

BRITISH MILERS' CLUB NEWS

Number 27 Autumn 1978

EDITORIAL

What a wonderful year it has been for our men middle distance runners. The deeds of Steve Ovett, Dave Moorcroft and Sebastian Coe have been highlighted by the National Secretary in his Report and dealt with more fully by Dave Cocksedge in most entertaining articles on the Commonwealth and European Championships. In addition there are the fine performances of the up-and-coming youngsters, headed by Graham Williamson (or profile in this issue) and Tim Hutchings. Their example must inspire a steady improvement in standards during the coming years as others try to improve on their performances.

I am sure that it is no co-incidence that B.M.C. members have been in the forefront in this upsurge and should encourage the club to aim even higher.

The big disappointment is that the women have not produced the same results and are still lagging yards behind their European rivals. Dave Cocksedge has some hard words to say on this, which are fully justified.

You will see a price on the cover of the issue, which does not mean that we are going to ask members to pay for the BMC NEWS. However, the Committee has decided that it is sensible to print additional copies which will be available at a price of .20p. plus postage.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Those who have not yet paid their subscriptions will receive a letter with this issue advising them of the fact. They should send off their £2.00 to the Treasurer at once. As they should know, he is:

Ray Williams,
39 Nursery Avenue,
Bexleyheath, KENT

There are far too many of them and year by year the same members seem to be the late payers, so why not pay £3.00 now, which will cover you for next year as well, without having to pay penalty for once.

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B.M.C. Equipment

Equipment may be obtained from:

Bill Bennett,
319 Dover Road,
Walmer,
Deal, KENT

Telephone: Deal (030 45) 62366

The following items are available:

Ties - £1.00
Vests (male) - £2.00
(female) - £2.00

Badges 25p.

Please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope LARGE enough to hold the item you order. It is important that your cheque or postal order should be made out in favour of: W.P.BENNETT and not the B.M.C.

Please also state clearly your category, i.e. Youth, Coach, Junior Etc, when ordering a badge and your chest size for vests.

HAVE YOU THE RIGHT BADGE?

If you were a Boy when you first qualified for the B.M.C., there is no need for you to continue to wear a boy's badge all your life.

Provided you have done the qualifying time, you can get a badge for the higher age groups as you grow older. Just send .25p. with S.A.E. envelope to Bill Bennett and he will send you the appropriate badge for your new age group.

BE PROUD OF THE B.M.C. AND WEAR YOUR BADGE!
BE A CREDIT TO THE B.M.C. WEARING YOUR BADGE!

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OLYMPIC PROSPECT

Profile of Graham Williamson

Name: John Graham Williamson
Place of Birth: Crookston (Glasgow)
Date of Birth: 15th. June, 1960
Height: 6ft Weight: 10 stone
Clubs: Springbrook Harriers & B.M.C.
Occupation: Student

When did you take up running seriously?

Spring to autumn 1975 - it was a gradual thing, starting in 1973.

	800m.	1,500m.	3,000m.
1973	2:19.0	5:20.0	-
1974	2:09.0	4:29.0	-
1975	2:02.3	4:19.0	-
1976	1:56.3	4:01.9	- *
1977	1:53.1	3:48.2	8:25.2
1978	1:50.5	3:37.7	8:00.7

* Times done in May - Glandular virus for rest of season.

Best competitive achievements and placings:

1974 - 3rd. Scottish Jun. Boys Cross Country
1975 - 2nd. Scottish Schools Cross Country
1st. Scottish Schools 800m.
2nd. Scottish National Boys 1,500m.
(1st. Scottish National 800m. - disqualified for breaking from lane)

1976 - 2nd. Scottish National Youth 800.
2nd. Scottish National Youth 1500m.
1st. Scottish Schools 1500m.

1977 - 1st. Scottish Youth Cross Country
43rd. I.A.A.F. Junior C.C. (Dusseldorf)

1st. Scottish Youth 800, 1500 and 3000m.
2nd. A.A.A. under 20 1500m.
Scottish Youth 800 and 1500 record holder

1978 Scottish Junior 800 & 1500m. champion
Scottish Junior 1500 & 3000m. record holder

Scottish, U.K. and European record holder 1500m.
U.K. record holder Junior 1 mile
A.A.A. under 20 1500m. champion

Please describe in some detail your winter training and outline how it has progressed over the past three years:-

1975-6

Sunday - 7 miles easy
Monday - 4-5 miles steady
Tuesday - 4-5 miles brisk
Wednesday - 5 miles steady
Thursday - 5 miles steady
Friday - Rest
Saturday - Race

1976-7

Sunday - 10 miles easy
Monday - 3 miles easy - 800s or Speed work
Tuesday - 3 miles easy - Brisk road run
Wednesday - 3 miles easy - Steady road run
Thursday - 3 miles easy - Acceleration run
Friday - Rest
Saturday - Race

1976-7

Sunday - 10 miles easy
Monday - 3 miles easy - 800s or Speed work
Tuesday - 3 miles easy - Brisk road run
Wednesday - 3 miles easy - Steady road run
Thursday - 3 miles easy - Acceleration run
Friday - Rest
Saturday - Race

1977-78

Sunday - 10 miles easy
Monday - 3-4 mi. easy - Brisk road run
Tuesday - 3-4 mi. easy - Track speed work
Wednesday - 3-4 ml. easy - Steady run
Thursday - 3-4 mi. easy - Steady run
Friday - Rest
Saturday - Race

What are your views on the comparative values of indoor running and cross-country during the winter?

I value cross-country running very much. It is a nice break from track running. I take the country very seriously, but seem to get dogged by either bad colds or injury at the most important times, round about the nationals and international! I have only won the Scottish national once, twice in the last 3 years I have been undefeated and then got flue one year and a bad foot injury in 1978.

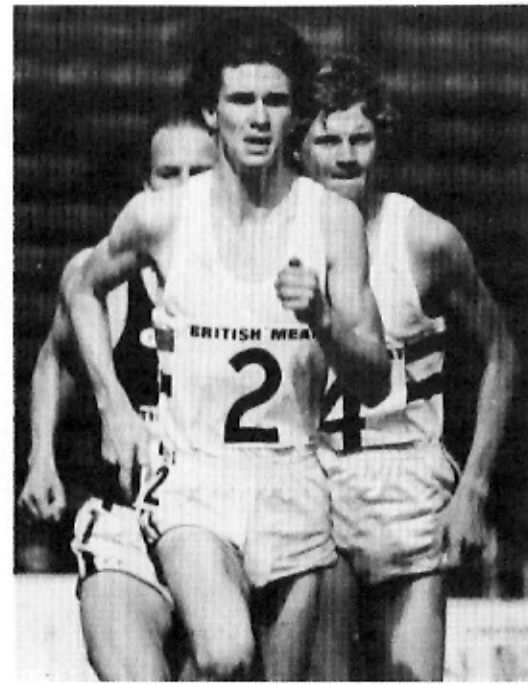
Please describe in some detail your summer training and outline how it has progressed during the past three years:

1976

Sunday - Easy run with lads at club
Monday - 3 miles easy - Fartlek run
Tuesday - 3 miles easy - Track session
Wednesday - 3 miles easy - Fartlek run
Thursday - 3 miles easy - Track session
Friday - Rest
Saturday - Race

1977

Sunday - Easy run with lads at club
Monday - 3 miles easy - Fartlek run
Tuesday - 3 miles easy - Track session
Wednesday - 3 miles easy - Fartlek run
Thursday - 3 miles easy - Track session
Friday - Rest
Saturday - Race



Graham Williamson

Photo: Mike Street

1977

Sunday - Long run with rest of club
 Monday - 3 miles easy - Track (150s)
 Tuesday - 3 miles easy - 15 x 200 or
 pyramid session
 Wednesday - 3 miles easy - Track (10 x 300)
 Thursday - 3 miles easy - Track (15 x 400)
 Friday - Rest
 Saturday - Race

1978

Sunday - Long run with rest of club
 Monday - 5 mile run - Track (15 x 150)
 Tuesday - 5 mile run - Track (20 x 200)
 Wednesday - 5 mile run - Track (15 x 300)
 Thursday - 5 mile run - Track (12 x 400,
 4 x 600, 3 x 800)

Friday - Rest

Saturday - Race

Please give details of training other than running:

None

What is your attitude towards training?

When I start a training session I think it is essential to at least complete it. I like to be serious during training, but afterwards relax and joke about with the rest of the club. I think you should develop a discipline of training at certain times regularly without ignoring the warm-ups and cool-downs.

Do you train alone?

I normally train alone, but occasionally with Tom Patterson. When I train with him normally my session becomes harder! I run on Sundays with the rest of the lads. Are you well provided with training facilities?

In my view I am well provided with facilities. The club track is adequate to train on and there are fields and country roads near my house.

How important is your athletic success?

My athletic success is very important to me as I feel that I put a lot into training and expect to get some success back from the work.

Please describe how you warm up:

At the moment I am trying different ways of warming up to see which one suits best. I am trying different amounts of jogging and strides at certain meetings. The warm-up depends on how long before the event you have to report. Normally at meetings I now start about 45 minutes before the event. I just jog about during that time with about 4 or 5 strides to loosen off and increase the heartbeat.

What importance do you attach to 'mental' training and how do you go about improving your mental approach?

'Mental' training is very important to having the willpower to win. I think 'mental' training comes from pushing yourself harder when running, so it is very important to tune your mind to push your body harder when feeling bad during a race. I think that by conditioning your body and mind to feeling pain before a race, you know what to expect, so there is no reason why

one should not go out and get stuck in and run a good race.

Describe any serious illness or physical setbacks you have had and say how they have affected your progress and attitudes:

I had a glandular virus in the summer of 1976. I was running my fastest ever times before I got it. After no running for 4 to 5 months I think that I was more determined than ever that I was going to win a Scottish title. I think that coming back from injury or illness can either make an athlete more determined to prove himself again, or go the other way and just not bother to run again, especially when the athlete is between 16 and 18, where training takes second place to girl friends, discos, Etc.

What was your reaction on being selected to run for Britain and what are your views on the organisation of international competition?

I think that being selected for your country is just a culmination of previous selections for club and county. I wasn't that excited about running for Great Britain. Of course, I was pleased, but if the performance warranted selection there is no reason to not expect to run for your country. What I have seen of international competition organisation is very good. I have no complaints. How interested are your parents and friends in athletics and your athletic progress?

Both my parents and friends show an interest in athletics. My father is about the only one who understands properly my athletic progress, but after some explanation, the rest of the family normally understand. I have had a great deal of help from my family in encouragement during the past few years. Have you any athletic heroes on whom you have modelled yourself?

When younger I used to like Malinowski of Poland. He seemed to run aggressive and gutsy races which I liked to try to copy. This respect came unstuck recently in Warsaw when racing him. I had him with 200 metres to go only I thought "I can't go past him, he's Malinowski!" After that he got about 8 to 10 metres on me round the bend. In the straight two men passed me, so I started to sprint again in the last 60 metres and in the end I finished second to Malinowski by less than a yard. In my opinion I could probably have beaten him had it not been for my over-enthusiastic respect for the man. Give your views on being coached and describe some of the ways in which you have been helped by your own coach.

To me coaching is very important. Eddie (Sinclair) has helped me in many ways probably making me aware of my ability and giving me confidence to use it. What are your targets?

My targets for the future are just to keep improving. This year we worked for commonwealth Games selection, but that did

not come off. Next year there is the European Junior and the following year the Olympics. Obviously there are plenty of incentives and targets for the coming two years.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Middle Distance Comments

by Dave Cockledge

800 metres. A very disappointing overall standard. The Christchurch racing (Bayi 4th. in 1:45.3) really showed this up. Mike Bolt had the most casual of preparations, was 90% of the man who ran 1:43.6 last year, but that was still good enough to win. But I suppose its good to see Mike win a major title at last. Seymour Newman, a man with blazing 400 speed, never gave the impression that he was doing everything necessary to take it. Having taken the lead early, he then stayed in front at a modest pace instead of pushing it hard. Bolt was possibly vulnerable in the third 200 in his state of unfitness and yet none of the others put any pressure on him here. Strange. Hopefully Colin Szwed will gain from the experience as will Garry Cook. He was another man far from his 1977 form, but he's a gutsy boy who was in there trying. Peter Hoffman must be taking lessons from Wilson Waigwa. His 1:46.6 run in June shows he has the physical assets to run this event fast, but he must get his brain sharpened to race the whole distance before he will do so. Coe and Ovett have proved that they will blow all other British 800 men off the track. Glen Grant obviously used this to race himself to a nice edge for the 1500. I don't see any great depth to enthuse about in this event in the U.K. at the moment, and that is worrying.

1,500 metres. This scored over the 800 in every way. What a triumph for British miling! It must have given a big thrill to men like Frank Horwill, George Gandy and Harry Wilson, who have been working for this sort of success for years. Three men under 3:36.0; another at 3:38.1 in 6th. place and youngsters Steve Cran and Tim Hutchings acquitting themselves well. And don't forget that Walker, Ovett and Williamson were not in the race. Poor Frank Clement found his 3:35.7, fourth fastest in the world, didn't get him to Prague! Never has U.K. miling depth been so good. David Moorcroft amazed me by running two seconds faster than my estimate, considering his injury problems of the last couple of years. In 1976 I felt he was overrated by the British media, though others will disagree with me.

Now there is no doubt that he belongs to the elite at 1500/mile. One of his main assets is his ability to keep himself well placed throughout. Same for John Robson, who proved that he can hold onto a hot pace and still finish well. But on that department, Clement was without equal on this occasion. The man has, after all, run 800 in 1:45.8 and sometimes, when he gets his long legs unwound, he can blast the homestraight at an awesome pace. He had a clear run at them on the inside and had he begun his incredible charge ten strides earlier, would have passed all three men battling ahead of him just before the tape. That would have given David Coleman apoplexy because our commentator didn't seem to notice the flying Scot suddenly bearing down on Moorcroft, Bayi and Robson in the last fifteen metres!

Filbert Bayi was magnificent in defeat. It takes real courage to set a 57.6, 1:55.2, 2:53.9 pace with such men on your heels and he tried everything in his armoury to defend his title. Morally he was the victor in my view. To him alone must go the credit for all those fine personal bests by our boys. Wilson Waigwa was the victim of his own arrogance and stupidity. There is no excuse for a man



Dave Moorcroft

Photo: Mike Street

of his experience giving such opposition a 20 metres start with only 300 left at such a tempo. What on earth did he think he was playing at? Nice one for Grant; though he was playing a catch-up game at the last lap, he still clipped his best by 1.8 secs. What a pity Graham Williamson, who really impresses me, was not there. He set an European Junior record (3:37.7) two days after the games ended. Those short-sighted Scottish selectors who left him at home ought to be sacked forthwith. Men who can't recognise talent and reward it have no right to be in their exalted positions of power. Regarding U.K. depth, don't forget Jim McGuinness and Paul Lawther, who are both capable of 3:36 or so.

5,000/10,000 metres. The effects of the 2,600 foot altitude and humidity were not foreseen. Certainly they decimated the British competitors. Brendan Foster can run 28.13.7 every day of the week at home, but at Edmonton that effort left him looking exhausted and relieved to get the thing over. Some observers who ought to know better, described his run as slow. I say it was pretty brisk for a non-altitude man in those conditions. The stop-watch can be a very unreliable guide as to what is significant in distance running. Foster's superb fitness alone saw him through these three races, but at a cost to be assessed. Nick Rose and Tony Simmons never adapted and their poor showing must have dented their confidence for the European Championships. Mike McLeod showed once again what a tough customer he is. He was the only man to get stuck into the Kenyans when in the 5,000 metres they started to break away from the pack, and that effort might have cost him the bronze because he had nothing left in the final straight where he is usually very strong. But at the time he had every reason to feel that courageous move was taking him away from the others. Mike Mysoki is obviously the man to watch out for these days and my pre-Games pick, Suleiman Nyambui would have been a strong contender for silver had malaria not slowed him earlier this year after a fine indoor campaign. We may not know the full effects on these Edmonton races on the British boys for some time yet.

Henry Rono is simply untouchable. People who expected him to crack from his tough European schedule should know better. The man has proved himself many times over as to his incredible recuperative powers. He'd have won the 10,000 too, if he'd decided to run in it. There has never been anyone quite like this Kenyan running machine, who moves along with a free flowing, liquid stride that just never falters. The mistake easily made is to judge him by the standards of others. Quite simply, he is a class apart and one wonders just

who can push him in distances over 2,000 metres and what the result would be. Again, his 5,000 metres winning time was called slow. But I didn't see anyone else at Edmonton capable of 13:23 in those conditions - and he wasn't pressured in the last kilometre.

WOMEN'S EVENTS

800 metres. This remains a depressed area in the Commonwealth. Judy Peckham showed her sprint paces in the second round in gunning down Liz Barnes and then she nipped through to win the final when the chance was offered to her. Sensible racer. Evelyn McMeekin was the only U.K. athlete to race the final all-out and she might have got a medal had she not run out of steam in the straight after looking good throughout. Lack of conditioning. Barnes and Jane Colebrook hung back too much in the final and gave themselves too much to do. I don't know why, but Colebrook has not run to her potential since winning the 1977 European indoor title. Barnes remains an enigma. On her day she can beat almost anyone. Colebrook should have the U.K. record below two minutes by now, but continually lets chances slip by. Good experience for Paula Newham, who was already suffering from an over long season and achilles trouble. I was amazed by Adrienne Smyth. In Merthyr Mavr last April she couldn't even manage to run down the dunes, yet here she ran 2:07.5 and 2:06.7 in one day! Will Telea Chembwal, the silver medallist, ever come through to greater things? Four years ago I was optimistic about the Kenyan women, but I'm not so sure now. They become mothers so early in Kenyan society and they never come back. Seems sad to us liberated westerners, but that's the way things are there and it will be a long time before they change. I note, however, that Rose Tarta is still around (running 1500/3000). Little Sabini Chebichi of Tanzania, who ran 2:06.4 at age 13 in the last Games seems to have vanished into obscurity, though. Maybe Chembwal's medal will start a tradition, but perhaps that's too much to hope for. How about some coaches getting over to the African continent to discover talent?

Tremendous effort from Charlene Rendina, the holder, to get into the final. She had just come from motherhood and a long lay-off and her 1:59.0 is still there defying the rest of the Commonwealth. 1,500 metres.

Here I must admit straight away that I am a Mary Stewart fan, so her win was very heartening for me. I have been impressed with Mary ever since I first saw her in the 1970 English Schools Junior 800 (second to Lesley Cobden - remember her?) and having got to know her, I'm impressed with her tough non-compromising attitude even more. She ran a well judged race, and since Mon-

treah we have come to expect nothing less. Unflustered by Christine Benning's break-away burst approaching 700m., she gradually reeled her in, and then struck hard from the front coming off the final turn, when Penny Werthner looked threatening for a few seconds. The time was reasonably fast (4:06.3) for major games competition, and there is a lot more yet to come from Miss Stewart. As I see it, there is only one thing wrong with her - she is not a B.M.C. member!

Chris Benning deserves every credit for the brave manner in which she took the fight straight to the others, putting in that hard 63 second lap that broke the race absolutely wide open. Then she still had enough strength left to hold Werthner off in the final straight for the silver medal. A game tryer who never knows when to quit. Her 8:52.3 for 3,000 a week after the Games suggests that she can do pretty well at that distance too. Werthner ran up to expectations but has never quite fulfilled her early promise. Christina Boxer was a good dark horse pick following her out of the blue 4:10.0 in June, but she folded up with nerves after running a so-so race in the heats to barely qualify. That pressure must have been self-induced as I doubt if many people expected her to do great things. When Chris trains for this distance - watch out, though! She could be pushing Stewart hard by next summer. The Kenyans were never a factor; perhaps the maternal yoke is something they will never effectively conquer en masse. Hilary Hollick got buried early - racing the entire distance is not her style and as long as the others realise that and plan accordingly, she won't win anything that matters. Nice running from Chris McMeekin, who looks much happier in this event than she ever did at 800. 3,000 metres.

Very little to add here. Paula Fudge was plainly the pick of the field and she showed it. Ignore the times. The 2,600 foot altitude, the humidity and the dryness were combined with very strong wind whilst this was run and that must have cost them seconds a lap. You could see it in the way the poor girls were bending into the strong gusts on the backstraight. Heather Thomson was the only New Zealander to shine in what was a very poor Games for them, but she had no chance against Mrs. Fudge. Mwinga Nwanjala ran the 800 and 1,500 in 1974, but was a well beaten seventh here. Ann Ford is still getting back to full snap as she showed with a gutsy run in the W.A.A. Championships a week later. She certainly didn't look at all happy with her bronze medal. Both the former Yeoman twins stood on the rostrum staring stonily ahead and one would have thought they were having sentences passed in court instead of listening to 'Land of Hope and Glory' after winning Commonwealth medals. Girls like Grete Waitz, Natalia Marasecu and Lea Olafsson are really half a lap ahead of us in this event, and I don't see any sign of the gap closing.

AG.M. Report

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Crystal Palace on Sunday, 24th. September, 1978, with 27 members present and Harry Wilson in the chair.

The National Secretary reported as follows:

Last year I said that 1977 had been a tremendous year for British middle-distance running, yet 1978 has surpassed it in all respects. Achievements at the Commonwealth Games and European Championships are still fresh in our memory - four out of seven medals won for Great Britain in the latter event were won by the B.M.C. Presidents of the last three years - Sebastian Coe (1977/78), Dave Moorcroft (1976/77) and Steve Overt (1975/76). Much of the time of the National Committee has been spent trying to improve our services to members in the Midlands and North East, but with only limited success. At the last A.G.M. an offer was made to take on the Midlands post, but this was subsequently withdrawn. Similarly, there was an offer to organise races at Gateshead, but this was also withdrawn.



Steve Overt

Photo: Mike Street

However, the National Committee was delighted when Derek Parker came forward to become Scottish Secretary and it is hoped that his efforts will lead to great increase in membership there. The continuing success of the North West under Peter Shaw has been a source of great pleasure to us all. Whenever I'm told that someone is unable to become a B.M.C. officer because of 'heavy commitments' - claims honestly made and fully justified - I think of Peter Shaw with his teaching and coaching commitments plus his B.M.C. duties. Yet despite these calls on his time, he managed to carry out the training which brought him a second place in the National Indoor Championships, a sub-eight minute 3,000 metres and a G.B. international vest.

In the South there have been regular monthly races for women at West London Stadium organised by Frank Horwill and there are now regular races at Coptthall Stadium at Hendon organised by Bryan Smith. The Crystal Palace races took place throughout the winter, but in the summer several months went without races. This happened because of the massive entries now received for Southern Counties Open Meetings in the summer, causing the organisers to seek a cut-back in the programme. However, a B.M.C. race re-appeared in the programme at the September meeting.

At this point I would like to mention the magnificent work done by Frank Horwill during the past year. In addition to organising the races mentioned above, Frank has set about organising a race-a-month scheme at various tracks around the country. He was also responsible for putting on five excellent races at the Festival of Scotland held at the Crystal Palace in June and has published a series of excellent pamphlets on training methods, culminating in his most recent publication: 'Spotlight on Two Lap Running', a masterly survey of 800 metres training.

I also wish to draw the attention of all to the ever-improving standard of our magazine, the B.M.C. NEWS. The general consensus of opinion is that the last two issues were the best ever and we are very grateful to the editor, Charles Booth, for his devoted work. Charles has informed the National Committee that he will be retiring from this post at the end of 1979, so let us hope that we can find a successor who can maintain his standards.

There has been a reluctance by our regional representatives to organise training days this year and this has been mirrored by the reluctance of our members to apply for a place on the Annual Training Weekend which was due to take place at Crystal Palace, but which has been cancelled because of lack of support. It may well be that another time of year is more suited to the requirements of our members.

As I sit compiling my report, it has just been announced that Steve Ovett has set

a new U.K. record for the mile of 3:52.8. Much as I am delighted by Steve's latest achievement, I can't help thinking that there are far too many mile races at our home international meetings, with the result that the 1,500 metres event is somewhat neglected! This may well be heretical thinking from the Secretary if the British Milers' Club, but the National Committee would welcome the views of members so that future B.M.C. racing programmes can be planned to take account of their opinions.

May I conclude by thanking all members of the National Committee for their sterling work. If the standards of British middle-distance running continue to improve at the rate they have done in the past two years our efforts will have been very worthwhile.

The Membership Secretary reported a total of 648 members and 72 new members during the year.

The Race Secretary had records of 34 races, 26 for men and 8 for women. In addition, there were the monthly races at West London Stadium for ladies, now organised by the B.M.C.

The ladies' races at West London were very satisfactory but men's races at Crystal Palace were not well supported. When races were advertised in A.W. the response was not as good as when individual invites were sent out.

Equipment Report. Athletes seem to understand the need now to send stamped, addressed envelopes, resulting in a reduction in his postage bill. New 36" and 38" vests were on order, but there might be some delay in getting supplies. He was considering getting winter vests with short sleeves when funds were available, the price to be about the same as for sleeveless. He would like to have the views of athletes and committee.

Income & Expenditure Report

Income	Expenditure
Subs 501.25	Printing, Etc. 198.96
Donations 87.45	Postages Etc. 187.38
Race Fees 133.31	Race Expenses 31.88
Equipment	
Sales 96.25	Sundry Expenses 41.99
Coaching News	Advertisements 45.00
& Sundries 58.94	Equipment -
Balance	BMC NEWS 127.00
1/1/78 70.67	Balance
	24/9/78 315.66
	<u>1947.87</u>
	<u>1947.87</u>

Election of Officers

President - Peter Shaw

Vice-Presidents - All were re-elected, plus Sebastian Coe and Bill Bennett

Other Officers - A list of the other officers elected is given below, together with addresses, etc.

Other business - It was agreed that race organisers should put on races over 1,500 metres as well as over the classic mile and try to maintain a fair balance.

B.M.C. Officers

Chairman: Harry Wilson, 15 Hillside, Welwyn Garden City, Herts Tel: W.G.C.23555

Vice-Chairman: Neville Taylor, 43 Burlington Road, Isleworth, Middlesex
Tel: 01 560 5504

National Secretary: Mick Dunphy, 7 Everest Court, South Norwood Hill, London, SE25 6DR Tel: 01 653 1712

Hon. Treasurer and Race Records Secretary: Ray Williams, 39 Nursery Avenue, Bexleyheath, Kent Tel: 01 303 0803

Membership Secretary and Magazine Editor: Charles Booth, 34 Quarry Lane, Swaffham Bulbeck, Cambridge, CB5 0LU
Tel: 0223 811178

Race Committee Chairman: Frank Horwill, 201 Sumatra Road, London, NW 6

Training Day Committee Chairman: Malcolm Coomber, 20 Heathwood Gardens, London, SE7 8EP Tel: 01 317 7298

Equipment Secretary: Bill Bennett, 319 Dover Road, Walmer, Deal, Kent Tel: Deal 62366

Statistics and Press Secretary: Dave Cocksedge, 82 Florida Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey Tel: 01 679 3977

Area Representatives:

SOUTH - Frank Horwill (address as above)

Bryan Smith, 22 Avon Close, Watford, Herts, WD2 6DN Tel: Garston 73102

NORTH WEST - Peter Shaw, 9 Cringle Hall Road, Burnage, Manchester, M19 2HU
Tel: 061 224 5908

MIDLANDS - Tony Saunders, 2 Parkdale, Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV1 4TE

George Gandy, 30 Pantain Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire

SOUTH WEST - Paul Rozier, 42 Parkside Road, Pinhoe, Exeter Tel: Exeter 6771

EAST - Robert Sexton, 1 Pintail Drive, Mill Park, Bradwell, Norfolk

SCOTLAND - Derek Parker, 9 Waverley Gardens, Elderslie, Renfrewshire Tel: Johnstone 24928

PRAGUE Middle Distance Observations by Dave Cocksedge

Where did Olav Beyer lose those extra two seconds? What business did he have interfering with an absorbing private duel between Steve Ovett and Seb Coe? Well, much as we resented it, he did interfere, and damn well won the race too! Its just one of the things that make the sport so fascinating and entertaining. There can be no doubt that Coe's 49.3/1:17.2 pace benefited the powerful 21 year old East German, while it wilted Seb's own power and killed all the explosiveness in Ovett's legs. It came down to a battle of the strongest man in those vital last 80 metres and that's where he scored heavily. There was no

pre-race pressure on Beyer as there had been on the other two medallists and he quietly went about his business of cashing in on their duel and stealing the race from under their noses.

Experts have stated that, had it been a 1:46 race, Ovett would have accelerated away at 600 and won handily, but then Coe would not have let the pace lag that slowly. However, 49.3 at the bell was too extravagant. My feeling is that no-one learned more from the race than Sebastian and he will be all the better for it. The man has improved dramatically as a lead-all-the-way exponent. I saw him do it in Edinburgh (U.K. Championships) and he didn't look at all good on the last straight. But obviously fitter and better prepared after injury, he did it again in Brussels in late August and realised a fine 1:44.3. He is a great athlete and we will see many more exciting results from him. As for Ovett; well he did lose, but he captured the U.K. record with 1:44.1, speed he never showed as a specialist 800 man between 1973 and 1976. He can't be criticised for his 800 in Prague. He did everything right and could not have expected Beyer to be there. No one, including Beyer himself, expected him to be there! We were stunned, as were the East Germans. But 1:43.8 is a powerful argument that points towards a great talent and Herr Beyer will be treated with respect from now on.

The East Germans have another bright prospect in young Andreas Busse. He ran an European Junior record of 1:45.5 back in June

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120, while Ovett takes off with 200 left - whatever the pace. On this occasion, Moorcroft found that Coghlan was even better than he is at gunning the last 800 metres.

Ovett's initial acceleration is devastating - he gains 8 to 10 metres straight away - and then continues to pour it on. So far this method has worked 100% for him. Moorcroft's method has worked 98% of the time for him. If Dave wants badly enough to be the world's top miler, he must try something different against his domestic rival. There is no reason for Ovett to change, until someone beats him; or unless he gets bored with blowing them away half way through the last lap. Anyone who wants to put him under severe pressure must be prepared to take him through three laps in 2:50.0 and risk blowing up himself in the process. Of course, all they may be doing is dragging him through to a world record! I was surprised at Thomas Weasinghage and Jurgen Straub, who merely waited for the inevitable explosion in the pack along with the others. The Brighton runner seems to be building up a psychological advantage over the rest of the world's milers that is quite awesome. Josef Flachy had burst a gasket in the heats and was never a factor. We may have seen the best of him after his 3:52.6 mile this year. John Robson has had a great season and will have learned much. The Finns took to Antti Loikkanen now that Ari Paunonen has emotional problems. Frenchman Jose Marajo was a surprise with 3:38.2 for sixth place after coming a well beaten last in the 800 final.

5,000 and 10,000 metres.

Just as I left for Prague, I was chatting with Clive Shippen, an observer of distance running who certainly knows what he is talking about. "Foster won't do anything much out there," he told me, "he was a tired man after the '10' at Edmonton and I don't think that he'll pick up an European medal now." This confirmed my fears and in Prague and still had enough to make the final here (sixth). In three rounds he ran 1:49.1 - 1:47.6 - 1:47.1 and ran in their 4 x 400 relay team as well. Watch out for him. 1,500 metres.

There is no-one around at the moment who can beat Ovett if the field plays it his way, and in Prague they did just that. No one was prepared to help Francis Gonzales out with the pace making and they merely primed Steve for an explosive last 200 in 24.8, which wrapped up his first senior European title for him. Going through 1,200 in 2:56.9 meant that the battle was for second place and Eamon Coghlan won that after getting into brave traffic coming off the curve. After the Rotary meeting on 23rd August, Dave Moorcroft told the press "Ovett is beatable." Not if you wait for him to go first, David. Ovett and Moorcroft are both kickers; but Dave's race tactics are even more predictable than Steve's. He waits until the last 100 to



Sebastian Coe

Photo: Mike Street

they became a reality. Foster ran guttily and intelligently, but just didn't have it over the last half lap. Martti Vainio chose his moment perfectly and sprinted to glory which to Finns really means something. Venanzio Ortis came from nowhere and drove the Italians into frenzy. Then Foster allowed a desperately sprinting Alexandr Antipov, previously known as a cross-country runner of note, through on the inside. An inexcusable error that cost him the bronze medal. He failed to survive the 5,000 heats and went away to be ill. He had learnt a bitter lesson. "I bit off more than I could chew, but then, you don't know until you try it, do you?" he asked. This is fair enough, but note that Coe and Ovett at 21 and 22 had the sense not to attempt the daunting Edmonton/Prague double, whilst Foster at 30 did not. Same for Mike McLeod who surely would have been much better off running only the 5,000 at both meetings to gain experience, without getting so desperately burned out and tired.

Dave Black very sensibly ran only the '10' in both and pulled off a personal best in the European. He could not have raced any harder and typically gave it everything

he had. My pre-race pick, Gerard Tebroke, never got the chance to break the race open but still finished in 27:36.6 for 6th. Ilie Floroiu, the Dave Bedford of Rumania, made the race for everyone. He ran an excellent 13:19.0/27:47.8 double in June and is a man to be respected.

The 5,000 was a pretty nondescript race. I can't recall ever before seeing such a crowded last 100 metres in a race of this length. It was exciting if you like cycle sprint affairs, but there is not much that I can add. Ortis found that he had the most zip in a last lap that timed only 57.0, which suggests most of the racing was only in the final 200 metres. Markus Ryffel, the European indoor 3,000m. champion and a man who has been re-writing his personal bests this year, should have won as he had the best position coming off the turn, but the Italian nailed him in the last 200 metres. I never thought I'd see John Treacy produce a kick like that! The man is deceptive. Nick Rose tried one of his bursts and should have kept it up to make an honest race of it; but perhaps he'd had enough of things this year. He has only looked like the Nick Rose of 1977 in the G.D.R. match in June. Ever since he ran that hesitant, stop/go affair in the A.A.A. Championships against Rono, he has lacked sparkle. Let's hope it's just a passing lapse. No doubt that Eamon Coghlan was racing the wrong distance at Prague. After his Irish record 13:26.5 to defeat McLeod in July and the impressive way he outkicked Tony Simons in Cwmbran this year, he has looked very much the part as a 5,000 runner. A good winter and he'll be hard to beat next year at 12½ laps. I think he has an exciting future there. Aleksandr Fedotkin is a new man to watch too. He ran 13:24.1 in the heats and then came back for the bronze medal in that undignified scramble they called a final. Have the Soviets a workable system or is he another Enn Selik one season wonder? Moscow will undoubtedly show us.

A word about Martti Vainio. The 1.91/6'3" Finn has been around (aged 28) and obviously peaked brilliantly for his 10,000. His P.B. came down to 27:31.0 from 27:59.7 which shows just what the big occasion can do. Like most top distance running Finns, he spent a lot of the winter training in Spain and Portugal. These people deserve their top athletes because their administration takes care of them. Enough said.

WOMEN'S EVENTS

800 Metres Nowhere was the 'Red tide' more prevalent than here. The Soviet girls won all the golds from 800 to 3,000. On the final day a Russian journalist stood up and shouted to me "Its like a gold rain for us!" One could only nod in agreement. You won't believe this, but I had down in my prediction chart: 'Women's 800 - Tatyana Providokhina, 1:55.8'! Her world best of 2:30.6 for 1,000m. shortly before the

championships decided me in her favour over Anita Weiss. Now, I've always had a sneaking admiration for Frau Weiss, who is versatility personified (before the championships she ran 1:56.2 for 800, 4:07.1 for 1,500 and 56.32 for 400 hurdles). But in Prague she attempted a tough double (800/400 hurdles) that no-one had tried before and her usual habit of running too fast in qualifying rounds worked against her. She led at 600 (1:26.3) in the final, but, as in Montreal, folded up in the finishing straight and the Soviets poured past. Nadyezhda Mushta nearly won the thing in the final 20 metres, but she kicked too late and 800 races, as most of us know, are always decided in those vital last 60 metres. Zoya Rigel was a real surprise, whilst Hildegard Ullrich, the youngster who made such an impression in London in June, lost out through inexperience. Depth was superb; 8th. place going in 1:58.8! And it will get better still, whilst U.K. standards stagnate. Jane Colebrook and Liz Barnes continue to disappoint. Janet Priotoc was in way over her head. Hopefully the experience won't have crushed her.

1,500 Metres Again, depth was amazing with my pick, Ulrike Bruns, clocking 4:01.3 for only 7th. place. Giana Romanova showed rare finishing speed after a tough race and decidedly outpaced Natalia Marasescu over the last 100m. for an excellent 3:59.0. The latter can open a silversmith's shop any time she likes and her two silvers here went largely unnoticed. Fity, because she's a fine athlete. The pace was hard but steady (62.8, 2:07.7, 2:55.5 bell and 3:11.6) but Chris Benning was too tired to benefit much. National records fell throughout but there was none from the U.K. I felt Mary Stewart had a great chance to run sub 4:02, but that desperately unlucky fall in the heats wiped out any chance she had. A gutful Midland lass in the best Stewart tradition, she got up and raced on to the finish. Its a scandal that she did not receive any medical attention for 20 minutes after stepping off the track with a face streaming with blood from a ruptured vessel in her nose. I blame the Czech authorities for this. There were plenty of stiff-necked officials ready to shove athletes around at all times, but none around to help athletes when they needed it. Disgusting!

3,000 Metres Paula Fudge again excelled herself, but her 8:48.7 was only good enough for eighth place in the stirring race. Its easily the best Women's 3,000 I've ever witnessed and I think that if this becomes an Olympic event, we'll see a lot more like this one. There are more and more females capable of running sub 8:40 around now and Greta Waotz, for one, is feeling the effect of this fact. Svetlana Ulmasova ran a strange race, but left no-one in any doubt about her speed on the final lap, which she covered in around 61 seconds! The second

String to Romanova, her previous best was 8:42.6 before her 8:33.2 here. She weighs 62 kg./126 Lbs. and stands 1.62/5'3 3/4". The Soviets have several successors to Bragina and Kazinkina and they will be still better in Moscow, believe me. Certainly in the middle distance events they do not intend to watch the East Germans dominate the next Olympics. The ball is now in the Germans' court to do something about the current situation. Marasescu was all set for the gold until the final 30 metres and must have felt heartbroken because she had done everything correctly and beaten off Ulmasova's initial attack at the start of the straight.

British girls are showing some improvement here, which makes a nice change, but we must cease to regard 8:50 as some magic standard. It's really not such a great time for females at all. The World record (never ratified for reasons unknown) is 8:27.1 by Bragina and by 1980 that could well be close to 8:20. This could be where Mary Stewart's future lies.

RACE RESULTS

Compiled by Ray Williams

WEST LONDON - 5th. April - Very windy

1,500 Metres - Women 'A'	
1. C. Benning	4:26.5
2. S. Harvey	4:27.2
3. R. Smeeth	4:30.2

1,500 Metres - Women 'B'	
1. W. Lodge	4:51.8
2. C. Rodgers	4:52.1
3. J. Smith	4:53.0

WEST LONDON - 3rd. May - Fine, calm

800 Metres - Women	
1. P. Newham	2:03.9
2. P. Yule	2:04.8
3. D. Kiernan	2:06.4

STRETFORD - 16th. May - Fine

1 Mile - Men	
1. T. Leonard	4:03.0
2. A. Blackwell	4:03.9
3. K. Harrison	4:05.2

LOUGHBOROUGH - 1st. June - Very wet

1,500 Metres - Men	
1. D. Moorcroft	3:48.0
2. K. Newton	3:48.2
3. T. Hutchings	3:49.1

800 Metres - Women	
1. J. Colebrook	2:02.6
2. J. Prictee	2:07.5
3. J. Williamson	2:09.7

STRETFORD - 30th. May - Cold, windy

800 Metres - Men	
1. K. Bell	1:52.0
2. G. Cooper	1:52.0
3. S. Cahil	1:52.1

WEST LONDON - 7th. June - Cool, breezy

1. A. Mason	9:27.2
2. B. Madigan	9:35.4
3. B. Green	9:42.8

WESTERLANDS (SCOTLAND) - 6th. May

1 Mile - Men	
Cold, windy	
1. D. McMeekin	4:16.9
2. L. Spence	4:18.0
3. D. Leitch	4:21.8

STRETFORD - 20th. June - Warm, no wind

1 Mile - Men 'A'	
1. K. McDonald	4:06.1
2. G. Harvey	4:06.6
3. K. Harrison	4:07.7

1 Mile - Men 'B'	
1. S. Markley	4:04.5
2. M. Plant	4:05.1
3. D. Gee	4:08.3

CRYSTAL PALACE - 17th. June - Warm, Breezy

800 Metres Men (Junior)	
1. M. Christy	1:55.6
2. M. Rezin	1:56.3
3. N. Morgan	1:57.5

800 Metres - Men	
1. C. Sly	1:50.8
2. P. Chimes	1:51.2
3. W. Wilkinson	1:51.5

1,500 Metres - Men (Junior)

1. G. Taylor	3:59.9
2. K. Robinson	4:01.4
3. S. Purser	4:04.1

1,500 Metres - Men	
1. M. Prince	3:47.2
2. D. McMeekin	3:47.4
3. A. Amos	3:50.6

3,000 Metres - Men	
1. K. Penny	8:16.8
2. P. Lee	8:24.6
3. J. Espir	8:28.0

STRETFORD - 11th. July - Warm, no wind

800 Metres - Men 'A'	
1. A. Mottershead	1:50.8
2. S. Cahil	1:50.9
3. G. Cooper	1:51.5

800 Metres - Men 'B'	
1. J. Blackledge	1:51.5
2. K. Rothwell	1:51.8
3. E. Brown	1:53.1

HENDON - 28th. June - Calm, cool

800 Metres - Youths	
1. N. Bruneau	2:01.6
2. G. Brooks	2:01.6
3. D. Harrison	2:04.2

WEST LONDON - 5th. July - Cool, calm

1 Mile - Women	
1. A. Mason	4:45.1
2. C. Gould	4:45.5
3. B. Green	4:45.8

CRYSTAL PALACE - 19th. July - Cool, windy

City Mile - Men	
1. N. Rose	4:00.1
2. T. Hutchings	4:00.4
3. P. Chimes	4:01.7

4. A. Staynings	4:02.2
5. K. Steere	4:02.6
6. W. Wilkinson	4:03.0

DERBY - 17th. August - Cool, breezy

1 Mile - Men	
1. W. Wilkinson	4:01.5
2. M. Fromant	4:02.0
3. P. Williams	4:02.4
4. S. Cahil	4:02.5

STRETFORD - 1st. August - Warm, windy

1 Mile - Men 'A'	
1. A. Mottershead	4:03.2
2. K. Rothwell	4:04.8
3. G. Helm	4:05.9

1 Mile - Men 'B'	
1. M. Morton	4:02.6
2. S. Cahil	4:03.1
3. P. Harker	4:04.2

STRETFORD - 22nd. August - Warm, calm

800 Metres - Men 'A'	
1. K. Rothwell	1:50.7
2. S. Cahil	1:50.9
3. H. Crabtree	1:51.1

800 Metres - Men 'B'	
1. K. Bell	1:50.5
2. S. Caldwell	1:50.6
3. M. Francis	1:51.3

WEST LONDON - 2nd. August - Cool, breezy

1,500 Metres - Women 'A'	
1. W. Smith	4:18.7
2. L. Harvey	4:26.8
3. C. Ward	4:28.6

1,500 Metres - Women 'B'	
1. J. Binns	4:29.4
2. J. Armstrong	4:32.0

WEST LONDON - 6th. September - Calm

3,000 Metres - Women	
1. L. Harvey	9:26.6
2. C. Brace	9:49.2

WEST LONDON - 4th. October - Calm

1,500 Metres - Women	
1. K. Lock	4:30.4
2. J. Clarke	4:29.8
3. D. Wilkins	4:42.0

CRYSTAL PALACE - 11th. October - Calm

1,000 Metres - Men	
1. M. Hirsch	2:31.1
2. R. Bolan	2:32.1

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Spotlight on Two Lap Running by Frank Horwill

EXTRACTS FROM A BOOKLET ON THE SUBJECT WHICH SHOULD BE READ BY ALL. Copies may be obtained from Frank Horwill, 201 Sumatra Road, London, NW 6 by sending a stamped and addressed envelope together with a cheque or Postal Order for .40p. if you are a B.M.C. member or .50p. if you are not.

The writer's study of the world's best 800 metres runners over the last two decades leads him to the conclusion that they can be divided into three groups:-

1. Those who have very good 400 metres times, but poor at 1500/mile. Nearly all of them able to run sub 11 sec. for 100m., e.g. Courtney, Harbig, Juantorena.
2. Those capable of running good 400m. and 1500 times, e.g. Deubell.
3. Those with outstanding endurance capacity, who often had 1500m. as their second event and not 400m., e.g. Snell, Wottle.

Courtney, Kerr and Kiprugut were below the average for their group, i.e. 142 miles a month, while Deubell exceeded his group average of 168 miles a month, likewise Snell and Wottle, 258 miles a month. Juantorena's workload was very largely anaerobic and even during the winter, six sessions per week were pure quality training. His aerobic work total per week did not exceed 12 miles of steady running, excluding the warm up period. If the latter were included, it raised the total of aerobic work to 20 miles per week, in many ways similar to that of Roger Bannister, except that he trained mainly at mile pace.

All the indications are that those in category 1 respond to fast work of a limited nature with recoveries after repetitions between complete and not quite complete. This would point to a pulse rate level of 120-130 beats as the point at which the next repetition would be tried. Athletes belonging to this group have a nervous system and muscular structure which tolerates anaerobic work better and, because they have an uneconomical metabolism, they react negatively to large training loads.

Athletes in the second group employ a larger number of repetitions with shorter recoveries and less intensity. Their metabolism is more economical and their energy reserves are superior to the first group. Thus, they do not succumb to fatigue very quickly.

Athletes in the third group employ a very large training load on low intensity. They possess a particularly economical metabolism, large energy reserves and their oxygen transport system is well suited to long duration training sessions. They recover faster from prolonged training loads of low intensity.

Professor Floyd, a physiologist from Oxford University, believes that middle distance runners should be selected at a young age and should be prepared through years of specific training.

On the same question of early development, the Finnish track journal 'Juok-sija' published a thought provoking article recently on the problems of talent development in distance running. There is a preponderance of 10 to 12 year olds in Finland who can run 3 minutes or under for 1,000 metres. But the long range picture is not so bright, for it has been found that the premise that the best training for running is running is not always correct. Many 15 year olds often cover marathon distances in training to the exclusion of other endurance developing activities, such as swimming, cross-country skiing, skating, ball games and participation in other track and field events. While youngsters may wish to emulate the success of Lasse Viren, coaches are overlooking the fact that Viren and most other world class distance runners never specialised as youngsters. Viren, for instance, competed in cross-country skiing, played baseball and soccer and even at the age of nineteen covered only 1,293 miles a year in training.

A study of 400 leading middle distance runners in the world ten years ago showed that the starting age for specific endurance training had dropped greatly. On the face value it appeared that future Olympic winners and world record holders should begin specific training at the age of 16 or earlier. However, practical experience has shown many exceptions. Courtney played football and basketball at school, his best 800 metres time was only 1:59.9 at the age of 18 and his specific training began at 19. Snell played at school rugby and tennis, beginning specific training for running at 18, clocking 1:58.9 in schoolboy competition. Doubell, involved in football, started his 800 career with a 1:54.6 reading at 18. The same goes for Mottle, except his best 800 was only 1:59. Juantorena was a basketball player up to 20 and dabbled with track, soon recording a 51 sec. 400 metres. Van Damme, tragically killed shortly after the 1976 Olympics, had a best time of 1:57.8 for 800 aged 18, only to improve to 1:48.6 within a year of specific work. The exception to this developmental trend in world class runners was Jim Ryan.

Taken broadly, the Soviet Estonian authority, O Karikosk, believes that the present methods employed in the training of young distance runners are not justified. Most successful athletes have not followed planned training during the years of youth. They have tended to develop the necessary endurance through a variety of activities such as football, handball, rugby, skiing, orienteering, swimming, etc. Some have

been involved in unplanned running to school and back, e.g. Henry Rono, world 10,000 metre record holder. However, the Estonian concedes the point that the development of champions should start at an early age, but must concentrate on all-round approach suitable for the emotional needs of the young athletes, not haphazard, but under the guidance of sports medicine specialists and coaches. He warns against strictly regimented running training based on pre-set mileage for weeks, months and years ahead. He believes that such one-sided and monotonous approach leads to early stress and even at this early stage the individual's outstanding natural abilities should be recognised and some are built for mileage of a low intensity while others are attuned to limited mileage of a high quality.

A discussion of two lap running would not be complete without a look at the tactics employed to obtained world records and Olympic titles. A review of 50 such times from 1912 to 1976 reveals that only four of them had a faster second lap, that the second lap was 2.5 seconds slower on average and in the majority of cases a front-runner or 'hare' has set a fast pace. Notable second lap exceptions were:-
880 yds. 1:44.9 (Ryan) - 53.3 - 51.6
800m. 1:49.3 (Elliott) - 58.8 - 50.5
800m. 1:50.5 (Matuschewski) - 57.1 - 53.4
Exceptionally slow second laps include:
Ted Meredith (U.S.A.) 52.5 + 59.4 = 1:51.9
6.9 seconds slower
Mal Whitfield (U.S.A.) 50.5 + 58.7 = 1:49.2
8.2 seconds slower
The most evenly paced Olympic winning was Tom Hampson (U.K.) 54.8 + 54.9 = 1:49.7

The question now is - for what sort of first lap time should the athlete aim? Many theories have been put forward by such noted authorities as Toni Nett and Ken Doherty. Though their formulae are different, they arrive basically at the same conclusion. However, the writer has found the following formula of his own to meet the requirements:-
Add 5.5 seconds to your best 400 time and multiply by 2. This gives the potential 800 time. e.g. Best 400 is 56 secs. + 5.5 = 61.5 x 2 = 2.03. The first lap should not exceed 56 + 2.7 secs., i.e. not faster than 58.7. This leaves 64.2 for the second lap, the difference being 6 seconds. It must be stressed that this is the maximum differential and can be tried in an 800 metres race for time or titles and it would be advisable to aim at the halfway figure, e.g. 2.7 + 1.3 = 4.0 + 56 seconds = 60 seconds first lap and 63 seconds second lap. If we do a little forecasting into a dream 800 based on the 400 world record of 43.8 + 5.5 we get 49.3 x 2 which is a new world record of 1:38.6! Tony Ward, writing in 'Modern Distance Running' forecast a 1:40 for 800 based on the assumption that man should be able to run within 4 seconds of his best 400 for

the first lap and follow with a second lap 2 seconds slower, i.e. 49 and 51 seconds.

One of the reasons physiologically for a faster first lap as against the findings of the world famous Professor A. V. Hill, who advocated level pace throughout, comes from Rodolfo Margarita, who studied oxygen intake in exercise and found that no matter how slowly the runner starts, there is an oxygen debt build-up followed perhaps by a small accumulation of lactic acid. The main point of this fact to the athlete is that it doesn't seem to matter how fast he starts, his bodily reaction is going to be the same, so he might as well get away quickly and put himself in a good tactical position. This only applies for the first fifteen seconds of running, so most 800 runners can think in terms of being through the first 100 metres in under 13 seconds and then settle down to their optimum pace. Time lost at the beginning of a race is very rarely made up later. However, after the first 100 metres run faster than race pace it is still felt that A. V. Hill's findings are valid. Richard Amery, well known Australian physical educationalist, advocates a fast start then a settle down even pace, e.g. 13 seconds first 100 m., then 14 seconds thereafter, giving a first lap of 55 + 56. World class running would read 12 seconds first 100 and 13 seconds per 100 for the rest = 51 + 52.

The writer believes that the greatest breakthrough in 800 metre running will occur when 800 metre runners systematically work in training on the third 200 metres. One way of doing this is in the non-competitive season when the athlete should run a series of 500s, reaching the 400 mark 5 seconds slower than one's best 400 mark in an 800 race, e.g. best 800 - 1:50, reach 400 in 60 seconds, then accelerate full out over the next 100 metres. After a month of this, the distance is extended to 600 metres and the process goes on until in January the athlete reaches 400 in 60 seconds and sprints the next 400 flat out. At this point, the 400 metre time is speeded up by 2.5 seconds and the process is repeated. The writer has seen 60 seconds first laps followed by 52 second laps and 55 second first laps followed by 52 second laps. In spite of all the statistics, the man who can turn on a faster second lap than the first is a difficult man to beat in major championships. With correct training, it can be done even from a fastish first lap.

Bill Marlow in the A.A.A. booklet 'Sprinting and Relay Racing' deals with the acquisition of suppleness, strength, speed, stamina and skill over a long period, which he intimates to be three months before the competitive season. Since world-class 800 metre runners must be looking at times of 1:40 minus for the future and this, of necessity, must involve the ability to run 400 metres in sub 46 seconds, it seems

logical that training advocated for 400 metre runners in the winter must be included in the 800 metre runner's training during this period. Marlow suggests plenty of mobility work each day including hurdling. For strength he recommends hopping over a measured distance of 40 yards aiming to reduce the number of hops for the distance by the time the track season arrives. Running with a harness while a partner pulls back to provide resistance is mentioned. The writer has found that a long bath-towel meets this requirement, wrapped around the runner while the two ends are pulled back. Sprint starts up to a distance of not less than 60 metres on varying surfaces, uphill and down, is also suggested in the off season. The writer believes it is utter folly for the 800 metre runner to neglect sprinting for long spells, since this activity calls for the use of specific muscles which, if neglected, become weak and when called upon again several weeks or months later for maximum effort, fail to respond and snap under the strain. Numerous 800 metre runners suffer from torn muscles and stress fractures in the early track season because of this neglect. It is interesting to note that Courtney and Juantorena did not abandon sprint training in the non competitive season.

The writer accepts that after a long, tiring track season the 800 metre athlete needs respite from track training and advocates a month of only one track session a week immediately after the season ends. This is followed by two track sessions a month later and three a week after three months; e.g. October, one track session a week; November, two track sessions; December, three, and kept constant throughout the year. This has been found to be ideal for the National Indoor Championships and other indoor meets. Some uninformed 'experts' have stated that this results in athletes reaching their peak too soon, but the writer has coached five U.K. indoor national record holders or title holders, all of whom went on to do personal bests in the summer season, the last being Tim Hutchings, National 1,500m. Indoor Champion and 3:57.8 miler four months later.

How to Improve British Middle Distance Running

(a) Runners should set their sights higher (too many psychological barriers).

(b) Junior and inter ladies training should be stepped up as they develop to help to compensate for this development.

(c) They should be made fully aware by their coach of the levelling off of performance during the 15-17 period and given every encouragement.

(d) They should be taught that the first six years are only an athletic apprenticeship - they really start at 19 or 20.

Rod Kane - East Kilbride

By running courses in coaching for athletes, so that they can help the younger members of their clubs.

John Blackledge - Blackpool

Many coaches think of an athlete as a machine and nothing more. They are inclined to overlook the fact that they also possess a mind, the functioning and effects of which are far less understood than is the working of muscles, heart, lungs and circulation.

For this reason it is surely unsound to suggest that a particular system of training is the best for all. It may prove to have had excellent results with certain well known performers. It may even have raised the standards of the majority of those who have undertaken it, but there is a good deal more to training than just blindly following the methods of some of the successful athletes of the day; in fact we can't always be quite sure that even those who have achieved success have solved the problem.

Athletes should be encouraged to think things out for themselves and suggest their own training schedules. Neither will it do any harm for athlete and coach to experiment a little before deciding irrevocably on a certain plan of training.

Diane Wilkins - Ickenham

Allowing athletes to compete in graded races and to allow them to make the grade progressively in their own time.

Beverly Sanderson - Northampton

Training facilities could be greatly improved. More encouragement should be given to middle distance athletes at schools. In particular, the Government should give more money to training schemes and athletic meetings should be more widely publicised.

Hilary Gaskell - Wigan

(1) By improvement of coaching standards at club level, particularly for the younger age groups.

(2) By the use of more county coaching/training meetings aimed at improving coaches' and athletes' knowledge of the sport.

William King - Peterborough

At grass root level I think more emphasis should be placed on schools as to the training necessary for middle-distance, as most children train the day before a school cross-country, then naturally come to dislike the event.

At higher level I think that more foreign competition should be available to a greater number of athletes to improve overall standards. With regard to England, I think there is a lack of good competition and training/coaching structure in the north so that good northern athletes loose out.

Kathryn Binns - Todmorden

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