

For Eamonn Coghlan, this year is the start of a "new" career. Forced out of training and competition in 1982 because of a series of leg injuries, the consummate indoor miler returned a new man in '83.

The jovial Irishman broke the 3:50 barrier for the indoor mile with his 3:49.78 clocking and he has moved outdoors just as successfully. His victory in the Prefontaine 5000 kept him undefeated at the distance, save for the Moscow Olympic final. His 52.6 final lap in Eugene amply showed that Coghlan's speed is just as good as ever, maybe better.

But in talking with the 30-year-old Coghlan the day before his Kinney mile victory over old friend and rival Steve Scott, one comes away with a sense that Coghlan is, indeed, a new man. It's not that he wasn't confident and determined in the past; it's just that now there is a sense of being even more deeply motivated, more seriously driven.

With the telecast of the NCAA Championships soundlessly flickering in the background, the outgoing Coghlan talked of his new motivation, his aims in the 5000 and the new man shooting for those goals:

T&FN: You just said that you have had your best period of training ever.

Coghlan: From the first of September right through to now, I've had the most consistent period of training ever in my life. Not that it's been hard; it's just been consistent.

Prior to this year and prior to my injury last year, I was working full time for the Irish Tourist Board and I would come home after a hard day's work and in my mind, I just didn't feel like doing a 10 or 12M fartlek, or a hard 15M run. I'd talk myself into doing an easy 8-miler instead. I wasn't concentrating full time on running, even though I thought I was.

It's only now that I realize the difference. Now, I'm not working full time for the Tourist Board; I'm working full time for EC. And that means training as a professional in terms of twice a day, every single day of the week. Everything else is centered around my running, more or less as it was in college.

Realistically, I'm 30 years old, I know I have less years ahead of me and the best years to take advantage of it in terms of becoming an "all-time great" are 1983 and '84.

T&FN: You must have come back with a new hunger.

Coghlan: I did. My attitude was fantastic. I just loved training for the first time in a long, long while. I didn't dread my morning run, or I didn't have to push myself to get out when it was raining. I was out there come rain, snow, hail or anything else. I realized I had been out a year, I hadn't been able to train or compete, but I won't miss training now that I am back.

Also, I wanted to do it because Gerry Farnan, my coach and mentor since I was 12, had passed away. Gerry had more belief in Eamonn Coghlan than I probably have in myself, because he knew me inside out. He always felt I should be able to beat Sebastian Coe or Steve Ovett or anyone

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else. It was because of this "savageness" in me, as he used to say. A killer instinct.

When I got back running again, I felt it was a shame that when I was back and feeling better than ever; he was no longer around to see the results. He won't see the belief he had in me be rewarded. So I drew inspiration from that to get out and do it.

T&FN: You missed competitive chances in '82 to gain maturity as a 5000 runner. Or might the layoff have been good in that you never really laid your cards on the table and all the other 5000 guys out there still don't know just how good Eamonn Coghlan can be at the distance?

Coghlan: I don't think anybody knows how good I can be—at the mile, too. Because I'm a "new" me; I can just feel it. I want to prove it to myself over the next two seasons. I feel I won't be intimidated when I race against Scott or Coe or Ovett, or anybody. I know what I have done, I'm going to think positive all the time and there is no reason I shouldn't do it.

As far as the 5000 goes, both Gerry Farnan and Jumbo Elliott felt my best potential always did lie in the 5000, because I could take the punishment of training and because of my finishing speed and my speed in the mile. Bringing them all together would make the 5000 my key event. And my father always felt I would be a late maturer and run better as I got older.

Last year allowed me not only to recharge my batteries, but also to look at the other guys and see how they could run 5000. From Moorcroft to Wessinghage and the Ethiopians. When I get into the right race, I can run sub-13:00, there is no doubt in my mind.

T&FN: Have you given any thought to the pace of the Helsinki 5000? It seems that a number of championship 5000s in recent years have been quite slow. You must lick your chops in thinking about a slow pace off which you could kick a 52 last lap.

Coghlan: First of all, I haven't given the race any thought in terms of pace, because anything can happen. But I will gear my training toward setting World Record pace; you have to think that way.

In Helsinki, we will have three races in six days and three relatively fast 5000s in six days takes a lot out of your body. I think the key ingredient in terms of preparing for the Helsinki 5000 is strength; you will have to be super-strong.

I don't care what the pace turns out

to be; I'm only thinking about myself. I don't care what Thomas runs, or Kunze from East Germany, or the Ethiopians, nobody. They all have to face the same facts as I do: three races in six days. It's going to boil down to the strongest guy in the race who doesn't want to give in.

T&FN: What if someone throws in a 60-second lap, an "African-type" surge?

Coghlan: It will depend where in the race it happens. If it happens with four laps gone, I won't worry about it. The guy should come back to the field. But if it happens with three laps to go I certainly respond to it. I feel there are two races in a 5000: the first two miles is one race and then that last mile is like a 1500 race. It is a race within a race. Once I get over the first eight laps comfortably, I'm a miler again.

T&FN: Has it been a difficult adjustment to go from racing for a little less than 4 minutes in a mile, to something over 13 minutes in a 5000? Does that take a whole different mental approach?

Coghlan: It is very difficult and it has taken me from 1979 until now to learn how to race in the 5000. You learn to become a miler in college and you run 3:53s or 3:52s and eventually 3:49 indoors, but to be able to apply that mental feeling to the 5000 is completely different.

A newcomer to the 5000 might go through a 4:16 mile and think, "This is only jogging." But to be able to maintain that pace for another eight laps and then kick strongly over the last lap is very difficult. I think the transition from one to the other takes at least a couple of years, and in 1980 I probably didn't give myself enough time to adjust to that transition.

T&FN: Who knows, but maybe some people have to go through a period of adversity to learn the lessons necessary to enable them to eventually gain the ultimate reward they deserve.

Coghlan: Well, I have certainly had my share of luck, in terms of the education I have received because of my running, the God-given talent I have, the financial rewards I have been able to enjoy now because of my running.

But when it came to winning Olympic medals or setting outdoor records, I was just out of luck. But I just have a sneaky feeling that it's changing. It's changing because I'm being honest with myself—and I'm being honest because there are a couple of guys, three guys really, up there who are watching me [he points heavenward]. They



can see what I'm doing, they can see if I'm training properly and consistently, so I've got to do it.

It's an eerie feeling, I have to admit, but at the same time it's a belief I really have and I've got to do it and take advantage of it before it gets too late. I never want to finish with my career and think, "Aw, I could have been Olympic champion or World Record holder but I never took advantage of it."

T&FN: *How about the great expectations of your countrymen? How are you trying to handle that pressure?*

Coghlan: I try to completely turn my mind off to all of that. If I win in Helsinki, everybody in Ireland will be my friend. They all will say, "Good lad, we knew you could do it. Fantastic. You're great." But if I finish 2nd, or 4th again, they will disown me again: "He can't do it when it counts."

I know that whatever I do in the World Championships will be for myself, my family and I've worked damn hard to achieve the goal of winning there. Regardless of what happens, I'll come away knowing I made an honest effort to succeed and it was only destiny that brought me defeat. I can accept whatever happens because I know the effort I have put in.

The Irish people build me up all the time. They need someone to look up to; they need the morale booster. They don't have a team or another individual who is constantly winning international events, so I get it all. In a way, I've become a victim of my own success. They just take it for granted when you win and win, but when you lose they are so quick to drop you.

But there is no point in me throwing my career down the drain, just because I finished 4th twice. There are many positive things I can get out of sport. I will run and enjoy it between the Olympic Games and I will work and try my hardest to win the Olympics. But if I don't, well, I guess I just wasn't destined to win it. It definitely won't be because I didn't try. □

Eamonn Christopher Coghlan was born November 21, 1952, in Dublin and is 5-9 $\frac{3}{4}$ /139. He is a graduate of St. Vincent's High in Dublin and Villanova University. While in this country he represents the New York Athletic Club. Won 4 NCAA 1500/mile titles (indoors and outdoors, '75 and '76). PRs: 1:50.2y ('74), 2:20.2 ('77), 3:35.6i ('81), 3:49.78i ('83), 7:37.60 ('80), 8:25.8y ('78), 13:19.13 ('81). He has put his name in the indoor record book in the mile 4 times (3:55.0", 3:52.6, 3:50.6, 3:49.78). His progression (with World Rankings in parentheses):

Year	Age	1500	Mile(i)	Mile(o)	5000
1970	17			c4:26	
1971	18			c4:19	14:28.0
1972	19			4:10.0	c13:58y
1973	20		4:03.9		13:45.0y
1974	21	3:41.9		4:00.9	13:26.6y
1975	22	3:43.9i (10)	4:00.4	3:53.3	13:35.0y
1976	23	3:37.0i (7)	3:59.3	3:55.07	
1977	24	3:38.95 (10)	3:57.9	3:53.4	
1978	25	3:36.57 (2)	3:56.0	3:57.4	13:26.6
1979	26	3:37.4 (6)	3:52.6	3:52.45	13:23.54
1980	27	3:38.58	3:52.9	3:55.2	13:20.99 (5)
1981	28	3:35.6i	3:50.6	3:52.11	13:19.13 (1)
1982	29	injured			
1983	30	3:37.9	3:49.78	3:52.52	13:23.53

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