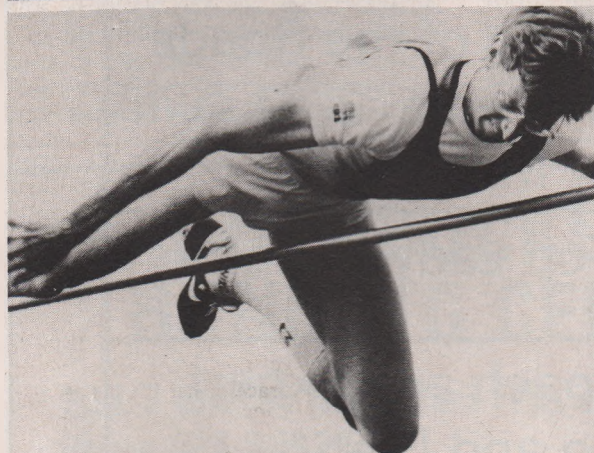


The Yoplait B.L.E. National Track and Field Championships

By
Jim Dowling

Saturday, July 23rd, and Sunday, July 24th



Top Left: Dave Taylor leads John Treacy and Noel Harvey in the men's 5,000m.

Above: Monica Joyce and Siobhan Treacy, women's 1,500m.

Left: Action in the men's High Jump.

Pics. Brian Tansey



Gerry Delaney (eventual winner) at the start of the men's 400m.

THE B.L.E. National Track and Field Championships run at Santry on the weekend of Saturday and Sunday, July 23rd and 24th, provided plenty of excitement, a number of championship best performances but few real surprises in the results. Indeed, the meeting proved a triumph for what might be called the "old guard" with such as Eamonn Coghlan, 800m; John Treacy 5000m; Gerry Deegan 10,000m; Mary Barnwell 400m hurdles and Aideen Morrisson 800m, all showing their best form and scoring notable victories, while it is not today nor yesterday that Kevin Currid, 400m hurdles; Caroline O'Shea, 400m, and Michele Walsh, 100m and 200m, appeared on the scene though they are in their early rather than late twenties. Stragnely, in both categories it was the 800m which provided the most interesting contest.

TRACK - MEN

In the men's 800m, run on Sunday, Eamonn Coghlan, having finished fourth to Steve Scott, Sebastian Coe and Graham Williamson in the mile at Crystal Palace the night before, seemed to have a stiff enough task where he was opposed by Irish mile record holder Ray Flynn, Brian Jennings the winner in Cork and last year's champion Roddy Gaynor.

At the bell Coghlan lay fifth to Ian Marron, Flynn, Jennings and Gaynor. Coghlan then tried to make ground on the inside but Jennings blocked him and Coghlan fell back only to make rapid ground down the back straight. Marron raced to the last bend with Jennings on his inside, Flynn on his shoulder and Coghlan poised on the outside ready to sprint. Jennings then had a choice. He could hustle through on the inside and go with Flynn and Coghlan in the final sprint or go around all his three rivals. He chose the former course. Down went Marron, Jennings himself almost tripped as well and away went Coghlan past Flynn, to win by a full second in 1 min. 48.4 secs. Jennings recovered to be third.

The 5000m run twenty minutes later featured a clash between Dave Taylor (Dundrum A.C.) and John Treacy (Deise), first and second in this year's B.L.E. cross-country championship. After Paddy Kerrigan and Brendan Quinn had helped with the early pacemaking, Taylor went on at halfway and when Quinn dropped out a lap later he was left well clear of Treacy who seemed in trouble. However, the championship spirit has not deserted Treacy. He suddenly closed along the fourth last lap, caught Taylor in another 100m and went clear to win by 11 seconds in 13 mins. 46



Top left: Eamonn Coghlan on his way to victory in the men's 800 metres.

Top right: Regina Joyce and Louise McGrillen lead the pack in the early stages of the women's 3,000m.



Far right: Michele Walsh pulls ahead to win the women's 100m.



Bottom right: In the men's 1500m, eventual winner Frank O'Mara (No. 423) leads the field.

13.46.27. Ronnie Carroll held off Tony O'Leary for third. Treacy failed to gain the World Championships qualifying standard but there was general rejoicing at his return to something like his best form after nearly a year in the doldrums.

In the 1500m, after junior star Gerry O'Reilly had made the early running, Marcus O'Sullivan surged up from second last place to take it up with 700m to run. From there the race lay between O'Sullivan, Frank O'Mara (of Limerick) and Tommy Moloney of Thurles. O'Mara shot clear with 300m to run to win in 3 mins. 44.11 secs. with Moloney having the best of a fierce duel with O'Sullivan for second. The previous day Gerry Deegan took the 10,000 title in 29.70.87, as Neil Cusack, who looked completely out of it at halfway, came through strongly in second and Roy Dooney had a great run to be third.

Derek O'Connor once more shone in the sprints, taking both the 100m and 200m titles, the latter in a championship best time of 21.25 secs. Gerry Delaney had a fluent win in the 400m and the 100m hurdles saw a fine confrontation between Kevin Currid (South Dublin) and J. J. Barry (D.C.H.) in which in keeping with the prevailing spirit of the occasion the more experienced Currid proved best.

LADIES

The most interesting and exciting of the ladies' events also proved to be the 800m. Here Aideen Morrison renewed rivalry with Aisling Mulloy over whom she had triumphed in the 800m at Cork after young Mulloy had run wide for much of the race. Determined to prove her dominance, Mor-

risson went into an immediate lead from the gun with young Mulloy tracking her. Keeping up the pressure, Morrison poached a precious five yards with 200m to run and as Mulloy went after her she was harassed by the brave challenge of Mary McKenna. In the straight Mulloy came through beautifully but Morrison had stolen it and the line came too soon. Aideen's time was 2. mins. 6.58 secs. while Aisling also got a P.B. with the gallant McKenna, much plagued by injury of late, giving D.C.H. their only ladies' track medal of the championships in third.

Both Regina Joyce, 3000m, and her sister Monica, 1500m, easily retained their championship titles but some interesting competition took place behind them. In the 3000m run on Saturday, Louise McGrillen, Anne Hilliard and Margaret Kelly had a rare set-to for second place with Anne Hilliard finding a stylish turn of pace on the last lap to take the silver as Margaret Kelly once more showed battling qualities to deprive the luckless Louise of the bronze. In a good race for the 1500, Cushla Murphy ran the race of her life but having got second with 200m she could not resist



Brian Jennings leads Ray Flynn and Roddy Gaynor in the men's 800m.



John Treacy (men's 5,000m champion) on his way to victory.



Left: Up-up and away! Action from the long jump.

Below; Gerry Deegan about to pass Robert Costello in the men's 10,000m.



the flying late flourish of Roiseen Smith who set a N.I. record for the distance in getting up to teake the silver.

After a three-year lapse, Michele Walsh achieved her second double in the sprints. Olive Burke set an Irish junior record and a

championship best in the 100m hurdles and Mary Barnwell easily took the 400m hurdles. By the time Caroline O'Shea went out to defend her 400m title, her chief rival, Mary Parr, had finished runner-up to Mrs. Barnwell and to Michele in the 200m. In a

performance that franked her triumph after a three-year battle with injury, Caroline hit the line in a championship best time of 53.92 with Claire Walshe's daughter, Patricia, second and Mary Parr stealing third on the line. Caroline's win was the fifth for Crusaders in eight track finals.

FIELD

The American-born high jumper B. Thierfelder got a huge cheer when he cleared 7ft.1in. (2m. 15cm.) on Sunday while there was an extremely close contest in the shot on Saturday with Paul Quirke edging out Paul Reynolds. Declan Hegarty duly won the hammer but failed to break 70m.

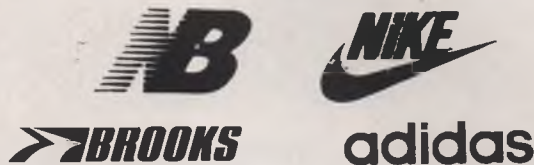
Among the ladies, Patricia Walsh beat Marita Walton in the discus, Marita having earlier defeated Patricia in the shot, while Brigid Corrigan held off the challenge of young Jackie Stokes in the high jump to score the only win for the D.C.H. ladies in these championships.

During the meeting certain athletes were warned about the size of advertising logos on their vests. Surely a matter of far greater concern was the obvious tendency towards "physical", i.e. rough, tactics in the middle distance events which produced fallers both in the heats and in the finals. Yet there was not one official inquiry into any of these incidents. Surely the descent into this sort of idiocy constitutes a far greater danger to the health of the sport than brand names on T-Shirts, the wearing of which, incidentally, was not confined to athletes.

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