

SPORTS

Falcon seeks record in two-mile at meet

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Editor

Joe Falcon is no ordinary distance runner, and in Friday's Prefontaine Classic at Hayward Field, Falcon will attempt to set a world record in a very unusual distance — the two-mile run.

Falcon will be attempting to break the 8:13.45 clocking set by Said Aoutia of Morocco in 1987 and the American record of 8:17.12 set by Marty Liquori in 1975.

After finishing third in The Athletics Congress 1,500-meter run at last weekend's national championships, Falcon believes he's ready for a record-setting run.

"It fits into my schedule pretty well," Falcon said when he was in Eugene two weeks ago. "People are always in the 1,500 and mile going for a world record. It's really never been tried at two miles so I thought I would at least give it a try."

Falcon agreed to make an attempt at a two-mile world record when meet director Tom Jordan guaranteed Falcon he could set up a rabbit to take out a fast pace to help push Falcon.

Along with a rabbit, who is supposed to take the first mile out in 4:05, Falcon will have plenty of other challengers in the race. Also in the race are Doug Padilla, the American indoor record holder at two miles and Montana State's Shannon Butler, the NCAA 5,000-meter champ and the TAC 10,000 winner.

Falcon does have some experience running the distance that is hardly ever run outdoors, having run several two miles in NCAA indoor meets and one outdoors as a freshman at Arkansas in 1986.

Falcon also has experience running in the Prefontaine Classic. Last year, he set a meet record in the 5,000 with a then world-leading 13:20.49 that earned him a \$5,000 cash bonus.

The chance to run in the Prefontaine Classic and in front of the Hayward Field fans was a big reason Falcon decided to return for this year's meet.

"I like running in Eugene at Hayward Field," Falcon said. "I won the NCAA (1,500 in 1988) here and then being at the Prefontaine Classic, I got a chance to see the great crowds here."

"This is certainly the place to go for a record," he said.

Few records of any kind have been set in American distance running in the last few years, and many consider Falcon the last hope for saving America in those events.

Falcon can certainly deliver, just like the man the meet was named for, the late Steve Prefontaine.

In 1990, Falcon was the top-ranked American in both the 1,500 and 5,000 meters and was ranked third in the world in the 1,500. He also won the prestigious Dream Mile in last year's Bislett Games in Oslo.

At only 24 — he will turn 25 two days after the Prefontaine Classic — Falcon will likely be carrying the torch for American distance running for several years, but it's a burden he welcomes.

"There's not as much pressure as one might think when you're having success," he said, "plus there's some other good, younger runners out there. But it's a responsibility we have to be willing to accept."

Falcon's biggest problem might be trying to figure out what his best distance really is. He currently is a better 1,500-mile runner on the international level, but many "experts" believe the 5,000 is his best race, as demonstrated in last year's Prefontaine Classic.

The 5,000 might prove to be his best event later in his career, but for the time being, Falcon sees the 1,500 and mile as his best events.

"I'm a firm believer that you shouldn't move up and change events until you've exhausted all of your potential at the other event," he said. "I believe that I can run a 3:44 mile sometime in the next three years."

Because he has planned his year around running the 1,500 in the World Championships in Tokyo in August, Friday's two-mile event will be one of the few races Falcon will run this summer.

He plans on running at the New York Games in July and twice in Eugene in August before heading to the World Championships.

Falcon admits that he's sacrificing large cash bonuses by not running often in Europe, but that doesn't bother him.

"When my coach and I sat down and planned the season, we did so with the World Championships in mind," Falcon said. "The main focus is to get a medal there."



Photo by Jeff Paslay

Joe Falcon will be shooting for a world record in the two-mile run Friday at the Prefontaine Classic.



The Saga Continues
WEDNESDAY NIGHT
at

TRACK TOWN PIZZA

Get a medium (12")

One-Ingredient
Pizza for ONLY...

(Just ask for the Special)

\$5⁹⁵

(Add 1 Ingredient .70)

Why settle for less... than the BEST!?!

FREE DELIVERY

(Limited delivery area)

484-2799

1809 Franklin Blvd.



Mother Kali's Books

Celebrating Women In All Our Diversities

women of color
Jewish women
lesbians
gay men



women's music
periodicals
cards

Everyone's welcome!
2001 Franklin Blvd. #5
Eugene, OR 97401

10-6 Mon-Thu & Sat
10-8 Fri
503-343-4864

Don't give up the search! Try LOST AND
FOUND in the classified section.



Having a garage sale? Advertise in the ODE
Classifieds.