

Plato Yanicks

Coach -- Cross Country and Track and Field

Plato Yanicks, 1965-94, was one of the most successful coaches ever at Menlo-Atherton High School. He started the cross country program in his first year at M-A in 1965. He also initiated weight training for his cross country and track teams and PE classes.

Plato's teams at Alameda, Hillsdale and M-A won a total of 20 boys and girls varsity championships in cross country and track and 29 minor championships, including two boys CCS frosh-soph championships. During his 37 year career Plato won over three hundred boys and girls dual meets. His M-A boys varsity track teams from 1975 to 1986 went 125-11 and from 1982 to 1986 his M-A girls varsity track teams went 51-2. Plato has coached 105 individual league champions, 14 individual CCS track champions, several All-Americans, a state meet champion, a Pac-10 champion and an Olympic athlete. Three of his athletes were inducted into the University of Berkeley Track Hall of Fame.

One of Plato's greatest accomplishments was bringing about the inception of the California State Cross Country Championship Meet. Plato planned a strategy with former CCS Commissioner, Larry Rice, to start a Northern California Championship Meet that would coincide with the already-existing Southern California Championship Meet. Plato was the Meet Director for the first three of these Northern California Meets, which eventually led to the first California State Cross Country Championship Meet in 1987.

Plato's honors and accomplishments include:

- *Inductee in the San Mateo County Sports Hall of Fame in 2004
- *Honoree in 1986 by the Palo Club for an outstanding coaching career
- *Co-honoree by the CCS in 1988 for an outstanding coaching career
- *Originator of the PAL decathlon
- *Meet Director of Stanford's High School Cross Country Invitational Meet for ten years from its inception in 1974
- *Selector and publisher of All-league and All Northern California Cross Country and Track Teams
- *Author of the All Time West Bay and Northern California Track Honor Roll. Plato's research helped make possible the historical booklet, the California State Track Meet, written by Donn Kirk.

Plato attended Palo Alto High School where he participated in football, basketball and track. He graduated from San Jose State in 1953, majoring in PE. He was soon drafted into the Army, receiving his first coaching experience while he was athletic director at his base in Munich, Germany.

Returning to the US in 1955, Plato attended Stanford University, where he earned a Master's degree in education in 1957. Attending Stanford was a turning point in Plato's life, as he came under the influence of legendary track coach, Payton Jordan. Plato was so inspired by Payton that he became a student aide for the 1957 Stanford track team. Working with Payton encouraged Plato so much that he decided to become a track coach. The rest is history.

COACHING CAREER OF PLATO YANICKS

Head cross country coach (35 years); **head track coach** (28 years) at Alameda, Hillsdale and Menlo-Atherton High Schools

Started sport of cross country at **Alameda** (1958) and **Menlo-Atherton** (1965)

Possibly the first coach in Bay Area to both run the 220 on a curve in dual meets and have each team member's name on back of uniform (1959)

Member of the **Stanford track officials** crew for approximately fifteen years. **Officiated** at the **USA vs. USSR track meet** in 1962

Coached a two-man 10 mile relay team of Marcel Hetu and Ralph Likens that set a **national high school record** at **Hillsdale** in 1963

Meet director of the **last NCS** track meet **before** the section was **split into NCS and CCS** in 1964

Originator of the **SPAL and PAL decathlon** in which **Menlo-Atherton athletes dominated** individual and team decathlon championships during the 20 year history of the event

Originator and selector of **All Northern California Cross Country and Track Teams** (which Citizen Savings later co-sponsored) and of **All League Teams** (which local newspapers published)

Meet director of the **Stanford Cross Country Invitational** for a period of approximately ten years from its inception. **Meet director** of the **1977 HS Division** of the **Stanford Invitational Track Meet**

Originator of the **Northern California Cross Country Championship Meet**. **Meet director** of the **first three meets** which ultimately led to the **State Cross Country Meet** in the 1980's

Chosen **High School Track Coach of the Year** by the **Palo Club** 1986

Member of the **high school coaches committee** that brought high school **indoor track** to the **Bay Area**. **Meet director** and **official** at early meets

Honored by the CCS at the 1988 CCS Track Finals for an **outstanding coaching career**

Author of "**All Time West Bay and Northern California Track Honor Roll**" (Researched best marks ever made in track and field in this area)

Provided statistics that made possible the completion of The California State Track Meet

Coached 4 athletes who are enshrined in the UC Berkeley Track Hall of Fame

Coached Menlo-Atherton's Trish King who later made the 1988 U.S. Olympic Team in the high jump with a mark of 6'5"

Selected for the **Crystal Springs Course Coaches Hall of Fame**

CAREER RECORD:

20 **Varsity League Championships** in boys and girls track and cross country

29 **Other League Championships** (Frosh, Frosh/Soph, Jr. Varsity) @ Menlo-Atherton, Hillsdale, and Alameda

TRACK DUAL MEETS:

Varsity dual meet teams had about 300 wins for boys and girls (Alameda, Hillsdale and Menlo-Atherton)

Since 1975: M-A boys won 125, lost 11 (97%); 3 unbeaten seasons
1977 team ranked #1 in N. Cal by Redwood City Tribune

Since 1982: M-A girls won 51, lost 2 (96%); 4 unbeaten seasons

League: Coached 104 individual League Champions (which includes athletes who were in two or more events)

Region: Track team champions three times; second eleven times

CCS: Coached 14 individual champions
Three times Menlo-Atherton was second to Independence in track team standings.

State: Coached 30 State Meet qualifiers. Eleven of these placed.
Twenty-four made the High School All-American list