

Mills: Inspired to victory

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Mills said that as the NAIG is at a critical point. He called for tribal leaders to "endorse the virtues and values that we're trying to present through sport."

The first phase of creating a world games is getting many young people to participate in the NAIG, and the other is sponsorship, he said.

"We have an chance for the Native American Indigenous Games to go global, with the world of indigenous nations sports, and we're getting a tremendous response," he said. "The Southern Ute tribe is one of our major sponsors. Other tribes are looking at sponsorship. Tribes that have very successful entrepreneurial programs, and the companies that do business with them, are being educated about our mission, and they're showing an interest. It's a big puzzle and things are being put in place."

The first Team Oregon try-outs were in the shooting event, which were held near Warm Springs last Saturday.

Mills' mother died when he was 8 and his father died when Mills was 12.

He took up running while at



Brian Mortensen/Spilyay

Billy Mills met with youth at the Warm Springs Community Center.

Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kan., and became a standout runner at the University of Kansas in the late 1950s. He was a three-time NCAA All-American in cross country and won the Big Eight Conference individual cross country title in 1960.

Dramatic win at Olympics

After graduating from the University of Kansas, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps as a commissioned lieutenant, and resumed his athletic training. He was good enough to qualify for the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo. He qualified to compete in the 10,000 meters and the marathon.

Olympic 10,000 meters, and Mills' qualifying time was a full minute slower than that of the favorite, Ron Clarke of Australia.

The race was anticipated as a head-to-head duel between Clarke and Mohammed Gammoudi of Tunisia. As it turned out, it was a shootout between those two runners, along with the unheralded Mills, who hung with the leaders.

Mills was leading with Clarke when Gammoudi pushed his way between the two and into the lead. "I'm coming off the curb, I'm pushed, and close back on Gammoudi," he said. "I'm on Clarke, Gammoudi goes between me and him, and

I'm pushed again, and I start to fall about 15 yards behind. Coming off the final curve, I had no more energy left."

The year before the 1964 Games, Mills was diagnosed as hypoglycemic and pre-diabetes.

Mills was sitting in third place when a German runner who was about to be lapped moved into the fifth lane, creating an open lane for Mills to run, and giving him a strengthening focal point. "One more try for me. I'm not boxed in. One more try," he said. "And I still have no more energy."

"I glance at the German runner. On his singlet, there was an eagle."

The image reminded him of a time he was with his father shortly after his mother died. The father had young Billy stand inside a circle drawn into the dirt and encouraged him to let go of the anger he felt for losing his mother and the jealousy for possessions he could not have. His father told him that if would let these things go, he would have "wings of an eagle."

"He said to look deeper, way down deep where the dreams lie," he said. "Pursue the dream. It's the pursuit of the dream that will heal you."

When Mills saw the eagle on the front of the German runner's singlet, he felt the wings of an eagle.

"I was back with my dad when I was 9 years old. Wings of an eagle," he said. "One

more try. Eighty-five thousand people screaming. A tingling sensation going down my forearms... I can win... I could feel it in my heart, I can win, I can win. Thirty yards to go. I can win... then I felt the tape break across my chest. I won. I came to stop and a Japanese official ran up to me. He pulls me right in his face, and he's shouting, "Tell me, who are you?"

Mills was an Olympic champion, finishing in 28 minutes, 24.4 seconds, almost 50 seconds faster than his previous best,

winning in a field that included seven won gold medals, three silver and four bronze and 36 world records.

Mills, now 67, was inducted into the U.S. Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1984, and his finish is regarded as one of the most dramatic in Olympic history. He was named South Dakota's greatest athlete of the 20th Century. Mills now lives in Sacramento and is a public speaker. He is national spokesman for Running Strong for American Indian Youth.

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Casino: support from governor

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The area of the Columbia is a part of the tribes' Ceded Lands.

"When Warm Springs decided to work with Cascade Locks in pursuing a casino, we fully recognized the off-reservation site posed new and very significant challenges," said Suppah. "Unlike the Hood River trust lands site, which is already gaming eligible, we understood that we would have pursue the IGRA 'two-part' determination and the fee-to-trust process to take the Industrial Park site into trust for gaming. We recognized we would have to be exceptionally diligent and careful in addressing these challenges, that we would have to, in fact, conduct a model process that would be very expensive."

The tribes have the support of the governor, and the local governments at and around the Cascade Locks site, said Suppah.

For these reasons the Confederated Tribes, the state and the local communities believe the Cascade Locks casino plan should not be curtailed by changes to IGRA. Suppah also said that it is understandable why the two-part test has become a point of controversy. Some tribes has pursued off-reservation casino sites without any realistic chance of surviving the process. These proposals have upset local communities, and unnecessarily contributed to the overall difficulties for tribal gaming, said Suppah.

At the hearing before the Senate committee, Hood River County Commissioner Carol York also testified on behalf of the tribes. Gov. Kulongoski was also on hand for support.

In opposition to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs were Cheryl Kennedy, chairwoman of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; Michael Lang, conservation director for the Friends of the Gorge; and Congressman David Wu, whose district include the Grande Ronde's Spirit Mountain Casino.

Kennedy testified that her tribe had always opposed off-reservation gaming. Sen. McCain then asked her to explain the inconsistency between that statement and the Grande

Ronde's several proposals in recent years to build a casino in Portland.

Sen. McCain was clearly unsatisfied with Kennedy's answers, said Howard Arnett, attorney for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, who attended the Senate hearing.

Sen. McCain also asked the Friends of the Gorge witness how the organization could claim in its testimony that it had been "shut out" of the BIA's environmental review process, when the organization admitted that it had participated in each of the five public hearings and provided detailed comments on the BIA's Environmental Impact Statement process. "... You weren't excluded from the process," Sen. McCain said.

The appearance of Rep. Wu was unusual at the Senate committee hearing, said Arnett. Wu's appearance led to an exchange between the Wu and Suppah about Wu's assertion that the Warm Springs tribes should build a new casino on the reservation instead of in the Columbia Gorge.

Suppah said Wu was wrong in thinking a casino at Warm Springs would solve the problems created by the reservation's declining natural resources-based economy. "The economic studies we have done show that only a casino in our ancestral and treaty ceded territory in the Columbia Gorge will meet the tribes' needs and secure our financial future," said Suppah.

Gov. Kulongoski was invited by McCain to join the Senators on the dais and address the committee. This gave the Governor an opportunity to explain why he negotiated the gaming compact with Warm Springs for a casino at Cascade Locks.

Kulongoski spoke with passion about the tribes' unmet needs in areas such as education. The tribes, or instance, are in need of a new school for children on the reservation.

"I (agreed to the gaming compact) because the tribe needs this to achieve true self-sufficiency and address the unmet needs of the tribes' members. I am convinced that the Cascade Locks casino will be good for the tribe, good for the local community and good for the State of Oregon," said Kulongoski.

The Senate committee is expected to take action on McCain's bill in the next few weeks, said Arnett.

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