

In Retrospect



Frozen freaks

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YOU CAN TAKE the warmth out of the Twilight Meet, but not the emotion.

Or the history, or the tradition, or the performances.

There are those who question even having a Twilight Meet in April. Why make the cold colder and the wind stronger by running a track meet at night just because they've always run it at night?

The Twilight Meet, of course, was the annual intrasquad affair held in early June, an appropriate time for keen competition in the lull between the Pac-8 championships and the NCAA meet.



PREFONTAINE

Behind Puttemans

should be a part of that crazy, capacity, shivering crowd that goes bananas over a six-mile run.

"You blow your wad in the Twilight Meet," said Paul Geis.

"I really got excited watching Pre run that six-mile. So excited, I wasn't sure how ready I'd be to run the mile."

IT'S DIFFICULT to comprehend a Twilight Meet, the incongruity of world-class performances in an intrasquad meet.

North Eugene High teacher Mike Manley rejects the advice of his doctor, and paces Pre through the first two miles. Mike Manley, school teacher and Olympic steeplechaser.

Then there was a guy named Jim Ferris, a guy people were yelling at to move over on the track so Pre could roar by on the inside.

"Jim was great," said Pre. "He was helping me. The People didn't understand."

Ferris picked it up as Pre closed in and for two laps led the way.

Oregon freshman Terry Williams, although on the way to setting a varsity record for 10,000 meters, picked it up as Pre passed, and he, too, helped.

So did a subtle pat on the behind from Jon Anderson, himself an Olympian, as Pre started the charge home.

"The guys told me they could see me lift up as I went by the grandstand," said Pre. "I sure wish the other grandstand was there."

The crowd was superb, and cheered lustily for both the Oregon distance phenoms, Pre and Paul.

Two years ago, however, the NCAA moved into the first week in June and the Twilight Meet grabbed longjohns, mittens and the vitamin C, and moved into April.

A year ago, the temperature was 46 degrees and a 12-mile-an-hour wind put the chill factor at 34 degrees.

A miserable night, the night Steve Prefontaine became the world's ninth fastest miler at 3:55.0.

Daylight Saving Time and a few degrees made Saturday night's evening bearable, and two races made it super. Those in the world who are serious about their track and field

"I THINK PRE felt he had to re-establish his credibility here," said Geis, "and he certainly did that. I'm very impressed with what he did."

Said Pre, "I definitely feel ready to get my Hayward Field three-mile record back . . ."

Watching the Twilight Meet, it is difficult to understand just how good Prefontaine and Geis are. Consider, for a moment, that only Emiel Puttemans of Belgium has run better times for the distances than Pre. That with his 27:43.6 for 10,000 meters, Pre has polished off Kip Keino and now ranks as the No. 2 distance runner of all time.

A look at their best times:

	Puttemans	Pre	Keino	Geis
Three-Mile	3:56.0	3:54.6	3:53.1	3:58.0
Two-Mile	8:16.4	8:19.4	8:25.2	8:24.8
One-Mile	12:47.8	12:53.4	12:57.4	12:55.8
500 meters	13:13.0	13:22.4	13:24.2	13:29.0
1,000 meters	27:39.6	27:43.6	28:06.4	no time

"I've got to start concentrating on world records," said Pre, who was just realizing that if he'd have run just six miles, and used a finishing kick for that race and not the 10,000, he would have had the world mark.

One week we have Bill Dellinger saying that Paul Geis could have run under 12:50 for the three-mile, and the next week saying that Pre would have broken the world six-mile record if the race had been that distance.

HARD TO imagine, especially in the cold chill of April.

"I've got to look ahead," said Pre. "I can't run here in front of this crowd very often anymore," he said, "so I've got to think about other things: World records and running in Europe."

It all makes you wish the AAU meet were being held in Eugene this summer. Had Hayward Field been built last fall instead of languishing for nearly a year in the snarl of red tape, it would have been.

When the new grandstand is finished, then the AAU meet will come. Like in 1975.

Then can the Olympic Trials be far behind? Can you think in terms of a Hayward Field crowd errupting in the moments before Pre and Paul step to the line in the 5,000-meter final.

If you can, then you've got to be one of those frozen freaks who spends Saturday nights in April watching track meets.