Peninsula Track 'Revolution' Proves U. S. Not Soft

By Darrell Wilson

A revolution (bloodless) in distance running is taking place these winter months at Stanford's Angell Field.

Australia's Herb Elliott, world mile record holder, has said that Americans are too soft for distance running.

The Russians have said the same thing and have tried to prove it with a state-supported, regimented program which has produced iron lungs and steel legs.

The Soviets have used their world-wide domination in distance running and some other Olympic Games events as part of a propaganda campaign about the softness and decadence of Americans.

But Bert Nelson, a man who is better known in Helsinki, Finland and Moscow, Russia, than in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is in strong disagreement.

"Americans aren't soft," insists Bert.

What's more important, Nelson, Forrest Jamieson, Palo Alto High School track coach, and Payton Jordan, boss of the Stanford trackmen, have started to prove the point with a weekly series of winter all - comers track meets at Angell Field.

The results have been so good, in this small section of America, that it's possible—even probable—that the experiment may prove democracy's answer to regimented teams.

Nelson is publisher (his older brother, Cordner, is editor, of the Track and Field news — the world's "track bible."

Nelson says:

"The problem has been that we haven't been training the year round. This is the first time in the history of the United States that a full winter program has been held. It's a revolution in distance running. We've had such good luck—the kids seem to love the running—that we've had inquiries from all over. I think the idea will spread. And I believe that's all we need to develop great distance runners."

The Peninsula statistics are interesting.

The combined population of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties is roughly one million people.

But this area has produced 15 high school boys

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Chronicle Sporting Green

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WILL CONNOLLY

Squaw Valley gets a shakedown run this week end. (Page 3H)

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who have run the mile under 4:30. (Most State high school mile championships outside California are won in times well over 4:30.)

San Jose (Lincoln High) produced America's only sub-four-minute miler in Don Bowden.

THIRD BEST

In a routine all-comers meet Saturday, George Linn, 17, of Palo Alto ran a 9:31.4 two mile, third best in U. S. prep history, and Bill Yaley of Serra, clocked 9:32 for the fourth best effort. (Tom Laris, Washington of N. Y. C., has the best prep two mile of 9:21.3 and Bob Buchanan of Stillwater, Okla., is second with 9:30.7).

The seed for these tremendous Peninsula efforts was planted by Jamieson. Nine of the 15 boys who have clocked under 4:30 have been Jamieson's Palo Alto products.

Jamieson's influence has spread throughout the Peninsula, to other Northern California highs schools (he started the Northern California cross country championships).

CROSS COUNTRY

According to Dink Templeton, former Stanford coach who now tutors the Olympic Club and is a world-wide authority, Jamieson's influence has also resulted in increased Pacific Coast collegiate interest in the cross country.

Keith Wallace, a Stanford sophomore who is a product of the increased interest in prep cross country races, clocked a fine 9:09.3 two mile Saturday and should make his mark in spring and summer meets.

Four Peninsula preps have exceeded 4:26 for the mile this winter in the all-comers meets. They are Linn and Dave Chilton, another Palo Alto star, at 4:22.4; Yaley, 4:23, and Dave Boore, Los Altos, 4:25.6.

If the Peninsula program should spread to other sections of the country — and Nelson believes it will—the pleasant Herb Elliott may be forced to eat his unpleasant words about the softness o. Americans.