

U. S. MASTERS INTERNATIONAL TRACK TEAM

NEWSLETTER - EUROPEAN REPORT

November 1, 1971

TRIP REPORT:

Helen and I have just returned from a 3 week tour of Europe and have made the final arrangements for the '72 tour. We arrived in London following our attendance at the A.A.U. Convention in Lake Placid. We were greeted by Ron Franklin, whom some of you may recall was 2nd in the big veterans' 25 Km. race in Czechoslovakia. He had waited at Heathrow Airport for more than 2 hours for us to clear customs. The next morning I ran from the Hotel St. James (where we will be staying in '72) into Hyde Park, which is just 5 minutes away, passing Buckingham Palace and enjoyed a Sunday jog in the park observing countless pick-up soccer games and at Marble Gate witnessed London's famous soap box orators long considered a bastion of free speech. On returning to the hotel we met with a 6 man British committee and spent 4 hours discussing the plans for the cross-country event at Epping Forest and the 2 day track and field meet at Crystal Palace. We agreed that competition would be in 3 divisions and if the number of entries justified it, we would add a 4th division for those 70 and over.

Events to be included will be the 10,000 meters run; 15 or 20 kilometer walk, starting and finishing in the stadium and conducted on a paved motorcycle course located on the stadium grounds. We have also added the 3,000 meter steeplechase, (much to the pleasure of Chris Brashear whom some of you will recall was Britain's Olympic steeplechase champion at Melbourne and is now a veteran.) (Someone, please send me Horace Ashenfelder's address since his name was mentioned several times during our European tour.) We will also have all runs from 100 meters to 1,500 meters; plus all the field events, two relays (the 4 x 100 and 4 x 400), as well as the 400 meter intermediate hurdles.

"Nutrament" has agreed to sponsor the meet and it looks very favorable for the meet to receive 2 1/2 hour prime evening shots on BBC TV. Veteran running is very big in Britain.

Awards will be first through third in divisions I, II, and III, and one medal only in Division IV.

The cross-country fixture will be another highlight. The British are licking their chops in anticipation as cross-country is their major sport. The race is scheduled for Tuesday evening, August 22nd in Epping Forest, an historic public preserve, less than an hour's drive from central London. The event will start and finish at the Royal Forest Inn where we can change and also slack our thirst after the race with our British counterparts. The race commences on a large rolling meadow and over a brook; then into a densely oak-forested wood in which the trees must be several hundred years old and cover much of the 7 1/2 mile circular course. We were forewarned that this particular course is considered one of England's "worst" (i.e., toughest) and if they have any rain in August, they guarantee it will be quite wet. The picturesque setting, convivial English pubs, and our fine hosts bespeaks of a jolly opening event.

The British will not neglect us socially and on Wednesday evening, we will be the guests of Sir Stewart Mallinson at his home "The White House" in Woodford Green. Honored guests will be Dr. Roger Bannister, the world's first 4 minute miler, and the Marquis of Exeter, Lord Burghley, England's first Olympic Champion, ('28 Amsterdam Olympics, 400 meter hurdles). This affair will take place in a pavilion adjacent to Sir Stewart's home, (who incidentally was Sir Winston Churchill's campaign manager for many years) where refreshments and libations will be served. The British are getting quite excited over our pending visit and are using it as a means to stimulate veteran track and field which has not developed as rapidly as our program. This is true even though England has many running clubs, which, however, lean to cross-country and road racing primarily due to the lack of tracks and other facilities.

The next day we had a second opportunity to run in Hyde Park which is so vast that we succeeded in getting lost, finally seeking directions from two Grenadier guards who were exercising their horses on the bridle path. Although we ran for an hour and a quarter and paused to look at the famous Kensington Gardens, we never managed to run completely around the park.

For those who enjoy good food, we found an excellent Italian place, "La Terrazza" on Romilly Street, just off Piccadilly Circus where we enjoyed steamed turbot with a white wine sauce and grapes, gazpacho soup embellished with an

excellent Italian white burgundy and fresh strawberries with thick English cream. On the subject of food, breakfast in Great Britain is an interesting experience served with fresh rolls, sweet butter, preserves, tea or coffee. For those with a heartier appetite, one can have grilled kippers, excellent Danish bacon, kidneys or eggs.

For our lady companions, London's shops and stores afford the widest variety of clothing, china and silverware. A trip to England's most famous department store, Harrod's, a 15 minute walk from the St. James, is a must. Equally outstanding are Simpsons, and Forthun & Masons. From our experience and the arrangements made, we are confident that your Monday through Saturday visit to London will be both exciting and rewarding.

We then flew to Munich where we went to the BMW factory and picked up a new car for fellow team member, Dr. Harold Elrick, and immediately drove to Köln to confer with Urban Miller and the director of the ASV Club. We examined their facilities, which are currently under construction. Financed with both public and private funds, the new club complete with all the amenities will cost approximately \$700,000.00 and is nestled deep in the "Stadwald", a forest within the city of Köln. Immediately adjacent to the new clubhouse lies the new track complete with covered bleachers. Adjacent to the track is a terrace where spectators can enjoy refreshments while watching the competition.

We suggested that the following events be scheduled, again in all 4 divisions, all running events through 1,500 meters, a 10,000 meter run, 20 Km. walk in the woods to start and finish on the track, 400 meter intermediate hurdles, 3,000 meter steeplechase, the 4 x 100 and 4 x 400 relays, plus all of the field events. This will be a 2 day event to be followed by the World Veterans' 5,000 and 10,000 meter Runs and Marathon. The ASV meeting will take place on Wednesday and Thursday. The World Veterans 10,000 meter Run final and 5,000 meter preliminary (separated into 4 divisions) will be conducted on Friday, with the finals of the 5,000 meter run and World Veteran Marathon being conducted on Saturday. We will return to the States Sunday, 9/17.

There is no minimum qualifying time for the marathon; however, "the race will be finished 4:45 hours after the start, which means that whoever reaches the finish line after this time is outside the official race and not entitled to medal certificate" Condition April, 1971 issue. There are minimum qualifying times for the World Veterans' 5,000 and 10,000 meters, which are as follows:

5,000 Meters:

Division I 17:30 Division II 19:00 Division III 20:30 Division IV 23:30

10,000 Meters:

Division I 34:30 Division II 37:30 Division III 42:00 Division IV 46:00

These qualifying times "can either be achieved in 1971 or 1972, but must, in any case, be officially confirmed," CONDITION, April 1971 issue. Since not all distance runners may be able to submit a qualifying effort, we have scheduled a 10,000 run during the first day of competition of the ASV Meet. As we will be handling all of our team's entries, those of you who have run the qualifying time for your division should submit a certificate signed by your club secretary or A.A.U. representative verifying your time so that you may be entered in the world veteran's 5,000 or 10,000 meter events. The Europeans are extremely technical about rules and eligibility. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to submit to us proper documentation. In this regard they require that all members of our team be sanctioned by our National A.A.U. Therefore, it will be necessary for you to have a current membership card in the A.A.U. for 1972.

We left Koln in a downpour and drove to Copenhagen, one of the most beautiful cities to be included in the tour. There we met with representatives of the SNIK Track Club who have agreed to sponsor a cross-country event which will be held in this city's famous Deerhaven Park, a forest approximately three by ten miles square, formerly the King's deer hunting preserve, the central point of which is the King's former hunting lodge, "the Hermitage". It is in this park where Denmark's biggest cross-country event is held each year and which had 7,000 entries in 1971. We will run the same 9 Km. course through the park on dirt paths and over grass. The park consists of large open meadows and heavily wooded sections populated by a large herd of deer which are so tame they had to be virtually shoed out of the way when I ran in the park early one morning. Following this cross-country event, we will adjourn to one of the numerous fine beer garden outdoor restaurants which border the park for refreshments, and to make acquaintance with our Danish hosts. It is here you will enjoy the famous Danish open-faced sandwiches

which must be seen, and consumed, in order to be fully appreciated. Carlsberg is one of the best beers brewed in Europe. One of the national dishes in Scandinavia is fresh crayfish, which, fortunately, should be in season when we visit in September of 1972.

We participated in a 20 Km. road race in Copenhagen which was extremely well organized and in which results were prepared and participation "diplomas" were issued within an hour following the completion of the run. We had a delightful Sunday afternoon dinner with Peter Schnorr, a young cardiologist, and his wife at a quaint restaurant located adjacent to Deerhaven Park in a structure built over 300 years ago. Besides enjoying delicious Danish pickled herring which is eaten with Schnapps and beer, we also enjoyed a delicious fish dish utilizing a local flounder called "red spot". We departed Copenhagen reluctantly and drove and ferried to Gothenburg, Sweden's second largest city located on the west coast adjacent to the Katagat Sea. There we met Mayor Hans Hanson, who referred us to his director of municipal athletics, Roland Jerneryd, who in turn was most intrigued by our proposal that our American team of veterans engage in track and field competition with the Swedes. After a full morning conference, he turned us over to his able and most enthusiastic assistant, Helge Johannesson, who had previously acted as manager for touring American track and field teams in the late '40s and early '50s. He had fond memories of George Rhoden, Fortune Gordien, Bud Held and Bob Richards. We quickly confirmed arrangements for the 2 day track and field meeting, including all of the regulation track and field events and walk. This city is extremely sports-minded with excellent facilities and is delighted at the prospect of entertaining an American veterans track team. We were assured that invitations would be sent to all Scandinavian countries urging their veterans athletes to compete with us in '72. We elected to use their "Slottskogsvallen" stadium where a number of our veterans competed 20 or more years ago. A portion of this facility burned down a year ago and has been replaced with a million dollar addition including the finest dressing, shower and sauna facilities, plus a delightful restaurant which overlooks the track. We will also be guests of the Viking Track Club, organized in 1909, and which still has several active charter members. These people are extremely gracious and we expect our visit to this beautiful Swedish seaport city to be one of the highlights of our '72 tour. On completion of these arrangements, we visited one of their fine restaurants, "The Fredericksburg", which overlooks the harbor and has been in operation over 100 years. The menu was one of the finest we have enjoyed, and the food and service were both excellent.

The next day we journeyed in rather inclement weather through the beautiful Swedish countryside bordering the sea and fjords to the capitol city of Oslo, Norway, just across the border. Here we conferred with the Oslo Orienteering Federation and arranged a competition and indoctrination in this sport. Orienteering is one of the major sports of Norway, and one in which as many as 10,000 may participate in one meet. If you haven't experienced orienteering, you're in for a delightful experience, in that it is a combination of cross-country running, map-reading, pathfinding, and requires besides conditioning, a lot of good horse sense. We hope that with this exposure to orienteering you will introduce this sport to your club.

Oslo is located on a fjord and has numerous tourist attractions. While there we ran in the Vigelands Skulptur Park, which contains the life work of one of Norway's greatest sculptors. We also visited their marine museum, housing the Kon-Tiki, the balsa raft which sailed the Pacific as well as the Arctic ship "Fram", which took Amundsen (the first man to reach the South Pole) to both the Arctic and Antarctic.

On reluctantly departing Oslo, we then drove to Stockholm where we met with representatives of the Stockholm Sports Federation, and the Swedish Marathon Association, who again were extremely gracious and most interested in promoting veteran running. Here we scheduled a cross-country event in one of their beautiful royal parks which will be run on a closed course of 5 Km. permitting distances of 5, 10, 15, and 20 Kms. We were again impressed with the magnitude of the Swedish involvement in sports and physical fitness. Stockholm alone has 1,600 sports clubs and approximately 1/2 million members, one-third of the city's population.

The trip from Stockholm to Helsinki was the most beautiful and exciting phase of our trip in that it involves a cruise on one of Sweden's new and extremely well equipped cruise vessels. The accommodations were excellent and besides a well appointed cabin, we enjoyed an indoor swimming pool, sauna, first run motion picture theater, night club complete with band, and first class restaurant offering the most elaborate smorgasbord we had yet experienced in Scandinavia. This meal at 15 kr. (\$3.00) has to be the best gastronomic opportunity

offered in Scandinavia. Although we cross the Bothnian Gulf, the vessel actually picks its way through 10,000 islands, one of Scandinavia's most scenic wonders.

Helsinki, the last stop on our tour, in several respects was the most rewarding to us since the culture and language is so different from the other Scandinavian countries we had visited. One of the surprises was the high quality merchandise available at very modest prices, primarily leather goods which are sold at a fraction of what you would pay for comparable items in the States. Other excellent buys are Finnish glassware, woolens and jewelry all at modest prices and of excellent quality. Here we met with representatives of the Finnish Track and Field Federation and the executive director of the HKV Club, Helsinki's largest track and field club. Once again, they expressed great interest in our pending tour and enthusiastically agreed to present a 1 day track and field meeting in Helsinki's famous Olympic stadium, constructed for the cancelled 1940 Olympics later held in 1952. This was probably the finest track stadium which we were privileged to visit on our tour, complete with Tartan track and indoor warm-up area under the stadium, adjacent to the starting line. Once again, we scheduled all of the disciplines, both track and field, plus a walk, and were assured very strong competition in the javelin, discus and distance events. We again had a press conference which was reported on the front page of the sports section of Helsinki's largest daily newspaper. They were extremely interested in the prospect of the possible return of such veterans as Bob Mathias, George Rhoden, Fortune Gordien, Bud Held, and Bob Richards, as these men were all local favorites when they competed in this same stadium more than 20 years ago.

HOUSING:

In each city we visited, we examined a number of hotels and have made reservations in the best hosteleries available within our budget. Europe has experienced considerable inflation during the past two years, and some hotel rates have increased 25% since we first planned this tour, and all have indicated an increase in rates of 10% to 15% between now and next summer. Nevertheless we hope to hold the line for the cost of this tour. In most instances, we will all be housed in the same hotel with the possible exception of Köln. Consideration has been given to the proximity of the hotel to competition and training sites.

TRANSPORTATION:

Travel arrangements have been made for flight from the U.S. to London, and London to Helsinki. From there, we will ferry to Stockholm, take the train to Oslo, bus from Oslo to Gothenburg and to Copenhagen. From Copenhagen we will take the train to Köln, and return to the States by air. Reservations have been made for the necessary transportation to each city as well as some transportation within each city, the details of which will be announced in a subsequent bulletin.

COMMITMENTS:

Since our tour will occur during the height of the summer season, we have been required to commit ourselves on both transportation and housing. The cost of our tour is approximately 1/2 of what the expense would be for a similar tour should you attempt such a trip individually and the prices quoted were obtained because of the anticipated size of our group. It is necessary that at least 200 avail themselves of this package; otherwise, our costs will substantially increase.

Although approximately 250 have joined our U. S. Masters International Track Team, with 500 tentative reservations, we have received firm reservations and deposits from only 125. It therefore behooves each of you who have not sent in your deposits to do so immediately, and to also get additional veteran running friends to join the team as well.

TO COMPLY WITH C.A.B. REGULATIONS FOR CHARTER FLIGHTS, ALL PASSENGERS MUST HAVE BEEN BONAFIDE MEMBERS OF THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION AT LEAST SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO THE FLIGHT INVOLVED, WHICH MEANS YOU WILL HAVE TO JOIN THE U. S. MASTERS INTERNATIONAL TEAM PRIOR TO FEBRUARY 1, 1972.

In making two lengthy trips to Europe, we have devoted a great deal of time and expense to this project and trust that your response will justify our effort. Please expedite your deposits and orders for uniforms.

HAWAIIAN MASTERS:

The Hawaiian Masters have scheduled a 3-day track and field meet and half-marathon for March 10 - 12, 1972. We have arranged a charter flight which would depart from Los Angeles, on Sunday March 5th, and return Sunday March 12th. The estimated cost of this flight is \$125.00 (1/2 the regular fare.) If you are interested in participating, please contact us immediately and enclose your check for \$125.00. We will also make Hotel reservations at reduced rates.