

# Pre

"Both of them are incredible competitors, but I'm not sure I'd like to make any type of further comparison," Dellinger says.

"I see a lot of Salazar in Salazar and a lot of Pre in Pre, but it's just not fair to compare one generation with another," Bowerman says. "You'd have to consider all of Oregon's great

distance men from the past including our top 5,000 man in 1956, who was Bill Dellinger. To say one is the greatest just isn't fair to any of them."

One quality Bowerman says ran common in both Salazar and Prefontaine was what he calls a "Pied Piper effect" on children.

One of Bowerman's fondest memories of Prefontaine occurred during the Olympic Trials at Hayward Field in 1972. Some of Pre's more dedicated fans at the meet were wearing T-shirts with the slogan, "GO PRE" displayed on the front.

One spectator not quite as fond of the Oregon star wore a

similar shirt that read, "GET PRE."

After he outran the entire 5,000-meter field, Pre headed around for yet another Hayward Field victory lap.

"Pre used to charge around on his victory laps," Bowerman says, "but he would always stop on the east side of the track to shake hands with the youngsters."



"He never forgot the Pre people, and we will never forget him."

Just as he began greeting the east side bleacher crowd, Pre noticed the fan with the "GET PRE" shirt sitting just a few rows up from the track.

"Pre exploded up the stairs, went right up to the guy and said, 'Gimme that shirt,'" Bowerman says.

The startled spectator immediately obliged, and Prefontaine made a second victory lap wearing the shirt he had taken. Bowerman says the already electrified crowd exploded with renewed enthusiasm.

When Prefontaine died, some reports defined him as being both popular and controversial. His most consistent criticism was aimed at the Amateur Athletic Union for what he said was the exploitation of American athletes. But to his friends, Prefontaine was a model of dedication and sincerity.

"He never forgot the Pre peo-

ple, and we will never forget him," McClure said just after Pre's death.

"He didn't like a sham," Bowerman says. "He was totally intolerant of 'stuffed shirts' and of pomposity whenever and however it surfaced."

During a memorial service at Hayward Field three days after Prefontaine's death, Bowerman and two of Pre's closest running mates, Kenny Moore and Frank Shorter, delivered short eulogies to a crowd of about 3,500.

As they took turns capsulizing Prefontaine's significance to his community and to his friends, perhaps Moore said it best when he said, "These remarks are not mine so much as they are those of all runners who knew Steve Prefontaine, and who grew with him here."

Shorter referred to an interview Pre had done shortly before his death when he was asked about Shorter's chances in the upcoming Olympic 10,000-meter race. The answer was vintage Prefontaine.

"If he's having a good day and running the right race, nobody can beat Shorter at 10,000 meters... Nobody except me."

The annual Prefontaine classic coed track and field meet will be held Saturday, June 5 at Hayward Field.

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