

It's a tradition in the Twilight Mile

Breaking the four-minute mark

By ART BUSHNELL
Of the Emerald

The race is called the Twilight Mile. It's been a tradition in Eugene since 1960. Everywhere else it's a legend. No other individual race has contributed so heavily to the roll of sub-four minute milers.

One night a year the men of Oregon run the mile just as dusk falls over Hayward Field. Usually they run against each other. Once in a while a notable outsider has come to spur on the competition. But this is more than a race; it's an assault on both the record book and the clock.

The tradition began when Dyrol Burleson was a sophomore at Oregon. It will continue Friday night.

Bill Bowerman remembers that first race well.

"We had promised that the first time we got a break in the weather we'd have some people try to break four minutes in the mile. It had never been done in Oregon; it had only happened one time in the United States.

"It was in April at the middle of the week when the weather finally broke. We got the kind of day we were looking for and at 4 p.m. we sent word to the dorms that the Twilight Mile would be run.

"The students just poured in. The stands were full. And Burleson ran under four minutes. He was the only one to break the barrier and it was his first time. The next year we decided to see if we could do it again. We did and it's become a part of Oregon."

The Twilight Meet has gone through many phases since that original 1960 spring evening.

In 1966, the meet became a benefit for an injured Oregon trackman.

The week after a long jumper Bob Wooddell won his event in a dual event against UCLA, he was paralyzed in a freak spring accident. The fraternity float he was working on for the canoe fete tipped over on top of him. His life hung in the balance for days. By June it was apparent he would survive, but that his medical expenses would be heavy.

The Twilight Meet became the Bob Wooddell Invitational and the Oregon athletes dedicated their performances to their fallen comrade. Burleson returned to again win the mile, this time in 3:57.3.

Burleson was a regular in those early Twilighters — even after he graduated. The meet has consistently been a showcase for Oregon runners past and present. Generally, it has been a showcase dominated by the milers.

For two years in the 1960's, the milers didn't concentrate on their event. Instead,

they combined to assault the world four-mile relay record. Both times the record was broken. Both times it was disallowed for technical reasons.

Bowerman considers the record broken. He just says both of the new records "remained unofficial because of technicalities.

"One time we changed teams just before the race. A pretty good wind had come up and changed our plans. Before that we had two teams and we had wanted both teams to break the record. But little guys are affected more by the wind and we put all the big guys in the same team. They ran under the world record by three or four seconds."

Even so, it has been the Twilight Mile that has remained the meet's feature event.

Bowerman says as much, "though all the Twilight Meets have had something outstanding about them."

And current head coach Bill Dellinger says the same thing. "The Twilight Mile has always been the feature event of this meet and it will be no different this year.

"The meet is kind of a home-town party," says Bowerman. "It's low-key but very exciting. It's a tradition and everybody's always enjoyed it."

It's not hard to enjoy a meet with this much history. Recent years tell the tale as well as any others in the history of the Twilighter.

It took Steve Prefontaine three tries before he could even win a Twilight Mile. His first two attempts saw him run identical 3:57.4 times (the first is still an Oregon freshman record) — and finish second.

In Pre's first year, when he was setting that frosh record, Roscoe Divine beat him to the tape in 3:56.3. Behind them came Oregon graduates Dave Wilborn and Norm Trerise and student Steve Savage. Savage ran a 3:59.2. All five had crossed the finish line in less than four minutes.

In 1971, Pre finished second to the Oslo Flyer, Arne Kvalheim. Kvalheim ran 3:56.4.

Last year, Prefontaine finally won the Twilight Mile, running his lifetime best 3:56.7. That time is the third best Oregon mile ever. This season, Pre has missed equaling it by one-tenth of a second.

Bowerman thinks this year's Twilight Mile will be just like those of the past.

"Headed by Pre there are several fellows that very likely without dual meet pressure might enjoy the rare privilege of becoming a sub-four minute miler.

"Besides Pre, there's Paul Geis, Mark Feig, Scott Daggatt and Steve Bence.

That's five right there, so at least that many are capable of running under four minutes."

The runners, too, know the Twilight Mile is something special.

They agree with Bowerman that something special could happen at Hayward Field Friday evening.

Says Daggatt, "There's about eight people that want to break four minutes. I want to get second place behind Pre. That's all I'm saying."

That's enough about the race.

But Daggatt also had some thoughts about the meet itself.

"The Twilight Meet just means a big mile race, a super mile. I could run 3:56 and still get second."

Geis feels the same way.

"A month ago I would have promised a sub-four minute mile, but I'm behind in my speed work. Now I'll just run with everybody and see how I feel. But I think there will be more than one sub-four minute miler this week. I could get last place and still run my fastest mile."

Dellinger agrees that the Twilight Mile is something special.

But all that tradition has him a little worried.

He points out that the timing of this year's Twilight Meet is different than in the past. Instead of taking place in mid-June, the race is being run in April. And instead of providing competition between the Pac-8 and the NCAA meets, the Twilighter comes before either one.

"Traditionally this meet has been used to sharpen everybody for the NCAA during that long break between important meets. But now the NCAA is moved up and that puts a crimp on the Twilight.

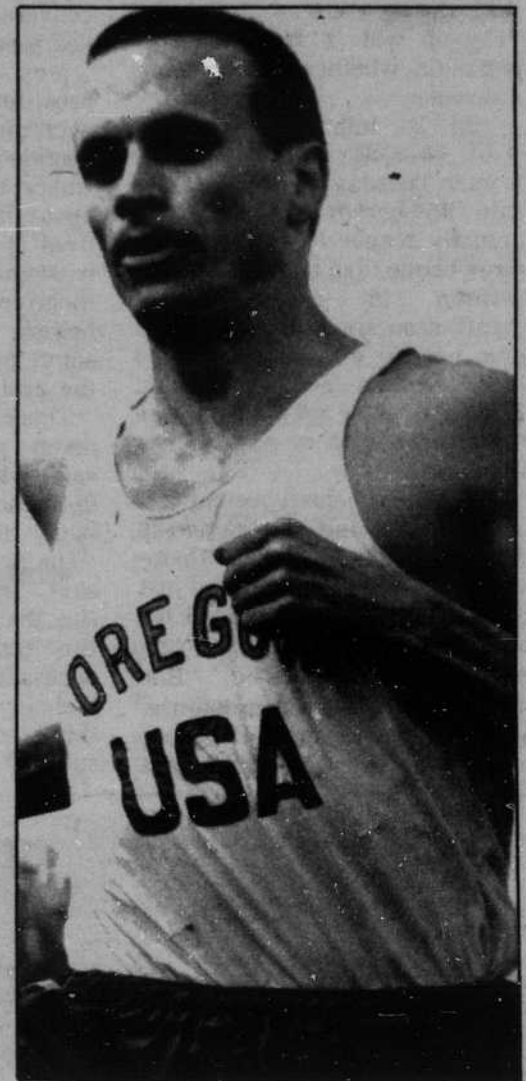
"It puts it a little earlier than we might like it to be. I'd like for the guys to take it in stride."

Besides being a good meet for milers, Dellinger points out that the Twilight get-together is the Oregon Track Club's one "big money-making event of the year. It's their fund-raiser and from this they hold their summer all-comers meets and send some of our guys to the national AAU championships. It's the life-blood of the OTC."

Life-blood or not, Dellinger doesn't want this meet to go to his runner's heads.

"I don't want this mile to be the fastest time of the year for my guys. I want them all to run well. We'd like to see how many of them are capable of running down around four minutes.

"But I want our runners to know they have some big races coming up; this is not their big effort of the year. But I'm a little worried about the tradition psyching them up too much."



Dyrol Burleson

"The students just poured in. The stands were full. And Burleson ran under four minutes. He was the only one to break the barrier and it was his first time. The next year we decided to see if we could do it again. We did and it's become a part of Oregon." — Bill Bowerman.

There may not be much need for psych. The caliber of the field might do the work all by itself. Dellinger himself says all of the entrants are capable of "running a 4:07 or better."

And around 7 p.m. Friday night things might just start happening.

It'll be about then that Prefontaine, Geis, Daggatt, Bence, Feig, Knut Kvalheim, Gary Barger, Gary Williams, Mike Long, Dave Weicker, Lars Kaupang and Todd Lathers will take off with the starter's gun.

Some of them should be done in less than four minutes.

It's a tradition in Eugene.

Gluttonous 12-4 win over Linfield

Ducks continue mastery of non-loop teams

The Oregon varsity baseball team's ravenous appetite for non-conference opponents continued Wednesday with a gluttonous 12-4 victory over Linfield at Howe Field. The Ducks smacked nine hits, including four home runs, and boosted their season record to 16-8.

Unfortunately, it seems to be feast or famine for the Ducks, with the famine falling in crucial weekend games against conference rivals. Although Oregon has scored 27 runs in this week's three non-conference games with Linfield and Portland, they could muster only four runs in last Saturday's doubleheader with Washington. The loss of that twinbill cost the Ducks any hopes of a Pac-8 Northern Division title. Oregon will get a chance for revenge this weekend when they meet the Huskies at Howe Field in a single game Friday and a doubleheader Saturday.

Wednesday's game with Linfield featured two home runs by Oregon shortstop Rich Chase, another round-

tripper for Don Reynolds, a two-run shot by Pat McNally and the traditional experimenting by coach Mel Krause. Fifteen Oregon players saw action, with third baseman Steve Wolf trying his hand at second, first baseman Jim Willis playing third and Fred Kay substituting for the injured Guy Krause in right field.

Craig Husband pitched six innings for the Ducks, scattering three hits while giving up five walks and two runs. Reliever Dick Galloway was the victim of a three-hit, two run Linfield rally in the eighth, but the Wildcats never threatened, as reliever Eric Gilmore finished them off on three ground balls in the ninth.

After the game, Krause commented on his experimenting with McNally at first and Willis at third. "I'm preparing Willis to play third in case McNally develops as a hitter," he said. The head coach added that he would go with his regular lineup of Willis at first and Wolf at third for the weekend contests. But since Wolf is a senior and both McNally and a recruit

from Southern California will get a shot at first for next year, Willis may end up at third. Willis, a freshman from The Dalles, had another good day with the bat in going 2 for 4 against the Wildcats.

Krause will go with his regular starting trio of Mike Shoup, Greg Richards and Brian Shandera against Washington this weekend. The only change in the regular lineup will be in right field, where Kay will replace Guy Krause, who injured his ankle

last weekend against the Huskies. Krause might be available for pinch-hitting, the coach said.

Linescores:

				r	h	e
Linfield	001	010	020	4	7	3
Oregon	203	430	00x	12	9	1
Winning pitcher:	Husband					
Losing pitcher:	Waritz					

Women lose two games to OSU

At least first game jitters are out of the way for the women's softball teams. Both the A and B teams lost games against Oregon State Tuesday. Today both Oregon squads go to Monmouth for 4 p.m. games against Oregon College of Education.

The OSU B team won its game 9-4. Diane Smith pitched seven strike outs for

Oregon, however, and drove in two runs with her double hit.

Doris Vance, also an Oregon B team player, had two hits of her three times at bat.

The Oregon A team lost 11-7. But the A team out hit their opponents 8-6. Carolyn Pura pitched for Oregon.