

Surprises abound at peaceful AAU gathering

The AAU National Track and Field Championships were about as predictable as an Alfred Hitchcock novel last weekend, and just about as suspenseful.

Not many things that were supposed to happen actually happened and many of the things that did would have been impossible to get a line on at Vegas.

For starters, there was no real discontent by attending athletes over dubious AAU by-laws and mandates, which in turn resulted in a relatively peaceful engagement. Only the competition was fast and furious.

The meet got off to a dubious start when a few of the headline stars failed to show for the event—prep sprint star Houston

McTear, pole vaulter Dave Roberts, sprinter Ivory Crockett, long jumper Bouncy Moore and shot putter George Woods—but nobody really missed them after it all got going.

The only thing one really mis-



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sed was Steve Prefontaine in the 5,000 meters. Somehow, even with a sterling performance by Marty Liquori, it wasn't quite the same.

The unanticipated happenings of the two-day affair were almost common by meet's end. Frank Shorter's unmatched finish in the 10,000-meter run was one of the few races that gave a sense of reality to the whole affair.

For instance, what were the odds that the top three high hurd-

lers in the field would all fall to allow a relative unknown to win? Or how about a middle-distance star that hadn't been beaten in two years at 800 meters losing to a junior? To top it all, how about an Oregon State high jumper outlasting Dwight Stones and nearly breaking the world record?

Such was the trend, not the exception, at the AAUs.

The biggest upset of the meet was Utah State NCAA champion Mark Enyeart's 800-meter victory over world record-holder Rick Wolhuter of the Chicago Track Club.

Nobody, least of all Enyeart or Wolhuter, expected such a finish. But Enyeart took the lead at the beginning despite a Lane 8 start and carried it throughout, fighting off bursts by Wolhuter on the last two curves and the straightaway finish.

The 21-year-old former sprint star blazed to a 51.1 quarter and it appeared nothing more than a set-up for Wolhuter, but down the stretch, Enyeart opened up again and won going away in 1:44.9.

"I like to get the lead and stay out of traffic," said Enyeart, somewhat unmoved by what he had done. "My strength is speed and the endurance is coming."

Enyeart, who only this year switched to the middle distance race after a frustrating stint as a sprinter, had never seen Wolhuter, let alone run against him before this weekend. It didn't seem to bother him, either.

In the high hurdles, it appeared Guy Drut of France and Charles Foster of North Carolina Central would battle each other, but neither was a factor as each met the same fate as veteran Willie Davenport, who tripped over a hurdle in the semi-final heat. Drut, the silver medalist in the Munich Olympics, collapsed on the first hurdle and Foster was decked out three hurdles later. The Beverly Hills Striders' Gerald Wilson emerged the victor in a fast 13.38.

Similarly, in the 440 intermediate hurdles, Pacific Coast Club's Jim Bolding seemed a cinch winner after two blazing heat races in which he slowed up

and looked back at the tape as if to mock his slower opponents. But in the final, veteran Ralph Mann of the Beverly Hills Striders got the last laugh as Bolding set a quick tempo only to stagger over the last two hurdles and allow Mann to eclipse him at the tape.

The high jump was the premier event of the first day, overshadowing a brilliant triumph by Don Quarrie in the 100 meters, his first major victory at that distance. On Saturday he became the only double winner with an aborted world-record finish in the 200-meter final, his specialty.

The action was narrowed to four men at 7-foot-4, the highlight to that point being Ron Livers of the Philadelphia Pioneer Athletic Club, who at 5-foot-9 cleared 7-3.18 inches over his height, which has to be some sort of world record.

Even after he was eliminated at 7-4, three men were left in the competition, all representing the Pacific Coast Club—Dwight Stones, Tom Woods and Rory Kotinek.

Kotinek failed at 7-5½ and Stones also missed three times after barely making it over 7-4. Only Woods, who had cleared 6-10, 7-0, 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4 on his first jump, made it, again on his initial try.

It was by far his greatest day as a high jumper. After a near miss at the world record 7-foot-7 that seemed only Stones would ever have a chance at, Woods was a real threat to the mark of 7-6¼ set by Stones. Unfortunately, on his second attempt, he slipped and fell and didn't really have a shot after that.

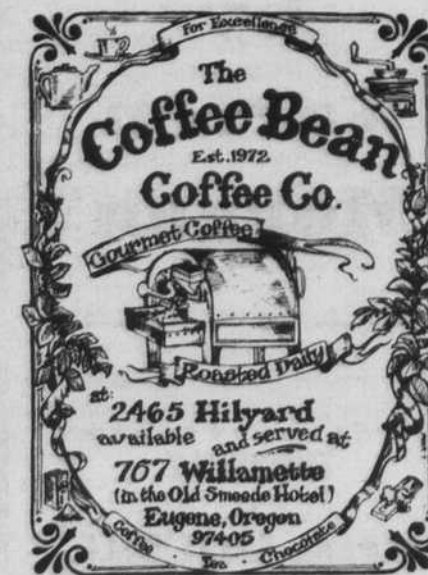
"I feel confident I can get 7-7," said Woods, "Man, it was unreal out there."

Other winners in the meet included Liquori in the 5,000 at 13:29.0; Randall Smith of Wichita State in the steeplechase (8:28.9); Len Hilton of the PCC at 1,500 meters in 3:38.3; David Jenkins of Great Britain at 400 meters in 44.93 and Ron Laird of the New York Athletic Club in the 5,000-meter walk.

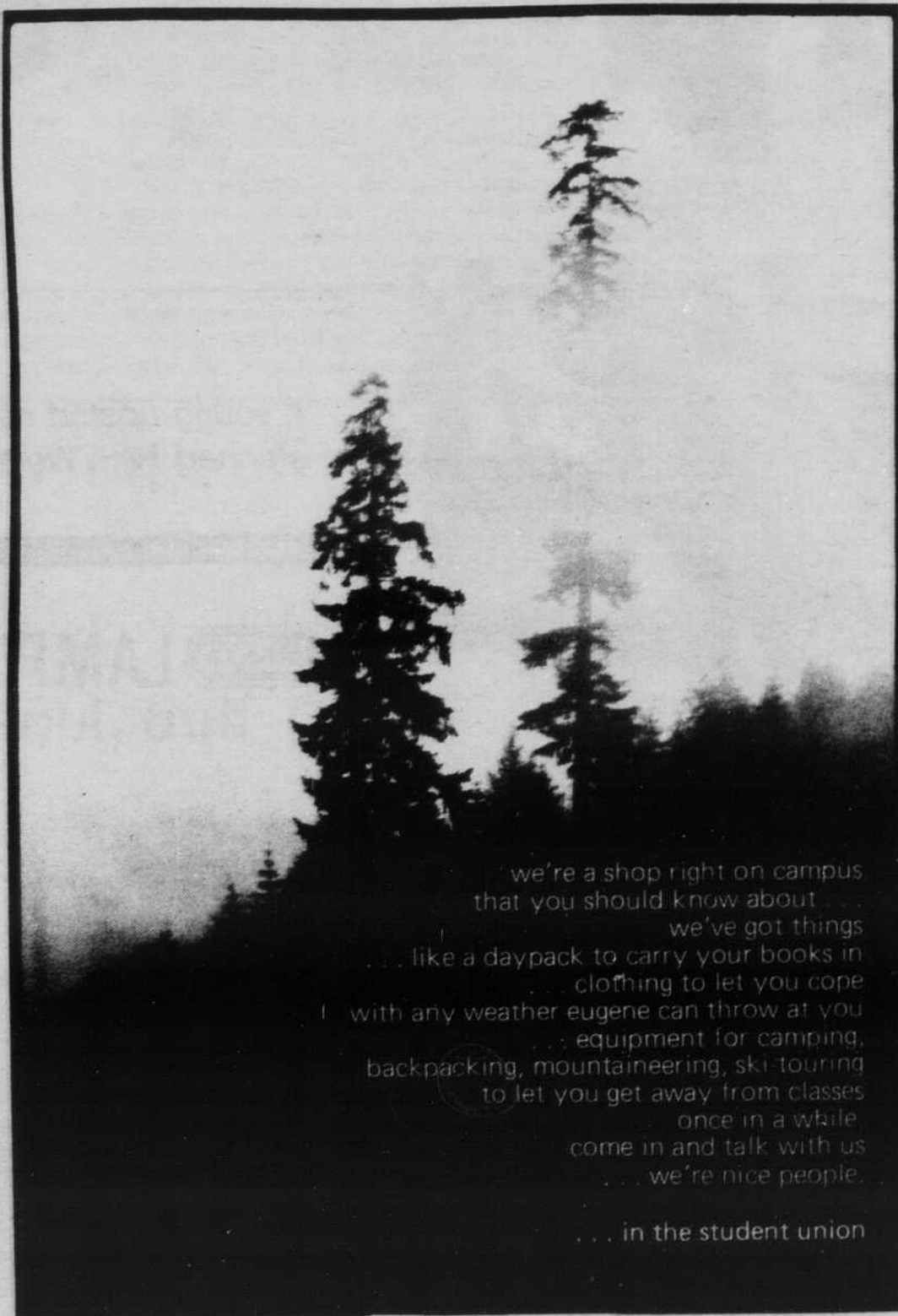
In the field events, Al Feuerbach took the shot in 69-10; John Powell the discus at 208-4 over Mac Wilkins, who was four inches shorter; Boris Djerassi in the hammer at 222-10; Don Baird in the pole vault at 17-6; Richard George of BYU in the javelin with a new Hayward Field record of 272-11; Anthony Terry in the triple jump at 54-9¾ and Arnie Robinson in the long jump at 26-5.

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