

Raiders to move?/2B  
Astros gain/3B  
Track record/4B

# SPORTS

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Eugene, Oregon, Monday, July 31, 1989

## Vet fans adopt oldest sprinter

### Taiwanese athlete captures third gold

By SHANNON FEARS  
The Register-Guard

Sure, it was a big disappointment when the 102-year-old sprinter from India failed to show up for the World Veterans' Championships.

But would you settle for 94? An unexpectedly large crowd at Hayward Field did more than that on a sunny Sunday afternoon, drenching Wang Ching-Chang of Taiwan in the warmest applause of the day for winning the men's 90 division 100-meter dash as the fourth day of the games unfolded.

The meet was unexpectedly well-attended as perhaps 4,000 filled the stands at Hayward. Many of those were undoubtedly competitors, but diehard Eugene track fans were certainly in abundance. A crowd of several hundred, perhaps more than 1,000, remained until dusk, watching six straight heats of men's 10,000-meter racing. That's 150 laps.

Today is an off-day for the championships. Action will resume Tuesday, a very busy day made up largely of triple jumping, javelin throwing, 5,000s, 200s, 800s and the longer hurdles races. Both Hayward Field and Sike Field in Springfield will be busy from 7 a.m. until past 10 p.m.

Wang, who lives in Taipei and is president of a 50,000-member political party ("a legal one," he said),

"Americans here are very friendly. I feel like I'm at home."

Taiwan's Wang Ching-Chang

polished off the 100 in 23.15, easily outdistancing the only other man in the race, Finland's Mikko Salonen.

The crowd reacted with pure delight to the non-generations, who played back to the applause with plenty of waving and wide smiles. Salonen didn't even wait until the race was over — he began waving to the crowd before he crossed in front of the west grandstand, some 60 meters from the finish.

It was a day when age and past winners prevailed, and in no other competition was the combination of the two so profound as in Wang. Winner of five gold medals in the '81 championships in Australia, Wang has already won three here — he won the javelin Saturday and added a shot title Sunday — and is on the docket for the 200, the 400, the 800 and the discus.

His chances are good — the most competition he has in any of those events is one other person.

And like most of the 4,000-some competitors entered in the meet, Wang is a relative newcomer to track. He played ping pong and tennis for many years, but didn't start running track until he was 88. It certainly hasn't done him any harm.

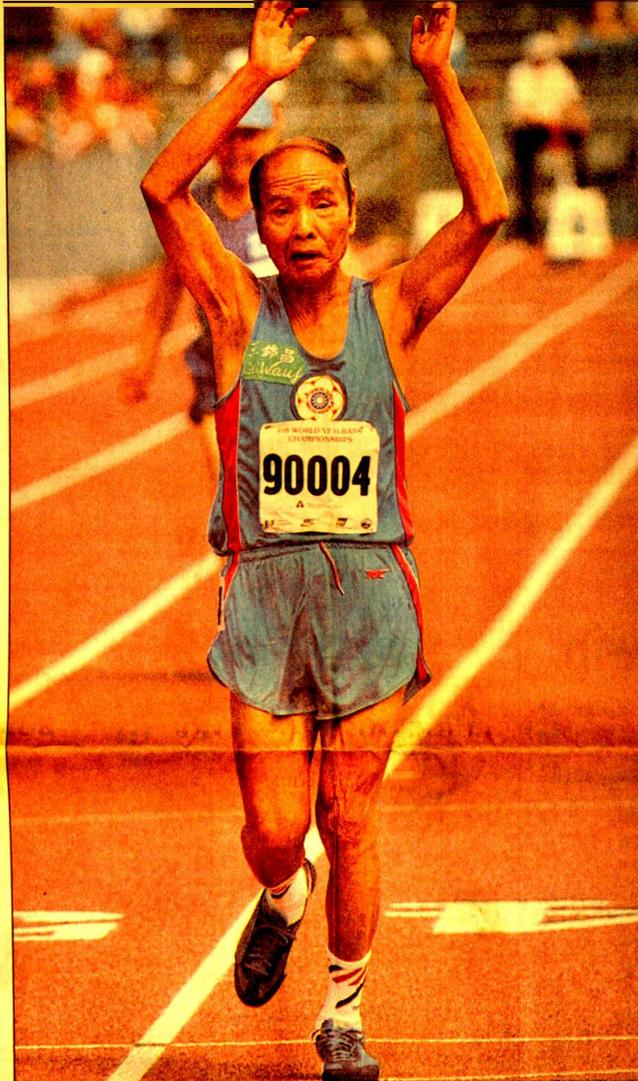
"I'm very healthy," he said through an interpreter. "I don't need anyone to take care of me."

Asked for the secret of his success, Wang credited a diet high in vitamins, traditional Chinese medicines and beans. "I don't eat very much rice," he said. And, he added, he received much of this dietary advice from the president of Taiwan himself.

It seems Wang is something of a celebrity in Taiwanese government circles because of his pastime, the president officially recognized his accomplishments after the last games and is sure to do so again, Wang said.

And for one afternoon, at least, Wang was a celebrity in Eugene as well.

"Americans here are very friendly," he said. "Turn to OLDEST, Page 4B



Wang Ching-Chang, 102, wins the 100 to culminate a 23.14 effort that was warmly received by a large Hayward Field crowd



## Cowboys won't be the same

"Yond (ca) Cassius has a lean and hungry look  
Such men are dangerous."  
Shakespeare, in "Julius Caesar"

ACROSS THE DESK from me sat the man who wasn't Tom Landry.

He was kind of a disappointment. I mean, he didn't look like what you would expect — a kind of furtive-looking guy who wouldn't look you in the eye. Who'd have this kind of shifty look about him, sallow complexion, nervous tic in one eye, biting his nails a lot, mumbling his answers, looking at his watch. The kind of guy you'd expect to be asked questions like, "All right, Joe, what did you do with the baby?"

This guy is the most unwanted guy in Texas. You'd think he came to blow up the Alamo, rob the noon stage, sell whiskey to the Indians. Definitely a guy in a black hat. Wyatt Earp would run him out of town. Poses would be after him.

This is a guy who has done unspeakable things in the eyes of Texans. He comes into focus like the dirty little coward who shot Mr. Howard and laid Jesse James in his grave. The cocky kid who stalked the legendary gunfighter and shot him when he wasn't looking, the guy who got Wild Bill Hickok in the back during the card game.

You see, Tom Landry was the biggest hero on the range since Sam Houston or Davy Crockett. He was as Texas as mesquite. He had this long prairie squint in his eye, the dry way of talking of a guy who spent his life in a bunkhouse or saddle.

In Dallas, indeed in most of the country, he came out in the public mind as a cross between Gary Cooper and Marshal Dillon. He had all the old-fashioned virtues. He was like the hero of the Saturday matinee. He'd order sarsaparilla in the bar, then blow the gun out of the hand of the blackguard he saw trying to dry-gulch him in the barroom mirror.

Everybody loved Tom Landry. Everybody loved the Dallas Cowboys. Detractors liked to sneer that the catch phrase, America's team, was made-up PR hype but that wasn't true. Every kid who had ever gone to a John Wayne movie liked the idea of Landry's Cowboys.

They were, like the prototype, fast, tough, smart, dangerous — but fair. They fit the image. They almost let you draw first. There was something sad about them. They were a great team but they kept losing to lucky bounces, unconscionable climatic extremes.

But they were self-reliant, never complained. Landry was better in defeat than any coach I have ever interviewed. He never hid or cursed. He was the same in victory. He never gloated or moaned.

I MUST SAY, Jimmy Johnson didn't look the part. You expect a guy with a scar on his cheek, parrot on his shoulder, tattoos on his biceps.

Jimmy looks as if his nickname might be Beaver. He's got these apple cheeks, he's got lots of kind of nose-colored hair, which he wears like a helmet. His blue eyes twinkle. He doesn't bite his lip. He has this kind of merry look about him. Put a white beard on him and he could be Santa Claus.

He doesn't have this lean and hungry look. He's kind of fat, to tell you the truth. Or at least plump. And he doesn't care.

Is he worried about replacing a legend? Are you kidding? Jimmy Johnson doesn't worry. Jimmy Johnson sleeps nights. Like a baby. You get the feeling he expects to have Texas eating out of his hand in no time.

He himself is as Texas as a branding iron. Port Arthur born and bred. He spent his youth cleaning out the engine rooms of oil barges. He learned his first football under a coach whose name was Bucksbot, which ought to tell you all you need to know about Johnson's philosophy of the game: Whip their butt and the score will follow.

Nobody ever called his University of Miami squads America's team. They were more like the Dade County jail's team. Writer Rick Reilly once said they were the only college footballers in the country whose team photo was taken from a helicopter. They used to come into town like a motorcycle gang wearing bush hats and battle fatigues. They arrived at Bowl games like the Germans entering Paris.

In Dallas, they gave Tom Landry a ticker-tape parade when he was relieved as coach. They all but gave Johnson and his owner, Jerral Jones, 48 hours to get out of town.

Does any of this bother Jimmy Johnson?

He smiles sweetly. He's got a 10-year contract. His owner was his college roommate and teammate. He's replacing a legend? Jimmy will remind you he's replacing a 3-13 record.

DOES JIMMY JOHNSON worry that he's leading off with a rookie quarterback?

He grins. "I'm a rookie myself," he says, chuckling. "We'll learn together."

Jimmy Johnson never had a self-doubt in his life. He won't prove the sideline in matching polyester and a bat with a broom in it, is a Landry.

He doesn't plan to do anything like Landry. His teams will be physical, not finicky. They won't be America's team, they will be Jimmy Johnson's. America will have to get its own.

Jim Murray is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times.



Jimmy Johnson  
From finesse to physical

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## Raider facing uncertain future

By MARK HEISLER  
Los Angeles Times

### Injury threatens ex-Sheldon star

OXNARD, Calif. — In the heat of the noonday sun, Todd Christensen, all alone on the field, straps weights to his ankles and high-steps toward an uncertain future.

Uncertain? Todd Christensen? Curly-haired, erudite, omnipresent, photogenic, unsinkable Todd Christensen, the man to see on third and eight, or when you've forgotten the author of "The Fountainhead," or how many home runs Babe Ruth hit in 1928, could be in trouble?

That's with a capital T and that rhymes with D, and that stands for Dyal. Mike Dyal is a blocker.

an unknown from Texas A&I who spent last season on injured reserve but is suddenly being projected as a possible starter at tight end.

Dyal, a 240-pounder, is described as a blocker.

Mike Shanahan seems to prefer large-blocking light ends to smaller pass-catchers of the Christensen-Trey Junkin mold.

Christensen, a prep star at Sheldon High School before journeying on to Brigham Young University and the pros, is 33 and coming off an injury-truncated 1988 season during which he caught 15 passes.

His off-season was even worse: Two major operations, the last of them 10 weeks ago for removal of his gall bladder. He isn't scheduled to begin contact work until early August.

He's 33 and earns \$750,000.

The last two Raider seasons, as another great Raider might have put it, have been distinctly unprofitable.

Can or will Al Davis pay that much to a backup? Turn to RAIDERS, Page 2B



Todd Christensen  
Is he in Shanahan's plans?

## Team that plays together stays together

By FRAN KEATING  
The Register-Guard

When Bonnie and Dale Blomberg signed up separately to play for the Pecosdillos, one of the Eugene Parks and Recreation's coed softball teams, the Eugene weren't expecting much. Just a little fun in the sun once a week.

As it turned out, though, the diamond they ran out that day in 1978 was their very own field of dreams.

Now married with a 7-year-old son, Ryan, who moonlights as the team's bat boy, the Blombergs and nearly all of the Pecosdillos — 10 of the original 12 — are still at it on fields in and around Eugene.

Now mostly thirtysomething with a couple of plus-40 players, time obviously hasn't stood still for the team or the leagues around them which have grown from just a handful in the late 1970s to 116 in 1988.

Back in 1978 when a group of lawyers and staff from Legal Aid of Lane County saw a notice in the paper calling for teams to sign up, coed softball was still a brave new world in town.

One of the attorneys, recalling a word from a brief he had worked on, suggested "pecadillo," meaning slight sin or fault, for the team name that has become more appropriate with each passing year.

They didn't waste any time in signing up to play, but when Dale Blomberg tried to sign up his own squad from Champion International, he found the limit had already been reached.

So he decided to go it alone. After getting a list of team captains from the Parks office, he found it wasn't hard choosing which name to call.

"Being single, one of the different team captains I chose the only woman on the list," Blomberg recalled with a smile. After a lengthy interview for not only athletic but social compatibility with the rest of the team, Blomberg had his spot on the team. The rest, as

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