

NATIONAL AAU JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

Girls' Track and Field

Comments by Sam Giambelluca, National Junior Olympic Girls Track and Field Chairman:

A youthful competitor was whisked away for an interview by a member of the news media shortly after running her preliminary heat. "What do you feel is the biggest problem facing the youth of today?" was the question posed to the petite competitor in the AAU-Quaker Oats Junior Olympic Championships. She looked up, smiled and answered, "Making the Finals!!"

Claiming the only new meet record on the track this year was 16-year-old Joyce Tinker, Miami, Florida, who was clocked in 10.8 seconds in the 100 yard dash to erase the old mark of 10.9 set by Janet Macfarlane, Gridley, California, in Washington, D.C. in 1967, the initial year of the competition. A meet record was established in the shot put, a new event in this year's program, by Mary Jacobson, Florence, Oregon, as she heaved the eight-pound sphere 48'71/2".

A lot of performances came "close" and the best of those was turned in by Sally Phihal, Tyndall, South Dakota and Jill Halgtimson, Naperville, Illinois, who both cleared 5'4" in the high jump, only one-half inch under the record. Miss Phiha took the gold medal on fewest misses.

Debbie Smith, Terre Haute, Indiana, took the long jump with a leap of 18'21/2" and defeated Knoxville, Tennessee's Judy Penton, the current record holder. Barbara Croney, Hopkinville, Kentucky, surprised the field and won the 220 yard dash with a clocking of 24.9 seconds.

No state had more than a single champion as the other events went to Lindy Oliver, Seattle, Washington, in the 440 yard dash in 57.9 seconds; diminutive Pam Bagain, Lincoln Park, Michigan in the 880 yard run in 2:16.3; and Joan Dean, Ambler, Pennsylvania with a 6.7 second clocking in the 50 yard low hurdles.

There was no wholesale assault on the meet records (one record was broken and one new event established) but the competition was the keenest in the brief history of the championships. The average age of the competitors was the youngest ever as a majority of this year's finalists will be eligible to come back in the same division in 1970. Add this talent to the excellent group of intermediates that will graduate to the senior division next season and the future of the Junior Olympics looks great.

Boys' Track and Field

Comments by Dr. Tom Hallstrom, National Junior Olympic Boys Track and Field Chairman:

It was evident that this third annual national meet was of a higher quality than the two previous ones. I am certain that the level of athletic excellence will continue to rise as this meet becomes the ultimate competitive goal of each and every young track and field athlete in the United States.

Yet, to me, the most important outcome of a meet such as this is the effect that it has on the individuals who participate. What a terrific educational experience it is for a girl from Anselmo, Nebraska, or a boy from Chicago, Illinois, to travel to another part of our great land; to live with, talk with, compete against their peers from every start in the Union. What an emotional experience the opening ceremony provided, with the flag of every state and of our country flying, with the band playing the Star-Spangled Banner, with the Navy Chorus singing "God Bless America", with the Olympic athlete lighting the torch, and finally with each participant repeating the Junior Olympic oath. Certainly everyone who was a witness to the opening program in the San Diego State College stadium was moved to an even greater love for these United States.