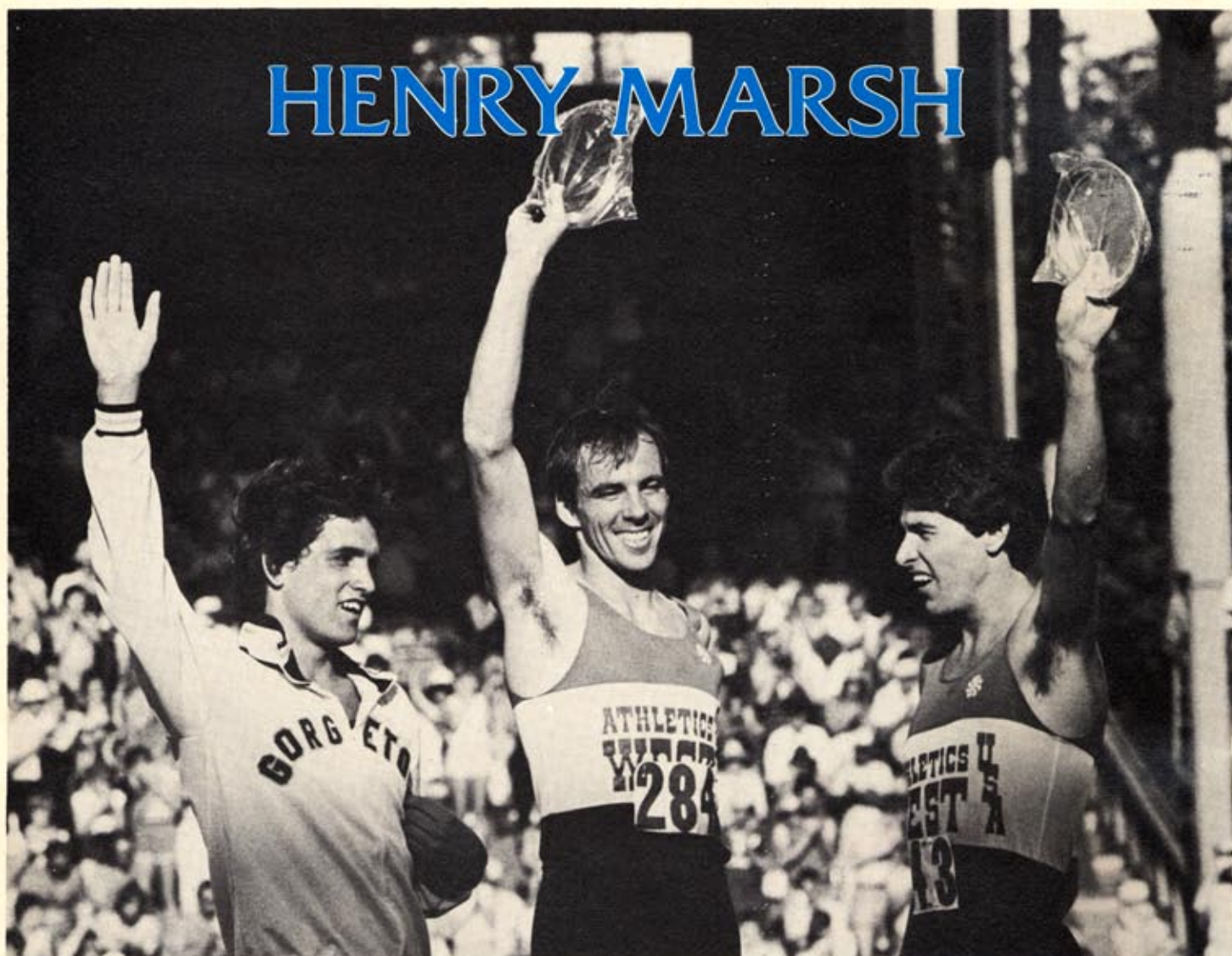


HENRY MARSH



Don Chadez

Henry Marsh is an engagingly open man, frank-speaking and quite willing to bare his innermost thoughts, whether about steeplechasing, the adjustments of family life or his goals for the future.

Marsh really has come a long way in a short time. A 9:25.0 steepler as a BYU freshman in 1973, Marsh then went on his Mormon mission to Brazil for the next 2 years. He ran very little during those 2 years, yet in his first year back, the Olympic year of 1976, he ran 8:27.4 to make the U.S. team and then 8:23.99 for 10th in the Games.

He has only gotten better since. An 8:21.55 American Record followed in 1977, which remained his PR until this year's Trials. He was ranked as the No. 1 American in '76, '78 and '79 and 2nd in '78. Last year he rated 6th in the world, his highest global rating yet, after victories in the AAU, Pan-Am and Spartakiad meets and 4th in the World Cup.

One of the most likable things about the 26-year-old law student is his candidness. He is honest in his views, but never pushy in expressing them. Nine days after his record run in Eugene, he relaxed with his 13-month-old son Jimmy, worked

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by Jon Hendershott

on a dish of ice cream and talked about the steeplechase and Henry Marsh.

T&FN: Just about a year ago, you said your goals in the steeplechase were to: 1. break the American Record; 2. make the all-time world top 10; 3. make the Olympic team; and 4. improve on your 10th place of Montreal. You did 3 of those 4 in one race in Eugene.

Marsh: Those were still my goals going into the race. I had seen the all-time top 10 list and I thought I was capable of getting on it, of running in the mid-teens.

But I was kind of discouraged, too, because I had such a big improvement in '76, coming from basically nowhere. In '77, I improved a little more and broke the American Record so that was a very satisfying year. But since '77, I really hadn't had a big improvement. I was always

right up there, I always ran consistently, but I hadn't had that breakthrough that I had been waiting for.

T&FN: Your college coach once said you race the clock and not people. Do you still?

Marsh: I think so. Going into the Trials, Doug [Brown] had beaten me pretty good at both the TFA in Wichita and at the TAC meet. I've thought about it and really the one thing I can pin both those races to is that they were run in hot weather and I don't run that well when it's real warm. I'm used to the cool weather up here in Eugene, but Doug had been in Boulder where it had been warm.

So before the Trials, I told myself that I would just have to run my race and not Doug's. That just wasn't for me.

I was one second fast at the mile (4:27) but I tried just to divorce myself from where everyone else was, at least until

PHOTO: Henry Marsh on the victory stand, flanked by AW teammate Doug Brown and John Gregorek.

Track & Field News

the mile was over. I knew that if everyone else went out a lot harder than me, they would die. I was still running 8:23 pace.

If they didn't go out that much harder than me, then they would be right within my range. So I felt secure in what I was doing. I felt that if Doug went out that hard and sustained it, he was just the better man than me. Not that I wouldn't give it all I had, but he would just have more on that day. An athlete has to accept that.

Matter of fact, I conceded the race to Doug in our warmups, I honestly thought he had it. After the race he ran at the TAC, when it was so hot, I thought he could run about 8:16.

T&FN: *Do you ever worry that someone will get out ahead of you early and just keep on going?*

Marsh: That's just what Doug did at the TAC. I was already resigned to the fact that if Doug took off and left me and I couldn't catch him, it was just because he was better that day. I just figured out how I could run my race so that I could get the fastest time.

Doug knew that his race was to go out and try to leave me if he could and try to take away my kick. That's my advantage, where his strong point is his strength. He's one of the best 10,000 men in this country and he has great range in the distances. He knew that's what he had to do.

T&FN: *Did you think the time was as fast as it was?*

Marsh: Well, I was worried most about making the Olympic team rather than what my time would be. When I went by with a lap to go, I thought I saw 7:11 and that was the first time I realized it was fast. I thought with an average last lap I could finish under the American Record.

T&FN: *Do you recall any particular reaction at that moment?*

Marsh (laughs): I was *psyched*. I still felt fine and I got really excited in the last lap, which really helped. There are certain times in a race when you get surges of adrenaline—it really lifted me when I passed Randy Jackson because I thought he would be right in there and I know that when I pass someone, they are gone because they usually have been working harder than me. Those lifts really help your race.

I can honestly say that for the Trials, I was as high for a race as I have ever been. The Olympics and World Cup and a lot of big races aside, the Trials still had a lot of importance for me and I was really up for it.

T&FN: *In the post-race interview, you said it all hadn't sunk in yet. Has it now? What do you feel about having run 8:15?*

Marsh: It has sunk in more. You see results of people like Bayi—and I was surprised to see him run the steeple—and when they run slower than you have it can't help but make you think differently, give you a different outlook.

So it's sunk in more and the paper
The Bible of the Sport

here mentioned that I would have battled it out with people like Bayi and Malinowski in Moscow. Malinowski might run an 8:10, but I can't help thinking now that I've got the ability to run with guys like that and there is an outside chance I could have medaled in Moscow.

A race like that just gives you a different mental outlook; it breaks down some mental barriers. I think you tend to put yourself in categories and when you have a big breakthrough, you can place yourself in a little higher bracket. It improves your mental outlook, and in track, that is very important.

T&FN: *So where do you go from here? Any particular goals in the steeple?*

Marsh: I really haven't evaluated things in terms of time. I want to go to Europe and race those people when I'm in what should be good shape.

I know next year will be much tougher in school because I had to cut back on classes this year. Really, what I'm looking forward to most is the following year when I'm out of school. I can get situated in my job, work part-time with Nike subsidizing the rest, train like I want and have my evenings with my family. That would be ideal. I'm looking forward to that day.

Maybe my breakthrough this year really is out of place. Maybe I should have run that fast last year, until I got mono. You can play a lot of "maybe" games, but "maybe" last year I would have ranked No. 1 in the world if I had won the World Cup and hadn't caught mono.

But if I had run 8:18 last year and won the World Cup and rated 1st, maybe there would have been a lot more pressure this year and I wouldn't have run well this year. Maybe there wouldn't have been the big breakthrough; it would have been just the status quo.

Who knows, but I'm the type who just says, "Keep working at it and we'll see what comes and what comes is where I'm at."

T&FN: *Was it an advantage for you to have run the Trials in Eugene, on what essentially is your "home track"?*

Marsh: I definitely think so. I've lived here and gone to school here for 2 years and we have a lot of friends through school and particularly through the Mormon church. That is a very close-knit community. In fact, they were running the concession stands and they all left during my race and yelled and cheered.

Also, just training on the track everyday and being comfortable with that was important. And another big factor is just living at home. I was going to school all week so I stayed in my regular routine, which took off a lot of pressure. I felt quite relaxed—not that I didn't daydream some in class that week.

T&FN: *It's obvious that living in Eugene has affected your running and performing quite positively.*

Marsh: It has and in the fall I'm going back to Brigham Young for my last year of law school and I wonder how much effect the altitude will have on my training.

T&FN: *Any particular reasons you are going back home?*

Marsh: Well, there are several reasons but the main one is for family. My wife Suzi grew up there and her family is there. When I'm running and going to law school, that doesn't leave a lot of time, so she needs an outlet and support. It has been hard in Eugene since she doesn't have any family here.

T&FN: *Your faith has always been a very strong, vital factor in your life and your career. And it's particularly fascinating that your Mormon mission to Brazil in 1974 took you out of track for 2 years. You were a 9:25 steepler before your mission, yet the first year back you ran 8:23.99 for 10th in the Olympics so it seems it was a positive thing.*

Marsh: There's no doubt that the older you are, the more mature and stronger and the better distance runner you are. I have always maintained that if I hadn't gone on my mission, I never would have run in the Olympics.

I feel that way mostly because I was just a different person when I came back. Not only in my outlook on life, but also in the way I looked at running. Before my mission, I was very hung up on running. I'd go out and drag the miles out; I'd get up at 6:30 in the morning and work out before classes.

But when I came back, I'd sleep in, run when I felt like it, cut back on the heavy mileage and run faster. I changed my style of running and I was just a different person.

Plus—and this is hard to explain and is probably a very personal thing—but I felt like I had a lot of spiritual strength that I didn't have before. I felt like I had a lot of extra help that is beyond this life. A lot of people might say it's just psychological, but it was a very big influence in my life.

There's something else, too, in terms of my religion. Starting with the mono I got last fall, I was sick off and on for quite a while this year. That was another reason why I didn't think I was ready to run as fast as I did.

My highest mileage this year was 62 miles a week, but the thing is, I never run on Sundays. Only if there is a big meet, but I never train on Sundays. Some guys hammer it 7 days a week, but I don't because I feel that rest is just as important.

And I wasn't running those 62 miles at 5:00 per mile. My morning run never got faster than 6:00 and 6:45 was usual.

Actually, it's been very interesting training with Bill Bowerman. I had always worked under the philosophy that you get in your distance, then you do your long intervals and finally the short speed work toward the end of the year. Well, he starts with speedwork in January and builds up

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to the strength intervals. It's been a whole different approach, so this year has been an experimental year.

Another positive aspect of working with Bowerman was that I was involved in so many things this year besides running—school, being sick, being heavily involved with the boycott problems which was really emotionally draining. Bowerman is very supportive and flexible enough that he could tell me to hold off, to reevaluate things, when I wasn't reaching the weekly goals I had set for myself in preparation for the season.

There was a point, in fact, where I told my wife, "After all this, I don't see how I'm going to make the team." Especially after the TFA, I began to question. I didn't have the mileage, I wasn't sure I could improve. I really questioned where I might end up this year.

But making the team was a big thing to me because, being in law school, that justified not being in the top 10% of my class. If you can say that you made the Olympic team, then that justifies not spending as much time studying as you might otherwise.

T&FN: *Has your wife understood the importance of these things and why you might be frustrated that you couldn't give 100% in some areas, like you wanted?*

Marsh: Well, there were times when it was tough and she didn't understand. Particularly in the off season or when you're not running well, it's easy to feel that track doesn't mean that much. Why are we spending so much time on it?

When I run well, and I can run up and kiss her after a race in front of everyone, then she sees the importance. But during the winter when I'm not home and am out training and she's by herself and looking out at gray skies, it would be natural for her to wonder, "What does track give us?"

In our life, though, if she wants me to stop, then I'll quit. If I would have been great, then she will have to bear the responsibility for both of us not finding out. You put it in those terms and you see it differently. But she knows that she will make the ultimate decision. I have committed myself to her, not to running. She comes first and if she wants me to quit, I will. I'll keep going as long as I'm improving, but when the day comes that she says that's enough, then that's it. □

Henry Dinwoodey Marsh was born March 15, 1954 in Boston. Married (Suzanne) and has a 13-month-old son (James). Coached at Brigham Young by Clarence Robison and now by Bill Bowerman in Eugene. He measures 5-10/160. PRs: 1500, 3:44.6 ('78); mile, 4:05.0 ('76); 3000, 8:03.9 ('77); 5000, 14:01.2 ('76). His progression:

Year	age	class	affiliation	time	ranking—A	W
1970	16	So	King, Corpus Christi, Tx	4:25.0		
1971	17	Jr	Punahou, Honolulu, Ha	4:18.5		
1972	18	Sr	Punahou, Honolulu, Ha	4:20.5		
1973	19	Fr	BYU	9:25.0		
1974	20		religious mission	9:34.0		
1975	21		religious mission			
1976	22	So	BYU	8:23.99	1	—
1977	23	Jr	BYU	8:21.55 AR	2	7
1978	24	Sr	BYU	8:22.5	1	8
1979	25		AW	8:23.51	1	6
1980	26		AW	8:15.68 AR		