

Men

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"I'd have preferred to get the American record to 3:45 or 3:46 or something like that, where no one else could even get close," El Guerrouj said.

What was equally record-breaking in the mile was prep sensation Alan Webb's time of 3:53.43, which broke Jim Ryan's 36-year-old high school record by two seconds.

"I felt good the whole time," Webb said. "I wanted this record. I ran great splits; I knew I was on pace."

Two laps into the mile, it didn't appear that any records would be broken — American, meet or high school. The race's pace setters were ahead by too many strides to be effective and Webb sat in last place.

"The pace setters went out a little too fast," El Guerrouj said. "To be able to run a 3:49 without pace setters is pretty good."

Webb wasn't deterred by his situation with 800 meters to go either.

"I knew the pace would be fast," Webb said. "I just stayed in contact and played conservative. I waited until 300 to go, then poured on the gas."

El Guerrouj was pleased with the turnout at Hayward Field.

"This is the first time I've seen a public that understands athletics so profoundly," he said. "The public deserves a great performance. I'd like to promise the crowd that I'll be back next year to break the world record."

Twelve runners in the mile field broke the legendary four-minute barrier, only one runner shy of the meet record, set in 1995.

A major coup occurred in the

men's 100 meters, which featured the "world's fastest man" in Maurice Greene, who had been undefeated at the Pre since 1998. After a controversial false start disqualified Canadian Bruny Surin, Jamaican Patrick Jarrett and Olympian Tim Montgomery edged Greene by .03 seconds.

It was later determined that Jarrett left his starting blocks 0.042 seconds before the starting gun, which proved to be the difference between him, Montgomery and Greene.

"Jarrett was two steps ahead of me," said Olympian Jon Drummond, who finished fifth. "That had to be a false start. Those were two blatant, powerful 'you-ain't-catching-me' steps."

"I didn't feel anything," Jarrett said. "The first false start was a blur. I didn't hear anything. The second time, same thing."

Jarrett's time of 9.89 seconds will not enter the Prefontaine record books due to a wind reading of 3.7 meters per second, 1.7 over the allowable mark.

That same wind had an adverse effect on the 800 meters. A loaded international field had its eyes set on the meet record of 1:44.6, set by Johnny Gray in 1996. But a strong headwind on the east straightaway threw off the pace of many runners.

Burundi's Patrick Nduwimana came close to Gray's record, winning in a time of 1:44.9. The Olympic semifinalist surged ahead of the pace setters with 350 meters to go, running splits of 54, then 50 seconds.

"The wind was pretty bad on the back stretch," Nduwimana said. "I can't complain. At the 200 [meters to go] mark I saw it was 1:17, and I knew I was going to be 1:45. I wasn't too

worried about time."

Following the 100 meters, the mile and the 800 meters, the rest of the meet was a little, well, ho-hum.

Meet record-holder Luke Kipkosgei defended his title in the 5,000 meters by out-kicking teammates Leonard Mucheru, Abraham Chebii and American record-holder Bob Kennedy. Kipkosgei was six seconds off his meet record with a time of 13:13.

Olympic silver-medalist Terrence Trammell won the 110 hurdles in a time of 13.34 seconds.

The only men's event inside the oval — the discus — was won by Lithuanian Virgilijus Alekna on his final throw of 220 feet, 5 inches.

The cast of world-class athletes will now travel to Athens for the next installment of the Grand Prix track and field series.

Women

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"I knew this was going to be one of my toughest races ever," Favor Hamilton said. "To win it here is overwhelming."

Favor Hamilton erased the memory of her Olympic fall and a close loss in last year's Pre Classic 1,500 with an easy victory. After running the race in 4:06.93, nearly three seconds faster than second-place Lyudmila Vasilyeva of Russia, Favor Hamilton threw her arms up in triumph as the Hayward Field crowd gave her a standing ovation.

Maria Mutola was another athlete with ties to Eugene who triumphed Sunday. Mutola, a native of Mozambique who lives and trains in Eugene, beat out a field in the 800 that included her own sister-in-law, and she ran the fastest time in the world this year.

Mutola has competed in 11

straight Pre Classic meets, and she hasn't lost since her first attempt at the Pre back when she was a high school student in Springfield.

"I always know the Eugene fans are behind me," Mutola said. "I'm really happy to know that things are going so well."

Marla Runyan completed the trifecta of Eugene distance winners. Runyan, a Eugene resident, easily won the 3,000 with a kick over the last lap that put her ahead of Kathy Butler by two seconds.

Runyan said she was slightly disappointed about not breaking the Pre Classic record, but she enjoyed the meet all the same.

"To win at the Pre touches my heart," Runyan said. "I knew the meet record wasn't going to happen today, so I just tried to run as hard as I could and get the win."

Even if the local athletes stole the Pre Classic spotlight, some world-class Olympians caught a piece of

Sunday's action as well.

In the 100 hurdles, American hurdling star Gail Devers lost to Jamaica's Deloreen Ennis-London in the day's closest race. Ennis-London's time of 12.68 seconds was only .01 seconds faster than Devers' time.

The biggest star to compete Sunday, Marion Jones, won her event with a whimper instead of the usual bang. "The world's fastest woman" won the 200 in 22.26 seconds, but her time was thrown out because of wind. She beat Jamaica's Juliet Campbell by .49 seconds for her fourth straight Pre Classic victory.

In two field events that lasted almost all afternoon, Americans Amy Acuff and Stacy Dragila outshone their foreign competition to win the high jump and pole vault, respectively. Dragila jumped half a foot higher than her nearest competitor in the vault, and nearly

broke her own world record with three attempts at 15 feet, 5 1/2 inches. Her winning mark was 15-1 1/2, a meet record.

"I jumped really well this week," Dragila said. "I felt good."

Acuff beat out the world's top high jumper, Sweden's Kajsa Bergqvist, with a final leap of 6-6. Acuff also beat out some personal demons on the high jump runway. Acuff rushed from Hayward Field after her event to catch a plane for Chicago, where she attended the funeral of her grandmother, Lorraine Ward.

"I've had a rough couple days," Acuff said. "My mind's kind of been in different places. I feel like [Ward] was here with me today."

Acuff's emotional, gutsy performance typified the 2001 installment of the Prefontaine Classic, where those with the most heart, it seemed, came out ahead.

Webb

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Webb's current coach, Scott Raczka of South Lakes High School, said he was impressed by Webb's performance.

"He's obviously very sharp right now," Raczka said. "He's able to shift gears as good as anyone. And he showed that today."

Webb will shift into another mode, as he did Sunday, as he enters the collegiate ranks this fall and looks to put American distance running back on the map — as the legendary Prefontaine did in the early '70s.

"I wanted that high school record," Webb said. "I didn't know if I had it in me today, but I wanted to set myself up if I did."

"To compete at this level is very special. I'm excited to see what I can do at the next level."



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