

# sidelines

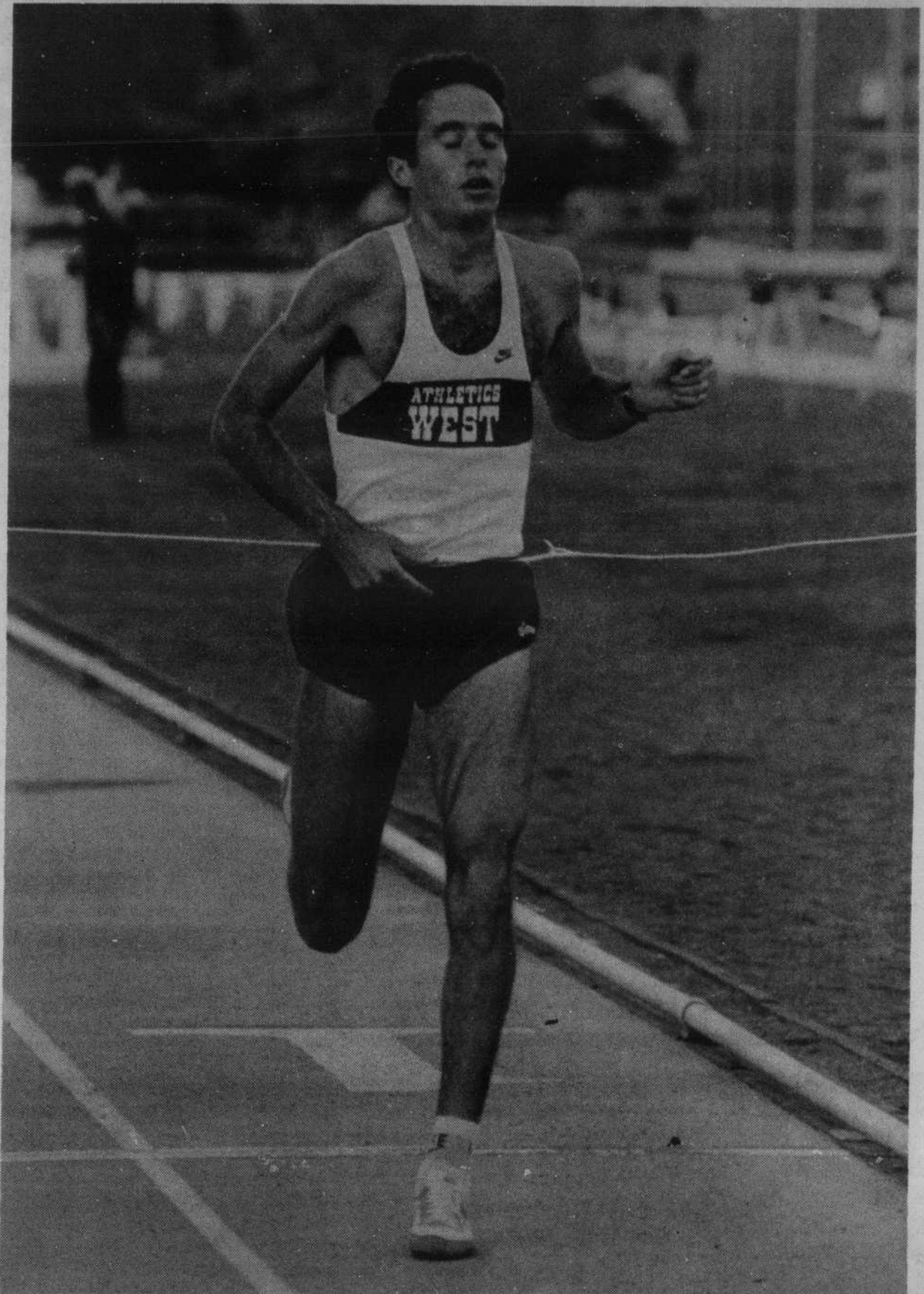
Emerald sports magazine

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## ALBERTO!

**May 8. The Soviet Union shouts to the world that it is pulling out of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.**

In Washington, D.C., Pres. Ronald Reagan contemplates his reply. In Los Angeles, Olympic officials hastily organize a plan to convince the Soviets otherwise.



**O**ne thousand miles north of the smoggy city, 25-year-old Alberto Salazar sits in his South Eugene-area home and answers the phone.

...  
*"I probably did about 10 interviews by noon that day. After awhile I'd done as many as I wanted to, so I just hung up the phone."* — Alberto Salazar

It's impossible to be Mr. Anonymous if your name is Alberto Salazar. He is the man who told everyone he'd set a world record before he ran the New York Marathon in 1981 — and succeeded in 2:08:13. Reportedly, he received

\$18,000 when he won New York a year later. Supposedly, the powers that be were willing to give him \$60,000 to run in the Los Angeles Marathon in May 1983.

He is the American record holder at 5,000 and 10,000 meters. He is supremely confident, painfully

**By Doug Levy  
Photos by Mark Pynes**

honest. He is, perhaps, the most magnificent all-purpose distance runner this world has seen. Privacy is a myth.

"It," says Salazar, referring to the constant drain of media attention, "can be an aggravation at times, but

it's not anything which I think is going to distract from one's running."

Again, the conversation turns to the Russian pullout. "We got one call at 5:30 a.m., and another reporter called and was real abusive and swore on the phone because I wasn't doing interviews. You just get to the point where you have to say no. So when the 11th guy calls, I say no, not because I have anything against the guy, but because I'm sick and tired of talking about it."

There is, of course, reason for the media to badger Salazar. From the time he entered Oregon in 1976 to the time he won his first marathon in 1980 to the time he set two American records in the summer of

1982, he has embraced distance-running headlines.

Nobody knew any of that when Salazar was nine. He'd called running "stupid" after his first attempt. Nobody knew any of that when he joined the Greater Boston Track Club at age 15 — he was only a skinny kid.

There was something inside that skinny kid. Maybe Bill Rodgers did call him "The Rookie," and maybe lots of the others ran better workouts.

"He was just a scrawny kid back then, but Billy Squires (the first coach of the Greater Boston Track Club) said he'd be the best

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