



from the editor

E. Garry Hill

HATS OFF TO BERNARD LAGAT as he winds up a spectacular career (see p. 18). When he listed his 5 most memorable races ever for our Sieg Lindstrom, one of them coincided with the 1500 entry on my best-races-ever-seen list. So a doff of the chapeau to Bernard as well for providing the inspiration for this month's column, a quick recitation of the most did-I-really-just-see-that?! races I've witnessed in person, one per event (men only; women will come next month):

100—That's easy, although the mark comes at yards, not meters. The first World Record I ever saw in person: Harry Jerome's 9.1 at the '66 Canadian Championships. Leaning over the fence at the end of the straightaway, watching him come barreling down the track, straight at me.

My favorite men's races ever, by event

200—Also at yards, 220 of them as Don Quarrie and Steve Williams run in lockstep in lanes 6 & 7 at the '75 AAU (*T&FN* cover, August) to both break the WR.

400—Giving you a hint as to what I'll vote for as Performance Of The Year this season, what can top a 43.03 from blind lane 8 by Wayde van Niekerk? I rest my case.

800—Most people think that "tactical" means slow, but in David Rudisha's case, he employed the most elemental tactic of all at London '12, leading from wire-to-wire in unworldly WR time.

1500—The one from Lagat's list: Athens '04. His side-by-side duel with Hicham El Guerrouj up the stretch is indelibly inked in my mind.

Mile—Seb Coe's 3:48.53 at Zürich in '81, my first Weltklasse ever. Mike Boit was supposed to take the pace from the halfway point, but Coe was feeling so frisky that he never let the Kenyan get by him, so Boit became a pusher-rabbit rather than a puller-rabbit.

Steeple—Stockholm GP '91. Not even on the premeet entry list, and with no known previous times, Moses Kiptanui runs 8:07.89 "to jump from oblivion to No. 6 on the all-time list."

5000—Allow me to slip in one I *didn't* see, but should have. In '78, less than hour's drive from my house, Washington State was at Cal. The driveshaft on my lemon of an Audi fell off. I didn't go. And some guy named Rono did the unthinkable, setting a WR in a collegiate dual meet.

10,000—In a stretch battle which presaged Lagat/El Guerrouj '04, Haile Gebrselassie vs. Paul Tergat at Sydney '00. As our photo caption in that edition said, "Take all the distance races you've ever seen and distill them down to one final mad dash to the tape..."

110H—There were countless Renaldo Nehemiah/Greg Foster clashes that could qualify, but my fave was at the '79 NCAA in Champaign, Illinois, as they duelled for supremacy. A classic photo in *T&FN* shows Foster exploding hurdle No. 6 ("There were wood chips everywhere," said one contestant) as Nehemiah went on to run a time, 12.91w, that wasn't bettered for a decade.

400H—You'll not be surprised to learn that this one involves Edwin Moses. And it's a photofinish, but not just a 2-person: it was the 3-way lean among Moses, Danny Harris and Harald Schmid at the '87 WC. In an era when stadium announcers weren't allowed to say much, the words finally came: "The winner is Edwin Moses." As Jed Brickner's story in *T&FN* pointed out, it was the only such announcement of the whole meet. It didn't seem out of place.

Off-Track Racing—Not a marathon or a walk (all too hard to see much in person), but a cross country race. I was in yet-to-be-named Silicon Valley interviewing for a job with *T&FN* in November of '69, and the Pac-8 cross country was coincidentally at Stanford. So I got to run hither and yon across the golf course to see the legendary Gerry Lindgren/Steve Prefontaine duel. It was even better than the masters of hyperbole tell it.

4 x 100—Can I leave this one open until the next time the U.S. wins a major international?

4 x 400—The '72 Olympic final was an all-time great because the U.S. was absent after injury and disciplinary action. With the dominant team gone, the race was wide open and it was 4 laps of wall-to-wall great racing to conclude my first Olympics.

The best part of all? 2017 and more years to come!

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