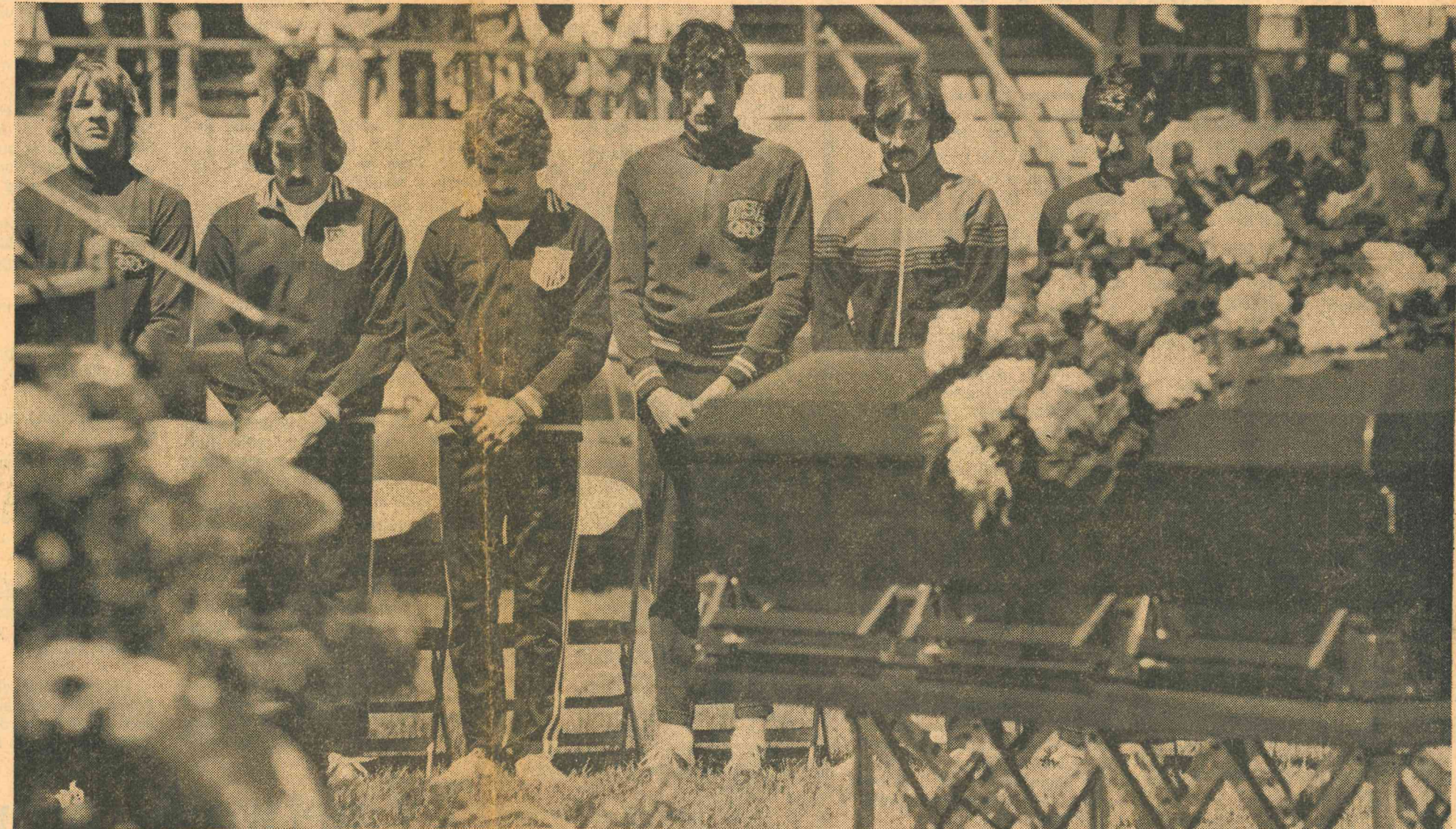


Eugene Register-Guard

Sports-Classified
Inside: Farm Report/Stocks/Theaters

EUGENE, OREGON, TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 1975



Carrying the burden of grief: Brett Williams, Bob Williams, Jim Seyler, Jon Anderson, Geoff Hollister and Frank Shorter (Register-Guard photos by Brian Lanker)

Pre's last lap back where it began

By **BLAINE NEUNHAM**
Register-Guard Sports Editor

COOS BAY — The six athletes sagged under the weight of the bronze casket as the body of Steve Prefontaine was carried onto the field at Marshfield High School here Monday.

The sun had broken through the morning overcast. The wind off the bay whipped the tall infield grass. Rather than dwelling on the agonizingly slow procession of the casket, it was easier to watch the sun glisten off the rippling grass.

In it, you could see Pre's full head of hair. That moment he fired down the backstretch, the hair blowing briskly away from his skull.

The roar of the crowd.

As the light blue hearse drove onto the track at Pirate Stadium, the crowd was still. More than 2,500 friends, relatives, townspeople and track fans had gathered here to pay their final respects.

There was no attempt in the memorial service to wring any more emotion out of those who knew Pre. You were left, basically, to reflect on your own remembrances of the great young runner.

"Let us all be grateful that we have been a part of what Steve Prefontaine, the champ, stood for. . . what he enjoyed and what he achieved," began Bill Bowerman, Pre's coach at the University of Oregon.

Pre was eulogized by his two

former coaches, Bowerman and Walt McClure, his coach at Marshfield High School. Six friends, and fellow runners, wearing track warm-ups — Jon Anderson, Frank Shorter, Geoff Hollister, Jim Seyler, Bob Williams, and Brett Williams — carried the casket.

Shorter, Anderson and Seyler wore the uniform of the U.S. Olympic team. A short distance away, runners for the Marshfield High

team were dressed in their track suits, thus the beginning and the end of Pre's 10-year running career.

It was difficult, I think, for anyone who saw the 5,000 meter race last Thursday night at Hayward Field to come to grips with Pre's body leaving Pirate Stadium, the hearse sweeping slowly around the final turn.

"He was always in a hurry, his

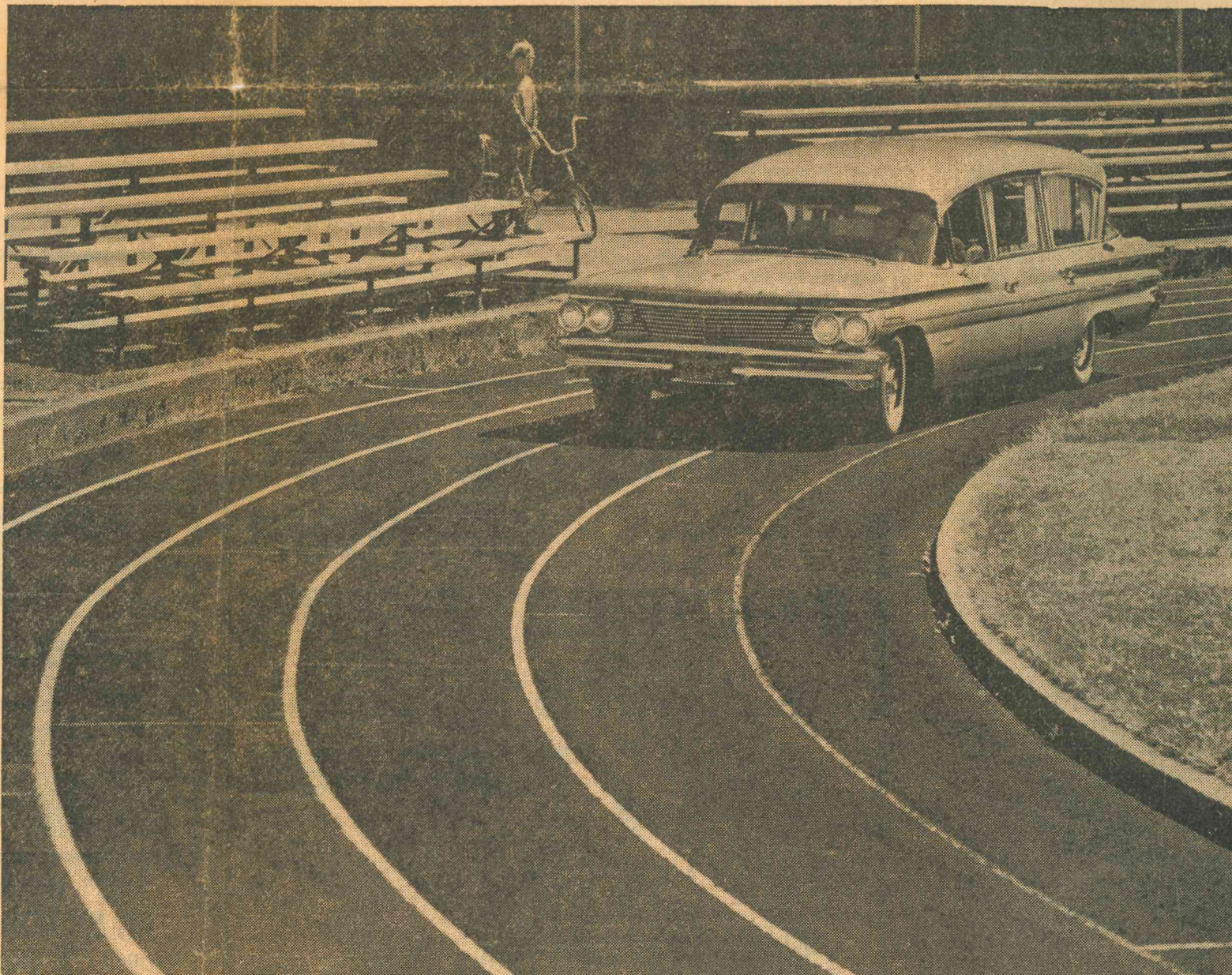
destiny could not allow for a wasted effort," spoke McClure. "Greatness is for only a few. The accomplishments of such an individual are often recognized years after the deed, the act."

"Steve Prefontaine achieved this level during his brief lifetime. I would not say that Pre was the last to leave the gym after a workout as many might believe, but rather he was generally the first, so intense

was his concentration in a workout, so great his effort, and so valuable his time."

McClure stood at the podium a few feet away from the casket which was covered with yellow chrysanthemums and forest green ferns. He talked of what made Pre more than just a good runner.

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Pre's final lap on the Marshfield High track and a young Coos Bay boy here to remember it

Rules set to prohibit sex bias

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's schools and colleges would not be required to spend equal amounts of money on women's and men's athletics but would be barred from discrimination on the

Thank You

We followed you through high school,
Your training in the dunes.
Victories came in handfuls,
Headlines followed soon.

We followed you to Hayward Field.
The college days were grand.
Your fans became an army,
Cheers echoed through the stands.

We followed you to Europe
And Munich made us proud.
You always ran your heart out
And electrified the crowd.

Your candor was refreshing.
The establishment would frown.
We understood and pulled for you
To knock the barriers down.

And now it's time to say farewell.
Who knew what lay in store?
We'll dream about what might have been
But, victory laps no more.

Still, you keep on winning, Pre,
Our debt is overdue.
For past and future victories
We owe a lot to you.

Thank you for the boys and girls
who jog the whole year 'round.
Thank you for your loyalty to a
dedicated town.
Thanks for the example; discipline
and sacrifice, high prices paid.
Thanks for all the memories that
time will never fade.
The Track Fans of Oregon

Goodby, Pre

Young man not yet reached his prime,
fastest in the land,
ran across the finish line
waving to the stands.
His people were all there to see him.
Little did they know
he would take his final bow.
This was his last show.

Later on that evening
the one who'd come so far
lost his young life on the road
alone beneath the stars.
But wherever he may be
in spite of loss and pain
in hearts of those whom he inspired
the runner will remain.

If there's a time and season
for each of us to die
what's the rhyme or reason
when young dreams are sailing high?
Unless it's true, as they say,
'the best of us die young.'
So let us simply hope and pray
his victories are won.

Goodby, Pre.
Your best was always ours to see.
Now the race is over
may you rest in peace.

Paul Halpern
Eugene

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Pre's last lap in Coos Bay

Continued from Page 1C

"To me, the characteristic that separated Pre from the rest of the field was his pride. It was so keen and intense with him, that it was frightening.

"Man imposes his own limitations. Limitation was not in Steve's frame of reference."

The Prefontaine family asked that a letter from Neal Steinhauer, the former University of Oregon shot putter, be read.

In it, Steinhauer told the family of the day in a U of O fraternity house that Pre "gave his life to God.

"I firmly believe God will take care of Steve," wrote Steinhauer.

Jan Prefontaine, a cousin from Washington, D.C., who had written a song about Pre during his visit to the East Coast in early 1974, arrived midway through the service, the airline baggage tag dangling from her guitar.

She sang the song, and urged the crowd to join in the singing. The crowd couldn't respond.

The final verse of the song said:

"To be a strong but gentle man not afraid to speak the truth,

To stand against a raging storm and try to right the tide of wrongs.

You're a free man full of wonder here to stay,

You've touched our hearts in a peaceful loving way, Our Pre."

Miss Prefontaine said news reports in the East constantly referred to the love people in Oregon had for Pre.

"Well," she said slowly, "he loved you too." And she told of suggestions by other runners that he leave Oregon.

"I could never leave my people," was his answer, she said.

A floral arrangement of the flag of Finland, a blue cross on a white field, was presented to Prefontaine's family on behalf of the Finnish athletes who came to the United States after vigorous efforts by Pre to cut through the red tape of amateur athletics.

As the hearse left the stadium for a private burial at Sunset Memorial Park in Coos Bay, a couple in their twenties got up from seats under the scoreboard. The woman was crying.

The man put his arm around her as they walked slowly down the track and off across a grass field. A few moments later, as the stands emptied, four young Coos Bay kids sprinted around the track in a race.

Running, like life, will go on in Coos Bay, but they'll never forget Pre.

Pre service tonight

Three close friends of Prefontaine will conduct a brief memorial service at 8 p.m. today at Hayward Field. Former UO track coach Bill Bowerman, marathon Olympian Kenny Moore and distance runner Frank Shorter will deliver eulogies.

ITA cancels meet

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The International Track Association said Monday its scheduled meet in Philadelphia on June 14 has been cancelled but other scheduled meets will be held.