ALEX TAM
HOLDING COURT

Now is the time to clear track's drug scandal

It's the one event that defines the state of Oregon every year.

The Prefontaine Classic has seen the best athletes that track and field has to offer. With performances from track legends Carl Lewis and Michael Johnson to modern stars Tim Montgomery and Marion Jones, the event exemplifies why Eugene is labeled Tracktown, U.S.A.

This week's Sports Illustrated highlighted the Pre Classic as Oregon's top sporting event. Media from all parts of the country witnessed the 30th year of the historic Hayward Field meet.

However, the topic most talked about was not the celebration of the sport or even this summer's Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. Instead, discussion around the stadium involved the drug scandal hitting the sport's biggest attractions.

The United States Anti-Doping Agency is investigating several athletes, including Montgomery and Jones, for using steroids distributed by the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative.

Numerous athletes expressed that they wanted the conflict to be resolved as soon as possible.

"Hopefully, things will get settled before the Olympic Games," said Inger Miller, the women's 100-meter dash winner at 11.05 seconds. "It's really unfortunate and I just want to be able to run a race, win a race and talk about me winning and how great it is and not about what's happening in the world of drug testing.

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Erik R. Bishoff Photo Editor

Marion Jones (middle) talks to the media about track and field's drug scandal. Jones said she thinks the scandal isn't likely to be resolved before the Olympics this summer.

Records fall at Prefontaine meet

Four world-leading marks headline the 30th Prefontaine Classic

ALEX TAM
SPORTS EDITOR

The world's top athletes put on a show at one of the nation's most prestigious track and field events.

Amid the drug controversy looming around track and field, a crowd of 12,376 gathered at Hayward Field for the 30th Prefontaine Classic in a celebration of the sport.

In the meet's main attraction — the Bowerman Mile — Alan Webb won with a time of 3 minutes, 50.58 seconds to set the fastest time ever by an American in the United States. Webb broke Jim Ryun's 1967 mark of 3:53.01.

"I didn't get under 3:50, but I won," Webb said. "I ran a personal best time — those are always my goals. Winning and running my best time, if I did it, I will eventually be a world and Olympic champion and have the world record. "The crowd erupted during Webb's last two laps; he missed the Prefontaine Classic record of 3:49.92 by Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj by less than a second.

"The crowd was just incredible," Webb said.

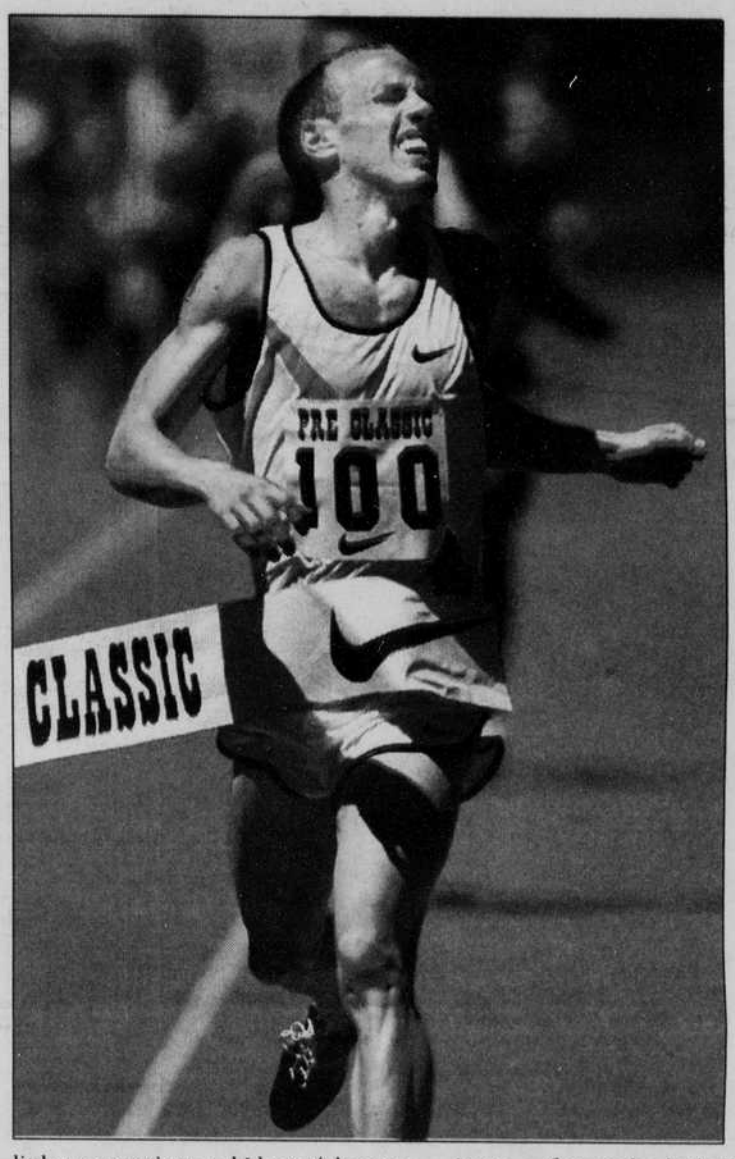
In two of the day's most anticipated events — the men's and women's 100-meter dash — both winners captured the crown unexpectedly, considering the field that included the world record holder Tim Montgomery (9.78 seconds) and the previous record holder Maurice Greene. The women's side included five-time Olympic medalist Marion Jones and three-time Olympic gold medalist Gail Devers.

Shawn Crawford won the 100-meter dash with a time of 9.88. Crawford, also a U.S. and World champion in the 200 meters, broke the Hayward Field record and the meet record set by Greene in 2001 (9.90).

"Winning always gives me confidence," said Crawford, who now holds the world's best time in the 100 this year. "It was good for notoriety ... You got some high performances from elite athletes in there and the winner is right here."

After the race, Greene held up Crawford's hand to honor his victory and said he was happy to give the fans what they came to see.

"We gave (the crowd) a show," Greene said. "It just lets me know what I need to work on. I kind of rushed it. I need to be a little more patient and I haven't been patient all year."



Alan Webb won the Bowerman Mile at the 2004 Prefontaine Classic with a time of 3 minutes, 50.85 seconds. Webb's time was the fastest by an American in the United States in history. Webb missed breaking the Hayward Field and meet record, which belongs to Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj (3:49.92), by less than one second.
Erik R. Bishoff Photo Editor

In the women's 100-meter dash, Inger Miller pulled out the victory over Devers in a photo finish after both crossed the line at 11.05. Miller, who won the 200 meters at the 1999 World Championships, has been slowed by injuries the past four years. However, Miller said she is "content" heading into the U.S. Olympic Trials at Sacramento in three weeks.

"Everyday when I go to practice, I'm enjoying it," Miller said. "It's not about, you know, what I did in '99 and if I can repeat that. It's about enjoying what I do because I know I have the talent. It's just putting everything together."

Jones finished fifth at 11.12 after falling behind in the last half of the race.

"No excuses, I just did not have it," said Jones, a former basketball standout at North Carolina. "The other four ladies beat me fair and square."

Jones later salvaged her day by winning the long jump with her best mark of 22 feet, 9 inches.

"I was pleased with the fact that I could regroup and go over to the long jump and jump farther than I have all year," said Jones, who owns the Hayward Field and meet record in the same event at 23-11 3/4 from 1998.

Over on the women's pole vault, American record-holder Stacy Dragila almost set a new world record at 16 feet. With the crowd behind her on each of the three attempts, Dragila nearly stole the spotlight at the acclaimed height.

"I would have liked to have made the

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