

A Better Way for Trials?

The length of Tuesday's trials for the SPAL track and field championships was, in a word, ridiculous. The first athletes arrived at Terremere Field at 12 noon, the last ones left at 7:45 p.m.

Some distance runners waited nearly seven hours before their races. I hope they brought bag lunches. The more experienced ones came with sleeping bags.

A few freshmen no doubt learned a lot about big track meets Tuesday. Performances, of course, suffered.

The length of the meet was no fault of the organization. Under meet director Jim Yelton of Cubberley the proceedings flowed smoothly and without flaw. But you can run off 75 heats, plus runoffs, involving nearly 600 entrants from 12 schools, just so fast.

Obviously it's time for a change. One method could be two-day trials, varsity one day and lightweights another, which were used for many years but discarded for some reason before World War II.

Another was suggested by Ed Jacobowsky, president of the South Bay Area Track Writers Assn. (and sports editor of the Trib).

Jacobowsky questions that a 4:25 miler should have to run a trial heat with a six-minute miler to prove he belongs in the league championship meet. But he also believes the six-minute man should have a chance to make the meet, if he can improve his mark. His plan is this:

At some point during the season, survey the talent and set a standard for qualification to the trials. In a given season it may be 10.3 for the 100 and 2:0 for the half, or 10.8 or 2:10 — whatever fits the talent in each event that year.

As athletes meet the standard, they earn a place in the trials, in which there would be only two heats for each event. A week before the trials, draw up a list of athletes who have qualified and then hold a meet for all the others to fill the remaining spots in the trial heats.

Heats in some events, such as the two mile, might be eliminated altogether. If there were, say, 10 berths open if the finals of the two mile and seven athletes met the qualifying time during dual meets, the remaining three could be taken from the pretrials meet and no heats would be necessary at the trials.

Jacobowsky's plan involves one more meet than currently held, but has these advantages: (1) there would be no seven-hour meets, (2) the superior athletes, who had proved during the dual meet season that they belonged in the league meet, would not have to prove it again by racing against novices, and (3) the lesser skilled boys would not "lose" a meet, and, in fact, would retain the chance to make the finals.

Preps: 75 Races Tuesday

If you like track—really like track, that is—Terremere Field is the place for you Tuesday.

Starting at 1 p.m. and ending who knows when, trials for the South Peninsula Athletic League high school championship meet will be held on the Sequoia High track. There will be 75 races with more than 500 entrants, plus many flights of field events.

Because the track is narrow, it will be necessary to run 14 heats of low hurdles all told in varsity, class B and class C division.

Any timer or judge who is as accurate on the 75th race as he is on the first should be a candidate for the track Hall of Fame. So should any spectator who last out all 75.

Meet director Jim Yelton of Cubberley, whose monstrous task it is to coordinate all this activity, announced today that the finals will be held Friday night at Terremere. They originally were scheduled for Saturday.