

# *Irish* **RUNNER**

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## EAMONN COGHLAN

THE CHAIRMAN  
BITES BACK

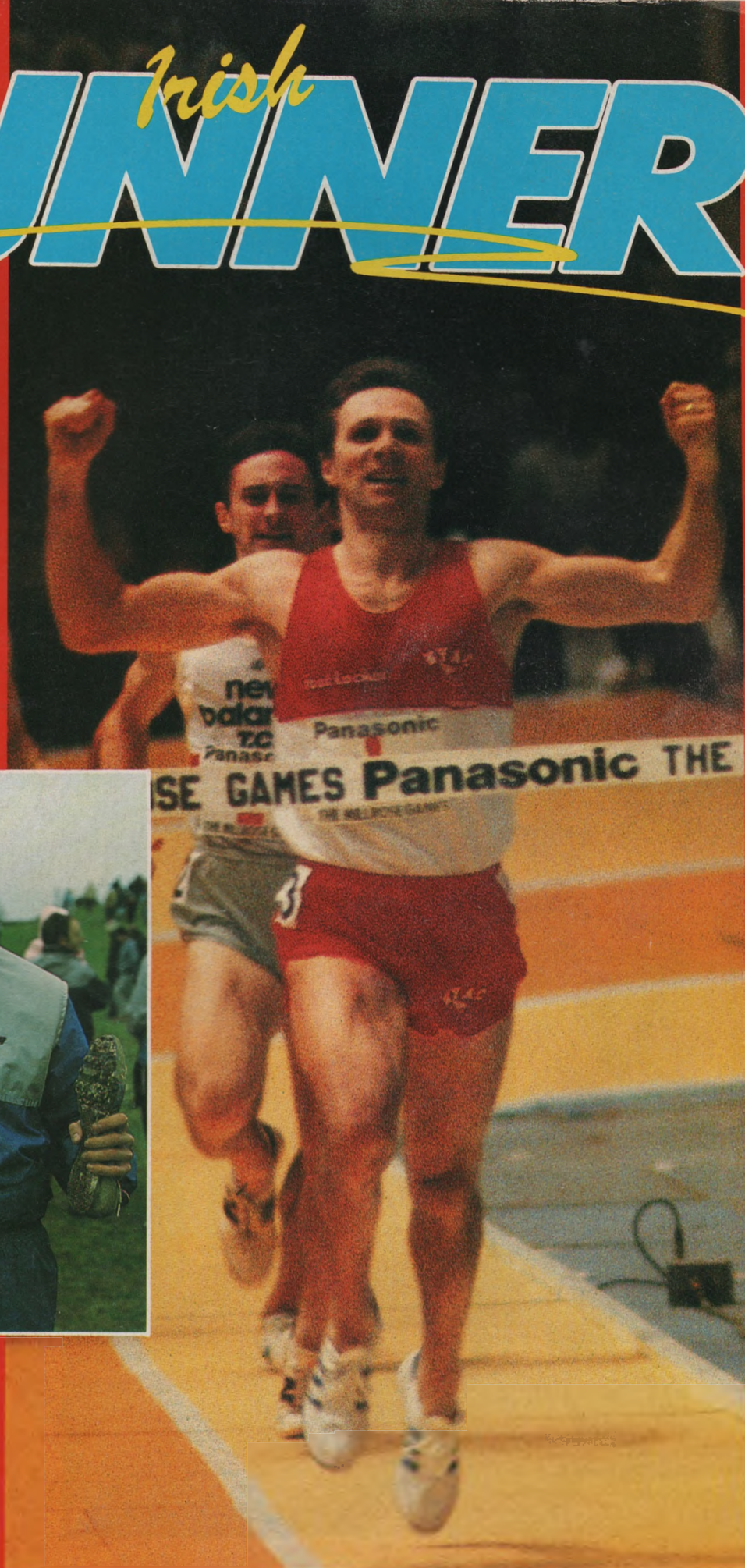
## INJURIES

SYMPTOMS, CAUSES  
AND CURES



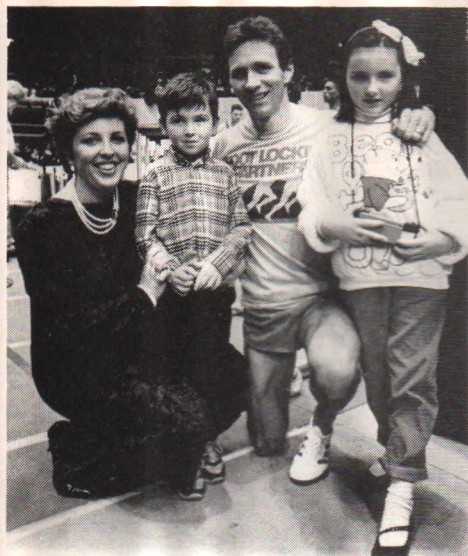
## DAVE TAYLOR

THE KILLENAULE  
CANTER





# MILLROSE MAGIC



WRITING OFF EAMONN COGHLAN HAS BECOME AN occupational hazard for would-be athletics experts. Some of them have fallen into the trap several times, but several times Eamonn has bounced back.

His most surprising, and surely most satisfying, revival came during the recent American indoor season. It culminated in a history-making Wanamaker Mile victory and a splendid world-best over 2,000 metres.

Notwithstanding the begrudgers, a small band of Irish journalists travelled to Madison Square Gardens on January 30 half expecting to see something special; Editor Frank Greally was among them; so was ace photographer Ray McManus; they were not disappointed.

Eamonn responded to the electrifying atmosphere and, in a welter of emotion, produced one of the best runs of a great career.

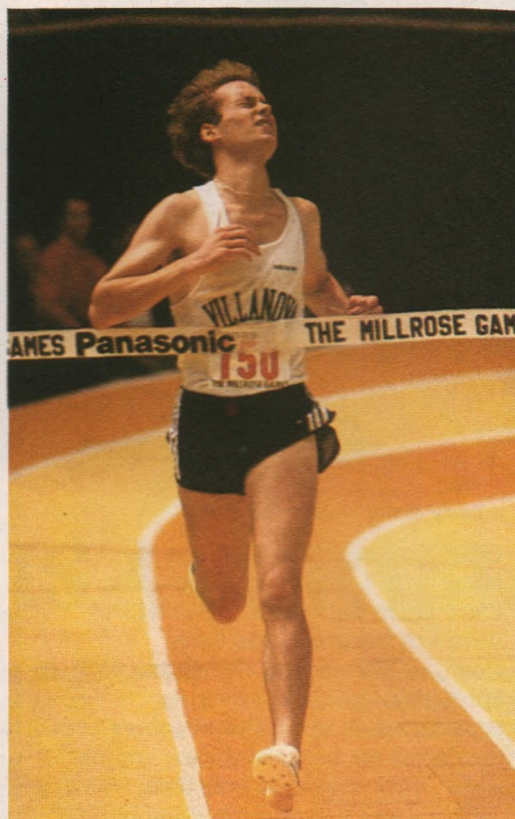
Frank and Ray combined to bring back the accompanying words and pictures of a unique occasion.

PHOTOS — SPORTSHIRE





- Top left — Yvonne, Eamonn junior, Eamonn and Suzanne.
- Bottom left — The Wanamaker mile gets under way.
- Centre — Eamonn savours the moment of victory.
- Top right — Abascal, Flynn, O'Sullivan and Coghlan.
- Centre right — Gerry O'Reilly wins collegiate mile.



**Y**ou really have to attend the Millrose Games at New York's Madison Square Garden to fully appreciate the tremendous respect and adulation that Eamonn Coghlan commands in what is actually perceived by New Yorkers to be the Dubliner's adopted city.

Friday night January 30 will probably be remembered by Coghlan as one of the most emotional and satisfying nights of his entire running career. The power and the passion that were evident in his Wanamaker Mile win drove the 18,122 capacity crowd at the Garden delirious with excitement.

Tickets for the 80th Millrose Games were sold out weeks previous

to the meet, and although this year's games boasted an array of world beaters, they were really about a single event — the Wanamaker mile.

Early in the evening there had been several dynamic performances as the arena began to fill up, but early was not a good time for favourites. Carl Lewis, winner of four gold medals in Los Angeles, was beaten by a stride in the 60-yard dash. University of Pittsburgh junior, Lee McRae, won in 6.12 seconds; Renaldo Nehemiah history's fastest high-hurdler, finished inches behind Greg Foster, who clocked 6.98 seconds; and Olympic champion Evelyn Ashford finished fourth in her heat and thus did not even qualify for the the final

of the 60-yard dash.

It was noticeable that many seats remained empty during these early events, but by the time the Wanamaker mile was introduced the arena was filled to capacity, even the many corporate blocks allocated to some of the most high-powered executives in the Big Apple.

There was plenty to cheer about for the small group of Irish media people who had travelled out from Dublin for the games.

Derek O'Connor ran an impressive final leg of 49.3 when taking Iona College to victory in the two-mile relay. Gerry O'Reilly showed very positive front-running tactics as he burned off a class field in the school mile. His winning time of 4.00.82 was a new meet record, but he was a little disappointed not to dip under four minutes. Garret Barry, the Iona College student from Buttevant, was fourth in 4.07.91.

There was also a World record in the masters mile, when Tracy Smith clocked 4.20. An off-colour Noel Carroll never showed in this race. Smith was returning to Madison Square Gardens after an absence of 14 years. The last time he ran there he set a world best (13.07.08) for three miles, with none other than Neil Cusack second (13.10) on that night.

An indoor track meet is really an amazing concoction that bristles with energy and creates a unique intimacy between athletes and spectators.

The 160 yard, steeply banked wooden track (11 laps to the mile) sits in the centre of the indoor stadium and the noise generated as the runners make contact with the boards reverberates around the arena. The shortness of the lap coupled with the closeness of the spectators to the action, gives an exaggerated sense of speed, especially in the middle-distance races.

Eamonn Coghlan has elevated indoor running to an art form and his performance in the Wanamaker Mile performance proved that he has now developed his art to perfection.

Early in the evening he was out on the track wrapped in a hooded



tracksuit, sprinting into the bends, and developing early the rhythm that would launch him to a history-making seventh win in this the most prestigious of all indoor events.

The announcer never got further than "Eamonn ..." when he introduced Coghlan last to the capacity crowd, who threatened to lift the roof of the Garden with rapturous acclaim for their adopted son. They were eager to see Coghlan reassert himself as Chairman of The Boards, and their loud acclaim for the Irishman must have greatly strengthened his already strong resolve. "The reception from the crowd really lifted me," he admitted after his victory.

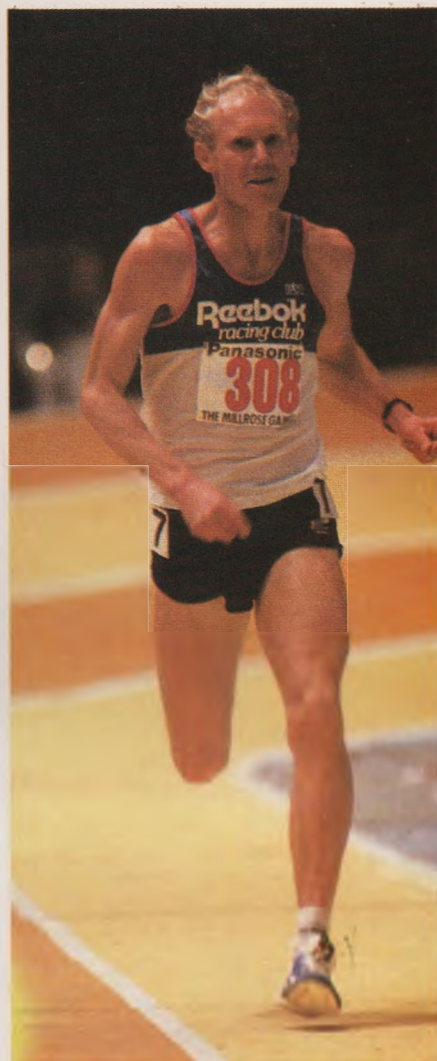
A seventh Wanamaker Mile was a daunting challenge for a runner who just a few weeks previously had felt that his indoor career for '87 could be in jeopardy as he lay bitten, bleeding, and nursing a broken hand in Dublin's Mater Hospital.

The field assembled for the Wanamaker Mile was one of the most formidable that ever lined up for the event. The presence of Marcus O'Sullivan, Ray Flynn and Frank O'Mara added up to what could have been an Irish mile championship. Also on the starting line were Steve Ovett of Britain and Jose Abascal of Spain, athletes who would love to thwart Coghlan's bid to become the first man to win seven Wanamakers.

When eventually the cheers following Coghlan's entrance died down, the lights set in the roof of the great dome were dimmed and a male voice led the assembled athletes and spectators in the singing of the American national anthem. This was an emotion-charged moment, but down on the track there was no sign of Eamonn Coghlan. He was in a passage under the stands completing his final warm-up and working on that vital last-minute preparation necessary for a top-rate performance.

Pace-setter Mark Fricker — America's only entry in the race — was quickly into the lead from the staggered start and established a three-yard gap on Ray Flynn. Coghlan was hanging back in fourth, being shadowed by O'Sullivan.

With three of the 11 laps remaining, Fricker dropped back and Abascal and Flynn took over. Within a lap O'Sullivan and Coghlan moved into third and fourth and with a lap remaining and the gun sounding in his ear it was



• Tracy Smith — vet mile record.

O'Sullivan who was breaking for home with Coghlan in hot pursuit. Once again the crowd threatened to demolish the arena and when Coghlan blasted past O'Sullivan with 80 yards to go there was utter pandemonium up in the bleachers, the corporate boxes and even among some of the seasoned pressmen.

There was a passion in Eamonn's final drive to the tape and an expression etched on his face that was reminiscent of his thrilling victory in the 5,000m at the 1983 world championships in Helsinki. As he crossed the finish line with arms raised and fists clenched in triumph, his eyes searched the upper regions of the stands, where his wife Yvonne and children Suzanne and Eamonn Jnr were gathered. This was the first time that the kids had been taken to the Millrose games, and their dad was proud that they had seen him create another piece of athletic history.

His time of 3.55.91 was the third slowest of his Wanamaker victories, but on this the tenth anniversary of his first victory it was the winning that mattered most. Marcus

O'Sullivan held on to second and Ray Flynn was just shaded for third by Jose Abascal. Steve Ovett's challenge never materialised and he finished last in 4.14.52.

After his victory, and now in the company of his wife and family, Coghlan paid tribute to the small but dedicated team who had stuck with him during his valley period of the past 18 months. There was praise for his wife, Yvonne, his physical therapist, Mark Chesnov, and his running confidant and great friend, Marty Ludwikoski. "This one is for the begrudgers," he joked as he untied his spikes in a corridor under the stands.

A year ago at this same meet Coghlan had been at the nadir of his career. "I'll never really understand how he held on for second to Marcus in the Wanamaker last year," Yvonne confides as she reflects on the period when the Eat to Win diet had reduced her husband to a shadow of his real self.

"That diet just sapped all his strength," she said. "It was only his pride that kept him going."

Eamonn regards Yvonne as his guiding light and his greatest inspiration. Coming into New York for the race, she had advised him: "You have more experience than anyone in the field. Let that experience do some of the running for you tonight." It was sound advice and Eamonn took it seriously.

Since that memorable night in Madison Square Garden, Coghlan has gone on to even greater things. His recent world record for 2,000m suggests that he is now on target for gold in the inaugural world indoor championships in Indianapolis. Then there is the world outdoor championships in Rome, where 10,000m is the likely target.

At 34, Eamonn Coghlan is far from being a spent force. This could well be his year of greatest glory. The indoor championships take place this weekend. In May he and Yvonne are expecting their third child. He still has his heart set on another outdoor world championship.

Lurking there among these immediate ambitions must also be the prospect of pulling off something special in Seoul in 1988. Age, he said after his Wanamaker victory, is not a negative, but a positive from which to draw strength. On the evidence of his recent performances one cannot but wholeheartedly agree.