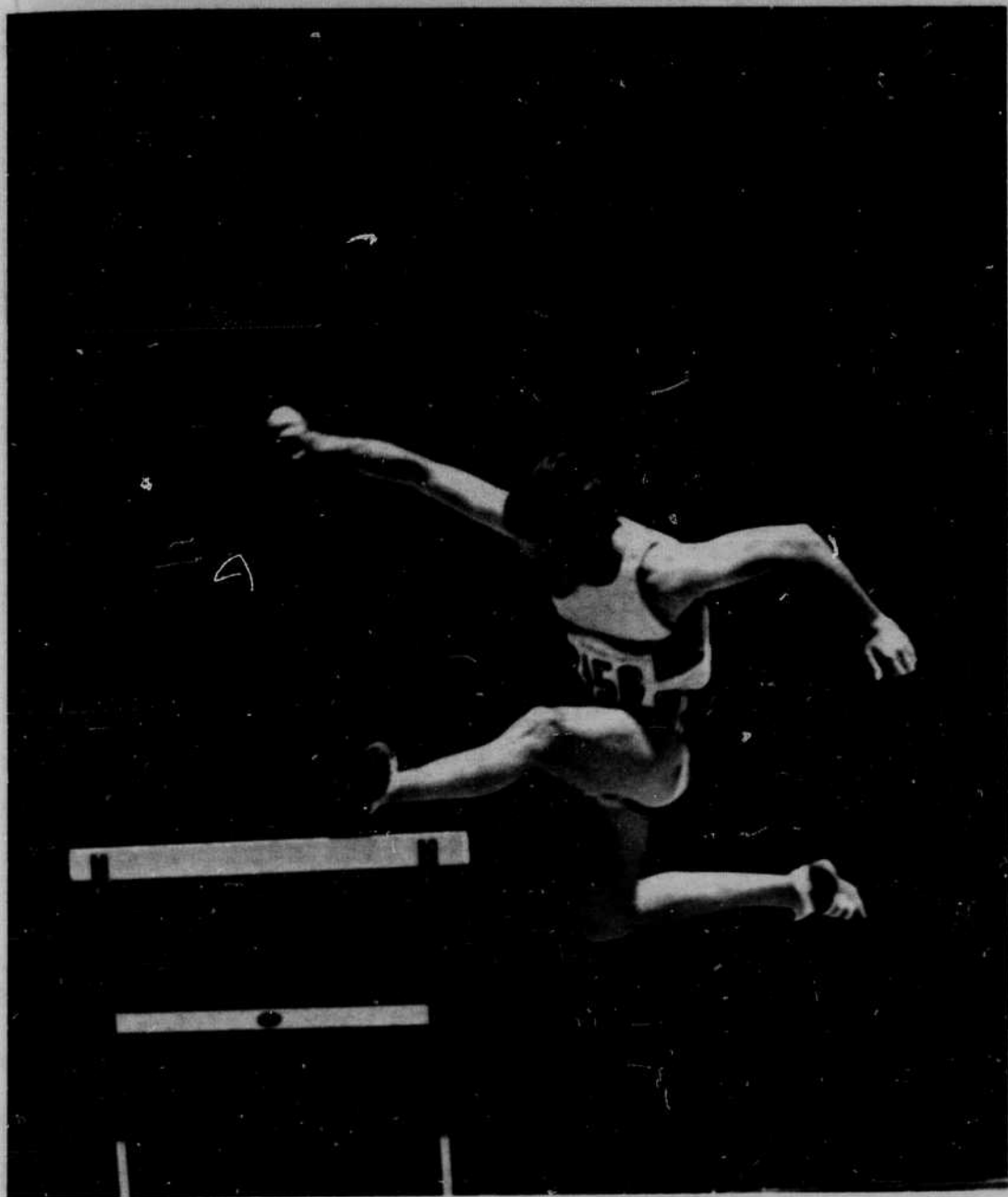




Ron Rondeau Photos by Carl Calvadetscher

Hurdle field narrowed in fast qualifying heats

Ralph Mann could afford to take it easy. "It felt like the Ralph Mann of last year," grinned the world record holder (48.8) in the 440-yard hurdles.

He's just run an easy 50.9 to win his heat in the first round of the 400 meter hurdles Friday. And although Mann's time put him ninth on the list of qualifiers on this blustery day at Hayward Field in the U.S. Olympic Trials, there appeared little cause for concern.

Of vital importance to men like NCAA champion Bruce Collins and AAU hurdle champ Bob Bruggeman, however, is now the event favorite fared physically after his first test.

Mann, formerly of BYU and now with the SC Striders, pulled some tendons in his right foot back in April. That injury shelved America's fastest intermediate hurdler for three weeks.

The question here was how he would fare after showing erratic progress since he hurt the wheel in Los Angeles.

"It was my best race so far. It felt good," Mann assured after his heat. "My foot is sore but I'll take a couple of aspirin and go."

It meant that Bruggeman, despite the blazing 49.8 he showed to breeze home first in the third heat Friday, was smoking perhaps when he shouldn't have.

"I don't think I went out that fast," said the Ohio Track Club star after he kicked home ahead of Jim Seymour of the SC Striders and Bob Steele.

"I felt relaxed. . . I just tried to maintain momentum. I guess I ran faster than I had to."

That heat, which saw Seymour come in with a 50.2 and Steele a 50.3, was easily the fastest of the qualifying runs.

In the first race of Friday's Trials Collins, the 21-year-old from Penn, ran down Melvin Bassett at the ninth hurdle and got to the tape in 50.6. Bassett, from North Carolina Central, was home in 50.7.

Mann's race followed and after some hard kicks through the first four flights of hurdles (there are nine in the 400-meters) he was coasting.

Ron Whitney, a teammate of Mann's on the Striders, saw his qualifying position secure and finished fourth in 51.2.

It is Whitney, along with Mann, Bruggeman, Collins, and Jim Bolding, who has the best chance of advancing in the second round which begins today at 4:15.

Bolding, who co-holds the nation's second-best time this year (49.5) with Bruggeman, ran second in the fourth and final preliminary heat, in 50.4.

"I was satisfied," said the Oklahoma State youngster. "But I felt a little more tired than I usually do. The first day is usually my hardest; on the second and third, I do better."

Collins, the one given the best shot at dethroning Mann, ran a race identical to his NCAA victory—where he strode past Bolding after the last hurdle. A silky-smooth strider, he went into overdrive after the eighth hurdle and Bassett didn't force the issue.

Said Bassett: "I missed a step on the backstretch and when I came into the wind (gusts reached nearly 9 miles-per-hour at Hayward on this day) I was struggling a bit. I saw Collins and since four qualified, I wasn't going to fight it."

For Collins it was his first race (in the hurdles) since that NCAA victory. "I felt a little sluggish," he admitted afterwards. "I was very strong the last couple hurdles, despite the wind."

"I've been working on technique since the NCAA, but I am still hitting hurdles (he clipped the seventh hurdle and nearly knocked it down)."

Fortunes in this mercurial event come and go.

For heat winners Collins, Mann, and Richmond's Carl Wood, slow times mean saving something for the second round.

Bruggeman, most impressive running his 49.8, is far from a sure thing to even survive his heat today. He's matched with Mann, Whitney, Steele (the second-fastest qualifier) and Wes Williams, who ran a plodding 50.7 but has a season tops of 49.7. That heat—the second of the semi-finals—should be interesting. Eight come out of the blocks in each race, with four making the Sunday (6:30) final.

"I'm not sure Mann is the one to beat," declared the veteran Bruggeman after his race.

"But Collins I don't know. I beat him once early in the season. But he ran that fabulous time in the NCAA, so I just don't know. I think it'll take 49 flat to get on the team."

(See related story page 8.)

Phone 343-5833

Anastasia's
Beauty Salon & "Acsorceries"

Complete Beauty Services and Fashions Next Door

Oakway Mall, No. 6 & 7:
across from Holiday Inn
and Thunderbird Motel.

DROP INS WELCOME

\$10 for 10 Visits

Oregon HEALTH SPAS
FOR MEN FOR WOMEN

LOSE 20 POUNDS IN 20 VISITS

Mohawk Shopping Center
Springfield 1511 Mohawk Blvd. phone 747-5632

WE WELCOME ALL TRIALS COMPETITORS TO THE FREE USE OF OUR FACILITIES

GENUINE MEXICAN FOOD!

Lunch 11 a.m. 'til 2 p.m.
Mon. thru Fri. only

Dinner 5 p.m. 'til 9:45 p.m.
7 days a week
Closed afternoons 2 p.m. 'til 5 p.m.
Open Sunday
2 p.m. to 10 p.m.

CASA TOL-TEC

389 6th West at Lawrence
342-3921

We're friendly

N.W. "TEX" HAGER
Innkeeper

JERRY MATTHEWS
Asst. Innkeeper

Invites You to
150 ROOMS - COLOR TV
24 - HOUR RESTAURANT
GREAT ENTERTAINMENT
Seven Nights a Week

225 Coburg Road
503 - 342-5181

Holiday Inn

PEUGEOT

THE FINEST IN
10-SPEEDS ARE HERE!

PEUGEOT HEADQUARTERS
Sales & Service

COLLIN'S CYCLE SHOP

344-9034

60 E. 11th AVE.
EUGENE