ranks of Heino and Zatopek (record-holder) who have covered 12 miles in one hour. Although he has yet to prove himself over the full course and allowing for lack of experience I nevertheless feel that he may prove himself Britain's outstanding Marathon contender. What talent Britain has in this gruelling event! There are veterans Cox, Iden and McMinnis (present British champion) Joe Lancaster and Eddie Kirkup striving to regain and improve on last year's form. Joe McGhee whose stiff schedule has been interrupted by illness and muscle trouble. Eric Smith who has made a most wonderful come-back after months off training due to a cracked pelvis; Ron Clark and of course cross-country expert turned marathoner Harry Hicks who had a fantastic win in the Finchley "20" in the new record time of 1h. 47m. 32s. If we add names like A. P. Keily, and R. Lambert of Wigmore (2nd to Hicks in Finchley "20") Britain should have capable contenders though of course the full marathon course of 26 miles is quite something different.

Bright Debut for Harry Fenion.

In Scotland, although things are fairly quiet contenders are busy tuning up for the championships at Meadowbank on June 22nd and 23rd. The track has been in the course of reconstruction, the bankings removed to make it conform to International standards. Naturally athletes out to do their very best are hoping it will not be too loose and brought to best condition in time for these major events.

Harry Fenion of Bellahouston has made a very bright start to his road running career and will be another worthy contender and rival to Joe McGhee in the marathon championship. He has already beaten Geo. King, last-year's runner-up over 16 miles & 20 miles and J. McDougall who recently set a splendid record in the Dumbartonshire "12" over 10 miles.

Marathon Doubts.

Nevertheless if Joe McGhee is back to his old form I expect him to win. If not quite at concert pitch Fenion may provide him with plenty to do. Geo. King perhaps aiming at more distance work is another worthy contender and Alex. Kidd of Garscube could also give a good account of himself if he could get free of his muscle trouble. What with illness and injury the persevering Garscube man has had a heart-breaking time of it over the past season or two but recently he showed signs of a return to his best form.

The X Factor in Training.

An interesting feature of Australian athletics at the present time is the existence side-by-side of 2 extreme schools of training as represented by Stampfl and Cerutty. One may be called the static approach, the other the dynamic. One calls for a rigid application to schedule the other depends less on the watch and more on the mood of the moment. Both gets results, which will get better results? The difficulty remains that an athlete may appear to get better results from one or the other merely because he has more natural ability. It could be said that the advantage of the former is that it entails discipline and that a weakness is that it is too rigid and begins to pall. That it treats the body as a machine rather than as a sensitive barometer, changing from day to day. The reverse is true of the other method. It allows freedom, variety and spontaneity but because of the natural tendency to relax care is needed to impose self-discipline.

Naturally my sympathy is with the dynamic approach. To my mind Zatopek combined the basis of both schools (actually both to some degree could be considered as off-shoots). His imposed discipline was terrific yet if reports are correct he was not a slave to the stop-watch. His training over 440 yards at 75 to 80 secs. then 220 yards at approximately 50 secs. (jogging) 440 yards again and so on, was much slower than most class distance men but he covered many more laps and thus

the tendency appears to be on stamina built on repetition work and undoubtedly stamina also meant speed to Zatopek.

Stephens has a free-er approach believing in speed-play and fartlek but also attempts to keep the Zatopek basic though he adds some extra speed work—thus aiming to strike a balance between Zatopek and the Hungarians (60 to 65 secs. laps), between stamina and speed.

In the last analysis I feel that the athlete must retain even in the midst of his labours a certain freshness of spirit—his training must never bedevil him and he must come to the post not just a ghost, an automaton but a super-charged being wanting to run for its own sake. This is the amateur spirit in excelsis. The achievement of this I call the X factor in training and to my mind can never be gained by a schedule rigidly imposed from without.

The Quest is Everything.

Thank goodness, however, the sport is not exclusively for the world beater and the more modest performer can look to his own particular star from a prospective national champion down to the athlete trying to win a race for the first time. Like the runner I once mentioned who tried for several years to win his club's 5-mile handicap. After repeated failures he succeeded but with his inspiration removed, his enthusiasm waned. Yes, indeed the prize is acceptable; the honour worthwhile; the quest is everything.

Graham Everett and the Czechs.

22 years old Graham Everett lowered the Scottish native record (4m. 11.2s., A. D. Breckenridge) to 4m. 7.6s. (actual 4m. 7.5s.) when finishing 3rd to the famous Czech S. Jungwirth and England's Ian Boyd whose times were 4m. 4.5s. and 4m. 4.9s. respectively, in a great mile race at Glasgow Police Sports on 9th June.

In a most kindly and sporting gesture, greatly appreciated by the Shettleston miler, the Czech athletes and officials presented him with a beautiful plaque. With the plaque was this greeting:— "With best wishes for future success in the future with your running at 1 mile and 1,500 metres."

Scotland's Stars of Cross-Country, Track and Field (No. 5)

JOHN McLAREN (Victoria Park A.A.C.)

By JAMES CHRISTIE.

IF you are a Scotsman, and you are just a little interested in sport, then if you hear the name McLaren you know that means just one thing "Guts."

John McLaren is the greatest potential Scotland has ever possessed over the country. His successes in that type of running last winter were nothing short of great in an unhandicapped runner of his age, but in his case, with the disability which he has completely conquered, it is really incredible.

First, let it be understood that this article is not going to be about a lad with a disability who overcomes it to do well, no, this is about a great runner who simply runs because he wishes to, who with or without any affliction could have risen to the stature he has attained today. You see, that is the great thing about John, he has no chip on his shoulder to overcome, perhaps that's why he is what he is.

John McLaren was born on 20th April, 1934, at Fauldhouse, West Lothian. It was at the age of two that he was struck down by "Polio," that being the case he does not remember much about how his illness affected him at the time, except that as time wore on he could not attempt some of the things his more fortunate compatriots could, e.g., climbing a great deal and vigorous ball games.

However, the years passed and John in June of 1950, took his first step in actually attempting to take part in any sport. He joined Shotts Miners W.A.C. Little did he or Scottish athletics realize then what a place he was going to take within such a short space of time in this sport.

His first efforts in his new venture were nothing spectacular, races at his club and handicap 1 mile races in open entry meetings. The first time I ever saw him competing was at The Edinburgh Police

Sports in 1953. That day he took part in the 1 mile, coming round the last bend in second place he produced a "Terrific" finish to win. At that time I thought he looked a good runner and that he might do well over longer distances. However, after I had seen him run in the Junior Scottish Cross-Country Championships, in 1954, I was convinced that in him we had a nucleus from which to build a young Cross-Country Team which could win the European Cross-Country Championship for Scotland.

In the track season of that year 1954, he had many victories in handicap 1 mile races and 2 mile team races, culminating in a 3rd place in the Scottish 3 Mile Track Championship of that year to Ian Binnie the reigning champion and record-holder over the distance. With the coming of the Cross-Country season he intensified his training with the intention of retaining his Scottish Junior Title and also having a crack at the Junior British event.

Both of his intentions were successful and in annexing both Scottish and British Cross-Country titles he created such an impression on the Scottish Cross-Country Union that they selected him to run in the Senior Scottish Cross-Country Team at San Sebastian, Spain in the European Cross-Country Championships of 1955. It was in this race that John suffered a very bad tendon injury, which caused him to curtail his track appearances greatly last summer, however he did manage to win the Lanarkshire 2 mile Championship. Resting for most of the summer, he thought that by the time another winter season would be on him his heel would have been completely cured, but in this he was unfortunate and he had to start another tough season not quite as fit as he would have liked.

We all know now, how in spite of his injury he took 5th place in the Scottish Cross-Country Championships thereby qualifying for a place in the team to compete in the European Cross-Country event. How he finished the first Scotsman home in 12th place, beating some of the most accomplished distance runners in Europe in doing so.

This track season of 1956 John has only competed once, in the 3 mile Championship of his new club Victoria Park A.A.C. He won that event, but at the end told me of how much his heel had troubled him especially that afternoon on the rough Scotstoun track. It was this which made him decide to withdraw from further track events this year and rest up for next Cross-Country season.

Undoubtedly he will be missed this summer, but if he returns a fitter and stronger athlete next winter, then it will have been worth the long wait. To quote John: "When you have a small trivial injury, you always think you can run it off, but if you continue, then it only becomes worse, whereas if you drop everything completely for a spell, when you return, your running will still be there, have no fear." "I should have laid off completely last year and my injury would have been gone for good, instead I kept trying to do something all the time with the result I still have the roots of the trouble there."

At 22 years of age and a wealth of experience behind him John should know what he is talking about. In the past 5½ years he has won 60 to 65 prizes between Championship and handicap events. He has been "Capped" twice for Scotland and he has won both Scottish and British titles. His enforced rest can do nothing but good, so on his return Scottish athletic fans will be expecting bigger and better things from the cheery lad from Fauldhouse.

Now more about John himself. He is about 5 feet 7 inches in height and weighs around the 9 stone mark. Dark haired and slim, with the wiry toughness of most great country runners he keeps to no special dieting, eating what he pleases in moderation. The job he holds with the

Glenboig Union Clay Co., Ltd., Fauldhouse as a dispatch clerk, is advantageous to his training. Having to walk 5 miles to and from his work and walking amongst wagons labelling means that even in a normal day he puts in a lot of ground work in strengthening his legs before he starts training in the evening.

When in training for Cross-Country or Track he always puts in 6 days a week. For the country, after a warmup of 1 or 2 miles he may do 4 x 2 mile runs or 9 x 1 mile runs or yet again 8 x 1 mile fullout, with rests between of course.

As far as the track is concerned he can vary it much more. Usual warmup, then 15 x 440 yards, 8 x 880 yards, 4 x ½ of a mile or 2 to 3 mile runs as he feels.

His ambitions?

To run 3 miles in under 14 minutes and 6 miles in under 29 minutes, on the track. Over the country, to win both Senior Scottish and British Cross-Country titles and finish in the first three in the European event. Advice for youngsters in the game? "The most important thing is enjoying your running, when you train put everything you have into it but don't let athletics run your life."

How has athletics affected his life? To John it has given an air of confidence and also it has helped immensely to overcome his disability. In fact, as he puts it, "Sometimes I forget I even have one." It is in statements from him, like the one above, which make you realize that here is not only a very great athlete but also a very great man.

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LANDY IN U.S.A. 3m. 58.7s. 3m. 59.1s.

SOME REFLECTIONS by Percy W. Cerutty

THE thought is always before me: as soon as one makes a definite assertion, indeed, before the ink has dried as it were, one is likely to get as definite a refutation. But after listening to an account of Landy's run at Fresno I am beginning to wonder if John will ever run again as fast as his 3m. 58s. at Turku.

I ponder: Has he set up a psychological barrier with his world record of 3m. 58s. even greater than the famed 4 minute barrier. This is quite possible despite the acclaim since that great run, now two years ago, and with more intensive training, added speed and strength, apparently, he has repeatedly failed to attain to this one superlative effort of those now distant athletic days.

Can it be, when one has equated the ego-need, that the deep personality refuses, or is unable, to lift us to the level again. Put in another way, it would appear that when we attain to the ego-gratification that equals our personality drives, it is not in our nature, or the unconscious drives, to support us to these levels again.

Ambitions, desires, duties, even will, appear to fail us irrespective of our physical strengths and levels. I have long recognised this: but I feel it is not taken into sufficient consideration by coaches and athletes themselves in attempting to appraise future performances.

Some there are who are not satisfied except with an ultra complete and comprehensive demonstration of their skill and ability. These men set and re-set records, not once but many times and over various distances. I have in mind, of course, Nurmi, Haegg, and Zatopek. Others, it would appear, are content with something less.

Like a skyrocket these athletes soar up—one moment of splendour, then forever into the discard. The record lists them with them.

Landy, as a record breaking runner, is already outclassed by Iharos. It is now for John to better all Iharos' times—as he should have attempted to do last track in Australia.

In justice to Landy it is probable that he never believed himself to be in the world record breaking class of the Higgs and Nurmis; and it is probable he is embarrassed by the claims made for him by the adulatory Australians, to whom, record breaking is quite a new thing in distance running.

Perry's sixth in the 5,000 metres at Helsinki was unprecedented by an Australian. Australia has never quite recovered from the amazement that an Australian could run a world record. That another Dave Stephens could so, has only added to that amazement.

What I wish to point out is that such a view is hardly the best ground for an athlete to go on to further records. Maybe such breaking into world records is too recent to admit of the national consciousness rising above the height, or effort, of one superlative effort only.

It is up to Landy and Stephens both to prove my assumptions wrong. I, of course, most sincerely hope they do.

But rather depend upon human frailties it is always better for clubs, coaches and countries to set about building up even greater performers.

Here in Australia I am faced with attempting to build up an athlete with this Nurmi—Hagg—Zatopek attitude to world records. Can such an athlete be produced in Australia—or in Britain? Or must we always be giving way to the Swedes, the Finns, the Hungarians and next, probably, the Russians. Soon it may be the Chinese: indeed, any one but those of British stock.

Where does the fault lie: We have proved in both countries that our athletes can run as fast as the world's greatest, or fastest.

But is it that we, as a people, over-laud our successes. I have in mind the publicity that Bannister achieved and the claims made for Pirie's world record for 6 miles. In Australia we have had the same lauding of Landy as the greatest runner in the world etc., and ad lib. In time I think the athletes themselves begin to believe these—and to their undoing. Their gratified and inflated ego's (and I am not being gratuitously offensive) cannot rise to greater efforts nor their unconscious support them in rising to greater heights, or speeds.

So I believe that the fault is in us: we lull our athletes into being content instead of further encouraging, demanding, enthusing, even goading them into being the world's greatest, at least in their own time. Must it always be someone else: in some other country.

The young athlete has the ability: he has the courage: he will have the technique if we bother to find that for him. It would seem to me, then, that the fault is in the national outlook: the habit of over glorification by our public people and the press, when it suits them. Obviously it is we, the oldsters, the teachers, the enthusiasts, who fall down on the job somewhere.

Landy and Stephens as Record/Breakers.

Landy, who once did not consider it necessary to learn how to finish, and Stephens, who slumped so badly after his world record that it would have even appeared he would never run so fast again, have both testified how easy it was to run a world record.

The almost boring ease with which Landy runs inside the 4 minute mile, now six times, indicates that he has the physical strength to run world record fast from 1500 metres to 5000 metres. However the many pitfalls that beset the athlete who lives too much in training isolation, and who may succumb to the publicity and good-will missions that appear to be part of the highly publicised athletes life to-day. Such athletes may find that the call that these activities may make upon their nervous energy may be such that they do not rise to the athletic heights of which they otherwise may be capable.

It is heartening to know, at least for Australians, that Stephens has recovered from the slump that followed his 6 miles record and I believe that this athlete has learnt the lesson. He has recovered his drives and is commencing the first part of his planned preparation for the Games by 4 hour sessions of fartlek training mixed with some speed work at a later session in the day. Stephens is not capable of training every day in this manner. The point is that the conservation of NERVOUS energy is a big factor in world record levels.

SPORTS DIARY

June.

22/23—S.A.A.A. Championships—New Meadowbank.
26—Glasgow Transport A.C.—Helenvale.
30—Stewarton Bonnet Guild.
30—Linlithgow Corporation—Linlithgow.
30—Braw Lads Gathering—Galashiels.

July.

7—S.A.A.A. Junior Championships—New Meadowbank.
7—Duns A.A. & C.C.—Duns.
7—Rafford Sports.
13/14—A.A.A. Championships—White City London.
14—Edin. Police A.C.—New Meadowbank.
14—Saxone A.C.—Kilmarnock.
14—Dundee North End F.C.
19—Edinburgh Press Charities.
21—Gourock Highland Games.
21—Aberdeen Corporation Sports.
28—A.A.A. Junior Champs. & Marathon.
28—West Calder.
28—Broughty Ferry.
28—Falkirk Victoria Harriers.

August.

4—Rangers F.C.
4/6—Gt. Britain vs. C.S.R.—White City.
11—Carluke Charities' Sports.
18—Edinburgh H.G.—Murrayfield.
18—Bute Highland Games—Rothesay.
18—Milngavie Highland Games.
24/25—Cowal Highland Games—Dunoon.

Aug.

25/26—Prague vs. London.
31/1—Gt. Britain vs. U.S.S.R.

Sept.

1—Shotts Highland Games.
8—Dunblane Highland Games.
15—S.A.A.A. International Meeting—Ibrox
29/30—Hungary vs. Gt. Britain—Budapest.

Oct.

10—London vs. Budapest.

Nov.

22/28—Olympic Games—Melbourne.

Our Post . . .

ARTHUR NEWTON IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Dear Walter,

It's so long since I've been in touch with you—but that doesn't mean to say I've never thought of you, and the athletes and friends I met, or Glasgow. If I ever come there again, I hope it won't be for races when one is tied down to some sort of routine.

As you must know, Mr. Newton is out here at the moment, and is really having a grand time. The highlight of his visit here was a banquet held at a hotel in Johannesburg, and attended by the Mayor. Wherever he has been taken to, and has said a few words of thanks as a reply, you can easily see he is overcome with emotion and appreciation. Of course, we like yourself, who have previously met him and knowing his simple charm and modesty are not surprised. For the month he's been in the Transvaal (Johannesburg) he's been living with Wally Hayward, who built an extra room on to his house which is like a self-contained flat or apartment! And he did it all by himself—a wonderful worker is Wally. Next month, Mr. Newton goes down to Durban where he is sure to be just as royally entertained.

As for me and my running—well, things haven't been too good and I think the best and only thing I could do was to "lie low" for a few weeks, which I have just done. I have now re-started training though my knee is troubling slightly again as it did in England last year. However, I'm sure things will start going right for me in the very near future. It'll just have to, or I can forget about Olympics! I had been running and racing solidly for 4 years in which I had averaged almost 100 miles per week. I was never in form last year and seemed to be going down all the time. I think I should strike better form now—hope so anyway.

I am just ending a full 12 months of summer, and just as you must be looking

forward to some warmth and sunshine, I'll be happy with a bit of frost and wind, though we still get plenty of sun. I have managed to invest in a little "Ford Anglia" car which comes in quite handy.

Please remember me to the chaps up there, and to Joe McGhee if you see him.

With fondest regards,
Sincerely,
JACKIE MEKLER.
Johannesburg, South Africa.

SCOT'S U.S.A. IMPRESSIONS.

Dear Walter,

Many thanks for your consistent delivery of "The Scots Athlete."

I left home in 1953 for the U.S.A. I miss the many friends I have back home, especially my fellow athletes of Victoria Park. I never really got down to good running in Scotland having left there for England in 1949 then off to Pakistan and now the U.S.A.

I am now doing engineering research at Pennsylvania State University. I run for New York Athletic Club. I should be flattered because some of the top athletes of the U.S.A. belong to this club. Namely the brothers Horace and Bill Ashenfelter, Browning Ross, Curt Stone, Fred Wilt, and many others. Incidentally I ran in the 8 lap steeplechase against Curtis Stone in '47. He and I are good friends and have done quite a bit of training here together. Unfortunately, it means travelling hundreds of miles to obtain competition—I have run in a half dozen road races here around 10 to 15 miles. There are usually 40 runners in a field. So far I have managed to place—usually 4th, 5th or 6th. In track there are far and few meets. Practically all of them are scratch. My best official win was 9:36.1 for 2 miles in Buffalo last summer.

This year because of pressure of studies and work I have only managed one race. The New York Metropolitan Junior X-country I finished second having led right up to the last mile. I am not being vain when I say that I was far from fit.

David K. Gracie (Larkhall Y.M.C.A.) the Olympic hurdler, Scottish-record holder and former champion is making a very welcome return to Scottish track. (He returned 52.3 secs. for 400m. H. at Malmö, Sweden on 6th August, 1952).

Photo by H. W. Neale.



I guess I am one of those runners who have run a few good races but never quite made the big one. I expect to run 6 miles on the track this year. However, It is a question of time to train.

Here in the U.S.A. I have run against old buddies, namely; Alex Breckenridge and Henry Kennedy. One time when I was running 4th in a 10 mile road race in Canada, flying round a corner with 100 yds. to go, whom did I see at the corner? Willie Ritchie. He was then living in Hamilton, Canada. I nearly stopped dead. You can imagine the fire it gave me over the last 50 yds.—That's what one V.P. supporter can do for an old clubmate.

It is really surprising how many Scots I ran into in Canada including the Garscube's ex-coach and sprinters.

The fault I find with the U.S.A. is this—dozens of potential champions graduate from college and give up the track for good. Another year and many of them would be Olympic possibilities. But there just isn't the opportunity to continue running—unless you are track minded like Stone and Ashenfelters and many others. They train alone in their

various communities. Then drive 400 miles or so to compete.

There are no athletic clubs as we know them back home. There is no scope for youngsters at all. High School Track!! In many schools it is—out for training two weeks before competition begins. A month later the season ends.

So the American Universities make the track stars—losing many potential after graduation. Always remember there are the exceptions in High Schools and in College track men. If they are keen and are prepared to go on alone—then champions they become. It would be interesting to know just how many American Track men came from the ranks of Industry to track, as compared to Univ. graduates. I would say probably 90% of the U.S. '56 Olympic team will be either former collegemen or University students.

I guess I'll write forever on this topic. Before closing I wish to send best wishes to your magazine and to all my friends in Scotland.

Yours in Sport,
GEORGE M. CUNNINGHAM.
Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

RISING STARS



JOE CONNOLLY (Bellahouston Har.)

ONE of Bellahouston's group of young members who has been improving steadily and now looks like rising to the top is Joe Connolly, a 20 years old British Railways Clerk. Joe, small and slim, looks anything but a distance runner, but during the past year has certainly made his mark in cross-country and track.

When he joined Bellahouston Harriers in 1950, Joe had no previous running experience, but he managed to finish second in his first race, a boys' two miles Cross-Country and in spite of vowing "never again" he carried on training. In 1951 he won his club's track Championship, and ran in various races from 100 yards to 880 yards, managing 2m. 15s. for the latter, as his best time. During the winter of this year, Joe ran for his club team in Youth C.C. Races, being a non-counter in the Renfrewshire and Midland District Championships. The National at Hamilton however, saw Joe making 15th position and being a member of the 3rd placed team.

In 1952 Joe improved his half mile time to 2m. 11.3s. and qualified for the Scottish Youths 880 yards final. During the Cross-Country season 1952-53, Joe began to show some indication of his form to come, when he won the Bellahouston Harriers' Grandison Trophy, breaking the course records in 2 out of 3 races.

In the Clydesdale Youth Road Race he was defeated by inches by Ian Tierney of Cambuslang in the record time of 14m. 42s. after having his stride broken by a dog in the finishing sprint! His form on the country varied somewhat, but once



Photo by G. S. Barber.

again at Hamilton he finished 12th in the youth race, being a member of the winning team.

Joe started track season 1953 with the intention of improving upon all his performances and his best 880 yards time came down to 2m. 5.2s.

August of the same year saw Joe starting his National Service with the R.A.F. but found little opportunity for serious training. However, he says: "I feel that this period of rest from competition proved beneficial as I had continually been competing since 1951.

During Track Season 1955 Joe re-started serious training, and ran in various R.A.F. races. He clocked 53.2 seconds for 440 yards, and the good time of 1 minute 59.3 seconds for 880 yards in the Technical

Command Championships. After his demob. in August, he competed in half-mile handicaps and picked up several prizes.

Joe was no longer on shift work at his job on the Railways and thus was able to train every evening. This improved his form tremendously and in the early season Road Relays, he was running really well and ran a magnificent race to win the 1st leg of the Edinburgh—Glasgow Relay in 26 minutes 24 seconds, a time which is second fastest ever.

In the Renfrewshire Championships Joe was 2nd counter for his team, but as they only finished 2nd once again a Championship medal eluded him. He hopes one day to beat this "hoodoo."

Later in the season Joe suffered from flu which effected his running, but a week's lie-off helped and he came back with a "bang" to finish 4th in the Scottish Junior National, again being a member of the winning team. Competing in the English Junior Race at Warwick, Joe feels that he ran below form and finished 37th.

After a few weeks rest, light training on the track was started, and April found Joe training 6 times per week. Since then he has concentrated on interval running over distances from 220 yards to 880 yards and runs between 6 and 8 miles during each session, including approximately 2 miles warm-up and limbering down. Occasionally he has an easy session on the Golf Course to provide a break in the routine.

Joe has also been consistently clocking under 4 minutes 30 seconds for the mile on poor tracks and with top class competition seems likely to improve vastly upon these times.

Although a self coached athlete Joe gives credit to his Bellahouston Club-mates and officials for suggestions on training, etc.

He aims this season to improve on all his times for races from 880 yards to 3 miles and his further ambitions are to represent Scotland both in track and Cross-Country which I am sure with all his enthusiasm, he can eventually realise.

Joe Gordon

JOHN LANDY AND THE OLYMPICS

The following letter, was prominently featured in the Melbourne Herald of 16th May, 1956:—

The "failure" of John Landy in the U.S.A., and before that, in Australia, to run the Mile faster than his record time of 3m. 58s. set at Turku, Finland, and now 2 years ago, is the failure, not of Landy, but of Australia to realise how athletes achieve top performances, e.g. world records.

Professional boxing interests know the value, and necessity, of removing the boxer from all public functions, and the dangers associated with being lauded and feted. Class boxers are removed to a secluded training camp since these people know the nervous exhaustion that follows from too much public life.

In my opinion, in the last year, Landy has not had a real chance to run his fastest since he has not lived in an atmosphere, athletically, conducive to world records.

In ability and training Landy is not wanting. In understanding the psychological aspects and emotional strains I think Australia has been very wanting.

The Games will be a success.

Using John Landy as publicity and an athletic ambassador for this success is one thing: giving him the fullest opportunity to acquitted himself in the Games may well prove another thing. He may not have another chance.

In world lists 3 athletes are already ahead of John in times for the 1,500 metres; and his position is no more favourable for the 5,000 metres, the two events he will run at the Games.

Australia can best show its belief in this athlete by giving him a chance to fulfil his athletic destiny rather than use him up in functions and publicity before the Games commence.

Percy Cerutty,
Ath's Coach, (Aus.),
Oly. Games, 1952.

Caustic Comments on Coaches and Coaching

By Percy Wells Cerutty

THE athlete must learn to understand his own body and its needs and capabilities. Also he must learn to understand his own mentality, his capacities and lacks. Introspection is not enough. He must have his ear attuned to the opinions of others: But he must be able to separate the sheep from the goats: those who do know and those who purport to know. Only knowledge based in experience supplies the answer to that one although to some extent an athlete can be guided by what he observes in the experience of others. If a tree consistently brings forth good fruit one can believe that that tree has something. But the caustic comment suggests that any coach anywhere may have the good fortune to have a world-beater fall into his hands. Especially is this so of sprinters. But a steady stream of world class, even top club class do not come along fortuitously.

We can only truly see ourselves mirrored in others. Fortunate indeed is the athlete who finds the best reflection of himself in a good coach.

The athlete who attempts to rise by his own efforts and from the very beginning of his career may be likened to a man who attempts to build a high class modern motor car from looking at others as he sees them on the roads and reading a few books. Truly would such a product not be in the race. We cannot lift ourselves by our own shoestrings.

Further: the belief that a man can achieve a great height in any field by his own efforts is not valid in reality. Those athletes who boast of their own individual efforts, if there be any such, would be those who would gratify their ego by delighting in feelings of separateness: difference: superior wisdom.

Also: to keep ourselves aloof creates the illusion of being godlike. These are much more common phenomena of

humans than we may care to admit. Both athletes and coaches may well always bear in mind the age old saying, "I, of myself, am nothing."

On the other hand the sooner the athlete becomes self-reliant: knowledgeable: and willing to trust his own instincts—the better.

I do not believe it is given to any man to achieve greatness without the support, drive, inspiration and belief in him, of another. This is a true even if humbling admission for any man. I, myself, accord my own life by that principle. We must all turn to the great minds that have gone before, or are still with us.

In justice to those athletes who are "lone-wolves" it is freely admitted that there appear to be too few coaches who can really help the advanced athlete. The case of the beginner is much more simple.

Such athletes must reach out to a wider field than mere athletics. They must seek out the scientist, humanist and philosopher. Fortunate is the athlete who finds such a mentor close to hand. But they exist. I know of some. I would take it to be axiomatic that they, these super coaches, have had more than ordinarily successful careers themselves. I have in mind teachers of the calibre of Arthur Newton and George Hackenschmidt to name but two.

But to return to the caustic, that also may be the truth: no less a keen observer than George Bernard Shaw once caustically commented—"Those who can—do: those who cannot—teach!" The note of warning here is that the best coaches: the really knowledgeable ones: the understanding ones, are those who still train and practice.

I would like to testify this: all that I may profess to know comes to me whilst running. I then "feel" the truth of it. Otherwise what I am told and read is merely heresy—to me. I believe that

what I feel I know, and teach, the very little that I do do, would fall by 80% to 90% in its truth, inspiration and value, when I entirely gave up hard running: that is racing against the clock as well as steady and other running. Only then can I feel the needs and problems of the athlete striving to make the grade—big.

Athletes therefore have a measure stick: as to the value of a coach, or coaches in general. Is he an active participant in the skills he purports to coach. He need no longer run records: nor jump as he once did: or throw up to the new standards of his charges: but—to have the clues I feel he must still be in it—actively: vitally.

Finally: it is well for the athlete, especially the beginner, to distrust all academic statements that treat body lean: foot-placement in terms of angles and geometry. These people are invariably wrong. When the body carriage is as it should be: when the athlete is told not to tense his leg or foot in any way: not even to think of the foot landing, such an athlete is more likely to run naturally, as do horses and dogs, without any such pseudo scientific analysis.

A good coach can demonstrate in his personal movements and run fast as long as he lives: at least relatively fast: even if it is only deceptively fast.

In a first class coach of the future a 60 sec. 330 at 60 years of age will be expected.

Let us be honest. In what field, let us take music, literature, gymnastics, the ballet, the arts and skills in general, much less carpentry, brick-laying or accountancy, in what field would we give credence to the teacher who could not do the thing he purports to teach! Even with great age the great masters remain, and demonstrate that they are masters. I refer again to Newton and Hackenschmidt. The one over seventy years: the other approaching that age: both demonstrated prowess, agility that had to be seen to be believed. As a runner Newton remains as perfect a mover as I have ever seen: erect: lifted:

balanced: he had gifts: or developed them—far greater than his modesty would have us believe.

For it is the law—for coaches as for all men and fields of activity: The gifted who keep in practice not only tend to remain gifted but will tend to grow more gifted: Whilst those not gifted, and especially those who never practice, these people will lose with the passage of the years even that which they may have had.

CLYDEBANK—HELENSBURGH ROAD RACE

By G. S. Barber.

Saturday, 7th April opened the season's road races and with 25 eager men the race seemed sure and fast. There was an entry of 29 and many were running there first road race, one face that was missed was J. E. Farrell, Maryhill Harriers (is it that the old war horse is beginning to find it hard work these days).

After a fast start it was seen that Geo. King, Greenock Wellpark H. was going to have a say in the race and with T. D. Reid, Larkhall Y.M. and Harry Fenion, Bellahouston H. they went ahead and at Old Kilpatrick (3½ miles), Reid led in 19 mins. 34 secs. by some 60 yards. Now King was pulling him in and Harry Fenion was working his way to the front with a very easy style. At 6 miles Fenion took the lead in 33.03 with Geo. King hanging on in 33.15. The positions did not change up to 8 miles when the times were Fenion, 43.30, Reid, 43.53 and King, 44.02.

Then Fenion decided it was too slow and he piled on pace and with a very easy choppy stride he pushed ahead increasing his lead every second to finish well inside the previous course record of 1h. 31m. 5s. made in January, 1952 by Charlie Robertson. George King was also making his effort and chased Reid, who at this point was obviously tiring, and the result of the race was as follows:—

1. H. Fenion, Bellahouston	1 28 22
2. G. C. King, G. W'park	1 29 52
3. T. Reid, Larkhall Y.M.	1 32 13

H. M. S.

MIKE AGOSTINI'S WORLD RECORD

WHEN answering a questionnaire in May 1955, Derek Johnson, Britain's young star middle-distance athlete said when asked what advice he would offer the young novice, "Watch and listen. You should probably train harder than you do now. 'Burning-out' is nonsense, so far as one can see." We might add an Americanism "And, how!" after reading this report of Mike Agostini's wonderful 220 yards world-record run as it appeared in our contemporary 'Track and Field News,' March 1956:—

Agostini Speeds to 20.1

Bakersfield, Cal., March 17—Little Mike Agostini hurtled 220 yards over this brand new crushed brick track today in a world record breaking 20.1 seconds.

Meet officials, proclaiming everything in order, said they would submit the mark for official approval to displace the current 20.2 standard set by Mel Patton in 1949.

In marvellous shape and running on what must be one of the world's fastest tracks, the Fresno State flash from Trinidad opened with a 9.4 hundred, his second of the still young season. He went all out in the furlong to win by five yards from quarter-miler Jim Lea in by far the fastest time either man had clocked. Agostini's pre-1956 best was a 21.1 turn effort, and he had a wind-blown 30.7 last week. Lea had never broken 21 before.

It was the first meet ever held on the track which will be the scene of the National A.A.U. June 22 and 23.

Two older brothers, both runners, interested Mike in track and he started at the tender age of 9, running 75 in 10.0. At 10 he ran 13.0 for the century and has progressed steadily ever since. At 11 years, 12.6; at 12, 11.6; at 13, 11.0; at 14, 10.6; at 15, 10.3 and 23.4; at 16, 10.2 and 23.2; at 17, 9.8, 10.7 and 22.0.

Mike, who is now 21, 5-7½ and 152, first came to the attention of the track

world in 1953 when, still in high school, he beat Olympians Andy Stanfield and Jim Gathers in Jamaica in 9.4. This still stands as his greatest track thrill. He came to the 1953 A.A.U. in Dayton but finished 8th and last in the 100 after his blocks slipped. His best 220 for the year was 21.1 around a turn.

Entering Villanova, Mike became one of many with a 6.1 sixty indoors and established the American indoor record of 9.6 in the Washington Star games. Later in 1954 he won the British Empire Games 100 in 9.6 but suffered the biggest disappointment of his career when he was shut out of the finals of the 220 where his seasonal best was 21.6.

Agostini transferred to Fresno State College and won the West Coast Relays last year in 9.4. A bit later he injured himself fooling around with the hop-step-jump and was through for the season which had produced 21.2.

A pull type runner, Agostini concentrates on all out running at all times with stress on proper form. He trains 10 months a year and currently is doing a lot of over distance work, up to 660 yards, for stamina and form. He has his eyes set on all three Olympic sprints.

Mike was a soccer star in high school and picked up a knee injury which still bothers him occasionally. He is majoring in business administration and works part time as a grocery clerk. Jim Golliday and Bob Morrow are the rivals he takes most seriously. He gives part of the credit to help from Stanfield and Mal Whitfield, and coaches Flint Hanner and Dutch Warmerdam.

Personable and sharp-witted, Mike likes track for the opportunity it offers for full self expression, and for the travel and contacts. He most dislikes the expectation of many people for a record at every start.

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—(under S.A.A.A., S.W.A.A.A. & S.A.W.A. Laws)—

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