



# Little bit of Europe

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AS THE pro track tour moves from one smoky arena to another and from one Steve Smith-Bob Seagren hassle to another, Steve Prefontaine is content to stay an amateur.

Looking like just another jogger, Pre raced by daffodils standing at attention before a warm spring sun. He wore a faded blue sweat shirt, shorts and running shoes. No fancy USA warmups.

Only the style and the incredible swiftness separated him from the pluggers padding the sidewalks along Hilyard.



## PREFONTAINE

*Wants to teach*

decathlete in the 1972 Olympic trials. A guy who loved the Eugene scene so much, he decided to move his muscles here and set up training.

Jeff also needs to eat.

Although their participation is marginal, and will be marginal, Pre, Bannister, and Geoff Hollister, the dynamo behind the successful Athletic Dept. shoe store here, are hooked up with the new Decathlon Club.

"It's not a health spa," says Hollister. "To us, health spa has a bad connotation. You think of people passively letting rollers take fat off.

"The Decathlon Club will be a jogging oriented health club."

"I want to stay in Eugene," he said. "Really, I haven't talked to the pros in quite a while. I guess I scared them off when I talked money."

With a college degree in his jogging suit, Pre would like to take advantage of his schooling, his reputation, and all the while to continue running.

Better said than run.

Pre pumps a little beer at the Paddock, enough work to pay a few bills. The per diem from the indoor track travel helps, too.

But Pre and other athletes would like to get their roots into the Eugene economy.

## MEET JEFF BANNISTER,

America's top

**THREE EUGENE** men — Dan Desler, Hans Backer and Bill Wheatley — are ready to put up between \$50,000 and \$75,000 to get the club underway.

It will be built on the third floor of the new Atrium, the new downtown mini-mall which presently has one floor and a second underway. The Decathlon Club has an office on the first floor to solicit memberships.

“I want to feel that I’m helping the community,” said Pre.

“Right now I run by a lot of people and I want to stop and say, ‘Hey, why don’t you run a little differently so you’ll get more out of it and have more fun.’”

“But right now I’m afraid they’d say, ‘Who the hell are you?’”

In other words, Pre wants to teach running. For his satisfaction and bank account.

Pre and Hollister will run a jogging program, while Bannister will handle the weightlifting.

The jogging will center around a 37-lap-to-the-mile indoor track. Although not likely to be the site of any world records, it should be a welcome shelter for joggers in the chill and wet of winter.

Although construction will not begin until the club has 200 memberships, Hollister and Pre are ready now to begin jogging classes each morning (7 a.m.) and evening (5 p.m.). They will charge \$10 per month for the thrice weekly instruction.

“**PEOPLE NEED** to feel obligated,” said Hollister. “They also need others to share in the pain and pleasure of running. We hope to provide that, as well as instruction.

“There has yet to be a runner at the University of Oregon who hasn’t changed his technique under the coaching of Bill Bowerman and Bill Dellinger.”

Pre may be skating on thin ice with the Amateur Athletic Union. Coaching for pay is not considered amateurish.

“It’s what I’m trained to do, it’s my occupation,” said Pre. “They can’t tell us what to do.”

Where have you heard that before?

The Decathlon Club may go in Eugene. If it does, it will mark a little bit of Europe in America. It represents a health club in the European style.

“We’ll have a lounge for the businessmen to relax in during the day,” said Hollister, “but we’re not going to be hypocritical and allow smoking.”

Besides Pre, Bannister and Hollister, Bill Bowerman is on the club’s advisory board, as are some of the noted orthopedic doctors in the area.

“**WE CAN** become a center for running in the area,” said Hollister. “We’d like to have a dinner meeting once a week. Athletes like Dave Wottle, Jim Ryun and Francie Larrieu have been through here recently and would be happy to speak to the group.”

There’s a sales pitching going on, all right. The memberships, which include running uniforms, laundry, use of the indoor track, weight room, sauna and ice plunge, as well as the running instruction, are \$25 a month.

Pre will be happy to talk to you about it. Catch him on Hilyard. Pull along side, do a five-minute-per-mile pace, and ask questions.

That’s if you can talk. If you can’t, you need his help.