



MEASUREMENT NEWS 

October

1986

Issue #19



MEASUREMENT NEWS

#19-OCTOBER 1986

COPING WITH FALSE CERTIFICATION ADVERTISING

I intend to try to get Ohio Runner to publish the following. You may be interested in getting your own local running publication to do the same:

How Can a Runner Tell if the Course is Really Certified?

It's confusing. You see all these race flyers and advertisements, and they all say the course is certified. Later you find it isn't. It's not a happy situation to do your best and then find that you really don't have any faith in the course. Here's what I suggest;

Race Directors - If you have really gone to the trouble to have your course certified, you have a certificate to prove it. Make photocopies of the certificate and map and plaster them all around the registration area. Show the runners your course is real. If you've got it, flaunt it.

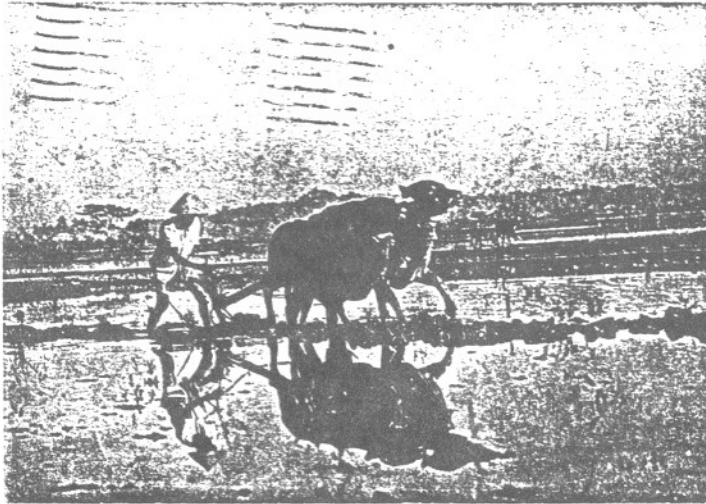
Runners - If you're planning on a good effort on a course the director claims is Certified, ask him for the course certification number. Ask him if he truly has a piece of paper signed by a TAC certifier. If he cannot come up with this, suspect the course. Tell him certification matters to you, and urge him to try to make the claims of his advertising come true. If you get to a race that claims it's certified and isn't, demand your money back and otherwise make a pain of yourself. You are entitled to the truth, especially when a lot of your travel time and money are involved.

TAC can't cope with the problem of false advertising all by itself. But proud race directors and informed runners can do the job.

Although false claims of certification make me mad, I do not believe that any race director has any obligation to certify his course. The key is telling the truth to the runners. One of the more popular races in the Columbus area is billed as being "about 4 miles" in length.

This gets complicated when one tries to figure out just what a TAC sanction obliges one to do. Perhaps the proposed "A" and "B" sanctions will cure this. Most race directors have so much to do that small legalisms fall through the cracks in the rush to get the race put on.

LETTERS TO PETE



THURSTON MEASURING IN BALI
- NOTE TWO CALIBRATED OXEN.

Island Of Bali.
Ploughing The Rice Field.

7/31/86



Pete, I've been over here
to measure two courses
a 10K in Bali + a marathon
in Jakarta. I've never had
so much good help - always
police motorcycle escorts and
support vehicles, etc. People
are interested and eager to
learn; Indonesia is working
hard to build up sports +
physical fitness. More later

Pete Riegel

3354 Kirkham Rd

Columbus, OH

43221

USA



PS Rain is unpredictable
here - crazy for
measuring

Cheers!
Bob Thurston

PS #2 YES! Will write it
Up for MN! I spy star jolly
Mostly clouds for me

THE BIG TRANSITION

Next year we won't have NRDC to kick around anymore. Part of the transition will involve the transfer of the course list from NRDC News to MN. In a conversation with Jennifer Young, it was agreed that courses should stop coming to NRDC on November 30. After that time they will come to MN.

From December 1, if you are a certifier, send your approved courses to your Vice Chairman - Wayne Nicoll or Bob Baumel. They will check the maps and forward the courses to me. I will eyeball them to get them in my memory and pass them on to John White (we work at the same company). Then the courses will be entered on the list and updates published every two months.

CERTIFIERS: DO NOT SEND COURSES DIRECTLY TO ME OR JOHN. SEND THEM THROUGH YOUR VICE CHAIRMAN. Begin doing this on December 1.

John and I discussed the course list over lunch and came up with the following things that are probably true:

1) The new TAC Road Course Registrar is:

John White	day: 614-424-7011
4865 Arthur Place	evening: 614-459-2547
Columbus, OH 43220	

2) Certificates (with maps) will be available to anyone, on demand, who sends \$2.00 per course, the course ID number, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Pricing is done for two reasons: To discourage frivolous requests for information and to fund the operation as a self-sustaining entity.

3) The list will be kept on a Zenith (MS-DOS) PC using Wordstar (ASC-II).

4) An update will appear bimonthly in MN starting February 1987.

5) A one-line format will be used, rather like the one described in the August MN.

6) We will probably keep the list on a series of floppy discs, with 8 or 10 pages to a file. We will thus wind up with several files, each including several states. Biggies like California may have their own file. A complete list of the region including a requested state will be available at a price (\$10 or less) once we get caught up. Write or call John about this.

7) We plan to begin the new list where the old list ends. We may get the present courses on the list, but it will take a while. In the interim, people wanting to know what's available in their region will have to buy a course book from TAC and an update from John.

8) Floppies of the course list may become available for those computer nerds who want to play games with it. Maintain your own list if you wish!

9) We will not change the names of courses. New users of old courses may display the certificate and map and use the number.



TAC/ARTC
KEVIN P. LUCAS
Texas Regional Chairman
9802 FORUM PARK #3333
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77036
(713) 721-5615

August 21, 1986

TAC/RRTC
3354 Kirkham Road
Columbus, Ohio 43221

Attn: Peter S. Riegel, Chairman

Dear Pete,

Regarding your letter to both Wayne Nicoll and myself dated 08/12/86 and your comments about documentation of calibration courses, I thought I would add mine here.

I certify all calibration courses and maintain them like any road course. Keeping track of cal. courses like road courses makes very good sense.

Have I been certifying cal. courses in vain? Have I been sending them to Jennifer Hesketh Young with \$5.00 per course like road courses for no reason?

Documentation of cal. courses seems more important than road courses at times. Just recently I had a measurer use a cal. course after someone simply showed him the start/finish points. To me this is very shaky. The outcome was he measured a half marathon and a 10km with the cal. course he was shown, it was 21'-6" short of a half mile. A lot of work down the drain.

Keeping track of cal. courses is going to continue in Texas just like documentation for road courses. Maybe I should not be sending them into NRDC. I figured ALL final signatories did the same. I am a little surprised to find the contrary.

By all means the little work it takes to document a cal. course and keep files or records on them should be done. How can a measurer measure a road course without a well documented cal. course?

Regards,

Kevin P. Lucas

cc: Wayne Nicoll, Vice Chairman/Eastern U. S.
Jennifer Hesketh Young, Secretary
Bob Baumel, Vice Chairman/Western U. S.

CALIBRATION COURSE CERTIFICATION

We seem to have a lot of ways to certify cal courses. Some certifiers make up certificates and send them in to NRDC. Some, like me, merely note on the cal course map that it is approved for use in TAC road course measurement, send it back to the measurer, and ask them to send me a copy each time they submit data.

When I make up these "certificates" I try to keep it all on one side of one piece of paper, so that xeroxing is kept to a minimum. You'll find an example of one of my approved cal courses elsewhere in this MN. I also keep copies in my files, although I don't assign numbers. Some keep good records of cal courses, assigning them numbers. When data is submitted, the measurer merely writes in the number of the cal course.

NRDC saves the cal courses they get but has no real interest in them. When John White and I start doing the course list we will have no interest in cal courses. They remain local. Handle them as you like.

I like my way (the measurer sends me a copy of the approved map) because then I know that they had a map of the course they used. If all I see is a number I wonder whether somebody just told them where the course was and turned them loose with a rumor and a number. Word of mouth can spread a cal course number around to people who don't know what they're doing. Besides, my way relieves me of the need to keep highly organized cal course records, with numbers. When I get a request for a cal course, I generally just burrow until I find one. But the requests are few. Most people seem to prefer their own local course.

Most of the repeat measurers I get sooner or later get to measure a cal course near their home. Then they can really get cracking on measurement. They use the same calibration course over and over.

DELAYED CALIBRATION COURSE

Picture this: You are to do a course measurement in a strange town. You arrive at the course and find that the calibration course is unavailable or nonexistent, but you must get cracking before the traffic starts up or lose a day. What to do? Simple.

If you are using a strange bike, just put the valve stem on the bottom and roll it one revolution. Tape the distance covered and figure out a layout constant. If you're using a familiar bike, you may already know what your approximate constant should be.

Example: in one revolution of the front wheel the bike rolls 84 inches.

$$\frac{1 \text{ revolution}}{84 \text{ inches}} \times \frac{12 \text{ inches}}{1 \text{ foot}} \times \frac{5280 \text{ ft}}{1 \text{ mile}} \times \frac{20 \text{ counts}}{1 \text{ revolution}} = \frac{15086 \text{ counts}}{1 \text{ mile}}$$

Then find a decent road nearby and use your approximate count to lay out an approximate half-mile. Calibrate four times on your "half-mile" and then measure the race course. Then recalibrate. Your bike measurements are done and all you have to do is tape the stretch you used as a cal course and figure out how long the race course turns out to be.

Then all you've got is a final adjustment to make.

Entrega General,
Panama 5, Panama,
September 3, 1986.

Mr. Peter S. Niegel,
3354 Kirkham Road,
Columbus, OH. 43221.

Dear Pete,

Thanks very much for sending the certification of the calibration course so quickly. We were happy to get it. We had already done one bike check on the course and will do another this weekend when we measure again. Here are the figures on the first check: Count to first 15 meters, 144, count for entire course 7732. B divided by A = 53.69444. As we had 53 15 meter tape lengths and one length of 9.672 meters the check seems to be very accurate.

Admittedly there was ambiguity at the Randolph Road Trans-Isthmus highway but that question is moot now. We are not going to use that route. That was to be part of the "new shorter route". I had determined by pre-measurements that this would reduce the distance of the 84.39 kilometer course by about 2.6 kilometers. The bottom line was that the old course itself was considerably short of 84.39 kilometers. The "new" route measured out to only 48.6 miles so we will not use it.

By first measurements it would seem that the old course is about 51 miles. The exact measurement is not available as the streets of Colon were just changed last week making the old route one way - the wrong way. We will remeasure this weekend but I do not think that the new route on the streets will be much longer.

If the old route is indeed close to 51 miles it will continue to be the course. (Except for the one-way street change) I would rather have the course one mile long than to put an out and back turn-around on the new course or to run the course more than a few yards out the causeway. Vehicles are not allowed on the causeway and the runners would have to walk back to the Officers Club after a 50 mile run.

In Panama they will probably always call this an 84.39 kilometer course but if we can certify it at 51 miles or less, and call it 50, I'll be satisfied. It would be unsatisfactory to mark a 50 mile point and take "splits" there as it would be in a fairly high traffic area.

We will be unable to get all the measurements in 30 days before our race but it should be soon after. One set of measurements had to be discarded as the measurer was over eager and wanted to finish the entire course. He became overheated and fell and was unable to recalibrate after the ride. The measurements are being made by

volunteers from a bike club and to avoid any hurt feelings i did not tell him that his measurements would not be used. i feel that the measurements to that point were probably good and i am basing my estimate of the length of the old course on them.

we are finding it impossible to measure forest road by the shortest possible route without endangering the bike rider. this is a short 5 mile narrow road through a jungle rain-forest. it is heavily traveled by what I can only describe as wild traffic. with the heavy jungle growth even when a truck or bus is heard approaching it is difficult to tell the direction until it is right on top of you.


only the slowest runners, those not likely to set a record, will reach this point after daylight. I'm certainly not fast and i was off this road at 5:20 AM last year. in my training i hesitate during the day to run the tangents on this road.


the only solution that i see is to also restrict the runners to the right hand lane on this road. most of them would be afraid to risk running the tangents anyhow. i would not ride a bicycle over the shortest possible route on any kind of bet and will not ask anyone else to do so. i hope that measuring in the right hand lane only will meet with your approval. this makes most of our route a one lane course impossible to monitor but as mentioned to you in a previous letter, we will try to have an official in almost every support vehicle.

Enclosed is a brochure of our race for your information and amusement. we will get those measurements to you as soon as we possibly can but like so many places, we are restricted by when the people can get off from work.

sincerely,

Ray
ray N. Steele

IV ULTRAMARATHON  OF PANAMA
October 12, 1986 84.39 KMS



ENTRY FEE \$20.00
SPONSORED BY adidas
ORGANIZED BY THE LIFE AND HEALTH RUNNER'S CLUB
Non Profit Organization

WRITE TO:
Marcos Avila Jr.
Box 1718, Balboa,
Panama, Republic of Panama.

THE ATHLETICS CONGRESS
OF THE USA

Road Running Technical Committee
Peter S. Riegel, Chairman

3354 Kirkham Road
Columbus, OH 43221
614-451-5617 (home)
614-424-4009 (office)
telex 245454 Battelle

September 9, 1986

Fay N. Steele - Entrega General - Panama 5 - PANAMA

Dear Fay,

I enjoyed your last letter immensely. I am going to put portions of it in next Measurement News. SPR measuring is not always possible, and your account of the perils of riding through the jungle are entertaining and illuminating.

The bike check of your cal course is, as you noted, just as it should be.

You seem to be aware of the options open to you. The only thing I will suggest is that you establish a couple of good reference points, near each end of the course, but far enough toward the middle that they will not be affected by local roadworks. Then, if you have to do any fine-tuning later you will still have 40 or 45 miles that does not have to be remeasured. I would be sure I had a reference point about every 3 to 5 miles. They really can come in handy.

If you are going to go for a record you ought to give yourself every advantage you can, and I think that a certified 50 mile split would be of value to you. Your choice. If you wanted you could establish a mock starting line that the runners cross after a mile or so of running. The distance from the mock start to the finish would be 50 miles. It would be necessary to do some fancy timekeeping, but I think it would work, for those seeking records.

The race information you sent really got my juices going. It looks like just the sort of race I have always liked - small field, low key, and in an exotic and far-off place.

Judging from what you said about the "wild" traffic, I think right-side-only makes a lot of sense. Can you safely measure the SPR using the whole right side or should you restrict the runners to 1 or 2 meters from the road edge? Any restriction you choose to impose is certifiable, just so the route is reproducible. Enforcement can be a problem, but I doubt that any serious questions would arise unless an open record was involved.

Good luck with your measurements.



entrega general,
panama D, panama,
sept 17, 1986.

Mr. Peter S. Riegel,
3354 Kirkham Road,
Columbus, OH. 43221.

PRECAL TEMP. = 30 C
POSTCAL TEMP. = 36 C
HUMID.

Dear Pete,

We finally completed the measurements of our course, despite the rainy season. It was somewhat of a shock to the people who formerly measured the course at 84.390 kilometers to find it is only 81.251 km or 50.465 miles. I was at least mildly surprised as I had expected it to measure about one mile shorter. This was good as we do have a good start and finish location.

The important thing for all of us was to have a course that goes from ocean to ocean, is at least 50 miles long, and not too much longer. This fits the bill quite well. I have no idea what length they will now advertise the course but I am going to consider it 50 miles.

We did manage to get measurements through the rainforest road very close to the shortest possible distance, but I never want to go through that again. The person driving the car drove on the left with flashers going and the bicycle behind. To put it mildly, we had some experiences. But, we got the job done.

A good deal of the credit goes to a young man named Aurelio Juan Dulari-vlieg, who will probably be the next president of the club that sponsors the race. I mention this because he may in the future be wanting to get a 10 km and possibly other courses certified. He is highly intelligent, a graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY and will eventually be a Panama Canal Pilot.

I hope all the papers enclosed are in proper order. My thanks to you for the help you have given. It made things a lot easier. I hope to meet you personally someday, possibly at a race. I will introduce myself before the race as all I usually see of the other runners in a race is their backside.

Sincerely,

Ray
Ray M. Steele

THE PAPERS WERE
IN ORDER, AND THE
COURSE IS CERTIFIED.
Ray

NEW BLOOD

Let's face it - sooner or later we will each get tired of doing RRTC stuff and want to get out. The nice way to do it is to recommend a willing and capable person as your replacement. This eases things on the rest of RRTC who otherwise would have to share your load when you leave.

New people in RRTC are necessary to keep us from becoming insular. A lot of the RRTC folks are members of the team that measured the 1984 Olympic marathon course in LA. Fortunately we have added several people since then who were not members of that group, and this is good to see. RRTC should not be too much of an old-boy club. So far I am not aware of a deserving, hard-working person who has been shunted aside in RRTC because of a clique. I hope things stay that way.

Any person who really wants to get into the inside of things in RRTC has only to write a couple of letters. Correspondence seems to be the common denominator among the central faction of RRTC. Is there a job that's not being done that ought to be done? Would you like to do it? It's your chance to be a chairperson!

WHAT IS RRTC?

In the 1986 TAC Directory (P. 107) there is a blank space where the duties and responsibilities of RRTC are to be defined. With what shall we fill it? Who are we, and what does RRTC do - and what should it be doing?

Here's how I see it. Please chime in with your opinions on this and maybe we can come up with a definition of what we are.

The Road Running Technical Committee was formed in order to bring technical order and structure to the sport of road running. As part of RRTC's activities toward this goal,

- 1) RRTC conducts a Road Course Certification Program, in which courses considered to be accurately measured are identified and listed, and the updated list periodically published.
- 2) RRTC provides expert measurers who may be used in validating courses on which pending records are set, so that the Records Committee has knowledge of the accuracy of the course.
- 3) RRTC has written a Finish Line Handbook, and has a Finish Line Chairperson, but the goals of this particular part of RRTC are not yet defined. One goal might be the creation and maintenance of a list of finish line companies. Before we rush full-bore into this, it might be wise to see whether we can determine whether the public has a strong interest in such a list. Any ideas?
- 4) RRTC has developed an expertise in the field of measurement that may be used to help in other TAC activities.



The Athletics Congress of the USA

*The Governing Body for Athletics in the United States
including Track and Field, Long Distance
Running and Race Walking for
men and women and boys and girls
at all age levels.*

WAYNE B. NICOLL
3535 Gleneagles Drive
Augusta, Georgia 30907
(404) 860-0712

August 31, 1986

THE FOLDING BICYCLE Is It Suitable For Measuring ?

Recently while in a bicycle shop I impulsively purchased a Peugeot folding bicycle. It resembles a kid's BMX bicycle in size and shape and has 20 inch wheels, a thick tubular frame, and is shaped like a girl's model with no cross-bar. The bicycle is hinged at the bottom of the frame near the sprocket and folds back against itself. The frame hinge, seat post, and handle bar post all have quick release levers to allow quick adjustments or removal. It weighs 40 lbs and when folded the dimensions are about 32 x 27 x 16 inches. By removing the handle bars and seat post the size can be reduced even further.

The gear system is a Sturm Archer three speed thumb shift. I use all three gears regularly. The first gear is generally inadequate for hill riding and I have found myself walking up grades that would have negotiated easily with a ten speed model bicycle. The bicycle was sold equipped with fat white walled tires and fenders. I replaced the original tires with kid's BMX tires and removed the fenders. I felt the original tires would not withstand the rigors of the gutter riding that we measurers frequently do.

A Jones Counter mounted easily on the front hub and I mounted an old inexpensive model Cateye bicycle computer from another bicycle onto it without difficulty. The computer is not adjustable for the different wheel size so it registers about 1.07 miles per mile. On a half mile calibration course the 20 inch wheels produce about 10,600 counts per half mile. The count spread tends to be a little greater for the four rides. In general one expect a 5-7 count spread where you might normally have a 3-5 count spread with a 27 inch bicycle wheel. I may be able to improve on that if my riding skills improve.

The seat post that came with the bicycle proved to be too short for my 34 inch legs. I found a longer post but it was greater in diameter. After widening and filing the frame seat post receptacle, I managed to fit in the new post. I tested the Peugeot bicycle on a .9 mile winding paved course that I set up next to the calibration course. The folding bicycle compared very favorably with only 8" difference in measurement between the best rides of the folding model and my old 27 inch bicycle. I then rode the bicycle for several weeks, calibrating and measuring some old courses to develop some confidence with it before taking it cross country for the validation of the Carlsbad 5000 in Carlsbad, California.

Shipping any bicycle by air is a number one hassle. The cost of transporting a bicycle by air from Atlanta to San Diego was \$ 25.00 each way. I could not locate a container that was small enough to allow the bicycle to be considered ordinary baggage. It had to be classified as excess baggage. Excess baggage is handled separately and in some places, like San Diego, it was necessary to bribe a porter to unlock a door so I could recover it. I still plan to take the maximum allowable dimension for ordinary luggage which is 62 inches circumference and see if I can make or find a container that meets that dimensional limit.

The bicycle and I performed well on the Carlsbad validation. The fat 20 inch tires tend to give a high count spread between the calibration and recalibration but final calculated measurements were consistent with the other two riders on 27 inch bicycles. I am satisfied that a 20 inch bicycle is acceptable as a race course measurement device.

The bicycle sold for \$ 185.00 and I have spent \$ 20.00 on modifications. This compares favorably with the \$ 225.00 price for a DA-HON folding bicycle which has even smaller wheels. I plan to see if a 5 speed gear system with thumb shift can be adapted to it to increase the hill climbing capability. The bicycle looks funny with its high seat and raised high handle bars on a small frame so it turns a few heads and draws some laughs. Normal saddle bags do not fit on it so I am presently using a fanny pack. The folding Peugeot is, however, a practical little package of transportation that I can carry easily inside my personal vehicles and it does the job. I expect to use it regularly on far away race course measurements.

Wayne B. Nicoll

VALIDATIONS

For years we have been insisting that a properly-measured course is "safe". That is, if you measure right, your course will not be shot down when it is validated by an expert rider. This belief, so often expressed as an unsupported opinion, is now buttressed by Ken Young's "The Validation Program" which appears in NRDC News, September 1986. It's a well-put-together piece supported by a complete history of every validation ever done in the US. Good work, Mr. Validations Chairman!

In the article Ken discusses the old and new measurement standards, and shows how courses fared when validated against those same standards. Under the new standard, where we presently operate, over 83 percent passed the validation. This is not bad, considering that the courses were measured by people of varying experience who may not have had one-on-one training from anyone, perhaps only having the chance to read the instructions. Yet the courses fared well.

Ken goes on to say "In light of this, it is suggested that courses showing up shorter than 0.05% be rejected, courses showing up at least the distance be accepted, and courses in the so-called grey area be referred to the TAC Records Committee for final judgement. I feel the TAC Rules of Competition should not be changed from their present intent in this regard."

I (Editor) know of no single instance in which the measurement of an RRTC member has been bested by a full 0.1 percent under any condition. Do you? Even on the Olympic Marathon ride, where we had 13 people on the course at once, the whole measurement span was within 0.08 percent.



Directors Ken Young
Statistician, Record Keeper
(602) 326-6416
Jennifer Hesketh Young
Administrative Officer
(602) 326-6416

P.O. Box 42888 • Tucson, Arizona 85733

August 19, 1986

Pete Riegel
3354 Kirkham Road
Columbus, OH 43221

Dear Pete:

We are puzzled by the second reference in MN to the mistaken notion that the 100K distance is an "orphan" to the sport and is not record-kept.

On the contrary, 100K is a record kept distance by TAC and is also a championship distance - for both track and road.

Noel Nequin puts on an excellent ultra each year which incorporates 100K and 100 mile (if there is interest). Sandy Kiddy's 100K marks at Chicago and in Duluth have been validated, too.

Get out that TAC Rule Book!

I STAND CORRECTED. SINCE I MEASURED
& HAVE RUN THE CHICAGO AMJA COURSE,
I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE MY BONEHEAD
LAPSE ORIGINATED. *Pete*

MN had the info we needed about the convention. Is there any chance that the exec committee meeting can be changed to Thursday? 9-12 on Wednesday means that most people must fly down Tuesday night and therefore miss three days of work plus the weekend. That's going to be expensive in many ways. Last year, when this time was revealed, I managed to get it changed for everyone. If you think that all the Exec Committee doesn't mind, leave it be. I know that Ken will not be able to make it.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL RUNNING DATA CENTER, INC.

Jan

Jennifer Hesketh Young

CORRECTION:

RRTC WILL MEET
THURSDAY AND FRIDAY

EVENINGS, NOT THURSDAY MORNING AS
REPORTED IN NRDC NEWS. JUST A
COMMUNICATIONS GLITCH. *Pete*

VALIDATIONS CHAIRPERSON SOUGHT

Ken has expressed a willingness to continue as Validations Chairman of RRTC if we cannot find a replacement for him, but he really would prefer to let someone else do it. Would you like the job? Get in touch with Ken or Pete Riegel if you are interested. You need not be a present member of RRTC, although that would certainly be a strong credential.

FINISH LINE CHAIRPERSON SOUGHT

The office of Finish Line Chairperson may become vacant this year. If you have any ideas concerning how this job should be handled, and think you'd like to try your hand at it, please get in touch with Pete Riegel.

GIANT MAILING OF MN

In an effort to get the existence of RRTC out to the general public I asked for, and was given by Jennifer, a copy of NRDC's mailing list. I intend to send a copy of the February MN to each person on that list. The February issue will have our first certified course update since NRDC's last one, which will come out in December. In addition, if there is anything you think ought to be in this issue, please let me know. This mailing is our chance to promote RRTC to people who are already sold on the virtues of NRDC.

IS IT SAFE?

Our entire system of measurement rests on one simple device - the Jones Counter. Ever since Clain Jones passed on the business to NYRRC Bill Noel has quietly been taking and filling orders for them.

The counter has as a chassis the gear drive for a mechanical bicycle speedometer. I have not seen one of these for years, and it began to worry me that we would be in deep yogurt if the supply of these devices dried up. So I asked Bill how things stood in a note with a recent order for a couple of counters. He replied:

"Here are your three Jones devices. The delay in shipping (ed: I didn't notice any) due to my awaiting a response from manufacturer of gear drive mechanism - 'at this time we do not plan on cancelling our part. We do not see any reason in the future to do so either'. Now can relax on that score anyway."

At this point I think it is appropriate to recognize Bill for the work he has done over the years in keeping us all supplied with counters. With all the NYRRC work he does, and his certifying duties, it would be understandable if things started to slip. But the counters are right there when needed, and nobody's complaining. Thanks, Bill, for making things so dependable.

THE ATHLETICS CONGRESS
OF THE USA

Road Running Technical Committee
Peter S. Riegel, Chairman

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Columbus, OH 43221
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telex 245454 Battelle

August 4, 1986

Alvin Chriss - PO Box 120 - Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear Alvin,

SOME INTERNATIONAL MEASUREMENT CONCERNS

In response to your phone call today, here are some ramblings:

AIMS and IAAF are in the process of beginning to set up a road race records structure similar to that of TAC. As they do so it is important for us to keep in communication with them so that they don't go off in some direction that hurts our own system gravely.

The techniques of measurement are similar. TAC and AIMS both subscribe to virtually identical measurement procedures. The only place they differ is that AIMS wants to use a 0.05 percent Short Course Prevention Factor (SCPF), believing that if the measurement is expertly done the 0.05 percent is enough. TAC uses 0.1 percent.

AIMS conducts pre-race "validations" in which a measurer from another country, of recognized competence, measures an already-laid-out course and pronounces it OK. Then, if a record is set, it may be immediately declared without the necessity for a remeasurement.

I have disagreed with this procedure for years with John Disley of AIMS. I believe that it is hugely wasteful of time and money (since few courses will ever see a WR) and also closes the door to honest post-record inquiry. At this time I do not believe that AIMS even requires any course documentation. In other words, post race checking is not only not done, but is practically impossible, since no course map need exist!

The two current marathon WR's were run on AIMS courses. Rotterdam did not have their AIMS procedures in order (no foreign measurer) so outside validators were called in, and they got the cooperation of the Rotterdam organizers. London was more of a closed thing. Lennart Julin of Sweden measured the course with Max Coleby, and Coleby later did a validation ride of the course just before the race, as I understand it. Then Coleby ran the race with Ingrid Kristiansen and verified that she ran the measured course.

Coleby is, I believe, an Englishman. If London had been Barcelona and Coleby had been a Spaniard, I think the reaction to the "validation" would have been different. Residual Anglophilia and the persuasive writings of John Disley and Chris Brasher have largely quieted my doubts, but they linger. And deep in my gut I know it would be better to have London given an outside ride.

But how to do this? The London organizers don't want it, and I think it is because they fear the risk that the course may measure short. This is a legitimate fear, if a very small SCPF was used. I cannot help but wonder whether a definitive course map exists. It may be too late to do London. But the next WR should not go unvalidated, after the race, by whoever wishes to do it. No legitimate measurer should be excluded.

I cannot think of a single reason why post-race validations should not be done when WR's are set. The only reason for the present AIMS posture, it seems to me, is that it eliminates the possibility of post-race embarrassment by the race director and anger by the record claimant. If a course is solid, it will stand a validation. If the course is not solid, should a WR be recognized on it to save somebody's face?

Last year Chicago was "validated" by David Katz, almost on the heels of the final certification measurement. And New York City was not validated by anybody at all, although Wayne Nicoll, Bob Letson, Bill Noel and I laid it out. Not a foreigner in the bunch. Would AIMS have accepted a record set on either course? Personally, my pride is such that I would welcome a remeasurement of any of my courses. By anybody. And most of the measurers I know have similar pride. We feel protected by the 0.1 percent SCPF - not threatened by it.

The threat of validation makes us pay attention, and measure conscientiously. Without it we could become sloppy.

John Disley had a traumatic experience recently when he measured the NYC marathon and got a length that exceeded the official TAC distance by 0.068 percent. Not outrageous, but more than 0.05 percent. I hope it has shaken his confidence, and that he will incline toward 0.1 percent as we use. The reason for the difference is unclear - perhaps he is still subconsciously trying to measure where he believes the runners will run, and isn't as tight on the corners as he ought to be. Who knows? Most of the measurers I know have been burned like that once or twice.

Here's a scenario: A non-US measurer comes to Chicago to validate it for AIMS. He checks the TAC certified course and finds it to be 0.05 percent oversize. A WR is set, which AIMS instantly recognizes. But TAC sends a validator who finds the course to be 1 meter short! Where does the record stand? We have a WR but not an AR? (note: I don't think one meter in a marathon will cause a U.S. record to be disallowed. See MN #17)

It's obvious that we have some international problems to work out. It's also clear that the problems are centered in that confusing region where all the courses are about the same length, but a few will be "short". In other words, no matter what we do course lengths are not going to change by any significant amount.

Pre-validation is OK when it's a track that's being checked. After all, the track is still there when the competition is done, and it can be checked if need arises.

AIMS procedures lead to good courses - better than TAC's. By spending big measurement bucks on every single race they can get the experts to do the work. TAC can't afford to do this - we have too many courses for that. Can we reconcile the two systems?

Another complicating factor - a political one. If Disley measures Chicago what does this mean to TAC? Has his measurement any weight? I'd assume that if he sent Bill Grass (IL TAC Certifier) his paperwork and it was OK, that the course would be TAC certified. But if he used only a 0.05 percent SCPF it wouldn't be long enough.

The AIMS people believe that because they are all experts, they should only have to add 0.05 percent. Of course, since their courses are uncheckable, they might as well use a single centimeter. Why add 21 meters to a marathon course that won't be checked? And can't be, because there's no map?

I like the idea that measurers from different countries should get around and measure each others' courses. I don't fear a dilution of anybody's power. Instead I think it is a long overdue step in a direction of international trust. Rotterdam broke the ice. They let in the international studs, and their course was just fine. And in spite of the fact that I believe (about 90 percent) in Max Coleby's validation of London, I think it would have been better if they had thrown open their doors too.

Anybody who does a competent job of layout has nothing to fear from remeasurement.

An important question to resolve is - at what level should a course be shot down for shortness? I believe that -0.05 percent is proper for bike-measured courses. (a 9995 meter 10k would fail and a 9996 meter 10k would pass - a marathon could measure out 21 meters short and pass) If this is the case, then a SCPF of 0.05 percent would be big enough for experts.

But since AIMS does not envision the idea of remeasurement, it's academic. I think AIMS should behave as if each WR was going to be remeasured, and lay out accordingly.

I'm going to try to go to Chicago and ride and talk with Disley to see whether there isn't some simple accommodation that can be reached. Actually it might be better if I don't ride. The rides might differ by a lot and then we'd spend days arguing about what SCPF to use. It's conceivable that Bob Bright might even say "to Hell with TAC - it's an AIMS race", which would confuse things dreadfully.

Should IAAF concern itself with non-marathon distances? I register total indifference here. Depends on who they've got keeping records. If they do get into lots of distances, they will soon find that pre-validating all races will not work. Too many races, too few experts.

Lack of measurement manpower is the single best reason why the efforts of the experts should be saved for WR courses. It is, of course, prudent for a big race with a tough field to hire an expert - but this should not buy them instant credibility when the race is over.

Should marathon courses be subject to outside scrutiny? I'd say yes. We should be totally open with regard to our methods and procedures. This is the only way to encourage others to do the same and to foster international trust.

None of the experts I know in the US worries about his course being found short by anybody. But I'll bet if we only had a 0.05 percent SCPF we'd worry a lot more. It's not enough to be safe, and I've told Disley so, and his recent NYC experience has since told him so as well. I pointed out that if he had laid out NYC using a 0.05 percent SCPF, the measurements of Nicoll and Letson would have shown his course to be short.

I'm going to get ahold of Bob Bright and see what I've got to do to go to Chicago to measure that course with Disley. John and I badly want to meet. I am sure our conversations will bear good fruit. I'm sure there's a way to keep everybody reasonably happy.

There is a pressing need for credentials for experts. We already have a loose framework of international measurers who have worked with one another. International measurement will foster international confidence, and soon many will want to be experts. We may have to contend with jealousy of those who feel qualified for experthood but who have not been chosen. So far our own informal communications seem to be working. In the future we may need a structure that's more official. It may be hard to set up.

As for what happens soon in Stuttgart concerning AIMS/IAAF measurement standards, I hope Allan may persuade heads to remain cool while we continue to make progress behind the scenes. This is no time for inscribing things on tablets of stone. I applaud the presence of foreign measurers on US soil, and I hope the interchange continues. I am certain that it will lead to a condition of good will - better than if we try to keep all outsiders out and be parochial about it. There's too much of that going around already.

I dare say that even if AIMS and IAC do continue on different tracks that we could recognize one another's records without much trouble. Can we really say that there's all that much difference in the actual courses that result from the two methods? I think not. I can't imagine an athlete preferring to race in Europe because their 10k is 5 meters shorter, on the average. There are too many other variables around for that to make a significant difference.

Best regards,



*c:

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Association of International Marathons

AIMS

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August 11 1986

Dear Pete,

I have today received a copy of your letter to Alvin Chriss.

I have to protest - but hopefully not too much as I don't wish to be classed with Ophelia.

Basically, the message of your letter is totally acceptable, eg let's get a consensus now before lines get drawn too solidly in the various international camps.

I add one further clause in my argument - AIMS can only do so much to prepare the stage for the IAAF to take over the leading role. At the end of day the IAAF has to be the Rule Maker - not AIMS or TAC.

Now my objection - you have failed to understand the AIMS certification/validation process.

1. Of course, European courses have maps. I enclose some pages from Edinburgh Commonwealth Games, Munich and London. Perhaps we don't set so great store by our maps and don't seem to have the fine draughtsmen that you can produce in the States - but we do have maps.

2. The London Process for the 1985 Race:-

a) John Disley and helpers work at the Course for months until we have a route that measurers to our (my) satisfaction.

b) London Marathon invite Lennart Julin from Stockholm to certify the course. They also invite Max Coleby - Great North Run to accompany Lennart on the run.

They measure - pontificate, adjust for the SCPF and tell John Disley where to put the Start Line (the finish line is harder to change)

This takes place 2 weeks before race day.

c) Two days before race day the shortest possible running line is painted on the route - supervised by John Disley.

Note: This is the only way that the runner can know where the route that was measured goes, as lead vehicles are too wide and often inattentively driven to be reliable indicators of the SPR.

d) Race Day. The Certifiers are invited back to ride in the lead clock vehicle to witness the course taken by the runners. If satisfied a Validation certificate is signed which states that the lead runner ran the course that was measured.

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In fact, Max Coleby actually ran with Ingrid and was as close as anyone could be to ensuring that no corners were cut or changes in the route made since Certification.

This is not the process you describe in your letter.

OK - I agree this is an expensive method of achieving integrity, but the London race already costs us £880,000 to stage, so a few hundred spent on measuring is a good and minor investment.

I agree that another post-race method of measurement must be devised for situations where the above wasn't done and a world's best, etc., happened.

I think where we differ, Pete, is that I believe that a post measurement is a poor alternative for witnessing the race on the day and confirming the route against what was measured.

I am sure that you did a conscientious job of Rotterdam but at the end of the day you still had little more than heresay on where the runners actually ran. Where the cones in the right spot as shown you on the map and as marks on the ground, for unless you have video of this section you just don't have the evidence?

You are right we need to work together and have a few beers after. I am trying to get money from the IAAF to arrange an "international" seminar of the 'peer' group of measurers this autumn (fall to you - and this reminds me that language differences may be part of our problem).

I know that Allan S. is looking for a New York venue, but I would favour a meeting in Seoul in October because I think it is vital to get the Japanese measurers to accept something different to the 1 metre rule which I am sure they still use - although they wont admit to it, and an IAAF official seminar would enable them to accept a new method (SPR) without loss of face, because this would be the first time that God (read IAAF) has spoken on the subject.

As to Chicago I never seem to be able to get Bob Bright to name the day - my visit to USA in September was bracketed with the task of measuring the Buffalo - Niagra Race. However, John Chew's race is a lapsed AIMS member and unless he re-joins then I wont be coming for that particular session. The date ear-marked for Chicago is Sunday 21 September - the day after the B-N race, or a day in the week preceeding this Sunday (17 - 19th).

Anything you can do to un-ravel these dates will be appreciated.

If I do come to Chicago I think we should ride and measure together - I am not convinced that riding technique can account for the discrepancies I experienced in New York!

May you ride on sun-lite roads.

Yours sincerely,



John Disley



September 2, 1986

Greg Nelson
138 Maine Ave.
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Peter Riegel
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Columbus, OH 43221

Dear Pete,

I wish to add my name to those who appreciate the new look of Measurement News. Thanks also go to Kevin for publishing it. There are certainly some interesting articles in each issue, some, to be honest too technical to hold my interest, but many others which are definitely relevant. In response to some of those issues as well as to ask a couple of questions I have sent you this letter.

I can see the need to prune courses to keep the certified course book within reason. I support the change in format although you could perhaps compromise by eliminating the blank line between entries to save space instead of going to a single line. As for Maine and myself, since we are a small state with less than 50 courses I have been able to pretty much keep track of which courses are presently in use. My task is aided by the magazine: Maine Running, which publishes almost all the results of Maine races. If they don't appear in the magazine it is pretty certain that the race is not being held. Therefore, I prefer suggestion #2 rather than dropping courses after a certain number of years. I assume most states now have a magazine or magazines that publish results and flyers. A notice could be published in them, plus club newsletters, listing races that the local certifier thinks may be inactive. If there is no response from either the Race Director or runners to the contrary they could be dropped.

The question of who owns course certification is certainly thought provoking. In Maine another race has used a certified course a couple of times, but it has always been by the same club so there has not been a problem. However, I can definitely see potential problems. Since a group spends quite a bit of time and probably some money to have a course certified they may not take kindly to someone else using it, especially if this race conflicts with one of their own. I think Wayne's suggestions are probably the best solutions and would

Maine Association of the Athletics Congress

hopefully resolve almost all cases. I assume that we would never know the exact answer to this question unless it went to court which I doubt anyone would really want to do.

I too like Professor Buckner have wondered about the acceptability of the NGS EDM BLs. I work for the Maine Dept. of Transportation and have worked in the past with the team that laid out these baselines. I can attest to the accuracy of them and certainly believe that a transferral to the adjacent pavement would be worthwhile. I think that in a hilly state such as Maine, where flat stretches of road that are safe to ride bikes back and forth are limited, can benefit from these baselines already in place. Also, I get the feeling that people interested in certifying their courses get a little leery when I tell them about laying out baselines. If one of the NGS baselines is nearby it might help overcome this reluctance. If they are acceptable, measurers could obtain a list of the ones in their state from their state land surveying organization, since their intent is to calibrate EDMs for local surveyors.

Yours truly,



Greg Nelson
582-5607 - H; 289-3223 - B

Race Directions

How to direct a successful distance race:

1. Hold the race at 2 p.m. in August. This time of day is best for the spectators, the race being sort of a sideshow anyway, and the runners are happy because the mid-afternoon temperature makes them plenty loose and warmed up.

2. By all means, have a little water along the route, but no earlier than six or seven miles in a marathon as it would be unsportsmanlike for a runner to drink any sooner than this. Hand the water to the runners in half-filled four-ounce cups. They shouldn't drink much because they'll get sick and the water will mostly go up their nose anyway if the cups are too full.

3. For convenience, plan the course down the main thoroughfares. It doesn't matter whether it passes by shopping centers and through busy intersections, since runners are accustomed to traffic and they consider dodging cars and pounding on hoods a sport in itself. Add a few gravel roads and trails with holes and projecting roots for variety. This variation from smooth roads is especially important toward the end of a long race, since you don't want the runners to get bored. A railroad crossing or two always adds interest. Trains are fun to race to the end of the crossing.

4. Estimate the length to the nearest tenth of a mile if possible, using a little commonsense and your auto odometer. Trying for better accuracy through that complicated certification business would take too much time, and even if you have a budget of a few hundred dollars, you have better things to spend it on than course measurement.

5. It really isn't necessary to measure or mark any intermediate distances, but if you should do so, just estimate these using the car odometer. The real competitors instinctively know their pace anyway, and the rest of the runners just want to know approximately how far they have left to go.

6. Don't go to any special effort to clearly mark the finish line. You probably won't have any photo finishes anyway, since the runners will be slowing down to avoid knocking down your fat friend handing out the finish cards

and other runners standing in the finish chute.

7. Use any track timer as your official watch. It doesn't matter if it was designed for timing sprints—it ought to be accurate after running two or three hours since it reads so precisely. Even if it gains or loses a little, or if it is misreads by a few minutes, this isn't too serious in a long race like a marathon. Record the winner's time to a tenth of a second, though. It's more impressive.

8. As to intermediate times along the course, recruit any kid who wants to read a stopwatch and post him somewhere along the course, preferably at a mile mark. Tell him that the times need only be read to the nearest minute since the runners just use them for general reference. Tell him nothing more. He should know enough to read the times loudly, stand exactly at the mileage marker and stay until the last runner has passed.

9. As the runners cross the finish line, mumble each time softly to the person recording the places. There is no need to read the times loud enough for the runners to hear, as all they care about is their finish place anyway. Besides, you wouldn't want any finish line hassles in case some runner's wristwatch disagreed with your official watch.

10. If you expect a field of about 100, give five trophies. That is about two more than enough, since about 80% of the starters shouldn't be there anyway. You might consider one trophy for over-40 age-group, but that is plenty since the others are only joggers anyway and are just there to get a free T-shirt to show off.

11. If you run short of money, eliminate some of the awards, but don't mention this until after the race since you don't want to upset anybody before the race. Cut the age-group awards first. An older guy is generally just happy to finish anyway and won't be too disappointed.

12. Adopt the attitude that you have done the runners a big favor by spending your time and conscientious efforts. Don't take any advice or criticism very seriously, especially if it comes from someone who finished in the middle or near the end. If it wasn't for you, they wouldn't have had a race!

from Ben Buckner