

Spills, thrills

Byers wins despite tumble

By Mike Riplinger
Of the Emerald

No world records were broken. Sebastian Coe, Steve Ovett and Sydney Maree didn't run, but the Oregon International Track and Field Meet will still be remembered because of a couple of gutsy performances by Tom Byers and Bill McChesney.

Byers, after falling in the first 10 yards of the mile, came back to win when the race was restarted, breaking Dave Wottle's field record set in 1973.

The mile was supposed to feature Coe and Ovett in the last of their series of meetings, none of which took place because of injuries. Maree also didn't run because of an injury.

McChesney kicked home in the last 300 meters of the 5,000 to outdistance a world-class field and vindicate himself in front of his home town fans after his injury-plagued senior season at Oregon last year.

Jeff Phillips turned in a double by winning the 100 and 200-meter dashes, but the meet was otherwise marked more by the lackluster performances of some world class athletes who fought the rain and cold at Hayward Field Saturday.

Bob Roggy in the javelin and Dave Laut in the shot put failed in their last attempt of the season to set world records. The two had to settle for sub-par individual performances. Roggy with a mark of 276-10 and Laut with a 69-6 heave.

David Mack, the Oregon runner who won the NCAA championship in the 800 meters last year, said he won't be returning to school to finish his senior year and ran what



Photo by Mark Pynes

Bill McChesney breaks the tape in front of his hometown crowd.

could be his last race in Eugene for quite a while. Mack said before the race that he wasn't in shape and his time beared him out as he finished ninth in a field of 10 in the 800.

James Robinson, who is ranked second in the world in the 800, finished just ahead of Mack in seventh place.

Byers' performance, coming

after he had the wind knocked out of him and he was bruised and bloodied on the first start, was something that could have come straight out of the movie Chariots of Fire.

On the restart the field seemed uncertain about the strategy, and after the pace setter, Charlie Taliaferro, dropped out after 800 meters,

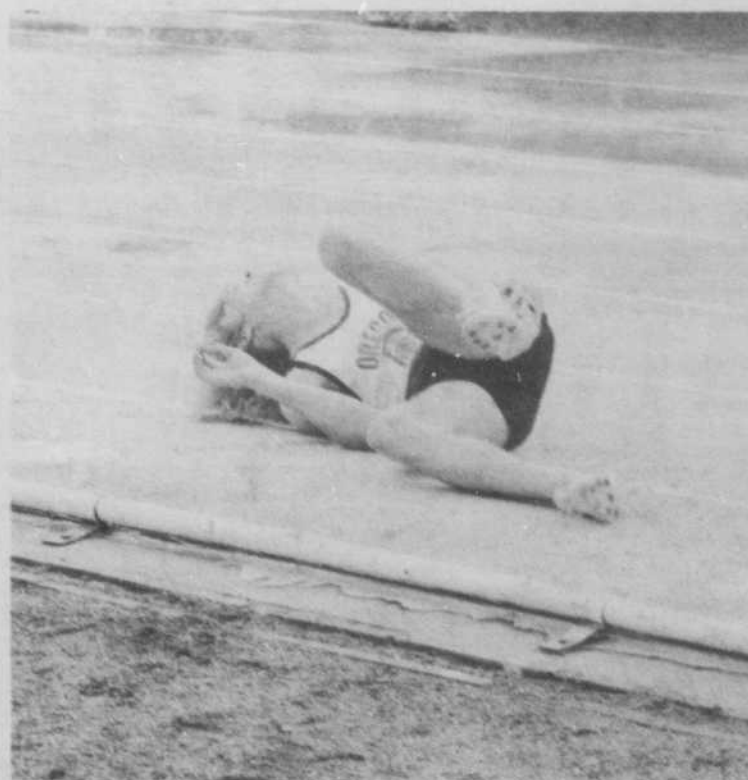


Photo by Mark Pynes

Tom Byers huddles in pain after falling down at the start of the mile.

no one took charge.

"That changed the whole race," Byers said of the fall. "The pace setter dropped out, so it got to the position of most miles in America--no one to set the pace, so you go slow for three laps."

Byers, who earlier in his career gained entry in a few big races by agreeing to be the rabbit, is known for taking the lead himself and forcing the pace. After the fall, he said, he decided to stay with the pack until he came into the last corner and blew by Graham Williamson of Scotland and Jose Abascal of Spain for the victory.

"I was shocked. The whole season flashed before my eyes as I lay on the track," Byers said of his fall. "But I'd have to have been dead not to get up and try again."

McChesney's effort was just as tough as Byers. He is coming off of a disappointing senior year where he was hampered by injuries which hid the talent that has him ranked with the third fastest time in the

United States for the 5,000.

Against Pac-10 champion Peter Koech who outran McChesney in the Oregon-Washington State dual meet and the Pac-10 meet which were both in Eugene, McChesney may have been looking for a bit of revenge.

He found it as he turned on the kick he said he has been working on to prepare himself for the 1984 Olympics, and burned the Kenyan by three seconds with a clocking of 13:31.98.

"I'd hoped to go for a record, but the time was all right," McChesney said. "I felt really tired with a mile to go. I worked hard on my speed work this summer which really helped."

"I felt the pressure of Koech, but I had enough confidence in my kick from the speedwork. In the '84 Olympic games, I have to be able to come off a slow pace. Once I went at the end, I was committed, so if anybody would've kicked by me, there was nothing I could do."

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