

Ngeno Leads Way In Uphill Runaway

12/1/74

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race over the Crystal Springs course. Cusack was timed in 30:15.2 with Ted Castaneda of the Colorado Track Club third in 30:33.4.

Frank Shorter, 1972 Olympic marathon champion who was seeking his fifth consecutive AAU title, finished 11th in the 404-man field.

Colorado Track Club edged NYAC for the team title, 89 to 95. Philadelphia Pioneers finished third with 102, and Eastern New Mexico T.C. fourth with 114.

Ngeno, the Pacific-8 Conference champion, ran even with Cusack for the first part of the race, but pulled away near the four-mile mark and continued to open ground the rest of the way.

"I really didn't feel pushed today," said Ngeno, who won the NCAA six-

mile title last spring! and finished second to Nick Rose of Western Kentucky in the NCAA championship last week. "It was an easy race for me. I think I could have run a lot harder if I had to. This was pretty much like a road race and was a lot easier than the NCAA. That one was sloppy."

Ngeno, whose favorite TV program is "The Six Million Dollar Man," said he is going into special training, but refused to give any details.

Cusack said Ngeno beat him on the hills. "There was nothing I could do about it," he said.

Shorter, who leaves Monday for Japan for a marathon race the following week, has been training at high altitude for several weeks, and said he had not concentrated on speed training. He has been

working on mileage instead.

However, he blamed a slow start for his performance. "There were too many people and I was behind from the start," he said. "I was 35 seconds behind before we had gone a mile, and on a narrow course such as this it was very difficult to pass. That prevented me from making a better move."

Shorter started well back in the pack and had to start out running uphill because of his position.

Greg Fredericks of the Philadelphia Pioneers was fourth in 30:40, with David Taylor of the Oregon Track Club fifth in 30:43. Domingo Tibaduiza of the host West Valley Track Club, who held the Old course record of 31:51, placed sixth in 30:44.

Former University of Oregon distance star Steve Prefontaine was a late scratch. He told meet directors Friday that he didn't feel capable of a good effort.

Results:

TEAM

Colorado TC 89, New York AC 95, Philadelphia Pioneers 102, Eastern New Mexico TC 114, Club Northwest (Seattle), Florida TC 163, Oregon TC 186, Jamul Toads "A" 193, West Valley TC Blue 246, Quantico Marines 275.

INDIVIDUAL

1. John Ngeno (Washington State) 29:59.8 (course record, bettered old mark of 31:51.4 set by Domingo Tibaduiza, WVTC, 1974). 2. Neil Cusack (NYAC) 30:15.2. 3. Ted Castaneda (Colorado TC) 30:33.4. 4. Greg Fredericks (Philadelphia Pioneers) 30:40. 5. David Taylor (Oregon TC) 30:43. 6. Domingo Tibaduiza (Nevada) 30:44. 7. Ed Mendoza (Jamul Toads "A") 30:45. 8. Jim Johnson (Club Northwest) 30:47. 9. Gary Tuttle (Beverly Hills StridWrs) 30:50. 10. Michael Peterson (Colorado TC) 30:54. 11. Frank Shorter (Florida TC) 30:57. 12. Ric Rojas (NMTC) 30:57. 13. Scott Bringham (Unat.) 30:59. 14. Bob Wallace (Eastern NMTC) 31:00. 15. Tom Howard (Richmond Kajaks, Canada) 31:00. 16. Marty Liquori (NYAC) 31:03. 17. Charles McGuire (Philadelphia Pioneers) 31:05. 18. Chris McCubbins (Unat.) 31:06. 19. Tony Staynings (Western Kentucky) 31:07. 20. Don Kardong (Club Northwest) 31:11.



Only two miles to go... Ngeno, Cusack and Castaneda

Ngeno eclipses x-country stars

By GENE WILLIAMS
Times Sports Writer

BEAUMONT Some 3,000 track nuts flocked to the Belmont Hills Saturday morning to watch the best of their kind compete in the 1974 National AAU Cross Country Championship at Crystal Springs.

They came to see, at least in part, the highly advertised duel between Frank Shorter, the four-time defending champion, and Steve Prefontaine, the American record-holder at that distance, 10,000 meters, and many shorter ones.

Instead, they saw a long-legged Kenyan by the name of John Ngeno run away from a field of more than 300 "non-spikers" on the hilly 6.2-mile jaunt. "Non-spikers" because the turf was so hard most of the harriers wore shoes without spikes.

It was strictly no contest as Ngeno, a 21-year-old junior at Washington State, pulled away from Ireland's Neil Cusack at the half-way point and won easily in a course record 29 minutes, 58.8 seconds.

Ngeno was but one of 46 runners to slip under the course record of 31:51.4 set earlier this fall in an invitational meet by University of Nevada's Domingo Tibauduiza, who finished sixth Saturday in 30:44.

Cusack, this year's Boston Marathon champ, competing for the New York

Athletic Club, ran even with Ngeno the first three miles and finished a distant second in 30:15.2.

After that one burst nobody came close to catching the long-striding Kenyan. Ted Castaneda, who led the Colorado Track Club to the team title, was third in 30:33.4.

Greg Fredericks of the Philadelphia Pioneers finished fourth in 30:40 (all times were rounded off after the first three), followed closely by David Taylor of the Oregon Track Club in 30:43.

Taylor explained that teammate Prefontaine scratched from the race because "Pre doesn't take cross country that seriously and we didn't have a chance for the team title."

Oregon TC was one of the pre-race favorites, but finished out of the running as Colorado TC edged New York AC for the crown, 92-98 (low score wins in cross country).

Shorter was favored to win an unprecedented fifth consecutive individual title, but ran into trouble right

from the start—or even before the start—and finished 11th in 30:57.

"No sour grapes," Shorter said, "but people with lower starting positions (on the hill-slanted starting line) lost about 30 seconds in the first mile. I was about 150 yards behind after the first mile and the path was so narrow you couldn't pass. I kept tripping over people and saying excuse me."

Still, the 1972 Olympic champion worked his way up to 10th place before rea-

lizing there was no catching Ngeno. "I just packed it in the last two miles," Shorter admitted.

"I wouldn't have won anyway," Shorter added. "Ngeno was out of sight."

Ironically, Ngeno acted as if the gruelling 10-kilometer test was a lark. "I'm not tired at all," he said after receiving the winner's crown and a kiss from Miss San Mateo County Tina Marie Fisch.

"I was taking it easy," Ngeno insisted. "I ran better Monday."

UCLA women win

DAYTON, Ohio (AP) — Led by Julie Brown and Francie Larrieu with second and third place finishes, respectively, UCLA captured its first women's national AAU cross country championship Saturday.

Lynn Bjorklund, a 17-year-old high school coed from Los Alamos, N.M., won the individual crown by running the hilly, three-mile course in 17:31.7.

UCLA had a team score of 68 points for a comfortable margin over the second-place Duke City Dashers of Albuquerque, N.M., with 139. The Falcon Track Club of Seattle was third with 149 and defending champion San Jose, Calif., Cinderghals was fourth in 161.

Running with the Albu-

querque club, Miss Bjorklund, the national champion last year in the 14-17 age group, finished more than nine seconds ahead of Miss Brown, with a 17:41. Miss Larrieu, the defending women's titlist, came in third with a time of 18:03.

CROSS COUNTRY

NATIONAL AAU
at Crystal Springs

Individual results—1, John Ngeno (Washington State), 29:58.8 course record for 6.2 miles; old mark of 31:57.4 set in 1974 by Domingo Tibauduiza (West Valley TC); 2, Neil Cusack (NYAC), 30:15.2; 3, Ted Castaneda (Colorado TC), 30:33.4; 4, Greg Fredericks (Philadelphia Pioneers), 30:40; 5, D. Taylor (Oregon TC), 30:43; 6, Domingo Tibauduiza (Nevada), 30:44; 7, Ed Mendoza (Jornal Toids), 30:45; 8, Jim Johnson (Club North), 30:47; 9, Gary Tuttle (Beverly Hills Striders), 30:50; 10, Michael Peterson (Colorado TC), 30:54; 11, Frank Shorter (Florida TC), 30:57; 12, Ric Rojas (NMTC), 30:57; 13, Scott Bringhurst (un), 30:59; 14, Bob Wallace (Eastern NMTC), 31:00; 15, Tom Howard (Richmond Kajaks, Canada), 31:00; 16, Marty Liquori (NYAC), 31:03; 17, Charles Maguire (Philadelphia Pioneers), 31:05; 18, Chris McCubbins (un), 31:06; 19, Tony Staynings (Western Kentucky), 31:07; 20, Don Kardong (Club Northwest), 31:11; Team standings—1, Colorado TC, 89; 2, New York AC, 95; 3, Philadelphia Pioneers 102; 4, Eastern New Mexico 114.

WOMEN'S AAU
at Bellbrook, Ohio

Individual—1, Lynn Bjorklund (Albuquerque) for 3.1 miles, 17:31; 2, Julie Brown (UCLA), 17:41; 3, Francie Larrieu (UCLA), 18:03; 4, Debbie Galtier (Seattle), 18:12; 5, Charlotte Lettice (Vermont), 18:12; Team—1, UCLA, 68; 2, Albuquerque, 139; 3, Seattle, 149; 4, San Jose Cinderghals, 161; 5, Oregon TC, 169.

Junior division

Individual—1, Pam Allen (Lassen), 15:05 for 2.5 miles; 2, Margaret Gross (New York), 15:15; 3, Mary Anne Opatowski (Fairfield, Ohio), 15:16; 4, Marlene Horewics (Mt. Lebanon), 15:25; 5, Kathy Adams Sacramento, 15:26.

Ngeno runaway harrier champ

12/2/74

By GENE WILLIAMS
Tribune Sports Writer

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Instead, they saw a long-legged Kenyan by the name of John Ngeno (pronounced Nino) run away from a field of more than 300 "non-spikers" on the hilly 6.2-mile jaunt. "Non-spikers" because the turf was so hard most of the harriers wore shoes without spikes.

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Cusack, this year's Boston Marathon champ competing for the New York Athletic Club, ran even with Ngeno the first three miles and finished a distant second in 30:15.2.

"He won it when he broke after about three miles," Cusack recalled. "Yes, I remember it was going up a hill."

After that burst nobody came close to catching the long-striding Kenyan. Ted Castaneda, who led the Colorado Track Club to the team title, was third in 30:33.4.

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"I was taking it easy," Ngeno insisted, "I ran better Monday."

Ngeno finished second to Nick Rose of Western Kentucky in last Monday's NCAA championships and said he would have won if he hadn't been "boxed in" toward the finish.

Rose, a young Englishman with long blond hair flowing over his shoulders, wasn't a factor at Crystal Springs, finishing far down the list, "around 70th."

"I sort of lost interest after a mile," Rose ad-

mitted. "I couldn't wear spikes and I had to borrow shoes. We all got blisters and we were slipping and sliding all over."

Rose said he didn't have the "mental thing" for the race after winning the NCAA title and added, "It's hard to get into it on a course like this. It's ridiculous, too dry and too much dirt. Cross country is supposed to be run on grass."

Ngeno called the Belmont course "fair," while Cusack termed it "enjoyable and demanding." The personable Irishman opined, "I don't know if I'd call it a cross country course but everyone enjoyed it."

Not quite everyone, Neil.

NOTES — Ngeno said he considered the 5000-meters his best race and will chase the world indoor record . . . His best harrier race, he said, was the Pac-8 event, which he won in 27:27 . . . Shorter said he was leaving for Japan Monday to run a marathon . . . Rose said he "loved" San Francisco and hopes to make his home here eventually . . . Marty Liquori finished 16th, ex-Stanford star Don Kardong 20th, Tracy Smith 30th, Reggie McAfee 31st, ex-Card Duncan Macdonald 71st, Byron Dyce 94th . . . Alvaro Mejia, Colombian Olympian from Redwood City, was 118th and San Carlos High ace Mitch Kingery 120th.