

# CLANCY EDWARDS

by Jon Hendershott

**I**t was a busy year for Clancy Edwards in 1978. He ran in 36 outdoor meets, 15 in the U.S. and 21 in Europe. He won both sprints at both the NCAA and AAU, the first sprinter in 35 years to pull off the dashman's double double.

He took the NCAA 100 in a world-pacing 10.07 after earlier in the spring running a global-leading 20.03 in the UCLA dual meet.

But those fine efforts were only turned in on the homefront for the stocky (5-9/168) Southern Cal senior. Once in Europe, the now-23-year-old Edwards met and often beat the cream of the world's sprinters, posting major wins in Formia (20.32 vs. Pietro Mennea), Dagens Nyheter in Stockholm (10.34/20.43) and Warsaw's Michalowicz Memorial (10.36). Understandably, he was losing more than he was winning by September, in his 7th consecutive month of top-flight competition.

But 1978 was by no means unusual. Edwards' '77 season, in fact, was even more of a marathon as Clancy competed in a whopping 48 outdoor meets, 37 of them during a whistle-stop Continental summer.

Regardless of where it was displayed, Edwards' turn of speed was scintillating, coming as it often did after a dismal start which often left Clancy back in the pack.

Nowhere was this more evident in 1978 than in his NCAA 100 semi. At least 2m behind the field with half the race gone, Edwards suddenly changed gears, pumped his stiff arms and blazed to the front. The crowd was electrified.

The finish of the AAU century was only slightly less spectacular as Edwards spurred from 3rd to victory in literally the last stride.

The '78 campaign was especially gratifying for the Santa Ana native, since cramps had cut him down in the '77 national meets, injuries had hobbled him at the '76 Olympic Trials and personal problems had caused him to leave Cal Poly/SLO after scoring College Division victories in '74 and '75.

But Edwards, softspoken and easygoing, got it all back together at USC—and his name has been near the forefront of world sprinting since. Now his objective is to put the name of Clancy Edwards at the top of the biggest meet, 2 years hence in Moscow.

32—November 1978

**T&FN:** You achieved so much during 1978, but it was a long season, too. Is it difficult to keep your sharpness and speed over such a long year?

**Edwards:** Yes, it is. I guess it's more of an emotional thing, the mental aspect of trying to keep yourself in shape every day.

**T&FN:** You said that last year there were times when you could use small meets as training.

**Edwards:** Sure, they were just like a workout. I did that some this year, too. This summer it seemed like I had more time. I didn't run in as many meets as I did last summer, so I had more freedom away from the track.

**T&FN:** When the outdoor season started for you back at the end of February, had you intended to run all summer in Europe?

**Edwards:** Well, I wasn't expecting to run that much. I wanted most to run in the top meets against the very best guys. But when I was over there, I got bored so I hit some of the smaller meets.

They helped kill time, instead of sitting somewhere for a week and waiting for another meet. The small meets gave me something to do. You can sightsee only so much and the small meets helped occupy my time.

**T&FN:** [USC head coach] Vern Wolfe said he felt your '77 summer in Europe really made you as a world-class sprinter.

**Edwards:** Well, I'm not sure. See, this hasn't really gotten to my head yet. I'm just waiting for the Olympic Games.

I know it turned my life around as far as track goes. It taught me I could compete right up there with the very best. I mean, I won some College Division races at Cal Poly, but that can't compare to winning the World University Games or the World Cup and beating the best sprinters in the world.

**T&FN:** Was your college season

tough, since you ran the sprint double, plus the relay, several times during the year?

**Edwards:** Well, no, but it's different over here. You want to do it. There's the team depending on you and the people who come to watch you. To me, the season was short.

But I wasn't running the double every week. We were lucky to have a lot of guys who could pick up the slack for me.

**T&FN:** Could you choose when you would run what was really a sprint triple?

**Edwards:** Not really. The coaches and I would look over our opponents each week and talk it over and decide if I needed to run both sprints.

**T&FN:** How important, then, was it for you to try the sprint double at the NCAA?

**Edwards:** My approach was that I wanted to win both to make up for my injury last year. It was also very important to me to get the team championship. I really wanted a championship ring, so I could wear it around campus and people would see it and know we were the best. I wanted it all because '77 was a bad year for me at the NCAA.

**T&FN:** You were virtually injury-free all during the college season, unlike '77. What was the difference?

**Edwards:** I think I was just more aware of staying in good health. I did my stretching before every workout and meet. A lot of my problems in '77 were due to muscle cramps, so I took vitamins and mineral supplements and salt tablets this year.

**T&FN:** How did you feel during the NCAA races?

**Edwards:** I knew I had a lot to do, but I tried not to put all the pressure on myself. I looked around for the team, because I knew they would help me out. It was just one of those things you have to do without psyching yourself out.

Track & Field News

**T&FN:** When did you definitely decide you would double in both national meets?

**Edwards:** I knew it before the season started because I just had to take revenge for '77. I guess you could say that my running this year was caused a lot by what I didn't do last year.

**T&FN:** Besides redeeming yourself, what else did you hope to achieve by winning the sprints in both meets?

**Edwards:** My whole season was geared to being the No. 1 sprinter in the world. But once I got to the meets, I wasn't sure I could win both because there were such heavy fields at both meets.

**T&FN:** Was any one race especially satisfying during all of '78?

**Edwards:** I liked the 200 I ran against UCLA as well as the NCAA 100 because they gave me the fastest times in the world this year.

**T&FN:** That NCAA semi had to be one of your most competitive races, when you came from so far back.

**Edwards (laughs):** Yeah, coach Wolfe told me that made him a little nervous. Sort of woke him up.

**T&FN:** Obviously you don't intend to get out as late as you did in that race.

**Edwards:** I actually like to get out late, but the NCAA forced me to get out even later with the one-false-start rule. That puts a lot of pressure on a sprinter, knowing if you false start you're out.

I go into a meet, well, not super confident, but certain I'll be among the top finishers. I don't want to put all the pressure on myself by telling myself I have to win the race. That false start rule kinda plays with your mind.

**T&FN:** Have you always run that way, coming on strong at the end?

**Edwards:** Yeah, I have. I've always had a slow start.

**T&FN:** And you don't feel that puts pressure on you? You must be very confident of your finish.

**Edwards:** Yeah, there's pressure, but that's why I run faster. It gets me scared.

**T&FN:** What were you thinking during that NCAA semi when you were so far back?

**Edwards:** Well, I felt like I was just getting warmed up. I know exactly where I can change to another gear. I ran races like that all year long. That extra gear just comes naturally. I can see everyone in front of me and, I don't know, I get really mad or tell myself to really run or something.

**T&FN:** What did you think about the finish of the AAU 100? Did you think your closing rush had won it for you?

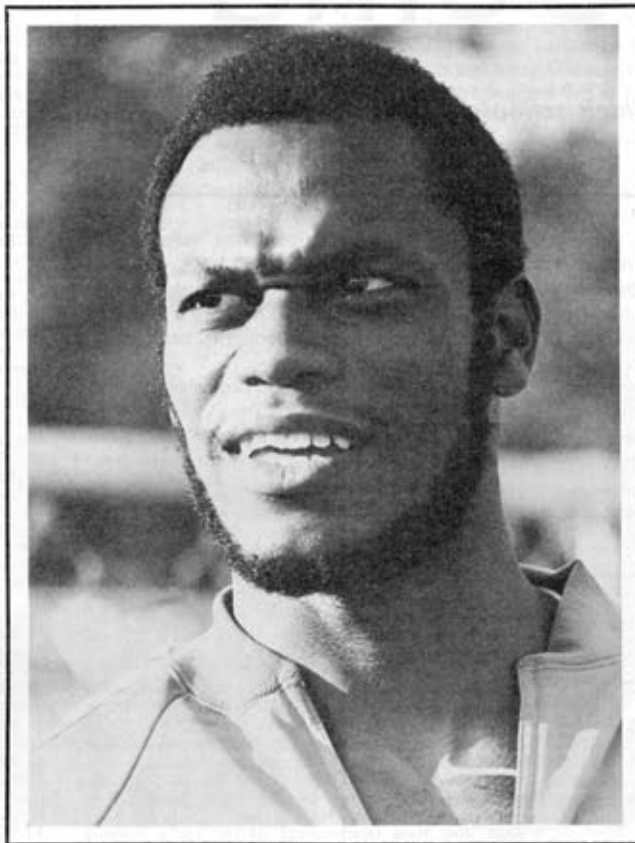
**Edwards:** No, I thought Donald Quarrie had won it. Like I told the reporters that day, when I looked over I

thought he had crossed the finish line. All the reporters went over to him, so I was sure he had won. Then when it was announced I had won, I was really shocked.

**T&FN:** But pleased certainly, because you wanted to win the double?

**Edwards:** Yes, and that was the first time I had ever made the AAU 100 final. I placed 3rd in the 200 in '76, but I had never made the 100 final before.

**T&FN:** Was the 100 the most pleasing



NCAA race?

**Edwards:** Yes, it... well, I don't know. I was pleased with all of them really. When you win, you have to be pretty happy.

But I was happy with the 100 time because it was the world's fastest. Plus it was a thrill to beat Harvey Glance. It was exciting to know that everything was going so well with our team. That was a great way to end my college career, going out on top.

**T&FN:** Last year you said the 200 was your better race and you had your most notable successes at 200. But this year you were brilliant in both, so has your favorite changed?

**Edwards:** No, it's still the 200. It's just my start in the 100, plus I get stronger as the race goes on. I'm more confident in the 200.

**T&FN:** You said you planned to double in both Nationals from the start of the year. Then there was the relay, the important college meets, the conference. What was your mental approach to that kind of demand?

**Edwards:** Well, I felt that if I could do

all that, I could go to any meet in Europe and run against anybody I had to. I could meet the top guy in America or Europe or the world.

That's what really psyched me up in practice when I got bored, just thinking about so many big races coming up that I wanted to shoot for. I knew that running well would be my ticket.

**T&FN:** Now '79 will present a different challenge because you won't be a part of the college team and program. Are you expecting it to be a big transitional year for you?

**Edwards:** It will be a big turnaround because I won't be competing with the team every week. I'll have a lot less meets in the spring. I think it could get boring not competing every week.

**T&FN:** How important are the Olympics to you?

**Edwards:** It's the only thing I'm shooting for; the biggest meet of my life. It's important for me to go to the Olympics because of the great times I've run. It's proving in the biggest one of all that I don't choke under pressure.

**T&FN:** Has not making the '76 team been a big motivator to keep you training and running well to 1980?

**Edwards:** It is. I see people I know, like Donald, who have been to the Games and sometimes they talk about how it feels to run in the Olympics and I just want to go. I was so disappointed not to go in '76 that I didn't even watch the Olympics. It's once in a lifetime; the absolute tops.

**T&FN:** We spoke of transitional years and it's possible that '79 might work out well, since you can gear your season to peaking in Europe rather than during the college season.

**Edwards:** That's possible because it seems that most everything between here and the summer is meaningless. You don't have a college to run for, so the only thing you really have to peak for is the AAU. Then that gets you rolling when you head to Europe.

**T&FN:** It's an "iffy" question, but if you hadn't gone back to college and kept sprinting, where might Clancy Edwards be right now?

**Edwards:** That's hard to answer. If you're not running, there are many things to get into. Bad things and good things. I don't know.

But I do know that sprinting has made me somebody. It has made me what I am today. □

EDWARDS' PROGRESSION (with World & U.S. Rank):				
1973	17	Calif HS	9.6v	21.1'
1974	18	Cal Poly	9.4v (-, 6)	20.5' (9, 3)
1975	19	Cal Poly	10.34 (-, 8)	20.61 (13, 6)
1976	20	Tobias	10.43	20.83
1977	21	Sn Cal	10.18 (5, 3)	20.13 (3, 1)
1978	22	Sn Cal	10.07 (?)	20.03 (?)

## T&FN Interview

# JAMES BUTTS

by Jon Hendershott

**L**ife has not made it easy for James Butts to achieve what he has achieved in the triple jump.

The '76 Olympic silver medal, the first TJ medal won by an American in more than 40 years; two raisings of the American record this year, first 56-5½ at the Pepsi meet, then 56-6¼ at Helsinki's World Games to become the No. 6 performer in world history. He is the leader of the powerful U.S. triple jump corps.

None of it has come easily. The 28-year-old (5/9/50) former UCLA leaper worked at two jobs during much of his Olympic preparation, getting along on 4 hours of sleep a night (5 was a luxury).

Then it was off to work as a security agent at the May Co., one of the largest department stores in Los Angeles. After that, it was a shift delivering laundry around the UCLA Medical Center.

But it was all necessary. Butts's mother is under a physician's constant care, and he helps his sister through school.

He willingly accepted these responsibilities, all the while he was training for the Olympics he had missed by 3" in 1972 when he placed 4th in the U.S. Trials.

But he made it in '76 and at Montreal he came within 4¼" of taking away Viktor Saneyev's third gold medal.

And Butts is still supporting his family—while jumping better than ever. He is convinced he can be the first man to hop-step-and-jump beyond 60 feet—which would be a marked raising of Joao Oliveira's 58-8¼ world record.

He is squarely on the road to Moscow, and has been since Montreal.

Butts is a quiet man and although his voice is soft, he is tough-minded and determined when it comes to achieving the goals he has set out for himself in the fine art of triple jumping.

And working to achieve something is nothing new to James Butts.

**T&FN:** Things were tight before and after Montreal with having 2 jobs and all that, but you had goals of what you wanted to jump at that time so you have kept working toward those goals. But in terms of work, are things still pretty tight in your life?

**Butts:** Well, I cut the hospital job loose. Trying to train and compete and hold 2 jobs was just too much to deal with. I still have the security job—and going to work unarmed every day definitely keeps my adrenaline flowing.

**T&FN:** There was a story in the papers earlier this year about you catching 2 thieves who had run into a funeral.

**Butts:** I dress in everyday clothes on the job; sort of blend into the furniture, you might say. They took some merchandise right in front of me and walked out.

They saw somebody coming after them, so they ducked into a mortuary. Sat with the family, no less. I just waited outside until it was time for the family to come out and then we snatched both of them, one at a time.

**T&FN:** Do you get much of that kind of thing?

**Butts:** We're faced with different situations all the time. Being on the job unarmed is dangerous in itself. The incidence of bodily harm is high and it can worry you, especially if you are thinking about competing on a world-class level after being hurt.

**T&FN:** You're just back from Europe. This was really your first full summer over there.

**Butts:** Yes, and it's been a good learning situation. I've had to adjust to the European environment. Some countries were very dusty, others had more pollen, others were dry or cold, so my body had to continually adjust.

It was good for learning how to compete, train, condition, besides getting familiar with my competition over there. And I was breaking records while doing it. That keeps me really souped up and fired up and ready to do what I have to do.

**T&FN:** How is your training situation at home now? At the time of Montreal,

you had to get up at 5 in the morning to train.

**Butts:** Since I cut out one of the jobs, I don't have to get up at 5. Now I get up at 7. I have to be to work by 1 in the afternoon and I work until 10 at night. It has worked out a little better. I just have to concentrate on getting more rest and staying healthy.

**T&FN:** And you still care for your mother and help your sister in school?

**Butts:** I'm still faced with that situation. I've had raises at work which have helped some, but I did give up the other job, so I've had to conserve more than I did before.

My mother is still under doctor's care. I get all the bills. My sister is going to school. I'm in a kind of brother-father-son situation. It's a role I've accepted because that way I can be understanding, try to be a son and also take on a burden that my mother would otherwise have to take on.

**T&FN:** After Montreal, you talked about the sacrifices you made to prepare for the Games, both physically and mentally. But now you do have your small goatee and beard back, two things you willingly gave up then. Would you say you have been able to ease up a little on yourself in terms of what you can give and take?

**Butts:** I'm still disciplined on most of the standards I set for myself. But I do consider this to be an "off season." I was traveling every day, so I didn't worry so much about shaving. The beard is there because I feel I'm in training right now.

When I go into the major competitions, it will be just like going into combat. I'll go in there in full battle dress. The beard will be gone. I was clean-shaven at the time of the AAU because I was disciplined for that competition.

But this is a training year. It isn't a Pan-Am year, it isn't an Olympic year.

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