

Sports Thru The Lion's Eye

By JAKE HIGHTON
Collegian Sports Editor



In all the world's fields of athletic endeavor, it is doubtful if there exists a more coveted—and more unconquerable—goal than the four-minute mile. Throughout the almost one century that official track records have been booked, the four-minute mile has stood like Mount Everest in the Himalayas—a monument to invincibility.

Just as no one has ever been known to reach the 29,000 foot peak of the highest mountain in the world, no one has ever been known to run 5280 feet in four minutes flat.

To be sure, both monumental Mountains have had close calls. For Everest, the closest it came to being conquered was in 1924 when climbers Mallory and Irvine were seen only 200 feet or so from its pinnacle. Cloud and mist swallowed the two Britishers and they were never seen again. For the four-minute mile myth, it came closest to being exploded in 1945 when Sweden's Haegg came within one and four-tenths seconds. But before Gunder the Wonder could make another attempt, he too was swallowed up—by professionalism.

After Haegg's departure, the four-minute mile was again relegated to the realm of the improbability. But with the sudden and sensational arrival of Australia's John Landy on the mile scene last winter, the 4:00.0 myth has been revived. From the obscurity of any Olympic also-ran-in-the-rials, Landy startled the track world with a 4:02.1 mile.

Thus, once again a runner is hot on the scene of track's Holy Grail, a chase which began in 1864 when an Englishman set the world record of 4:56. By the turn of the century, the mark was pushed below 4:20. Cornell's John Paul Jones dropped it down to 4:14.4 in 1913. By 1923 Finland's Peerless Paavo Nurmi hung up a 4:10.4. Eleven years later Kansan Glenn Cunningham rambled his fire-scarred legs to a world mark of 4:06.7. Then 1945 and Haegg's 4:01.4. Since, the amazing march against the clock has been halted. However, the end of another 10 or 11 year cycle is approaching. Track astronomers might be able to predict another return of the record comet in 1954 or 1955.

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But whatever you do, don't bet that 4:00.0 will be run before 2000 AD. The reason is simply that it is unlikely that a runner will come along who combines the attributes of Nurmi-Haegg—the formula many experts give for a four-minute miler. Interpreted, the Nurmi-Haegg formula means that a 4:00.0 miler will need the speed and effortless grace of Haegg and the pace of endurance of Nurmi. A somewhat difficult bill for humans to fill.

Consider too the magnitude of a 4:00.0 mile. Haverford's ex-IC4A 880 champ Jim Grosholtz made the following comparisons to a 4:00.0 mile: a sprinter doing 100 yards in 9.1 (record, 9.3); the 880 in 1:45 (record, 1:49.2); the 440 in 43.6 (record, 46.0); and the 120 high hurdles in 12.8 (record, 13.5).

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On the other hand, it's possible that a runner, like Landy, with less natural equipment than a Haegg or a Nurmi could shade four-flat. Here's why: Today better coaching is combined with more scientific techniques. Training is harder—more than half the reason for any record. And, mental attitude and effort is stronger today. In the '20s if a runner did 4:15 he was extremely self-satisfied. Today, everyone has his eye on 4:00.0.

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Someday the mile will be conquered if for no other than the same reason Everest's are conquered—it's there waiting to be conquered. Conquer men have, and conquer they shall.

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4:00.0 AND 29,002: Penn State Coach Chick Werner's own personal theory is that the first four-minute miler will be a "converted middle-distance man." Chick cites Mal Whitfield, world's fastest half-miler, as the type. Chick's reasoning is based on a premise given little consideration in distance running until recently—speed . . . A low pulse rate has often been given as a requisite for outstanding milers. Cunningham had 40 pulse throbs per minute, Nurmi 37, and NYU's great Les MacMitchell had 37 (72 is normal) . . . Haegg's world record splits went 56.6, 61.9, 61.2, 61.7 . . . The Lion's Eye sees any European hitting 4:00.0 before any American. U.S.A. lads are more interested in speed. The assiduous effort necessary for great distance running scares most Americans . . . Triple-Olympic distance champ Emil Zatopek's motto is: Running and Still More Running. If the mile wasn't too darn short for Emil to get warmed up in, he'd be the logical 4:00.0 choice.

Baseball's Big Leagues

Pirates Drop Second

BROOKLYN, (AP) — Veteran shortstop Pee-wee Reese lashed a single through the box in the eighth inning to score two runs which gave the Brooklyn Dodgers their second straight victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates, 4-2, at Ebbets Field.

Reese's sharp blow scoring Gil Hodges and Carl Furillo, made it a happy debut for Russ Meyer, the temperamental righthander who came to the Dodgers in a late winter deal.

The same time it spoiled the return to the majors of Johnny Lindell, 36-year-old "rookie" who once played outfield for the New York Yankees.

Lindell, winner of 24 games for Hollywood in the Pacific Coast League last year, went all the way for the Pirates and, like Meyer, gave up eight hits. But his cause was hurt by 10 walks.

Phillies Beat Giants

PHILADELPHIA, (AP) — Young Curt Simmons pitched a five-hitter and joined in a 14-hit assault on four New York Giants' pitchers with a pair of singles and a double to lead the Philadelphia Phillies to an 8-1 victory at Connie Mack Stadium.

Simmons tried everything but standing on his head in a weird game of errors, hit batsmen and hit runners. The southpaw tried to steal home in the fourth but was out at the plate.

Del Ennis hammered his first homer of the season with a man on base in the first inning which was enough to hang the defeat on Al Corwin, first New York hurler.

Yankees Win First

NEW YORK, (AP) — Gene Woodling, who is not supposed to relish lefthanded pitching, stroked a pair of run-scoring two-baggers off Bobby Shantz to break up a

sterling pitching duel between New York's Allie Reynolds and Philadelphia's tiny southpaw, paving the way for a 4-1 Yankee triumph over the Athletics.

The victory, New York's first of the season, was witnessed by only 8,196 chilled fans. They watched Reynolds and Shantz duel evenly until the seventh inning when the World Champions broke through for two tallies to snap a 1-1 deadlock. The Yankees added an extra run off righthander Marion Pricano in the eighth.

Senators to Open

WASHINGTON, (AP) — Baseball is scheduled to make its belated bow in Washington today with President Eisenhower throwing out the traditional first pitch. But all is not well, for the weather man says it's going to rain.

A tight timetable has been set up for the Eisenhower pitch and any disturbance in the timing will throw the whole program out of kilter.

1953 Trout Season Is Officially Open

HARRISBURG, (AP) — Most activities in cities of Pennsylvania slowed down to a minimum yesterday as thousands of trout fishermen made a beeline for their favorite streams.

The opening of the 108-day 1953 season (close to daybreak at 5 a.m.) found the temperature around the freezing mark. But as forecast, the mercury rose quickly and fair and sunny weather was the result over most of the state.

No rain was reported anywhere in the Keystone state.

Initial reports from early anglers indicated good fishing everywhere.

WRA Results

BRIDGE

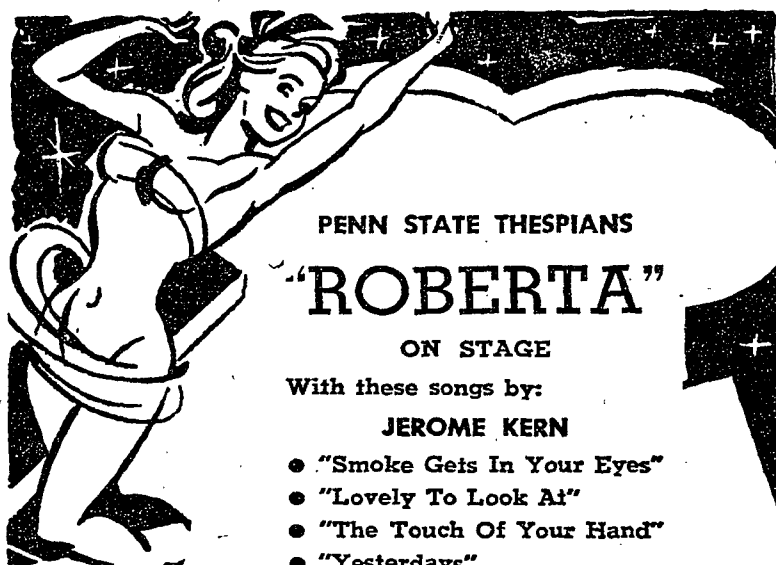
Three-way tie for first place:

- Delta Delta Delta
- Phi Sigma Sigma
- Zeta Tau Alpha

Arnelle Again Hits 400

For the second year in a row, Jesse Arnelle was Penn State's top basketball scorer with 408 points in 24 games. The new Rochelle, N.Y., sophomore now owns Penn State's single game, season, and career scoring records. His two-year total is a robust 900 points.

IT OPENS TONIGHT



PENN STATE THESPIANS

"ROBERTA"

ON STAGE

With these songs by:

JEROME KERN

- "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes"
- "Lovely To Look At"
- "The Touch Of Your Hand"
- "Yesterdays"

TONIGHT — FRIDAY — SATURDAY
Evenings at 7:30 P.M.—Sat. Matinee 2 P.M.

SATURDAY MATINEE 2 P.M.

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