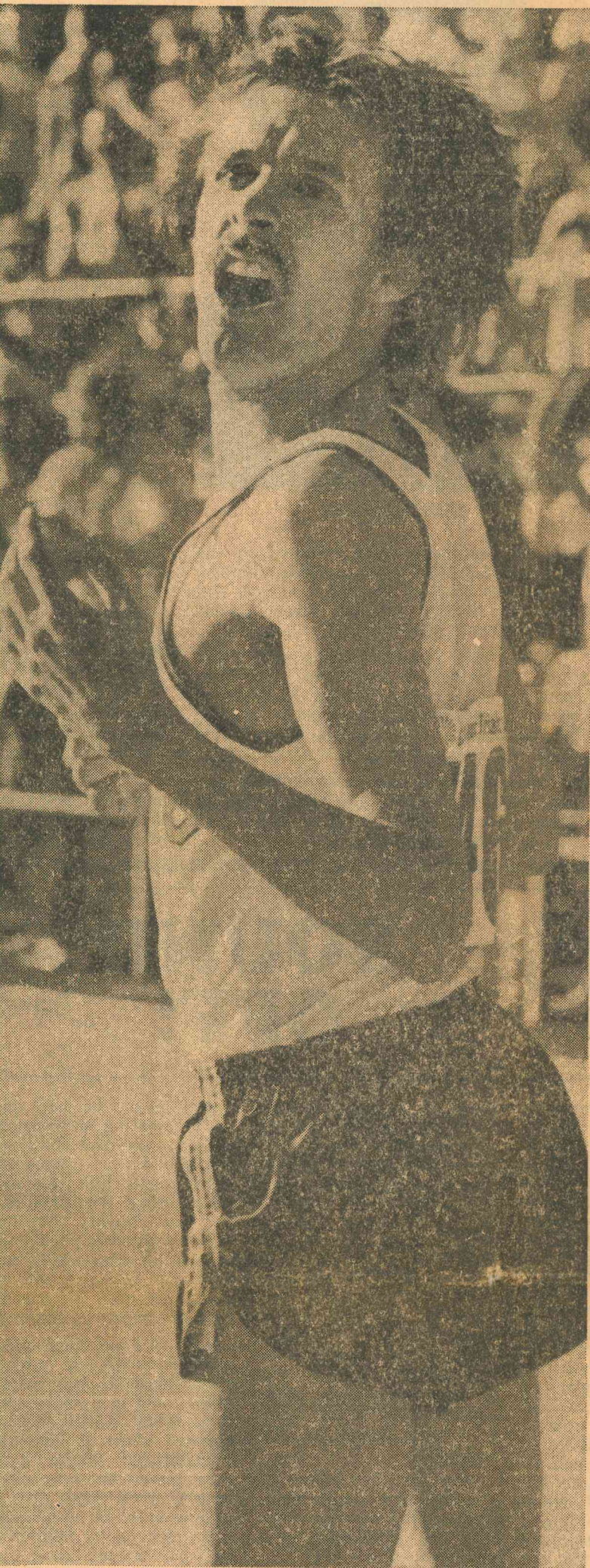


EUGENE, OREGON, SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1974



Rick Wohlhuter couldn't believe it either

Wohlhuter keeps his word: 1:44.1

By BUD WITHERS
Of the Register-Guard

Rick Wohlhuter, one of the few guys around who can forecast a world record and then go out and run one, was as good as his word Saturday night at the Hayward Field Restoration Meet, blasting his own 880 record by a half-second with a 1:44.1 clocking.

Wohlhuter's run, accomplished despite the lack of immediate competition, was only the cream off the top of a memorable evening climaxed when Steve Prefontaine ran down Frank Shorter for an American record in the three-mile in 12:51.4.

Only a persistent breeze on the homestretch may have foiled Pre's plans for Emiel Puttemans' world record of 12:47.8.

"THE PEOPLE who came saw the best track meet in America this year," Pre announced after warming down from his assault on Gerry Lindgren's eight-year-old U.S. mark of 12:53.0. Pre's mark jumps him into third on the all-time list, past Lasse Viren's 12:51.6.

"Not all the times were great, but everyone was competing as best they could."

Nobody in the capacity crowd of 8,000 could argue. Who can quibble with four world bests for 1974?

Besides Wohlhuter and Pre, Don Quarrie closed in on a world 220 mark but settled for a windy 20.1 for lack of competition; Al Feuerbach blew the shot out 70-7½; Jim Bolding took Pacific Coast Club teammate Ralph Mann in the 440 intermediate hurdles in 49.5; and Dwight Stones flopped 7-3½ in the high jump as dusk fell. All but Quarrie's and Feuerbach's efforts are the year's best.

AND NOT TO be overlooked were Francie Larrieu's 4:33.1 in the women's mile, or Debbie Quartier's 16:46.2 in the infrequently run women's 5,000, or Joni Huntley's 6¾ in the high jump, for three more American records.

But without question, Wohlhuter's half-mile was the most stunning event. The book says you don't run world records without world-class competition.

Wohlhuter didn't read the book.

Oregon freshman quartermiler Dacre Bowen did his bit, playing

The evolution of a record

Time	Recordsetter	Year
1:44.1	Rick Wohlhuter, U.S.	1974
1:44.6	Rick Wohlhuter, U.S.	1973
1:44.9	Jim Ryun, U.S.	1966
1:45.1	Peter Snell, N.Z.	1962
1:46.8	Tom Courtney, U.S.	1957
1:47.5	Lon Spurrier, U.S.	1955
1:48.6	Mal Whitfield, U.S.	1953
1:49.2	Mal Whitfield, U.S.	1950
1:49.2	Sid Wooderson, U.K.	1938

rabbit and pulling out to a 10-12-yard lead down the backstretch.

He slowed briefly so Wohlhuter could pass him at the 440 mark in the prescribed 51 seconds. Both Bowen and Wohlhuter were right on the money.

"It was a lot of fun for me," Bowen said. "I just got out as best I could."

FROM THERE, it was a matter of sheer guts and Wohlhuter's high-bouncing, smooth-yet-forging stride. And the roar of the expectant crowd on the East grandstand.

"I can't imagine him sustaining that," Bowen said. "He's got one smooth, strong stride."

The clock at the south end showed 1:44.0 before the official time was announced as a tenth-second slower, obliterating his own mark of 1:44.6 set last year at the Vons Classic in Los Angeles.

Wohlhuter, calm now in warm-ups on the infield, shrugged when asked how he can do such things without help over two laps.

"I guess I look at it this way: I say I know I'm a good runner, I'm in good condition, I might get a record by going out and trying."

WOHLHUTER KNEW he was on target as he and Bowen hit 440 in 51.

"Knowing I had that, and I had the wind blowing me along that backstraight, I knew I had something."

But he wasn't aware of his status at the 660 mark.

"I figured I had another 220 to go, and I'd better get going."

If the wind pushed him on the

backstretch, the crowd blew him along the homestretch.

"I knew I had a shot at it," he said. "... and having someone behind you does help."

The crowd was primed, as expected, when Prefontaine's list of accomplishments was introduced. He, too, had openly predicted an assault on a world's record.

BUT IF THE wind helped speed Wohlhuter, it dragged down Pre and his running mate, Frank Shorter.

They wanted to run 64-second quarters, which would have left Pre two-tenths of a second from Puttemans' world mark. And they did precisely that for three laps.

But with the two now alternating pace, the fourth lap fell off half a second to 4:16.5. Another half-second went in the fifth lap, and a full second on the sixth. With Shorter leading through the eighth lap, and Pre taking over on the ninth, it had fallen off to 9:44, and it was becoming apparent that the world record wasn't negotiable.

And for awhile, it appeared that Pre might fall to Shorter before the home folk. Frank blew around him at the north turn, with 400 yards left, and eventually opened a 10-yard lead.

"I saw him tighten up a little," Shorter explained later. "I was always the guy they said you follow till the last lap, and you can beat him. But I've been working on my sprinting, and I'm really getting pretty good."

AND PRE, behind by 10 yards with about 250 to go?

"My first reaction was, I didn't have the record, I almost said, 'Forget it.' Then I thought, 'I've come too far, at least make him work for it.' And I could hear the crowd ... I felt like I could have gone 200 yards more."

Lindgren's record was the last American distance mark past two miles to fall into Pre's arsenal.

"Now I have 'em all," he grinned. "So I gotta start doing something else. If I get together with Frank or Puttemans or some of the other Europeans, I think I'll be able to get it (the record)."

In the other feature race,

Please turn to Page 3C, Col. 1

Women set two more

Pre now owns all U.S. distance marks

Continued from Page 1C.

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"I was going on my own," he said. "If I had some people to run the straight . . . I needed that extra push. But I know I can do it."

FRANCIE LARRIEU was the hit of the women's races, running 4:33.1 for an American mark (she ran 4:32.4 a week ago, but her only competition was one man — and no ladies — and the AAU probably won't recognize it).

"It's encouraging to me," she said, "knowing one thing wasn't exactly right, namely lack of sleep."

A junior at UCLA, Francie got two hours of sleep Thurs-

day night cramming for a sociology final.

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Restoration results

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880 — 1, Rick Wohlhuter, Chicago TC, 1:44.1 (Bettors world and American records of 1:44.6 set by Wohlhuter at Los Angeles in 1973; Bettors Hayward Field record of 1:47.1 set by Juris Luzins of U.S. Marines in 1971). 2, Art Sandison, CNW, 1:51.0. 3, Peter Spir, UO, 1:51.1. 4, Gary Seivers, OTC, 1:51.4. 5, Mike Gregory, OTC, 1:53.5. 6, Eric Donaldson, UO, 1:54.4. 7, Whit Bass, OTC, 1:56.4.

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WOMEN'S 220 — 1, Fran Sichtung, Coos Bay TC, 23.6. 2, Jule Ward, MHCC, 25.6. 3, Karen Lloyd, OCE, 26.1. 4, Bonita Lloyd, OCE, 26.5.

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(Register-Guard photos by Wayne Eastburn)

Oregon freshman Dave Taylor exhorts Pre at the beginning of last lap



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Continued from Page 1C

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(Register-Guard photos by Wayne Eastburn)

Oregon freshman Dave Taylor exhorts Pre at the beginning of last lap



Al Feuerbach on way to 70-7½



Larrieu betters recognized American record