



## As always, Pre Classic provides plenty of stories



**HAKUNA MATATA**

**JEFF SMITH**

The great Steve Prefontaine once said, "I don't just go out there and run. I like to give people watching something exciting."

Well, if the Oregon legend were still with us today, there's no doubt that he would have been impressed with Sunday's 27th annual track and field meet honored with his name.

The Prefontaine Classic at Hayward Field, always a spectacular display of the world's top-notch track and field athletes, continued to dazzle Sunday with big names, fast times and that one high school kid with the contagious smile.

Oh yes, him. Alan Webb. He's 18 years old. He's a senior at South Lakes High in Reston, Va. He's excited about going to college at Michigan in the fall.

And — get this — he ran a mile in 3 minutes, 53.43 seconds.

Webb's four speedy laps around the Hayward track set a new national high school record, breaking one that had been set back in 1965 (Jim Ryun, 3:55.3).

"That boy ain't joking!" screamed Olympic speedster Maurice Greene, who congratulated Webb on his historic run.

Not to be overshadowed in the prestigious mile race was world record-holder Hicham El Guerrouj from Morocco, who won the event with a blistering time of 3:49.92, the fastest mile ever run on U.S. soil.

"El G" was racing for only the second time in America, the first in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, but promised to return to the Pre Classic next year. Speaking through an interpreter, he made sure to point out how impressed he was with Webb.

"Alan Webb could become my number-one rival if he really works at it," El Guerrouj said.

Webb and "El G" were clearly the headline story from this year's Pre, but they aren't the only ones deserving of attention.

How about former Eugene resident Suzy Favor Hamilton dominating the women's 1,500-meter run in a time of 4:06.93 in her first race since a panic attack ended her Olympic run in Sydney?

"I truly want to enjoy every bit of this," Favor Hamilton said. "Mentally, I feel like I'm a new person."

Or how about high jumper Amy Acuff's remarkable courage to compete at the Pre despite losing her grandmother earlier in the week?

The two-time Olympian said she felt her grandmother's spirit as she won the event with a leap of 6 feet, 6 inches.

And then there were the stars of track and field who repeatedly put on a show, whether they win or lose.

Marion Jones, who usually garners most of the attention, captured the women's 200-meter dash in 22.26 seconds, but she was left in the shadows a bit since her race came right after Webb and El Guerrouj's performances. She didn't mind, though.

"It's exciting to come out here and see a phenom like Alan Webb and the great miler in El G," Jones said.

Even in defeat, Greene came away from his 9.92 third-place finish in the 100-meter dash with his recognizable grin and engaging personality intact.

"I'm used to winning, but that just shows that anything can happen in the 100 meters," Greene said. "I didn't win today, though, but I'm having fun here, and that's the most important thing."

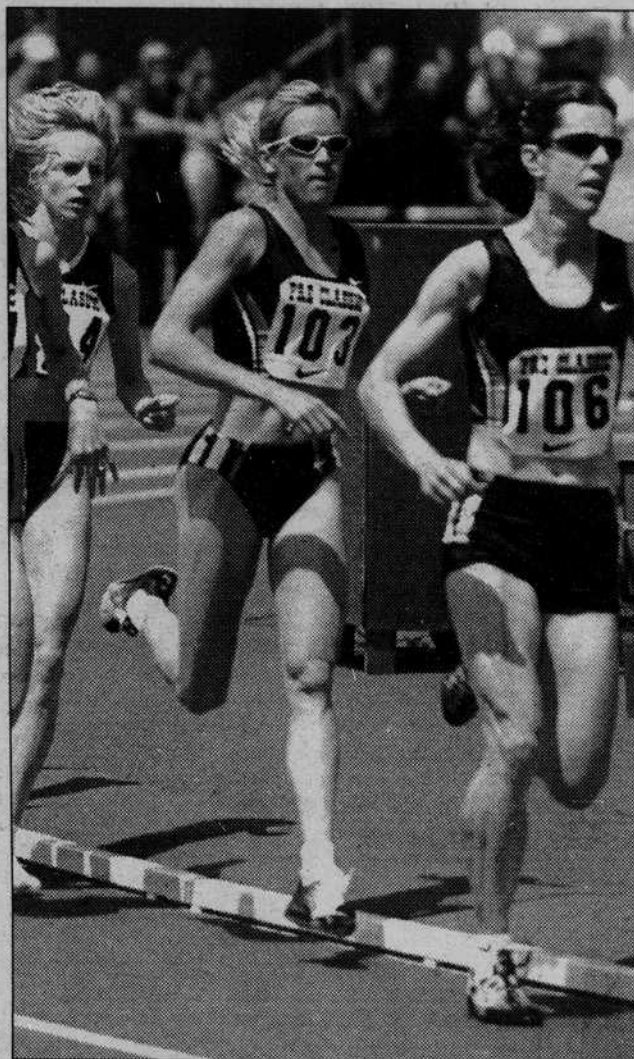
"I believe the fans are getting what they came to see."

Indeed they did, as somehow the Pre Classic found a way to keep getting better as it continued to grow in international prestige, thanks in large part to its historic mile.

As the great Steve Prefontaine also once said, "I like to make people stop and say, 'I've never seen anyone run like that before.'"

Well, those in the sold-out crowd of 11,211 who witnessed the double domination from Webb and "El G" probably stopped in their tracks Sunday and said those exact words.

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R. Ashley Smith Emerald

After being edged out in last year's competition, Suzy Favor Hamilton (103) won an 'emotional' 1,500 race Sunday at the Pre Classic.



R. Ashley Smith Emerald

Prep sensation Alan Webb shares a hug with world record-holder Hicham El Guerrouj after Sunday's historic Pre mile.

## Another record day at Pre

Local athletes such as Marla Runyan and Maria Mutola grab the spotlight at the international competition

By Peter Hockaday  
Oregon Daily Emerald

It was a track and field meet run by the International Amateur Athletic Federation, but the women's side of Sunday's Prefontaine Classic Grand Prix had a decidedly local flavor.

Americans won every women's event except the 100-meter hurdles and the 800 meters, and athletes with Eugene ties won all three distance running events.

It was an important meet for many of those winners. Suzy Favor Hamilton, the former Eugene resident who raced in the 1,500 for the first time since a disastrous fall in the Olympics last summer, called her victory "emotional."

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Stunning performances by Hicham El Guerrouj and Alan Webb in the mile highlight yet another record-breaking Prefontaine Classic

By Robbie McCallum  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Watch out, record-holders.

If the 2001 Prefontaine Classic Grand Prix was any indication of things to come, this year of track and field will be one of many upsets and broken records.

Sunday was an upsetting day at Hayward Field for some current and former record-holders.

World record-holder Hicham El Guerrouj assaulted the American mile record, running the fastest mile ever on American soil in a winning time of 3 minutes, 49.92 seconds in only his second race in the United States.

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## Prep star takes stage in record run

Alan Webb breaks a 36-year-old high school record in the mile and overshadows the star-studded field at the Pre Classic

By Adam Jude  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Marion Jones had her run in the spotlight.

Now it's Alan Webb's turn.

Jones won the 200-meter dash at the 27th annual Prefontaine Classic, but the 11,211 fans, the media and the viewers across the globe watching on live television just couldn't get enough of Webb, an 18-year-old phenom who broke a 36-year-old high school record in the mile Sunday at Hayward Field.

Webb, a Reston, Va., native, finished the mile in a time of 3:53.43, beating the 3:55.3 mark set in 1965 by Jim Ryun (now a congressman from Kansas).

Despite being last after the first lap, Webb passed about a dozen runners in

the final 300 meters to finish fifth. In all, 12 of the 18 competitors ran the mile in less than four minutes.

"With a lap to go, I knew I had it,"

Webb said of the record.

"This means everything to me. To be on the track where Steve Prefontaine, one of my childhood heroes, ran ... This is one of the best experiences of my career."

Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj, who set the world record in 1999, finished the mile in 3:49.92, the fastest time ever

run on American soil. After the race, El

Guerrouj and Webb ran part of the victory lap around Hayward together.

"He could become my number-one rival if he works at it," El Guerrouj said through an interpreter. "He's obviously got a great future. He just wants to stay on course and have confidence in himself and his entourage."

In the same event, Webb also broke Ryun's 1,500-meter record with a time of 3:38.26. With the records, Webb qualified for the USA Track and Field Championships, which will also be held at Hayward, June 21-24.

Webb will attend Michigan next fall.

"[Webb] was spectacular. He really surprised me," said Bob Kennedy, an American record-holder who finished fourth in the 5,000-meter run. "That's great for our sport. I saw the Michigan coach watching and drooling — he can't wait to get a hold of him."

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