

Mark Nenow does not like to be called a loner. He belongs to the Todds Road Stumblers, a group of over 1200 members. "A pretty big outfit, pretty organized," Nenow says from his Lexington, Kentucky, home. "We've even got a little clubhouse out in the country."

But at 28, Mark Nenow is clearly a man apart. He's an individualist. A man who doesn't like to talk about his running, Nenow somehow manages to be closemouthed and outspoken at the same time. His fame is a garment, in no way really him; just something he wears as a gift for efforts and success that came to him slowly, reluctantly, after years of hard work. He is often alone, but he is not a loner.

"In individual sports, in running, there's no one to blame but yourself," he explains. "Likewise, when you're successful, the gratification is all yours, 'cause you went it alone. The bottom line... when the gun goes off, it's really just you out there."

No, Nenow is not a loner. He is special. Check your watch. Look at it again in 27 minutes and 20 seconds. Mark Nenow can run 10K in that time. Think about it.

T&FN: In last month's issue of T&FN, you said, and I quote: "Obviously, an American Record on the track is within my grasp at 10,000 meters. Whether I'll ever hold it or not is a whole other question. But that would really be great for me if I could be an American Record holder on the track."

Well, you've got your AR. How does it feel?

Nenow: It feels like I've finally accomplished something. I feel like I've really done it. I've earned a credential at last that makes me happy.

T&FN: You've had a 10K road WR for some time now.

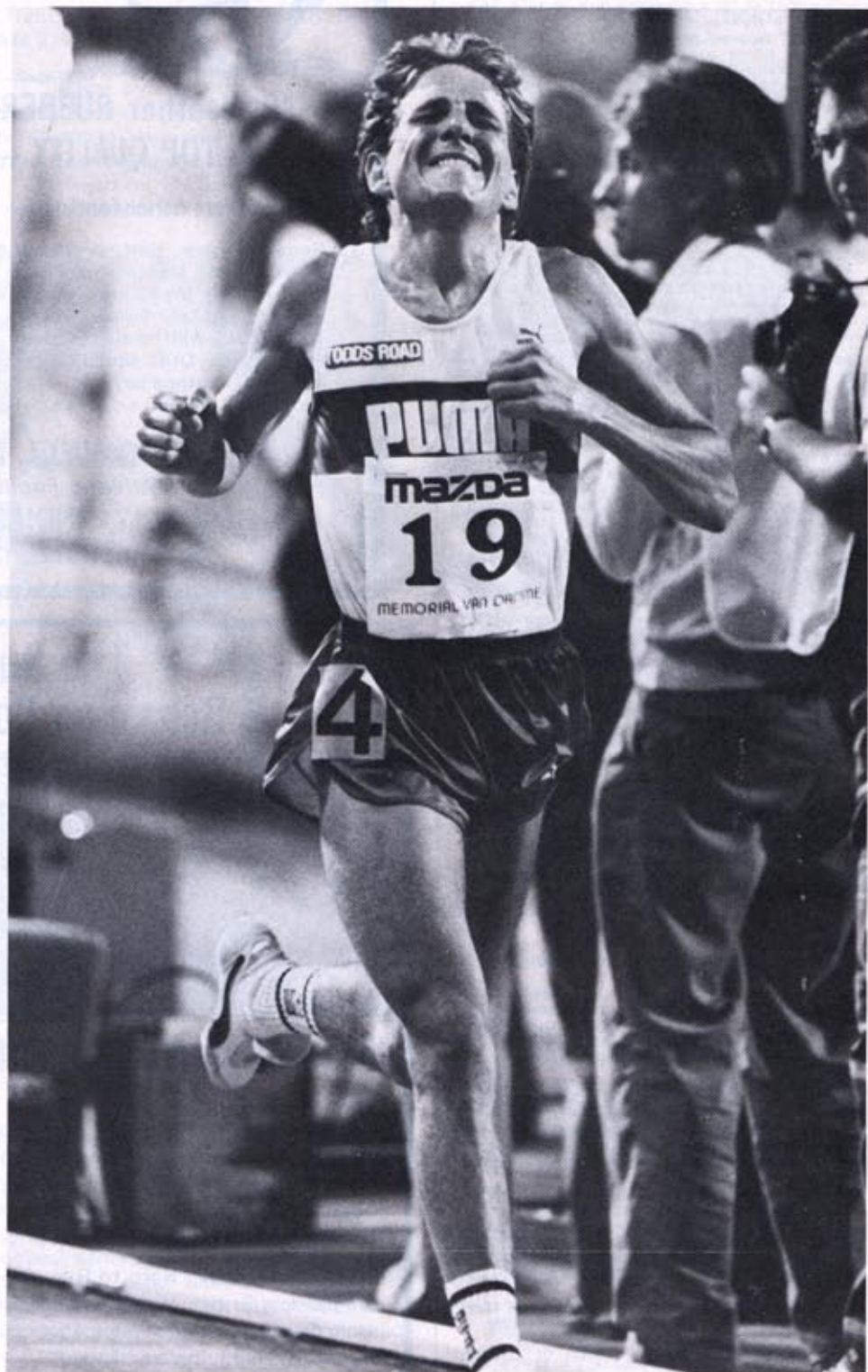
Nenow: A World Record on the road just doesn't compare to the American Record on the track. I was always proud of that road WR. I still am. Don't get me wrong. But, you know how you're introduced. 'This is so-and-so; he's done this.' Well they usually only mention one thing you've done. They normally name just a single credential.

Well, when people have mentioned my accomplishments, they'd almost always refer to that 10K WR. I'd often cringe. I'd wish there was something more. Now, there is.

T&FN: What makes the track so special for you?

Nenow: The track separates the men from the boys. It's universally comparable. How do you compare Crescent City to Continental Homes? You can't, not really. A 10K on the track is the same in Brussels

MARK NENOW



As Nenow crosses the line in Brussels (see p. 26), Alberto Salazar is history.

or Oslo or Mt. SAC. The track. . . there's a sense that it is the pinnacle of my sport. It's running at its best.

T&FN: *And now, you're one of the best. Here's a Barbara WaWa question: Are you a star? Do you put people in the seats?*

Enow: (chuckles): I certainly don't think of myself as a "star." I don't think other people do, either. I do think I'm respected. I've been at or near the top of the 10K lists for the last few years. Meet directors, especially in Europe, realize that I'll run a fast race for them.

T&FN: *Let's talk about Brussels.*

Enow: Let's! Gosh, it was great!! [Pauses.] It was a strange race. The rabbit, or rabbits, just weren't doing the job. They weren't doing much pacemaking. I think I had to do more work than the rabbits in the first half of the race. I had to spend the first 12 laps being more concerned about the pace than just trying to run hard. I probably led three laps myself.

T&FN: *Sounds pretty tough.*

Enow: It wasn't really easy. I started to realize that if I wanted to run fast I was going to have to do it by myself. I gave up on the others after actually telling the rabbit—at least 3 times—to go faster. Once I took off, I felt a lot better.

T&FN: *Do you remember your splits?*

Enow: We went out in 13:47, and came back in 13:33. I wanted 13:40. I'm convinced, if I'd sat back, they'd have brought me through in 13:55.

T&FN: *That won't get the job done.*

Enow: No, it won't. If they want a fast time. . . if meet directors want a World Record or even an American Record, they've got to set up a fast pace. You just can't go out in 13:50 and expect to get back in 13:10. But, where do you get a rabbit who can run 13:30 even on his bad day? That sounds like you need a runner who can do 13:10. And you're not going to get somebody to do that. Someone like that will want to run a real race, maybe the 5.

T&FN: *Was the race set up specifically for you?*

Enow: No, I don't think so. It wasn't a packed field. Treacy was there, a couple others. But it wasn't deep. The real key was that I had just planned to run well at Brussels.

T&FN: *Now, that's an insight. I didn't know Mark Enow planned.*

Enow: C'mon, Jack. I plan. My races, at least.

T&FN: *So, let's talk about your training. It's 10 p.m. and you're just going out for your second run of the day. Pretty unusual plan. Why so late?*

Enow: I always run at night, 11 p.m. or so. Our college coach used to tell us to run extra miles at night occasionally. I got used to it. I enjoy it. I'm a night person.

T&FN: *How far do you run in the dark?*

Enow: There are street lights. I run about 6-7M.

T&FN: *When do you run your morning workouts?*

Enow: Well, um, 2 or 3 in the afternoon.

T&FN: *Right. [pause] What kind of mileage are you doing?*

Enow: The same as always. About 100 miles a week. In the fall I usually do less. Try to give it a rest.

T&FN: *Mark, we better talk about this a little more, or we're gonna have half the joggers in the U.S. and most of the high school kids running off cliffs in the middle of the night, getting chased by cops or muggers or both.*

T&FN: *What's your secret? Are you still staying off the track? I can't believe you can run 27:20 off 100 miles of nocturnal jogging.*

Enow: I had been off the track until I came home on break from the European circuit. And I did run 27:28 at Oslo off my usual training.

T&FN: *And then?*

Enow: I met an English coach over there. A guy named Alan Storey. He suggested I add some light track work to my usual program. So that's what I did for 5 weeks before Brussels.

T&FN: *I thought you didn't think much of coaches.*

Enow: I admit I haven't been a big fan of coaching, at least not for myself. Only coaching I ever had was in college, and my college career was sketchy at best. The moment I left college, as soon as I was on my own, I excelled.

I believe you need to work one-on-one with a coach. He has to really know you. You have to be together. I've just never been willing to relocate to get coaching. I'm really comfortable in Lexington.

T&FN: *But you listened to Storey?*

Enow: Yes, I did. I liked what he had to say and I liked the way he said it. I was receptive.

T&FN: *What did Storey have you doing?*

Enow: Intervals. The classic stuff. Nothing fancy. Repeat miles. 4:40-ish. He was real careful. He wanted to alter my training, but he didn't want me to push it. He didn't want me to come up lame.

T&FN: *And that's your secret.*

Enow: I ran 27:28 on "nothing." When you toss on top of that some sprint drills, some repeat miles, maybe that is the difference. But I was really strong. Rome wasn't built in a day. Four weeks of track doesn't automatically get up 27:20.

T&FN: *"Nothing" doesn't get you 27:28. How were you training? How fast is your mileage?*

Enow: I don't really know. I really don't know the pace. I run how I feel. I just kinda scatterbrain run around town. I

never plot my week out. If I feel good on, say, Tuesday, then I run hard. If I'm feeling sluggish, I take it easy. I listen to my body.

I run alone *always*. There's a couple of reasons for that. First of all, there's no one around here to train with. And, secondly, I don't like to run faster than I want to run, and I don't like to run slower than I want.

T&FN: *I can remember at least once seeing you run slower than you wanted to. How about your 11th-place finish in the '84 Olympic Trials? You ever look back at that?*

Enow: Look back at that? And laugh, you mean?

T&FN: *In a word, how do you feel about that race?*

Enow: The word isn't sadness. In a word, I was embarrassed. I wasn't down. I wasn't mad. I was just embarrassed.

T&FN: *How do you feel now?*

Enow: You try to learn from your mistakes. I'm sure I'll benefit in the long run from that '84 experience.

T&FN: *No pun intended, right? What did you learn?*

Enow: I went into the '84 Trials without having run a single race in months. I thought I could make the team, I thought I could race well without having had any competition. I must have been a bit of a fool.

And I think I felt a lot of pressure from my friends, my family, my town, the local press. I got a lot more attention than usual. Everybody's hopes were up. I think a lot of people were counting. That all began to get to me.

I'll be able to deal with the pressure better next time. I realize now the world doesn't revolve around someone making the Olympic team.

T&FN: *You once told me you would run a marathon in the fall of '85. What happened?*

Enow: Jack, I lied. That's what I did—I lied. The marathon is like a big, smiling face with a hand stretched out to you. It seems friendly. There's so much glamour, so much hype, [chuckles] so much money. But. . . I have this feeling the marathon is the devil in disguise. There's an element of destruction in the marathon.

I don't want to mention any names, but you see guys running marathons. . . and, well, they're just never the same again. The marathon scares me.

T&FN: *I could mention some names.*

Enow: Don't. Actually, until recently I've been thinking about the marathon. A month ago I thought I might do one *this* fall. I was about 50-50 on it. But, after Brussels, I'm content to set it aside again. Brussels reminded me what I'm in track for.

T&FN: *And what's that?*

Enow: To go faster. To be the best I can be. □