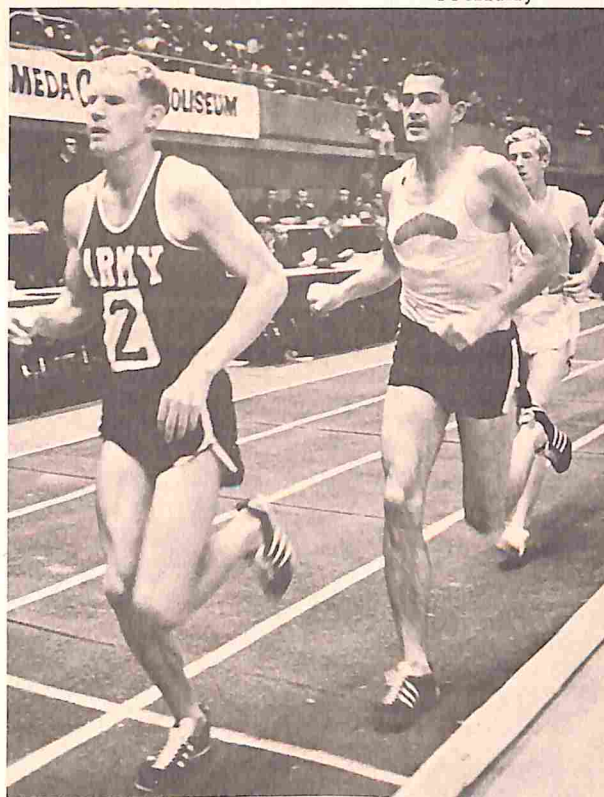




Little time has been wasted in this early post-Olympic year. Records are falling already. LEFT: Florida's RON JOURDAN is the hottest high jumper around. Here he clears 7'1" at Philadelphia; he has topped seven-feet six times indoors and has done 7'2" outdoors. (Photo by Albert Sesson) RIGHT: At Oakland, TRACY SMITH was the early leader in the three-mile run, with RON CLARKE and KERRY PEARCE in close proximity. Clarke burst away after the first mile, though, and forged to a world record 13:12.6, lowering Smith's old mark by nearly three seconds. (Photo by Jeff Kroot)



Tremendous Record Onslaught Picks Up Indoor Season

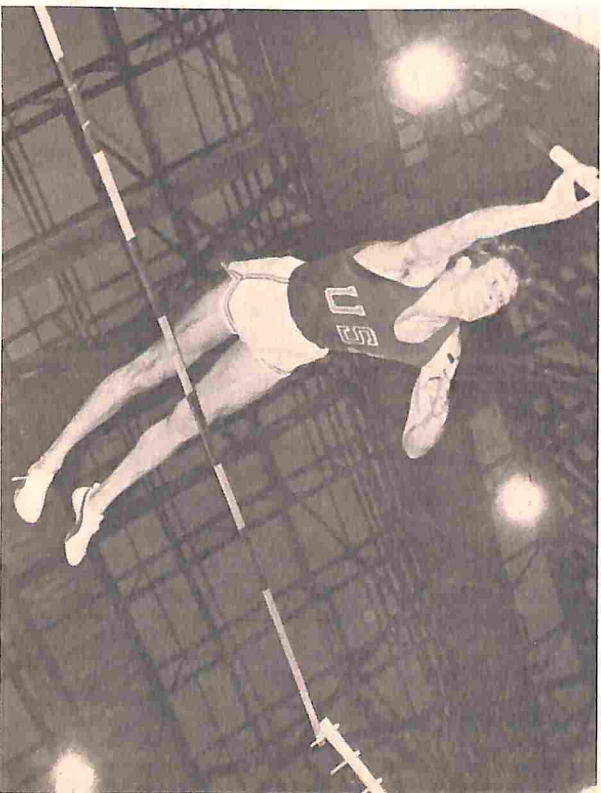
Whatever essential ingredients--tight competition and record breaking marks--this slow-starting indoor season lacked previously, it regained the last full weekend in January. The season started in earnest Jan. 24 at Oakland and the Astrodome, and the rush for records hadn't let up a week later. Tracks, big and fast ones, did contribute to the two fast weekends, but no more than athletes who were arriving back in top shape.

Ron Clarke, running on what he called "the best track I've been on" at Oakland, blasted through three-miles in 13:12.6 to lower the world indoor best by about 2½ seconds. On the biggest board track anywhere, the Astrodome's 352-yard monster, records tumbled by the handful. Hardee McAlhaney's 1:08.1 600, Texas' 3:08.4 mile, Kansas State's 3:17.9 sprint medley and 7:23.8 two-mile, and other divisional marks. But the marks were a victim of the track that helped make them so good. They can't be considered for records since

the track exceeds the 220-yard maximum size. On another fast track, Albuquerque's 10-lapper, Ralph Doubell tore a second from the 880 best with 1:47.9.

Other marks need no qualifying statements about track type. Exactly a year after setting his 17'4¼" record, Bob Seagren pushed the world best to 17'5¾" at Albuquerque. Willie Davenport went over the almost-never-run 120 highs in 13.5 at Houston on Jan. 24, then at Boston Feb. 1 he ran the slightly-more-common 45 highs in 5.3--a world best. In another indoor rarity, the 100, Lennox Miller and Jim Green had record 9.4s. George Frenn added over two feet to the 35-lb. weight mark with 73'3½" at Boston.

George Young continues to carry track's most impressive streak. With three more two-mile victories between Jan. 24 and 31, he now hasn't lost in 14 indoor races. He beat Clarke--again--at Albuquerque. Suddenly, Ron Jourdan is the country's leading high jumper. He has gone 7'2" and won eight meets.



LEFT: BOB SEAGREN continues to dominate pole-vault records. This is his world record jump of 17'5¾" at Albuquerque, his third world mark there in three meets. It was also a year to the day, January 25, since he established his former mark of 17'4¼". (Photo by Albuquerque Jaycees) RIGHT: The indoor season has also been spiced by many top foreign athletes. Here at Seattle, Czech LUDVIK PETR (left) paces KERRY O'BRIEN of Australia over two-miles. O'Brien later took the lead and won at 8:40.4 to 8:44.2 for Petr. It was the Czech's first race ever in the US. (Photo by Ed Eaton, courtesy Seattle Times)



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