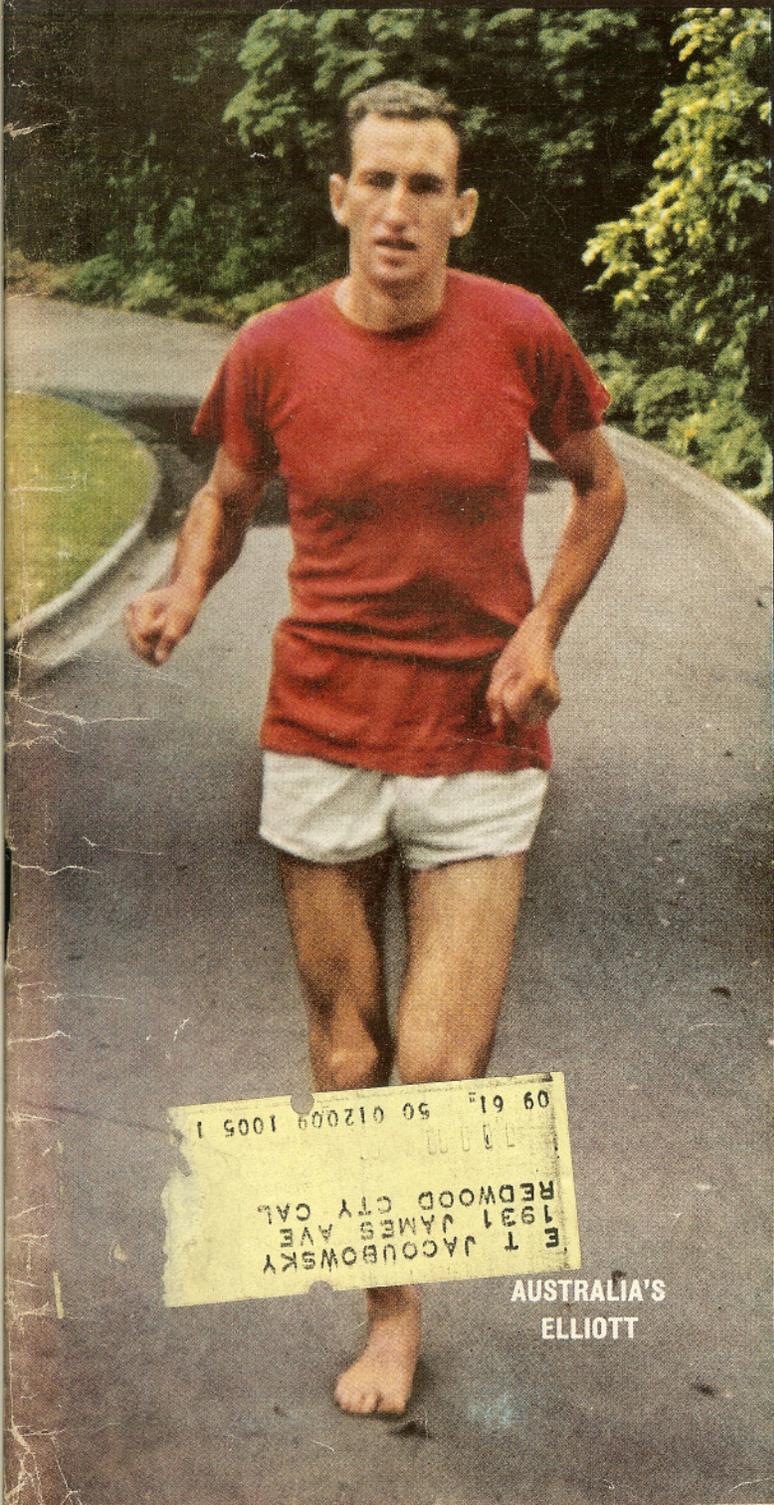


SPORTS

MAY 30, 1960
America's National Sports Weekly
25 CENTS

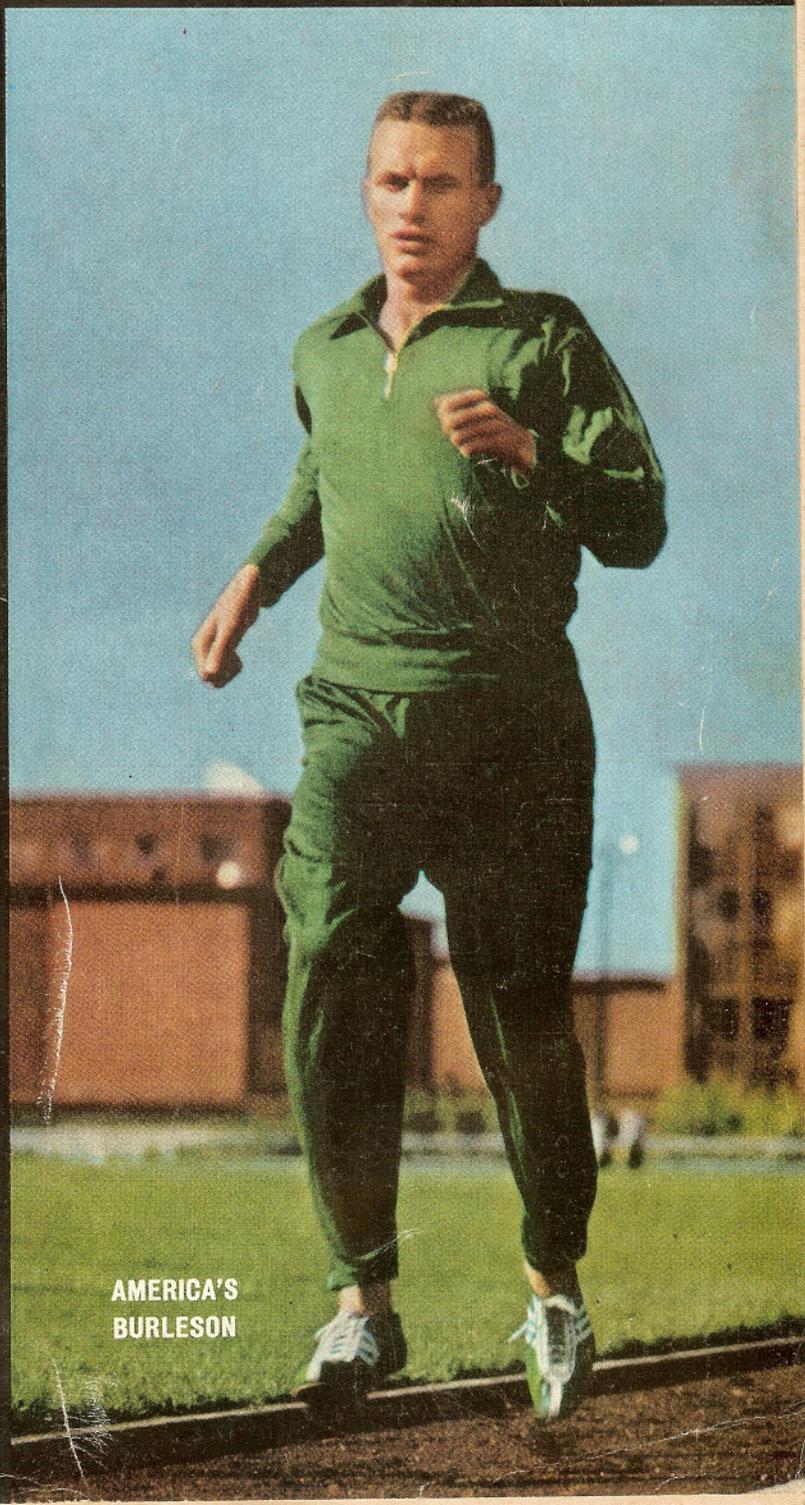
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World's Best Miler Meets a U.S. Challenge



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**AUSTRALIA'S
ELLIOTT**



**AMERICA'S
BURLESON**

THE NEW HERB ELLIOTT

Australia's superb miler may still be the best in the world, but he has lost his fierce dedication. Now he faces the challenge of Oregon's Dyrol Burleson, who is still hungry

by **TEX MAULE**

TWO years ago a grim, young, hawk-nosed Australian named Herb Elliott was the talk of the track world, and a good part of the world not ordinarily interested in track and field. Absolutely dedicated to running, Elliott, under the almost fanatic tutelage of stern old Percy Cerutti, punished himself fiercely in his efforts to become the best mile runner in the world. He spent long weekends at Cerutti's training camp at Portsea, near Melbourne, sprinting up huge sand dunes to develop physical and mental resistance to fatigue (SI, Nov. 10, 1958). He ate rolled oats, raw cabbage, brown bread and cheese. He read the books Cerutti recommended and assimilated the older man's Spartan philosophy.

And he became the best mile runner in the world. In four stunning months in 1958, on a "world tour" that included Honolulu, the U.S., England, Ireland, Sweden and Norway, he won 19 races, ran seven sub-four-minute miles, beat every top miler in competition and set eye-popping new world records for the mile and for 1,500 meters.

Now a new and different Elliott is on tour, a brief trip this time, to California, where he has a schedule of three races at 1,500 meters and a mile.

Only one of these is very important: the mile he will run this week at the Modesto Relays against a field that includes Dyrol Burleson (*see cover*), the youngster from the University of Oregon who is the best miler America has ever produced.

This race not only is important—it could be the most dramatic mile run on the North American continent since Roger Bannister whipped John Landy in their unforgettable meeting at Vancouver in 1954. For now Dyrol Burleson is the hungry young man dedicated to his sport—and the big news about Elliott is that he has turned into a relaxed, pleasant sort of fellow who is more interested in his wife, his 3-month-old son and his career with the Shell Company in Australia than he is in track.

Last week Dyrol Burleson trained hard and long despite torrential rains that drenched Oregon, and he won the mile in a conference meet on Saturday. Burleson's coach, Bill Bowerman, sounding like Cerutti, said, "The rains didn't bother Burleson. There's no such thing as bad weather, just soft people."

Elliott, on the other hand, went into his 1,500-meter race at the Coliseum Relays in Los Angeles last Friday in a much less determined frame

of mind. Just before the race began Laszlo Tabori, the Hungarian runner, stopped to chat a moment with Elliott. "Airb," he said, "anyone who runs the mile must be seek." The greatest miler in history smiled in wry agreement. Then he feather-footed over the Coliseum's lumpy grass track to win the 1,500 meters, the metric mile, in 3:45.4, something less than sensational but good enough to beat Tabori by 10 yards.

"The race was run just as I hoped it would be," Elliott said amiably after it was over. "I wanted some other chap to set the pace, and I didn't want it to be a fast one. I'm not ready for a fast pace yet. Then I thought I could take over in the last lap, and it worked out that way. I was worried when Walters jumped me going into the first turn on the last lap. I was afraid maybe he or Tabori was fit enough to run a really fast final quarter and I couldn't have made it."

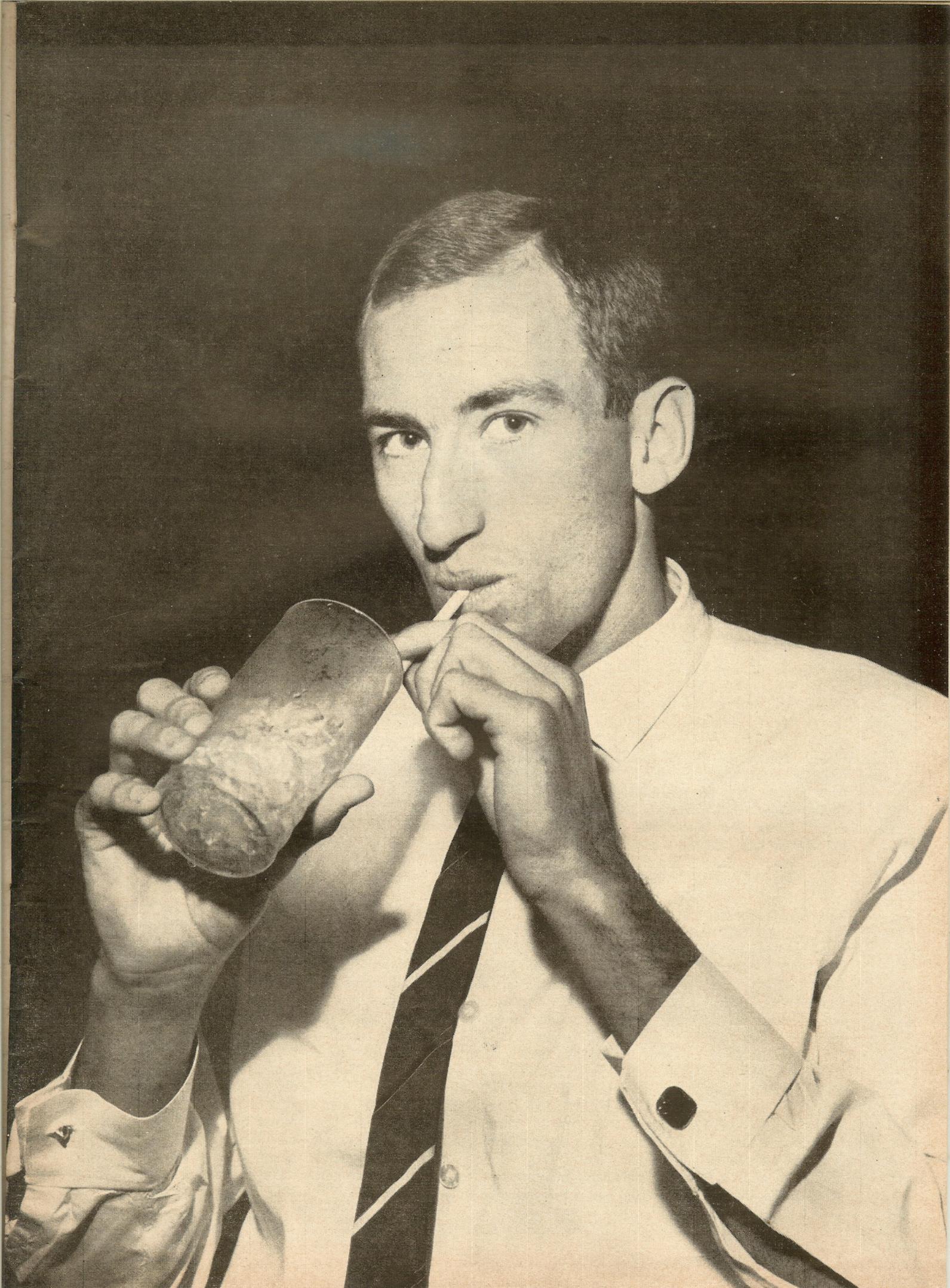
CHAMPAGNE AND TELEPHONES

Much later that night Elliott sipped gingerly at some pink champagne and waited impatiently for a call to his wife in Melbourne to be completed.

"You know," he said. "Sometimes I sit and wonder 'What am I doing here?' I don't like being away from the wife and the boy. I'm not yet

continued

RELAXED ELLIOTT sips soft drink, no longer sticks to his dreary training diet.





FLOATING ACROSS LINE IN CLASSIC FINISHING POSE, ELLIOTT WINS ROUTINELY IN FIRST OF THREE CURRENT U.S. APPEARANCES

HERB ELLIOTT *continued*

thoroughly fit and I don't like being beaten. I should be back in Melbourne training in the gardens at the governor's house [see cover] and seeing my family."

Significantly, he did not mention Cerutti. Since his marriage a little over a year ago, he gradually has turned away from Cerutti's teachings. "Percy and I are still good mates," he had told me a day or so earlier over a hearty breakfast of bacon, eggs, cereal, fruit and coffee (not a rolled oat in sight). "But I don't see as much of him as I used to do. I go down to Portsea maybe once every six weeks or so, whereas I used to go every weekend. Percy is good for winding you up, giving you enthusiasm again. But I train in Melbourne most of the time, near the family."

During the week he spent in Los Angeles before the Coliseum Relays Elliott trained hard, but not excessively. He lived in the home of Jack Kirkwood, a travel agency executive, in Anaheim, about 40 miles from Los Angeles. He played golf on the Los Coyotes Country Club course near Kirkwood's home, hitting the ball

with a beginner's slice but enjoying himself hugely. The evenings, for the most part, he spent quietly watching television, usually going to bed early, though one night he sat up until 1:30 in the morning to see the end of an old Red Skelton comedy called *A Southern Yankee*. He ate a normal American diet with considerable relish.

"You would get tired of ice cream if you had to lick a cone every day," he said. "I got tired of the other diet, and I do well enough on this one. I don't think I suffer from it."

Elliott kept watch on his condition by taking his pulse in the morning at breakfast. "When I'm perfectly fit my heart goes about 46 a minute," he said, fending off Pudgie, the Kirkwood's engaging 3-year-old daughter. "Now it's about 58. Our track season ended about two months ago, you know, so that I've not been running so much. Then I hurt my foot and that slowed me a bit, too. But I think I'll be ready soon."

The injured foot—a strained ligament suffered in Melbourne—has not bothered him here. He trained on the Los Coyotes golf course, usually in the late evening, running around the entire 18 holes barefooted.

"I tried to do the 7,000 yards in about 22 to 24 minutes," he said. "Gave some blokes a bit of a shock sometimes to see me running around the course just as they were teeing up, but I was careful not to disturb them when they were making a shot."

He went into Los Angeles rarely because he preferred the quiet of Anaheim. Once he drove in to attend a luncheon given for him by the Big Ten club. He left the Kirkwood home at about 10:30 in the morning and Pudgie came out to the car to say goodbye.

TA TA, HERB

"Kiss, kiss," Elliott said, leaning out the window so she could reach him. He got a moist kiss and then waved goodbye. "Ta ta," he said, and Pudgie, who is rapidly developing an Australian accent, replied, "Ta ta, Herb."

He enjoys driving and he handled the car effortlessly, not disturbed by driving on the right or, for him, wrong side of the road. "It's like riding a motor bike," he said. "Once you get used to it, it comes back to you right away. My first trip here I created an awful traffic jam driving on the wrong side, but not any more."

In his spare time Elliott is working on an autobiography. As he reached the freeway into Los Angeles, he said, "What I should like to do here is meet more personalities. For the book, you know. People like Eisenhower and Nixon. The public is interested in personalities, don't you think? I suppose it shouldn't be too hard to meet them."

He slowed for an inevitable traffic jam and watched a traffic cop roar by. "Why do your chaps use those big bikes?" he asked. "Our police use a much smaller bike, but it's just as powerful. We should be on a bike like the one I have at home. Then we could go right on between the lanes of traffic."

The policeman cleared the traffic jam and Elliott drove on, carefully staying at 60 mph, the legal speed limit.

"There'll be something in the book about training and diet," he said. "And a chapter on Percy, of course. And I suppose I must have a chapter on Leavitt. I'd much rather leave him out as a sort of a punch in the nose." Leavitt is Leo Leavitt, the American promoter who created a furor when he tried to sign Elliott to a \$250,000 personal service contract, and who recently filed suit against him for \$1 million for breach of contract. "I didn't even make a verbal agreement with him," Elliott said. "The bloke just wants publicity."

He reached the University Club in downtown Los Angeles half an hour early for the lunch.

"Is there a bowling alley near?" he asked. "Maybe we could have a game."

At the bowling alley he bowled an even 100 in the first game, looked at the clock, which showed he had 10 minutes left before the lunch, and said, "Let's bowl another. I'd rather do this than be on time there." But after bowling only half the game he decided it would be best not to be too late.

"You're lucky," he said to his companion, grinning. "I was just beginning to warm up. And I think you pack up a bit under pressure."

On Thursday, the day before he ran in the Coliseum Relays, Elliott was stung on the left heel by a bee. He took a shot, because he is allergic to bee stings and had already begun to break out, but he was not particularly disturbed. Friday night, when he

began to warm up at the Coliseum 25 minutes before his event, the heel was still swollen. It did not, however, affect his beautifully fluid stride. After the race he pulled off his track shoe and rubbed the heel vigorously.

"It didn't bother me," he said. "I'm well satisfied. I think I'll be able to better four minutes at Modesto and at Compton." He did not wait to watch the rest of the meet. He was in a hurry to put his call in to Melbourne to his wife.

THE BURLESON RACE

The 3:45.4 Elliott ran at the Coliseum Relays is roughly the equivalent of a 4:02.9 mile, and he will certainly have to do better than that at Modesto when he meets Burleson. Burleson skipped the Coliseum Relays because of Oregon's conference meet on Saturday, but according to Bowerman, his coach, he is ready for his test against Elliott at Modesto.

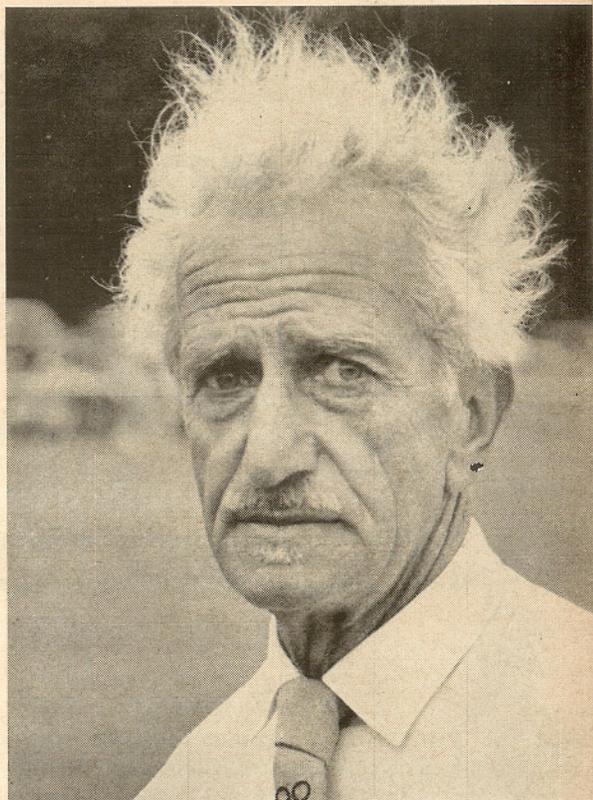
"Dyrol runs to win," said Bowerman last weekend. "That's what he'll try to do at Modesto. But even if he shouldn't win, he'll get a chance to learn something."

While Burleson was running Saturday, Elliott took it easy in Anaheim. Sunday afternoon he left on a leisurely auto trip up the Pacific Coast to Modesto, stopping for sightseeing and, of course, for his daily training stint. He looked for variegated terrain to run on, avoiding regular tracks. "Drives you mad, running around and around an oval like that," he said. "A chap needs a bit of variety, you know."

He did not appear worried about Burleson.

"I have a backlog of strength from the years with Cerutti," he said. "You develop physical and mental strength when you train that way, you know. Even when I'm not completely fit, I can call on that. Once in a while, for one reason or another, it won't be there, but most often it is."

At the Coliseum Relays, Dave Sime, running better than he has in four years, upset Doug Smith, conqueror of Ray Norton a week earlier, in the 100-meter dash (see page 18). Ironically, Bobby Morrow, who was Sime's archrival for U.S. sprint honors in 1956, may have ended his career at the meet. Just before the 100 meters, Bobby reinjured a groin muscle and had to drop out.



ELLIOTT'S SVENGALI, Percy Cerutti, is less an influence but still a good friend.

Glenn Davis nipped Dick Howard and Rex Cawley to win the 400-meter hurdles in 51 seconds flat, a remarkable time on that poor track. Davis, who injured his back last season, appears to be completely recovered and will probably now stick with the hurdle event, which he won at the Olympics in 1956, and skip the 400-meter run, although he plans to run both at Modesto. "I need to work on speed now," he said last week. "My back's O.K. and I feel strong, but I need a little more speed."

The first meeting of the Big Four in the shotput—Parry O'Brien, Dallas Long, Bill Nieder and Dave Davis—dwindled down to an appearance by Long, who won the event with 63 feet 5¼ inches. Sinusitis felled O'Brien, a pulled ham-string muscle kept Nieder out, and Davis, who is majoring in things like square dancing, driver education and the shotput at San Fernando Valley State College, left home in a huff when his girl friend was forbidden by her mother to tutor him. He disappeared for four days and turned up in Omaha, hitchhiking his way to York, Pa., where he will visit an uncle, major in weight lifting at the York Barbell Club and, presumably, cry at mother-in-law jokes. **END**