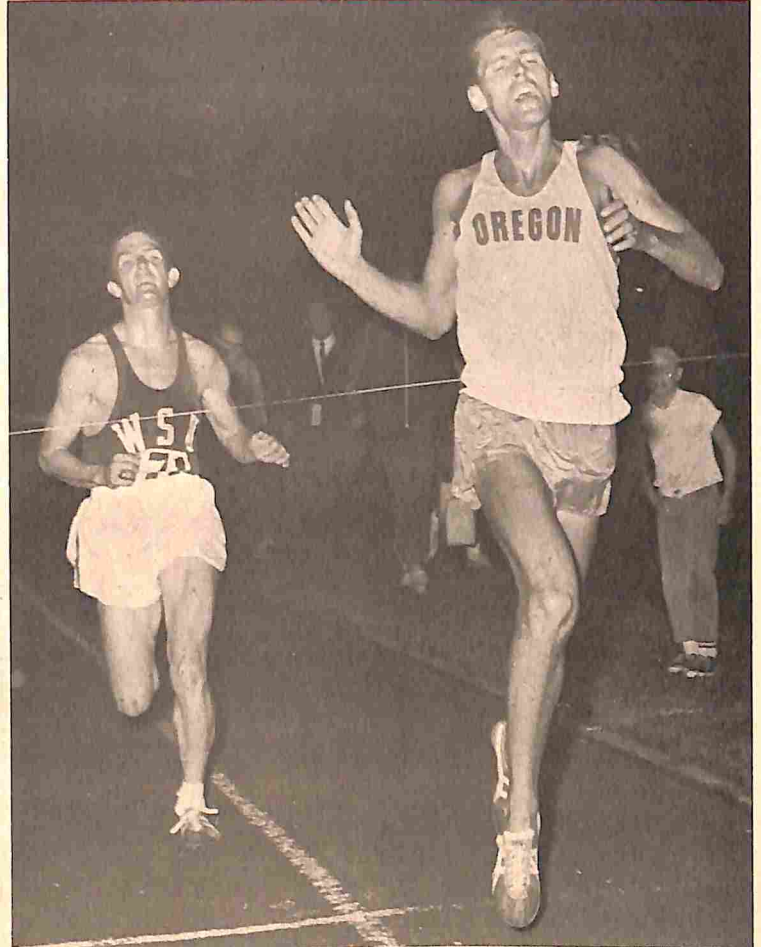




GEORGE YOUNG does in the Olympic Trial marathon what he has done in all his other races this year--wins. It is his first 26-miler. (Jerry Dorbin)

While other US javelinists struggle to reach 250 feet in pre-Olympic meets, FRANK COVELLI hits the 270 range regularly. (Photo by Don Chadez)



Five days after placing second in the US Olympic marathon trials, KEN MOORE (right) scored a significant upset over GERRY LINDGREN (left) at the Eugene Development meet. Moore covered 10,000-meters in 28:55.0, two-tenths a-head of Lindgren. (Photo by Wayne Eastburn, Eugene Register-Guard)

NEWS ROUND-UP

Americans Sharpening

The US is only three men closer to having an Olympic team than it was eight weeks ago. Only the marathoners have earned places on the team so far. Meanwhile, the intramural battling among the candidates in the other events continues to produce the bulk of US track action.

George Young, extended his indoor-outdoor track victory streak to the roads when he won the Olympic marathon trial--running a high-altitude 2:30:48 in his first such race. Ken Moore and Ron Daws also grabbed Olympic berths.

After going through four development meets in the last few weeks, America's potential Olympians appear nearly ready for the truly Final Olympic Trials at South Lake Tahoe, Sept. 6-16. Things are far from settled yet in terms of who will and who won't make the team. Every meet seems to bring out new young talent, and upsets have been common. Three big names--Lee Evans, Ron Whitney and Randy Matson--all lost season-long victory streaks during the development series. Evans twice lost to Ron Freeman at 400-meters. Gary Knoke beat Whitney. Matson's conqueror was George Woods. In-to increasing prominence have come distance runners Steve Stageberg, who ran a 13:40.8 5000 at Walnut, and Moore, a winner over Gerry Lindgren in the 10,000 a few days after his marathon.

The familiar stars have had their glory, too. Jim Ryun is running at full force again, as shown in his 3:55.9 and 3:59.0 miles. The discus throwers have been spectacular: Jay Silvester 215'0" (also 213'11" and 209'5"), Rink Babka 209'9", Gary Carlsen 209'7", Al Oerter 205'10". Evans ran the world's fastest 400-meters of the season, 44.9, at the South Lake Tahoe camp. John Pennel has returned to the front rank of pole vaulters with 17'4".

Around the world, the story's the same. Everyone's pointing for Mexico City and trying to determine who'll go. The biggest news from Europe is Ron Clarke's world record two-mile. The Australian who's training in the French Alps lowered his own mark by two-tenths to 8:19.6 at London, Aug. 24. High-altitude distance marks are become more and more important, and two recent ones were particularly impressive. Colombian Alvaro Mejia ran 10,000 meters in 29:10.6 at 8600-feet--a minute better than anyone else has done at elevations above 7000. Soviet Viktor Kudinskiy ran an 8:49.0 steeplechase at an altitude approximating Mexico City's.

Another dark cloud has formed over the troubled Olympics--another boycott threat. Following the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the USSR, East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria, a number of countries have threatened

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US OLYMPIC PREPARATIONS

All or Nothing Now

The US Olympic men's track and field team will choose itself during the Final Olympic Trials scheduled for September 6 through the 16 at South Lake Tahoe, according to the latest decree of the USOC ruling body for the sport.

In other words, the first three finishers at the 7370-foot Echo Summit competition will earn berths providing they have achieved the Olympic qualifying standard. Apparently the only consideration to be accorded the results of the June Semi Trials will be in the case of an LA winner who places out of the first three in the Final Trials but records an "excellent mark". Basically, system of team selection now returns to the familiar do-or-die method of past years. Because of the high altitude problem, the lateness of the Games in relation to the US season and perhaps the implication of a black boycott, a large delegation of athletes was passed on from the Semi Trials, important event leaders were petitioned directly to the Tahoe Trials and still others received a final chance at the Walnut Olympic Development meet. But now, whatever justification there was for another chance is no longer a consideration.

At the Final Trials, it won't matter whether you're injured or ill, nor whether you're Jim Ryun or Randy Matson: if you don't cut it, you're through. And since the entries must be postmarked September 18, no alternates will be chosen (the fourth place finisher in the 100- and 400-meter finals will be added to the team for possible inclusion on the 400- and 1600-meter relay teams). Unlike past team selections, each eventual squad member will be tested through more qualifying rounds than ever before--in just as many heats and preliminaries in as many days and over roughly the same time schedule as will prevail during the Games themselves. A potential, border-line qualifier may have to be sharp for as many as four races (e.g., 100, 200, 400 and high hurdles).

While a number of the major track power nations are moving steadily toward a policy of using one or two meets as the significant factor in team selection, the US remains the only country in the world where athletes select themselves through a single meet. And never before have any athletes, even in the US, been put through such a demanding qualifying test. In theory, such a schedule as will be followed at the US Trials will advance those athletes best able to cope with the problems of high altitude and preliminary competitions as will be in vogue at Mexico City. For a nation with such a wealth of talent, the one meet qualifying test still seems superior to the alternative of subjective evaluation. And there probably is not one potential, healthy Olympic medal contender who is not still in contention.

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