

McChesney flirts with 5,000 record

Misses U.S. mark by less than second

By JODY MURRAY
Of the Emerald

After passing the two-mile mark in the 5,000 meters, Bill McChesney knew something special was afoot.

"I suddenly realized, 'Hey, I can get an American record if I just start cookin!'"

Four laps remained in Saturday's race, and the 4,000 Hayward Field fans attending the Northern Division Relays knew exactly what was happening. They screamed themselves purple as McChesney poured it on. The scoreboard flashed the American record — 13:15.06, set in 1976 by Marty Liquori.

As McChesney hit the tape, there was a moment of confusion as the scoreboard's clock stopped prematurely at 3:12. Actually, McChesney had missed the U.S. mark by less than a second — 13:15.77.

After taking a very quick victory lap, stopping for handslaps, autographs and a somersault down the backstretch, McChesney approached a bevy of reporters. He wasn't a bit winded, looking like someone who had watched the race rather than ran it.

"Your best efforts always feel easy," said McChesney, who is redshirting at Oregon this year to give seniors Rudy Chapa and Alberto Salazar their season in the sun.

Despite running all alone for 11 of the 12 laps (Mike Lohman finished second at 13:51.16), McChesney's time was the second best ever by an American and the 16th all-time in the world.

Earlier in the week, with the rain coming and going, he had planned to only run around 13:40. Then at race time, noting the cool, windless evening air, McChesney thought a 13:20 would be possible.

But he would prognosticate no further. Because McChesney has learned that promises are made to be broken.

"If I told myself, 'I'll run 13:15 today,' I'd tie myself in knots. So I'm not going to try to make it happen anymore. If it doesn't happen again, I'm not worried."

"But I have this instinctive feeling that it will. Hey, I'm only 22. I've got plenty of years to go."

Since McChesney isn't competing collegiately, this is actually the beginning of his season. His peak, he said, will hopefully come at September's World Cup in Europe.

"I'll have to reevaluate my goals. I've never been in this position so early in the year."

McChesney's run was the brightest of several performances by current or former Ducks. Reidar Lorentzen heaved the javelin 255-6 on his last throw to beat University of Washington's

Mike Mahovolich (249-9); Jim Hill, a 5,000 specialist, tried the 1,500 and clocked a sparkling 3:41.54; and former Duck Ken Martin came out of training to run his first steeplechase of the year in 8:26.43.

Martin was very satisfied with his run, which nearly equalled his first steeplechase last year (8:25.5).

"It was super easy. This one felt easier (than last year's); I didn't go out as hard."

Hill said despite this 1,500, which translated to about a 3:58 mile, his first love is still the 5,000. And he also seems to belong to the McChesney school of relaxed running.

"I'm a guy who just runs to win, because if you run against the clock, you always lose in the end."

But the day's big winner was McChesney, who because of the scoreboard clock mixup didn't know his official time for almost 15 minutes. When an official finally told him, he face broke into a look of mock dismay.

"God darn, I'll just have to break it again later, I suppose."

"I love it!"

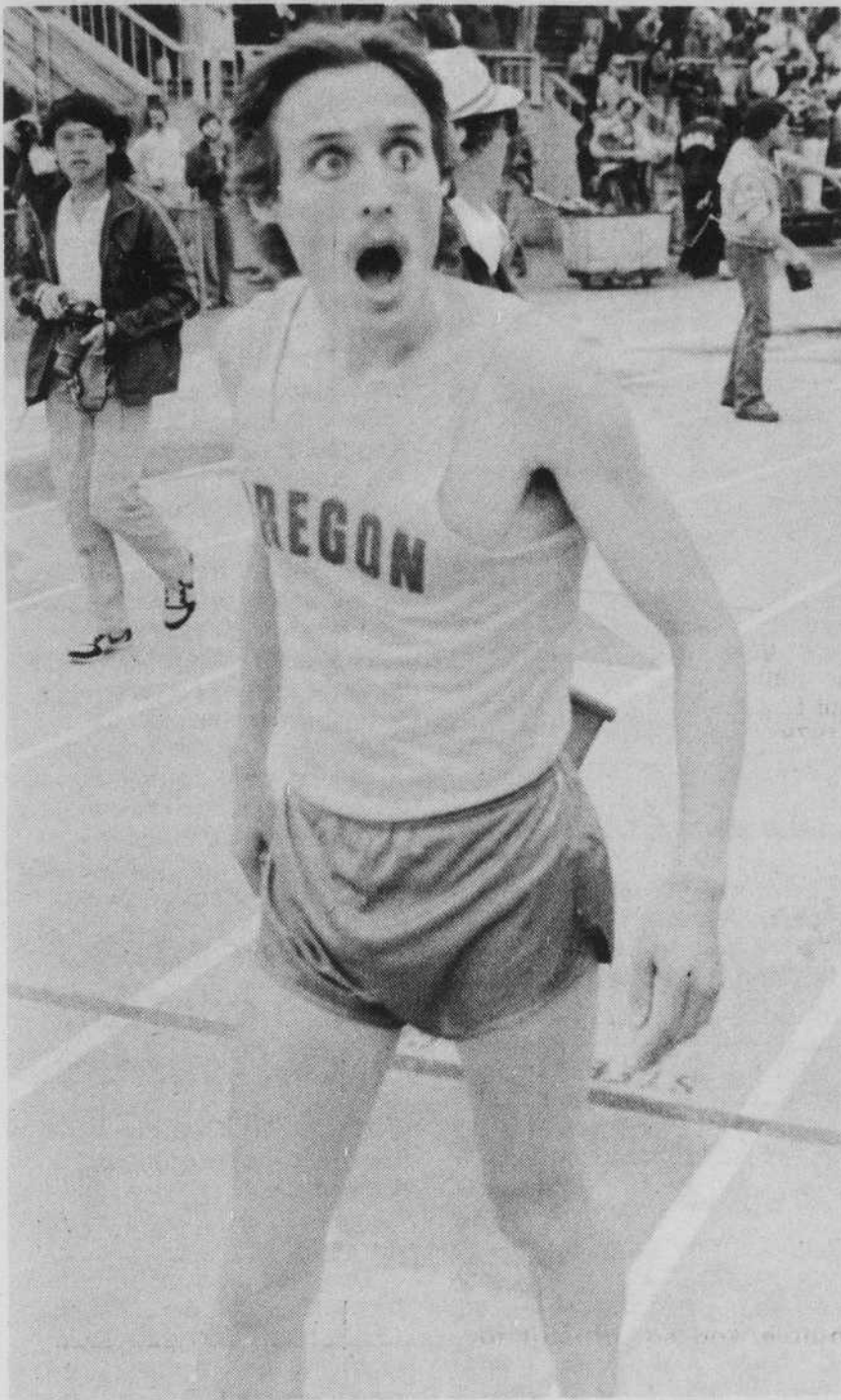


Photo by Steve Dykes

Bill McChesney gapes at the scoreboard clock, which stopped prematurely at 13:12 in the 5,000. His actual time of 13:15.77 was less than a second off the American record.

Stanford drops Huskies in two

SEATTLE (AP) — Phil Wilson, Mike Toothman and John Elway powered home runs Saturday as Stanford swept a best-of-three Pacific-10 baseball series in two games to end Washington's season.

The 10-6 victory by the Cardinals followed a 10-8 triumph over the Huskies Friday.

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