



Warmly wooded

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WALKING OUT OF Hayward Field in the cold darkness of a Sunday evening, the lights on the scoreboard still shone brightly with Steve Prefontaine's American record of 13:22.8.

Gone were the 16,800 people who had jammed every inch of ancient Hayward Field on the last of 10 days of watching America's best select themselves for the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich.

Eugene had done itself proud.

It had shown the world 95-degree weather, beautiful 75-degree evenings which warmly wooed world records, and it showed a little of its more publicized self, that light rain which fell on the last Saturday.

It had also shown an unwavering interest for track and field. Those who couldn't get tickets for the final day were among the 5,100 who stuffed Howe Field to watch the hammer throw final.

THE FINAL ATTENDANCE count was 140,100, ranking this meet behind only the 1932 Olympic Games at Los Angeles and the 1962 USA-USSR meet at Stanford in total attendance.

The world had watched, and the world was impressed.

With a new stadium, this meet could just be the beginning for Eugene, which has already been asked to apply for the 1976 Olympic Trials and may well be on the way to securing the 1974 National AAU championships.

And Bill Bowerman keeps talking about bringing the Pan-American Games to Eugene.

"Wouldn't that be wonderful," he said Sunday night as the last spectators left the stadium. "I know they've been promised for the other hemisphere but that doesn't mean we can't go after them.

"That would just be perfect for us."

Living and working here, it is easy to lose sight of the enormous attention given this meet. Consider these facts:

- Over 250 writers and photographers covered the trials. In addition to coverage by radio, television, newspaper and magazines in this country, representatives were here from Japan, Germany, England, France, Sweden and Switzerland.

- More than a half million words were written about the meet. Western Union transmitted an estimated 250,000 words and Sports Communications Inc. transmitted another 280,000 words.

- More than 200,000 sheets of paper were used to service the press with information about the meet, including lane assignments, final results and quotes.

- The athletes at Bean Hall reportedly consumed 3,800 steaks, representing 1.2 tons of meat.

There was only slightly more preparation for the Invasion of Normandy.



SATURDAY IT WAS Brian Oldfield, the colorfully competent shot putter, who added that something extra. Sunday it was a bunch of guys wearing "Stop Pre" T-shirts.

"The idea was hatched during the decathlon," said Bob Hersh, a New York City attorney. "It was all in fun . . . nothing against Pre. It was just our answer to the "Go Pre" shirts and the partisan crowd here.

"The shirts were made up using a silk screen process in the basement of a Eugene resident who must remain nameless."

The Eugene resident was Tom Gillespie, who



turned out 26 of the "Stop Pre" shirts, one of which was worn by Gerry Lindgren while he was warming up for the 5,000 meter final.

"We're Pre fans," said Tom's brother, John. "In fact, my brother wouldn't wear one during the race because he's such a fan. We go to all the dual meets and everything."

Most of the people wearing them were the workers from Track & Field News.

The magazines' managing editor, Dick Drake, apparently originated the idea.

"IT WAS OUR INTENTION," continued John Gillespie, "to make some T-shirts with the words 'New York Jerk' on them. We were going to have a steeplechase pit and a tape measure on the front.

"But we were persuaded by Dick Drake and Bob Hersh to make the 'Stop Pre' shirts instead. It was just for fun."

It wasn't too funny during the race when the locals discovered the group in the press box wearing the inflammatory shirts. In Pre country, that type of action can get a man in trouble.

The Go's conquered the Stop's on the track and then all was well when Prefontaine accepted one of the shirts from John Gillespie after the race.

"I can have this?" asked Pre.

"Do you want it?" replied Gillespie.

"For sure," said Pre.

They may have a better chance of Stopping Pre in a Eugene basement than they will in Munich.