

**I** imagine reading this interview with a laugh track in the background. It's the only way it all makes sense.

Daley Thompson, the world's greatest decathlete ever, is not the sort of person who can sit contemplatively and tell you the meaning of life, even if he does have it figured out for himself. But for what he has figured out, he hasn't discovered yet how to use his telephone's call-waiting feature even after months of his annual American winter-training program. The result was an almost incessant clicking on the line as Southern California (Daley in Irvine) and Northern California (T&FN in Los Altos) burned up the wires. We ended the interview after being cut off three times while the genial Briton tried to learn the system.

Part of Daley's outlook is that life is to be enjoyed, and what better way to do that than to be able to laugh about things as much as possible.

He has broken the decathlon down into a year of training for about 16 minutes of serious competition. It's a schedule that would drive anyone but an insane person mad. Somehow, Daley, a self-described "short, squat, ugly guy," has managed to find a place somewhere in between:

**T&FN:** *It's not even 9 o'clock yet. How come you're up so early? Or are you just getting in?*

**Thompson:** I wish. I'm a hermit. You know, I've been talking to *Track & Field* for the last eight years or so and this is the first time I've ever spoken to anybody outside Jon Hendershott. Has the company improved so much that they've sacked him? Obviously, he must have been promoted to a tea boy or something.

**T&FN:** *So, how are you?*

**Thompson:** A little short of fantastic.

**T&FN:** *What are you doing in California right now other than training?*

**Thompson:** Oh, just escaping the ravages of the British winter.

**T&FN:** *How ravaging is it?*

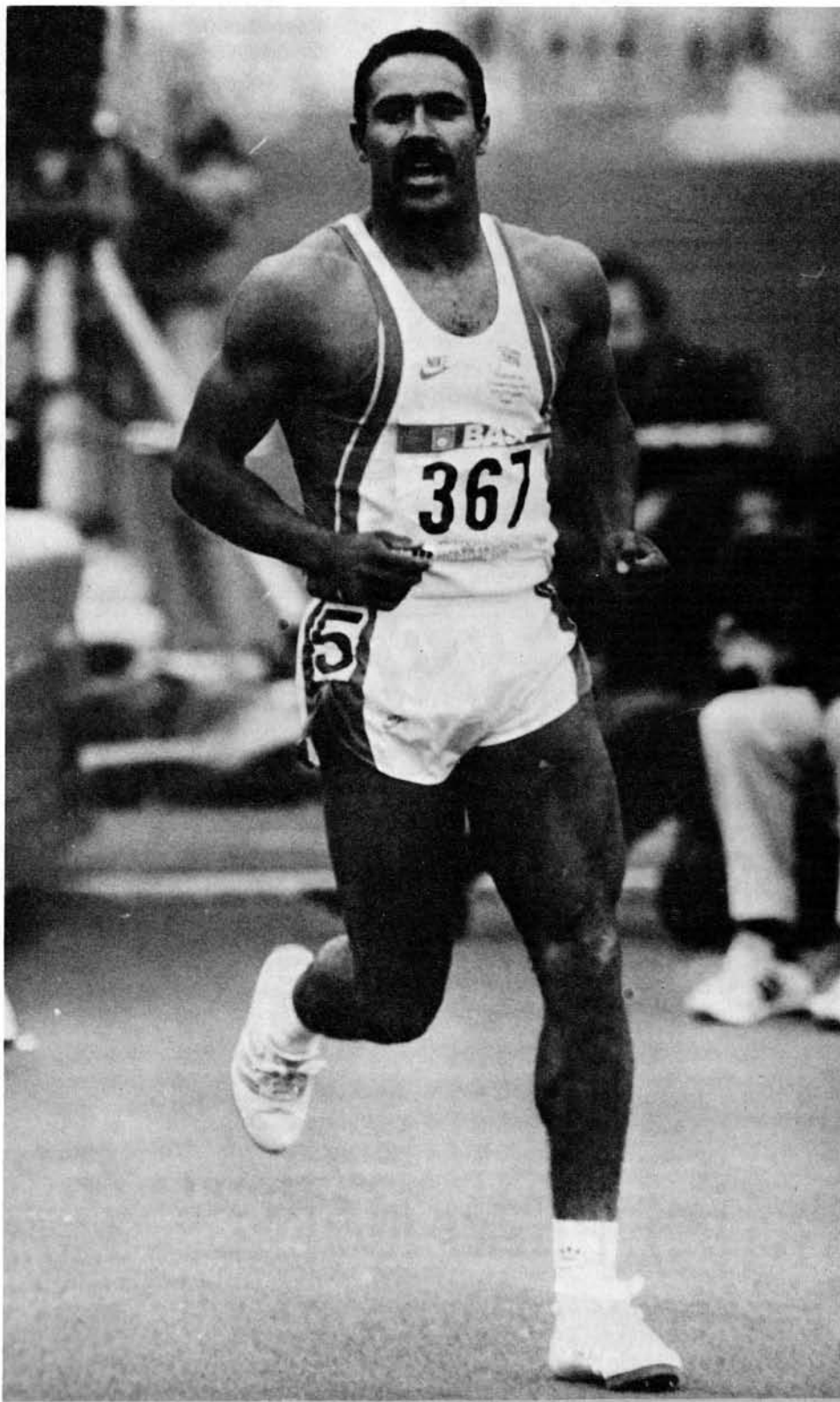
**Thompson:** Oh, it has been pretty ravaging this last three months. Like in January they had about eight inches of snow. And it actually stayed on the ground for two months.

**T&FN:** *Boy, that's rough.*

**Thompson:** It is, 'cause the trouble with our country is they're so unused to having snow, they just get a little bit and it stays on the ground and the whole country stops. And it gets to the point where you get quite a lot of snow on the ground you have to clear off the track every day.

So I come here. It's a lot easier on the fingernails. And it has been boiling down here this last couple of days. In fact, I'm sitting in the shade all the time these days.

## DALEY THOMPSON



istatiller

T&FN: *What do you have left in your career, 30 minutes of competition?*

Thompson: Exactly. But pretty important to me though. And you've got to get it right when you do it.

T&FN: *But shoot, that's just 30 minutes out of the rest of your lifetime.*

Thompson: Yeah, but what a lifetime.

T&FN: *Is that all that's left, those 30 minutes?*

Thompson: I don't think so. I have been giving it some thought recently and, to be honest, I think that track & field would be a sorrier place without me.

T&FN: *So maybe you just go into writing.*

Thompson: Ah no, it's not the same. There wouldn't be the same tension. 'Cause you could always rip it up and start again.

T&FN: *Can you perform well if the competition's not there?*

Thompson: Yeah. Obviously, for me I need a reason. From my point of view I need a championship or something of that caliber to perform well, 'cause it doesn't really matter if anybody's there or not, providing there's something at stake. That's my main incentive in life.

T&FN: *Could you go after a WR or 9000 points if nobody was around to push you?*

Thompson: Provided there was something at stake. But if it was just a regular decathlon then it would be a lot harder. Because you actually need something to take your mind off the actual performance. You need other things to concentrate on. Like people, for instance.

T&FN: *What are all the clicks on the line? Is that you getting incoming telephone calls?*

Thompson: Yeah, but the thing is, I've only been here for four months and I don't know how to use it. I think it's called call-waiting, but don't worry about it. I've got no idea how to use it. The only time I've tried it I've lost everybody.

T&FN: *How long does it take to get a telephone in London these days?*

Thompson: Oh, about a week.

T&FN: *That's better than the U.S. mail service, at least.*

Thompson: Except our mail service is a lot better than yours.

T&FN: *But you've got a little country.*

Thompson: That's very true. But we get three posts a day. How's that grab you? And we still have milkmen!

T&FN: *What else do you still have?*

Thompson: Black-and-white TVs.

T&FN: *Do you miss all of that?*

Thompson: Sometimes, sometimes.

T&FN: *But you get to go back to it.*

Thompson: That's the nice thing. It usually takes me about three or four months to get homesick and as soon as I get real homesick I can go. I gauge how

homesick I get by how large my telephone bills become.

T&FN: *What do you do in California when you're not out there training?*

Thompson: There's not that much.

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## "The American 4 x 4 Is Going To Get Thrashed."

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Because [decathlete] Greg Richards and I normally leave about ten o'clock in the morning. And we don't finish at the track normally until somewhere between four and six. And so usually we just come home, plunk ourselves in front of the TV for while, and then get something to eat and go back to bed—something like that.

T&FN: *What do you watch on TV?*

Thompson: We usually go get videos and things but my favorite shows are "Cheers" and I also like "Family Ties," but don't tell anybody.

T&FN: *Why shouldn't I tell anybody?*

Thompson: 'Cause they would laugh at me here.

T&FN: *But you're the best athlete in the world. You can't take a little ribbing?*

Thompson: Of course, I frequently do. There's quite a lot of English people here. There's about six or seven of us. Our relay team is over here now.

T&FN: *Do you tailor your speech depending upon which continent you're on? So it's a TV here and a telly over there?*

Thompson: Yeah, otherwise you might not understand me, see. I've spent enough time amongst Americans to know that we're friends separated by a common language.

T&FN: *Well, you do have that funny accent.*

Thompson: I'm not sure that it's quite me. We are speaking English, right?

T&FN: *So you think you might go on beyond Seoul?*

Thompson: Yeah, I think there's a really good chance of it because there's nowhere else I want to be. There's nothing I'd rather do. And while I'm still enjoying it and doing well at it I may as well continue to do it. Because there's not many people who can do the things that they want to do. And there's no sense in just sort of giving it up for the hell of it.

It's funny. I was talking to Edwin Moses this last week and I told him that I thought I was going on to 1992 and the next day his wife came and started giving me a hard time. She was saying to me, "I

thought he was retiring. He's talking 1992 now!"

T&FN: *You're just about the dean of track & field in England now.*

Thompson: Oh, I wouldn't go too far.

T&FN: *Aren't you an old-timer now?*

Thompson: Are you kidding? I would have said I was a Junior, perhaps.

T&FN: *So who is at the top level of the sport who's been around as long as you have? Ovett, Coe—anyone else?*

Thompson: I don't think so. And Ovett's almost finished, huh?

T&FN: *Don't put me on the spot. I'm the one asking the questions here. Are you saying Ovett's almost finished?*

Thompson: No, no, no. Ovett's been around longer than I have. He looks it as well. Mind you, we're told bald men do look attractive—to bald women.

T&FN: *What would prevent you from going on to 1992?*

Thompson: Obviously, you've got to take each a year as it comes. As I say, the way I feel now I can see nothing to stop me from continuing on. I honestly think that only injuries or something could derail me.

T&FN: *Have you ever had a major injury?*

Thompson: No, nothing yet, thank God.

T&FN: *What's the worst thing?*

Thompson: I remember having a severe headache once. I must have been over-eating chocolate or cheese or something.

T&FN: *If you had grown up in the U.S., how do you think your athletic career would have turned out? Still track?*

Thompson: I hope so, but I probably doubt it. I would probably have been right up there with Jim Brown and all them boys. Playing football. I think so, but only because everybody seems to gravitate that way.

T&FN: *How about baseball?*

Thompson: Well you know, they do seem to get—as we say in England—"a lot of money for old rope." Which means they get paid awfully well for doing very little.

T&FN: *You're too short for basketball.*

Thompson: Tell Spud Webb that.

T&FN: *What about Daley the bowler?*

Thompson: What, 10-pin bowling? Are you kidding? I thought we were talking sports here. Not recreational type.

T&FN: *Golf?*

Thompson: No, too slow for me.

T&FN: *What about hustling pool?*

Thompson: That's not too bad. Only because the word hustling is involved. It sort of fits. I'm a gambling kind of guy.

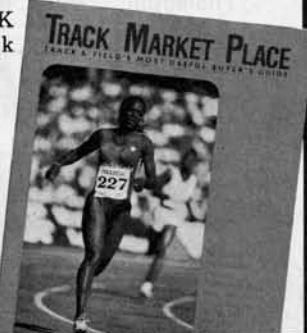
T&FN: *What do you gamble on most?*

Thompson: Track performances. For instance, if I go out to the track with Art Venegas' group up at UCLA we always have bets on practice. Just to make it a little more exciting. When I lose it's because I haven't been able to convince them



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DALEY THOMPSON—continued:

that I need more of a handicap.

T&FN: *Can't you just lose a few times in training just to set them up for the con?*

Thomson: Don't be silly. That wouldn't be noble; it's cheating. Excuse me, you're talking to an Englishman here, sir. This is not an American win-at-all-costs person.

T&FN: *So you can't go in and throw a contest.*

Thomson: Oh, of course not.

T&FN: *Now who's going to believe that among those who know you?*

Thomson: Nobody. Fortunately, none of your readers know me. It's OK.

T&FN: *But that's why we're doing this interview. Will they know you at all when we're done?*

Thomson: Perhaps. They'll know that I enjoy what I'm doing. And that I don't think it all should be hard work and strained expressions.

T&FN: *If you hadn't been blessed with the physical attributes to be an athlete, what would you like to be doing right now?*

Thomson: I dread to think. Honestly, I've got no idea. Because all my life, this is all I've ever wanted to do.

I can remember ever since I was nine or ten years old I've never wanted to be anything other than a sportsman. I know that the desire to succeed is there and if you've got it, you've got it. But I don't know at what else I'd succeed.

T&FN: *If your athletic career were suddenly ended tomorrow, but not from a major injury—say if the IAAF declared you ineligible—what would you do?*

Thomson: Well I think the first thing to do is to make sure they all had their kneecaps shot off. I'd find some bloody [hitmen], that's for sure. And then I don't know what I'd do. Because I've never contemplated it and that would be a really tough thing to do.

T&FN: *Is that one of the reasons you want to stay in the sport? To avoid contemplating that future?*

Thomson: Well, that's partly it.

But the main reason I'd stay in it is just because this is me. There's nothing else in the world that could ever take this place.

T&FN: *Do you feel like an adult or just an old kid?*

Thomson: If I ever do think of myself, I still think of myself as a young guy. I don't really think much has changed since I've been about 19. Except, if you ask any of my friends they'd probably say that I'm worse.

T&FN: *Long ago you told us that you always had to be first, whether it was catching the bus or finishing your lunch.*

Thomson: Hendershott probably made that up. But tell him I'm still getting indigestion these days. Still always the first one to finish at meals.

Track & Field News

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**T&FN:** *What do you do when you finish first and you have to wait for everyone else?*

**Thompson:** No, that's the whole idea of finishing first. You're the first person to get any more if it's going around. And if the food's gone then I get to talk. And they have nothing else to do but listen.

**T&FN:** *Is that your great hobby, talking?*

**Thompson:** No, I don't think it is. I enjoy conversations, but I don't enjoy talking to people I don't know. Some people would enjoy talking to anybody.

**T&FN:** *How do you get to know people, then?*

**Thompson:** I don't really. I know basically the same people I've known for the last 12 years. My circle of friends hasn't been changed.

**T&FN:** *What do we have to look forward to this year?*

**Thompson:** I'll tell you what we have to look forward to this year. For the first time in living memory the American 4 x 4 is going to get thrashed.

**T&FN:** *Are your friends in the room right now?*

**Thompson:** No, but they're going to ask me what I said and I better say something nice about them. I don't think it matters who's on the team. I think we have enough depth these days to do the damage. But probably, I would think our team will be Derek Redmond, Phil Brown, Todd Bennett and Roger Black.

**T&FN:** *What's the great question of the ages that I haven't asked you here?*

**Thompson:** I think there's probably only one deep question that I would like to know the answer to, and that is, "How do you work this stupid phone?" □

Francis Morgan "Daley" Thompson was born July 30, 1958, in London, England, and is 6-½/195. Undeclared in a major decathlon since his 2nd in the 1978 European Championships, he has set four World Records (8622 '80, 8704 '82, 8743 '82, 8847 '84) and two World Junior Records (7922 '77, 8124 '77). His top 5 performances are Nos. 1, 4, 6, 9 and 11 on the all-time World List.

His PRs: 100—10.26 '86; 200—20.88 '79; 300—33.94 '81; 400—46.86 '82; 1500—4:20.3 '76; 110H—14.04 '86; 400H—52.14 '86; HJ—7-¼' '82; PV—17-2¼' '86; LJ—26-3¼' '84/26-7¼w '78; SP—52-10 '84; DT—161-1 '86; JT—214-6 '80 (old)/207-7 '86 (new); Decathlon—8847 '84.

His progression (with World Rankings in parentheses), including season bests on both old and new tables and placings in major meets:

Year	Age	Old	New	Major Meets
'75	16/17	7012†	6941	
'76	17/18	7812†	7748	18)Olympics
'77	18/19	8124	8082 (4)	1)Euro Junior
'78	19/20	8467w	8470w (3)	1)Comm G 2)Euro
'79	20/21	6954	6949dnf (-)	
'80	21/22	8622	8648 (1)	1)Olympics
'81	22/23	7936	7897 (-)	
'82	23/24	8743	8774 (1)	1)Comm G 1)Euro
'83	24/25	8666	8714 (1)	1)World Champs
'84	25/26	8798	8847 (1)	1)Olympics
'85	26/27	did not compete	in multis	
'86	27/28	—	8811 (1)	1)Comm G 1)Euro

# Tokyo Beats LA For 1991 Worlds

Merely confirming what most people had figured was a sure thing, Tokyo was selected as the site for the 1991 World Championships as the 21-member IAAF Council met in Rome, March 27-30.

The Japanese capital was selected to host the third edition of the World Championships, getting the nod on the first ballot over Los Angeles, West Berlin and Perth.

"Tokyo's presentation was very detailed," noted Will Kern, special events manager for the *Los Angeles Times*. Kern made the presentation for the California city. "The Japanese had everything planned down to the most minute detail. And they had bags of money and obviously knew how to do things right."

There had been eager speculation before the meeting that the Council might change the schedule of the championships from its current once-every-four-years format, to every two years. But no specific action was taken here.

IAAF President Primo Nebiolo did go on record as stating that the outdoor meet may be held every other year after 1991, to match the World Indoor Championships (next scheduled for 1989). However, the Los Angeles delegation was urged to bid for the 1995 outdoor meet, the only specific date mentioned for the next outdoor Worlds to follow Tokyo.

Nebiolo added that if the outdoor Worlds do change to every two years, the team-oriented World Cup meet will be discontinued.

The Council also awarded the 1989 World Cup Marathon to Milan, Italy, while the 1990 World Cross Country Championships went to Aix-les-Bains, France.

## OLDFIELD FINALLY REINSTATED

Chief among athletes to gain reinstatement here was 41-year-old American shot putter Brian Oldfield. Oldfield was declared eligible for the Olympics, thereby completing his full reinstatement as an amateur. Oldfield competed on the professional ITA circuit in the '70s and had been reinstated as an amateur in 1981 for all competitions except the Olympics and Pan-Am Games.

"Now the curse has been lifted," said the always free-spirited Oldfield. "It's about 14 months until the Olympic Trials in Indianapolis, and 17 months until the Games in Seoul. My program is right on schedule."

Oldfield says the first thing he did after learning of his reinstatement was to call his mother in Illinois. He says she replied, "It's about time."

## SOME FOOTBALLERS REINSTATED

Three sprinters who tried to make it in pro football—Stanley Floyd, Mel Lattany and Mark McNeil—were also reinstated as amateurs. They reportedly signed declarations stating they would never again play football (as did former gridder Renaldo Nehemiah last year to regain reinstatement).

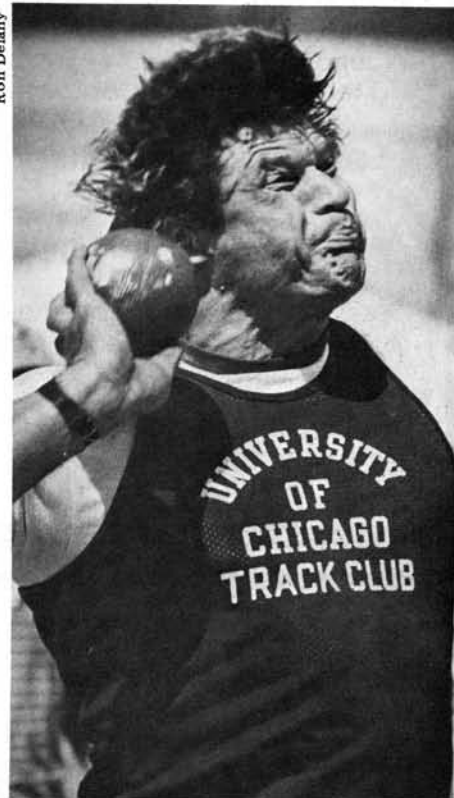
Applications for reinstatement from active footballers Willie Gault, Henry Ellard and Vince

Courville were rejected.

No applications were received from other current footballers such as Michael Carter, Ron Brown and Herschel Walker, all of whom were rumored to be interested in getting back into the "amateur" ranks as far as track goes.

## DRUG PENALTIES STIFFENED

A true lifetime ban for a positive drug test—long believed to be part of the IAAF punitive



"The curse is lifted," says Oldfield.

scheme, but in reality never meted out—was legislated into being as the Council toughened (and loosened) its penalties.

First-time offenders caught after use of ephedrine and its derivatives will now receive a 3-month suspension. A second offense draws a 2-year suspension. A third gets the lifetime ban.

Use of amphetamines or anabolic steroids results in a 2-year suspension for the first offense and a life suspension for a second.

All the penalty revisions are subject to approval by the IAAF Congress, which meets in Rome, August 25-27.

Seven athletes who had received "life" suspensions of the old kind had their sentences commuted after the usual 18-month waiting period:

Lyudmila Andonova (Bulgaria), Duncan Atwood (US), Remigius Machura and Zdenka Silhava (Czechoslovakia), Goran Svensson and Lars Sundin (Sweden), Hannu Polvi (Finland) and Ahmed Shata (Egypt). Future violators presumably won't be as lucky. □