

U.S. Outdoor Track & Field Championships

ATHLETIC ORDEAL IN OREGON MAKES HARD WORK FOR DCS

The 2001 Outdoor Track & Field Championships were held at the University of Oregon's Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon, considered the mecca for track and field in the United States. The Olympic trials were contested here in 1972, 1976, and 1980, as were the U.S. Outdoor Track and Field National Championships in 1993 and 1999.

The national championships determined the United States track team for the World Track & Field Championships that were held in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, August 3-12, 2001.

I was the director of chiropractic services for this year's national championships, and, with Dr. Ted Forcum's help, 11 other chiropractors were selected to provide care for the athletes. Although experience is important in selecting the DCs, many other factors are involved in choosing qualified chiropractors to treat track and field athletes at these events. Nine of these chiropractors had worked the previous year at the Olympic trials in Sacramento, California, but only five had previously treated athletes at the 1999 national championships.

Drs. Bill Bonsall (New Jersey) and Tim Ray (Colorado) from the ACA Sports Council volunteered their talents; Mike Leahy (Colorado) made a significant contribution treating athletes with his active release technique; Jim Kurtz (Washington) and Sheila Wilson (Indiana) worked at the 1999 nationals and 2000 Olympic trials, where many athletes enjoyed their hands-on treatments.

For Joanne Fava, DC (New York), medical director of the U.S. National Decathlon Team, this was her first time in Eugene; Joel Bienenfeld (California) works with the Santa Monica Track Club and worked at the 2000 Olympic trials. Hank Glass (Georgia) is the head chiropractor for the U.S. Indoor Track and Field National Championships, held each year in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. Len Ershow (New Jersey), who was an alternate to work at these championships, volunteered his services and did a great job when another chiropractor had a family emergency. Len had previously worked the 2000 trials in Sacramento.

Bud Walker (California) had worked the 2000 Olympic trials in his hometown, Sacramento, and was selected by U.S. Track & Field to be the chiropractor for the U.S. team at the World Championships in Edmonton, Alberta. It was naturally right to have Dr. Walker's considerable talents in Eugene to adjust the athletes before they competed at the World Championships. Justin Whitaker (Oregon) volunteered to help Mike Leahy treat athletes with the active release technique. Dr. Whitaker had previously worked at the 2001 NCAA event and did a terrific job at both competitions. The final two chiropractors were Oregonians Ted Forcum and myself, who are coordinators through the Chiropractic Sports Network for U.S. Track & Field. DCs had previously coordinated the care for athletes at the 1999 nationals and 2000 Olympic trials.

Chiropractic treatment for the athletes was between 1-8:00 p.m. Seventy-four athletes were adjusted the day before competition started. Over the next four days, 435 track and field athletes were adjusted at the chiropractic treatment area located next to the track. In other words, over 500 athletes received care during the event! Usually, five to seven chiropractors were working each shift. What a terrific sight to see seven athletes getting adjusted at the same time with other

athletes waiting for their turn!

Teamwork was the name of the treatment game. Many of the athletes would have two or three chiropractors treating them with spinal adjustments, extremity adjustments, and soft-tissue techniques. Also helpful was having two sports medicine physicians from California consulting with the chiropractors: Drs. Brian Davis and Steve Isono. Athletes receiving chiropractic treatment and winning national championships were Tim Montgomery (100 meters); Angelo Taylor (400 hurdles); Antonio Pettigrew (400 meters); Charles Austin (high jump); Gail Devers (100 hurdles); Amy Acuff (high jump); Stacy Dragila (gold medalist and world record holder in the women's pole vault); Regina Jacobs (800 meters, 1,500 meters); Sheila Burrell (heptathlon); David Krummenacker (800 meters); LaTasha Colander-Richardson (400 meters); Marla Runyan (5,000 meters); Dawn Ellerbe (hammer throw); and Michelle Rohl (20K racewalk).

Other notable athletes who received chiropractic tune-ups were Mike Powell, world record holder in the long jump; Nick Hysong, men's pole vault Olympic champion; Meb Keflezighi, American record holder in the men's 10,000 meters; Chryste Gaines and Kelli White (100 and 200 meters); Tonja Buford-Bailey (400 hurdles); Anjanette Kirkland (100-meter hurdles, World Championships); Kevin Little (200 meters); and Paul McMullen (1,500 meters).

Two of the most intriguing stories of the nationals involved Regina Jacobs and Paul McMullen. Ms. Jacobs won the 1,500 meters on Saturday, the 800 meters on Sunday, and then placed second in the 5,000 meters only an hour after winning the national championship in the 800 meters. She was adjusted seven times during the four days of competition, and was truly a chiropractic inspiration!

Paul McMullen placed third in the 1,500 meters to make the U.S. team for the world championships in Edmonton. Two years earlier, he severed several toes in a lawnmower accident. Still competing, he was adjusted four times and received active release treatment during the competition. His brother, Phil, made the U.S. team in the decathlon on Friday night. His wife, Jill, gave birth to their first child early Saturday morning, and Paul ran the final of the 1,500 meters late Saturday afternoon. Later that evening with his brother waiting in their car, Paul jogged across Hayward Field to the treatment area to thank the chiropractors for "putting him back together and making it all possible."

Needless to say, it was a very special moment!

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