



## NOTES ON SPORT

# TALKING OF RECORDS

## Ceremonial In Sport

**T**O cap our stories of the great New Zealand mile runners, this month arrived a cable reporting a race on an indoor track in which three Americans all ran under 4 mins. 10 secs. Chuck Fenske, the winner, timed 4 min. 7 2-5 secs. The other times are not available. It was wrongly stated that Fenske's time was the second fastest ever. It happened to coincide with our misreporting of Boot's time in Australia as 4.7 2-5, and arrived in time to remind us of the error before the telephone started ringing.

A week before the Masterton world record attempt, three of the four runners appeared in Wellington in the new famous Centennial Mile. Boot's 4.15 4-5 was one of his best performances. Tireless, he stayed in the mud with the field until the time came for his finish. In the conditions, with feet sinking deep at every stride, his race was a classic. No less excellent were the performances of Wade and Matthews. Wade probably lowered 4.17. Matthews was very likely under 4.18, which pleased him mightily, as New Zealand's best three-miler has not often brought his mile time down to such good figures.

This unfortunately must be written before the relay at Masterton, but with the mile so close to the front page in this year of great New Zealand mile runners, these records will be useful for digestion with the result:

### World Times

The world's record, held by Glenn Cunningham, who was beaten by Fenske this month and has announced his retirement, is 4.4 4/10. Until Cunningham established his record the history of the world's mile record has been:

4.29	W. M. Chinnery (Eng.)	1868
4.26	W. Slade (Eng.)	1874
4.24.5	W. Slade (Eng.)	1875
4.23.2	W. G. George (Eng.)	1880
4.19.4	W. G. George (Eng.)	1882
4.18.4	W. G. George (Eng.)	1884
4.18.2	F. E. Bacon (Scot.)	1894
4.17	F. E. Bacon (Scot.)	1895
4.15.6	T. P. Conneff (Ireland)	1895
4.15.4	J. P. Jones (U.S.A.)	1911
4.14.4	J. P. Jones (U.S.A.)	1913
4.12.6	N. S. Tabor (U.S.A.)	1915
4.10.4	P. Nurmi (Finland)	1923
4.09.2	J. Ladoumègue (France)	1931
4.07.6	J. Lovelock (N.Z.)	1933
4.06.7	G. Cunningham (U.S.A.)	1934
4.06.6	S. C. Wooderson (Eng.)	1937

It is only in the last decade that human beings have been able to cover a mile in times faster than 4.10. But since then the performance has become almost common, although records now go by tenths of a second instead of by one and two seconds at a time as in the old days.

Here is a selection of the most outstanding performances in recent years:

*4.04.4	G. Cunningham, U.S.A.	1938
4.06.6	Sydney Wooderson, Eng.	1937
4.06.7	Cunningham	1934
*4.07.2	A. San Romani, U.S.A.	1937
*4.07.2	Don Lash, U.S.A.	1937
*4.07.4	Cunningham	1937
*4.07.4	Cunningham	1938
4.07.6	Jack Lovelock, N.Z.	1933
*4.08.5	Cunningham	1934
*4.08.6	Cunningham	1938
*4.08.7	Cunningham	1937
*4.08.7	Bill Bonthron, U.S.A.	1933
*4.08.9	San Romani	1937
4.08.9	Bonthron	1934
4.09	San Romani	
*4.09	Luigi Beccali, Italy	1937
4.09.2	J. Ladoumègue, France	1931
4.09.8	Cunningham	1933
4.09.8	Cunningham	1935

### \* Indoors.

(a) San Romani and Lash clocked in 4.07.2, with Cunningham third in the same race.

(b) Bonthron second to Lovelock's 4.07.6.

Note.—San Romani (4.08.9) and Beccali (4.09) were second and third to Cunningham's 4.08.7.

### Memories of Lovelock

More memories of Lovelock come with reports of other records broken during the last 12 months.

At the same meeting in which Fenske, Venske, and Cunningham raced their fast mile, John Borican, a negro portrait painter, set a new world time for the three-quarter mile with 3.28. Lovelock once held the record for this distance on an outdoor track. Borican, incidentally, beat Romani indoors by eight yards.

Last year, the British record for the two miles was broken by C. H. J. Emery. It had gone unbroken for no less than 32 years before J. E. Lovelock brought it down from 9 mins. 9.6 secs. to 9 mins. 3.8 secs.

Teamed with P. D. Ward for the Achilles Club in competition with the Manchester Athletic Club, Emery ran a sound race. The combination of the pair in pace setting reminded critics of the great Finns running together.

Emery is not a graceful runner like Lovelock, whose style may never be matched, or even Ward, who has a pretty style. He is a strong runner with a clutching stride and plenty of power for hard finishes.

The history of the record is:

1884	W. S. George	9 mins. 17.6 secs.
1903	A. Shrubbs	9 17
1904	A. Shrubbs	9 9.6
1936	Lovelock	9 3.8
1939	Emery	9 3.4

Emery's race started fast, with 64 secs. and 68 secs. for the first and second quarters. The next four were kept more even, with Emery and Ward leading in turn in 70 secs. 70 secs. 70.8 secs., and 72.6 secs.; but the time of 6 mins. 54 secs. for the one and a-half miles was just outside Lovelock's schedule. Warned, Emery ran the seventh in 68.2 secs. and Ward let him through for a slashing finish in the last.

### Vaulter

Another notable event in the month's sport was the appearance of D. Weichert at New Plymouth as a member of the

New Plymouth Club. In 1936, Weichert was in the U.S. Olympic trials. At New Plymouth, in the pole vault, he cleared 11 ft. 6 ins., not as good as his 14 ft. 2 ins. four years ago, but better than J. H. Opie's 11 ft. 5 1/4 ins., cleared as a New Zealander's best in Christchurch in 1937. The best performance in New Zealand was put up by the Australian, Winter, when he cleared 12 ft. 3 ins. at Napier in 1936.

### Fun or Flags?

No less notable was the Association's discussion on the Hawke's Bay-Poverty Bay recommendations about the introduction of more ceremonial into Nation championship meetings.

Discussion covered some, but not all, of the questions this raises. Evidently the Association realised its responsibility in the matter and preferred, at the moment, to slide round the problem rather than go over it. The Centre was thanked for suggestions, which "would be most helpful." From H. McCormick came the comment: "These things can be overdone." Just as New Zealand "plays" tennis, and gets thoroughly beaten by people who take their sport more seriously, so New Zealand "plays" at athletics. In the last two issues of *The Listener* appeared the stories of four athletes who have gained prominence approaching international fame, not because of proper training or complete organisation of their athletic careers, but in spite of topsy-turvy methods and complete disorganisation.

Elsewhere sport is dramatised. At his school a promising runner is seized upon and sentenced to years of the most rigorous training regime possible. His publicity is handled properly, he is advertised, meetings in which he appears are made into spectacles, he becomes part of a ceremonial which controls his whole athletic life and a good deal of his private life.

Here we have so far eschewed this sort of thing. There has been something about it that has not appealed. We have been divided between the love of sport as sport and the desire to compete on equal terms with nations which treat sport much as they treat politics or international diplomacy.

And that is why four New Zealanders last Saturday strained themselves to attack mile times close to 4.20 while a dozen or more runners in other countries regularly beat 4.10.