

The name is changed — again

San Francisco Games still show some promise

By Keith Peters
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A new era in the history of Bay Area indoor track and field begins this weekend.

Gone is the Examiner Games' name, the official moniker since 1972. Gone, too, is the abominably slow Tartan track, sawed up for firewood last week.

The official debut of their replacements is Saturday at 6 p.m. in the Cow Palace in Daly City when the San Francisco Games unveils a new \$30,000 plywood track — reputed to be the world's fastest indoor running surface.

Since its inception 17 years ago, the meet has gone through three name changes and four tracks while presenting many of the great names in track and field history.

It began in 1963 when track enthusiasts Jim Terrill, Payton Jordan, Bert Nelson and Al Franken

Track roundup

decided to stage what they hoped would be an annual event.

They first Examiner Holiday Invitational featured a 500-meter duel between 1960 Olympian Jack Yerman and Jamaica's George Kerr, a graduate student at Oregon State.

Venerable OSU coach Sam Bell phoned the day before the meet to say Kerr would be unable to attend. "The major attraction was shot out of the saddle the day before," Terrill said. "We were all shocked."

Franken calmed his friends, telling them the spectators would enjoy the meet nonetheless. Franken was right.

A crowd of 12,117 turned out to see Hayes Jones stretch his streak of hurdle victories to 49 and Olympic long jump gold medalist Ralph Boston win the first pentathlon ever held indoors.

The star of that first meet, however, was 5-foot-2, 115-pound Gerry Lindgren, who won the high school two-mile in nine minutes flat, an all-time prep record.

Lindgren received a 10-minute standing ovation, and the meet was off to a good beginning.

Billy Mills, a Marine lieutenant who became a hero in the 1964 Olympics by winning the 10,000 meters, won the mile at the 1965 meet in 4:08. Australian Pam Kilborn set a world record for the 50-yard hurdles.

In 1966, John Pennel overcame a



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At 5-foot-2, 115 pounds, Gerry Lindgren was the star of the first Examiner Holiday Invitational, winning the high school two-mile in nine minutes flat, an all-time record.

painful back ailment to win the pole vault at 16-7½, earning the meet's outstanding performer award. University of Kansas freshman Jim Ryun set meet and arena records for the mile at 4:02.1.

In 1967, the named was changed to the All-American Games. Neal Steinhauer, a Sunday school teacher from the University of Oregon, established a world indoor shot put record — defeating outdoor record-holder Randy Matson, who at the time was the only man ever to exceed 70 feet outdoors.

After Steinhauer heaved shot 66-6¾, he gave his first-place trophy to his father as a birthday present.

Five meet records were broken in the 1968 All-American Games, including one in the men's 60-yard dash, where San Jose State's Kirk Clayton was knocked unconscious in a finish-line pileup.

Also in 1968, Lee Evans, who was to win the Olympic gold medal and set a world record in the 400 meters later that year in Mexico City, ran the 440 in 48.5 for a meet record.

The 1969 Games featured 35 athletes from the previous two Olympics, including 10 gold medalists. World outdoor record-holder Bob Beamon won the long jump at 26-11, still a meet record.

Little-known Al Feuerbach stunned a full-house crowd of 13,815 in the 1971 meet by setting a world indoor shot put record of 68-11. Miler Ryun, making a comeback after 19 months in retirement, ran 4:04.4 in preparation for the 1972 Olympics in Munich.

In 1972, the meet became the Examiner Games. Kenyan Kipchoge Keino promised a sub-four-minute mile. He ran 4:01.2.

The largest crowd in the history of the meet, 13,955, attended in 1973 and George Woods highlighted the 1974 meet with a shot put of 70-4½.

The 1976 Games featured Russian Olympic champions Valeriy Borzov and Viktor Saneyev, who lived up to their gold medals by winning the 60-yard dash and triple jump, respectively.

Twenty-year-old Mike Tully pole vaulted 17-8 during the 1977 meet, while Dwight Stones high jumped 7-5 and Tanzania's Filbert Bayi ran the fastest mile (4:00.2) in the meet's history to highlight the 1978 Games.

And this year will feature world-record attempts in the mile and 300 meters.