## Golden West: 1969 Peak

by Dick Drake Track & Field News Managing Editor

The Golden West Invitational comes the closest to a national high school championship of any event staged in the United States. Which may well rank this track and field championship limited to athletes--usually seniors--completing their final season of prep track eligibility the number one prep sporting event in America.

While this unique athletic contest has brought together many of the nation's very best high school track and field stars since its inauguration in

1960, the GWI has not been without its problems.

Aesthetically and competitively, the Golden West is certainly a track nut's dream. But somehow, the meet has seemed to escape the fancy of the casual track or general sports fan. The largest crowd has not exceeded 6500 fans in a decade of meets. And the meet has changed venues four times, thrice in Los Angeles before moving to Sacramento for the past five competitions, as well as sponsors three times before forming its current Golden West Track and Field Association in alliance with the Active 20/30 Club of Sacramento. The meet lost money five consecutive years beginning in 1962 despite the fact that meet management does not foot any of the transportation expenses of athletes and coaches.

Nevertheless, the cast of characters, both super-preps at the time as well as many champs of later years, has been impressive. And they have accounted for the destruction of 10 national records with two others matched. Check some of these names: Charlie Greene, Jim Hines, Bill Gaines, Willie McGee, Ulis Williams, Tommie Smith, Larry James, Ron Freeman II, Ron Whitney, Tommy Sullivan, Dennis Carr, Wade Bell, Jim Ryun, Dave Patrick, John Camien, Morgan Groth, Tim Danielson, Steve Prefontaine, Marty Liquori, Tracy Smith, Doug Brown, Fred Ritcherson, Earl McCullouch, Mel Renfro, Bill Tipton, Bob Bornkessel, Lorenzo Allen, Clarence Johnson, Brian Sternberg, Marc Savage, Bob Steinhoff, Paul Heglar, Casey Carrigan, Doyle Steele, Jerry Proctor, Bob Beamon, Karl Salb, Sam Walker, George Amundson, Mark Murro, and Roger Collins.

The list of super-preps who have not competed has detracted very little from the meet: Clyde Glosson, Richard Joyce, Gerry Lindgren, Rick

Riley, Richmond Flowers, Reynaldo Brown and Randy Matson.

The meet was first conceived by a group of Los Angeles track buffs who joined forces with the Monterey Park Junior Chamber of Commerce in the planning. It was first set up to pit the two major sections in and about Los Angeles, then was to match southern vs. northern California, and eventually was to include five or six west coast states—hence the name of Golden West Invitational. But by the time the first meet got off the drawing boards, athletes from 14 states were invited to participate in the 1960 meet at East Los Angeles Junior College where only 3300 fans turned up.

The concept remains the same as in the beginning. Invitations are limited to eight performers in each event who are completing their last year of track eligibility in high school. And the philosophy of competition is unique: no athlete can compete more than once; there is no second chance. There are no trial heats, no eliminations in field events. As the promoters advertize, every event "is a one-shot, go-for-broke situation, and the competitive pressure build-up is perhaps unequaled anywhere in prep sports".

There have been many fine performances in this meet--both compe-

though unrecognized because of excessive aiding wind. The athlete of the meet, and the sole double victor, was Bill Tipton (Central, Pontiac, Mich) with a windy 13.4 highs and an 18.3 lows in his first-ever turn race. Karl Salb (Crossett, Ark) inched up by three his own 12-lb. shot record on his first put offer of 69'6". And Joe Kurzrok (Mt Vernon, NY) sliced the 330-yard intermediates mark by a tenth to 37.3. The records nullified by wind the  $26'5\frac{3}{4}$ " long jump by Jerry Proctor (Muir, Pasadena, Calif), 9.3 100-yards by Bill Gaines (Clearview, Mullica Hill, NJ) in addition to Tipton's 13.4. The best meet yet also produced a 247'4" javelin toss by Mark Murro (Essex Catholic, Newark, NJ).

1968: A record crowd of more than 6500 fans, including two-time Olympic vault champ Bob Richards who watched his son take second in the vault, viewed still another national record, by Sam Walker (Samuell, Dallas, Tex) as he pipped the 16-lb. ball one inch over the standard with his  $61'1\frac{1}{4}''$  here which tagged Doug Lane (Cedar Rapids, Ia) by 15 inches. Walker also smashed Lane in the 12-lb. duel,  $69'8\frac{3}{4}"$  to  $65'10\frac{1}{2}"$ . But Walker was not named the athlete of the meet, an honor which went to Bob Bornkessel (Shawnee Mission North, Shawnee Mission, Kans) to make him the fourth hurdler to receive this accolade. He won the highs in 13.7 before falling in the 330-yard intermediates, his specialty. The top race was the halfmile, where John Drew (Memorial, Houston, Tex) wiped the oldest meet record off the books with a 1:49.5 effort that beat John Brady (St Helena, New York, NY) by a tenth. Three others got under the former 1961 meet standard and all five became the leaders of the 1968 season. In the upset column, Scott Hiles (Madison Heights, Ind) upset the year's only sub-nine minute two-miler in Rich Elliott (Proviso West, Hillside, Ill) as he reduced his PR by 12.4 seconds to 8:56.6. Elliott ran 9:02.4 here.

1969: This meet marked the 10th anniversary of the competition, and with 6000-plus fans and performances the likes none of the other nine meets had produced it appeared the competition was here to stay. The performances were solid throughout. The athlete of the meet title, presented by 1948 and 1952 Olympic decathlon champ Bob Mathias, went to Casey Carrigan for his national prep vault record of 17'43". He also had three good tries at  $17'10\frac{1}{4}''$ , which would have been a world record had he negotiated the height. Surprise of surprises was Willie McGee (Rowan, Hattiesburg, Miss), who copped the fastest mass 100 finish in history with a record tying 9.3 (aided by a 3.98 mph wind). Seventh and last place was a scintilating 9.5. Gerald Tinker (Coral Gables, Fla) was second in the century at 9.4 but topped McGee by four-tenths in the 220 with a windy 20.8. The two-mile produced three marks under nine-minutes, as Fred Ritcherson (Salesian, Los Angeles, Calif) mustered unexpected speed in the stretch to take Mark Hiefield (Milwaukie, Ore) as both clocked times of 8:55.2. Ruben Chappins (Excelsior, Norwalk, Calif) was third in 8:59.0. Steve Prefontaine (Marshfield, Coos Bay, Ore), prep record holder at twomiles with 8:41.6, elected to make a bid for a sub-four minute mile time but a stiff breeze held him to 4:06.0. Some of the other leading performances included a 47.0 quarter by Larance Jones (Lemoore, Calif), 1:49.8 half by Brian McElroy (Massapequa, NY), wind 13.4 high hurdles by Rod Milburn (Opelousas, La), 25'6' long jump by Heulon Hewitt (Merced, Cal) and 50'114" windy triple jump by Zack Gillon (Peekskill, NY). He also had a legal 50'10" which ranks him second all-time. Spencer Thomas (Car, ver. New Orleans, La) was second in the triple jump at  $50'6\frac{1}{2}$ ". Now the meet had really come of age. The performances of this meet were superior to those registered in two national collegiate championship meets, the NCAA College Division and NAIA, as well as two open invitationals, the Houston Strider and Orange meets, held on the same weekend.

Trenton, NJ) were both double winners, but McCullouch was named the best athlete of the meet off his hurdle wins in 13.7 and 18.1. Bethea was an easy winner in both the shot and discus at 64'12" and 185'82". Jim Hines (McClymonds, Oakland, Calif) was upset by Roger Cox (Redlands, Calif) in the 100 as both sprinted 9.8 but he returned the favor in the 220, 21.5 to 21.7. The mile and two-mile were the most competitive, as Gene Mc-Clain (Salina, Kans) zapped Dave Wilborn (Albany, Ore) and Dave Patrick (Kenwood, Baltimore, Md) in the mile, 4:13.3 to 4:13.7 and 4:14.4, while Charlie Messenger (Kenwood, Baltimore, Md) took the two-mile from Chuck Schulz (Evanston, Ill) by two seconds in 9:17.6.

1965: The meet directors decided that southern California simply could not be receptive to such a competition, and, after considering several sites including Abilene, Texas, moved the Golden West to Sacramento where it would be contested at Hughes Stadium of the City College. The best crowd ever of 5061 fans witnessed a doozy of a meet including three double wins. Jim Ryun (East, Wichita, Kans) was the obvious headliner. having just previously become the first prep to better four-minutes for the mile. And he responded with a 9:04.0 two mile two hours before he took the mile in 4:04.3. The two-mile was virtually a solo as Mike Ryan (Wilcox, Santa Clara, Calif) held back and finished second in 9:08.2. In the mile, Jim Olson (Kirkwood, Mo) and Bruce Bowman (Proviso West, Hillside, Ill) provided stiffer competition before slipping at the end to 4:07.3 and 4:08.7 clockings. Other double victors included Bob Hawke (Butte, Mont) with 61'71" and 187'11" and Ralph Wise (Pasadena, Calif) in 9.5 and 22.3. The national record fell twice in the triple jump, ultimately to Bob Beamon (Jamaica, NY) at  $50'3\frac{1}{4}''$  after placing fourth in the long jump at 23'11" behind Eric Klein (Ingraham, Seattle, Wash) at 24'10\frac{1}{2}". Larry Freeman (Poly, Long Beach, Calif) also topped Beamon's existing triple jump standard by two-inches for a second place finish at 49'8". Ron Freeman II (Jefferson, Elizabeth, NJ) copped the quarter in 46.8. 1966: This was certainly the best of the seven meets, as 31 states

were represented (a record to date), but the novelty had apparently worn off and less than 4000 people showed. Following Ryun's fine double of the previous year, the directors invited America's last world record holding miler, Glenn Cunningham, to be on hand in anticipation of two top races at a mile and two-miles. Tim Danielson (Chula Vista, Calif) earned top athlete laurels with a sizzling two-mile win over Ralph Gamez (Berkeley, Calif), 8:55.4 to 8:57.0, and an impressive mile victory in 4:07.0--a second ahead of Gary Lineburg (Oak Harbor, Wash). A national record fell, as Ron Beiter (Wichita Heights, Wichita, Kans) lowered the 330-yard intermediate hurdle best to 37.9 in beating Larry James (White Plains, NY) by a tenth. Clyde Peach (Brebauf, Indianapolis, Ind) was the meet's second double winner with his 9.6 and 21.4 clockings. Field events accounted for the remainder of the top performances. Doyle Steele (San Diego, Calif) annexed the long jump at 25'5" with a wind, Paul Heglar (Muir, Pasadena, Calif) the vault at 15'7", Dave Murphy (Sunny Hills, Fullerton, Calif)  $66'11\frac{1}{2}"$  and Roger Collins (Livingston, NJ)  $242'10\frac{1}{2}"$  in the javelin.

1967: Once again financial problems plagued the very existence of the meet. This time, the Golden West Track and Field Association joined forces with one of Sacramento's most involved service clubs, the Active 20/30 Club, and the meet drew over 6000 spectators and showed the first profit since 1961 which enabled the directors to pay off 50% of its past obligations. And they invited Jesse Owens, perhaps the most renowned track athlete of all-time who among other things collected four gold medals in the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, as the meet's honorary referee. Three national prep marks were officially topped and three more were bettered

titvely and mark-wise. Here are the national records set in this meet:

Year	Event	Record	Athlete (School, City, State)
1961	Mile	4:10.0	Morgan Groth (Alhambra, Martinez, Calif)
1961	880	1:50.6=	Tommy Sullivan (St George, Evanston, III)
1962	2 Mile	9:16.2	Doug Brown (Red Lodge, Mont)
1963	PV	$15'\frac{1}{2}''$	Marc Savage (Claremont, Calif)
1965	TJ	$50'3\frac{1}{4}"$	Bob Beamon (Jamaica, NY)
1966	330 IH	37.9	Ron Beiter (Wichita Heights, Wichita, Kans)
1967	180 LH-T	18.3	Bill Tipton (Central, Pontiac, Mich)
1967	SP (12-lb)	69'6"	Karl Salb (Crossett, Ark)
1967	330 IH	37.3	Joe Kurzrok (Mt Vernon, NYC, NY)
1968	SP (16-lb)		Sam Walker (Samuell, Dallas, Tex)
1969	PV	$17'4\frac{3}{4}"$	Casey Carrigan (Orting, Wash)
1969	100	9.3=	Willie McGee (Rowan, Hattiesburg, Miss)

Here is a capsule summary of the competitive highlights and records

established in this golden decade of the Golden West Invitational:

1960: The initial effort began somewhat modestly--both in terms of results (only one of two meets not to bear witness to a national record) and spectator interest (3300 spectators yielded a net profit of \$170 for charity). The East Los Angeles Junior College track has rarely yielded top performances, and this was no exception. Mel Renfro (Jefferson, Portland, Ore) was named the meet's outstanding performer off his high (13.8) and low (19.4) hurdles victories and fourth place finish in the long jump. The biggest future name star to win an event was Ron Whitney (Downey, Modesto, Calif.), who snagged the half-mile in 1:54.4.

1961: The meet moved to Los Angeles State's new stadium. where the competition improved with athletes from 18 states represented but as local television, fog and wind limited the crowd size and profits. The first national record to fall went to Morgan Groth (Alhambra, Martinez, Calif), who out-elbowed John Camien (Sewanhaka, Floral Park, NY) to win the mile in 4:10.0--a full second under the established mark which Camien also bettered by nine-tenths. But the athlete of the meet title went to Tommy Sullivan (St George, Evanston, III). He won the half-mile handily, in a prep record equaling 1:50.6 clocking. Ulis Williams (Compton, Calif) bagged the 440 in 47.3.

1962: The meet grew in its national scope as athletes from 24 states came to compete, once again at LA State. A crowd of 5384 watched unheralded Doug Brown (Red Lodge, Mont) win the first-ever two-mile by over 15 seconds in 9:16.2. The time smashed the previous record of 9:21.4. He finished fifth in the mile at 4:22.0, and earned meet athlete honors. Bad winds hampered the sprinters, hurdlers, high jumpers and long jump-

ers for the second straight year.

1963: Marc Savage (Claremont, Calif) arched over 15'1" to establish a national vault prep standard and was named athlete of the third meet at LA State--once again before a mediocre-sized crowd. Four 1968 Olympians-to-be claimed wins: Charlie Greene (O'Dea, Seattle, Wash) 9.5 (21.6 for second), Tommie Smith (Lemoore, Calif) 47.3 (9.8 for fifth), Wade Bell (Ben Lomond, Ogden, Ut) 4:17.1 and Tracy Smith (Arcadia, Calif) 9:17.0. Two other big names of the late 60s were winners here--Dennis Carr (Lowell, Whittier, Calif) in 1:50.8 and Bruce Wilhelm (Fremont, Sunnyvale, Calif) 63'72" in the shot.

1964: In a desperate move to salvage the meet, the directors took the GWI to nearby Cerritos JC in Norwalk where it would be co-sponsored by the Southern California Striders with open events intertwined. But less than 3500 people showed up, and it was a financial, if not competitive, disaster. Earl McCullouch (Poly, Long Beach, Calif) and Elvin Bethea (Central,

## 1960s' Golden West Champs

	62 Ed Moody (McClymonds, Oakland, Cal) 18.8
100 YARD DASH	on he modely (mentaly many)
60 Hubie Watson (Jordan, Los Angeles, Cal) 9.7	63 Alvin Mann (Edison, Fresno, Calif) 18.8
61 Ray Etherly (Albuquerque, NM) 9.7	64 Earl McCullouch (Poly, Long Beach, Cal) 18.5
62 Ed Moody (McClymonds, Oakland, Cal) 9.7	65 Ernie Smith (Lemoore, Calif) 18.5
63 Charles Greene (O'Dea, Seattle, Wash) 9.5	66 Leon Sanders (Grant, Del Paso Hts, Cal) 18.5
64 Roger Cox (Redlands, Calif) 9.8	67 Bill Tipton (Central, Pontiac, Mich) 18.3
65 Ralph Wise (Pasadena, Calif) 9.5	68 Ron Hamley (Lowell, Whittier, Calif) 19.0
of the state of th	69 Jerry Wilson (Roosevelt, Fresno, Calif) 18.8
	330 YARD HURDLES (36")
69 Willie McGee (Rowan, Hattiesburg, Miss)9.3	67 Joe Kurzrok (Mt Vernon, NY) 37.3
220 YARD DASH (TURN)	68 Art Miller (Kirkwood, Mo) 37.9
60 Jimmy Douglas (Carver, Miami, Fla) 22.0	69 Mike Cronholm (Lake Highlands, Dallas) 38.0
61 Ray Etherly (Albuquerque, NM) 21.3	HIGH JUMP
62 Vern Ragsdale (Lincoln, San Diego, Cal) 21.1	60 Richard Elliot (Glendale, Ariz) 6.2"
63 Jim White (Sunset, Dallas, Tex 21.5	61 Randy Walker (Cleveland, LA, Calif) 6'42"
64 Jim Hines (McClymonds, Oakland, Cal) 21.5	62 Richard Jones (Bakersfield, Calif) 6'2"
65 Ralph Wise (Pasadena, Calif) 22.3	63 Rick Carey (Eagle Rock, Calif) 6'44"
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	Of Darking Charles and Charles
67 Mel Gray (Montgomery, Santa Rosa, Cai)21.0 68 Al Coffee (Lee, Baton Rouge, La) 20.9	
00 111 001101 (011)	66 Doug Huff (Lincoln, LA, Calif) 6'6"
69 Gerald Tinker (Coral Gables, Fla) 20.8w	67 Don Stevenson (Paseo, Kansas City, Mo) 6'72"
440 YARD DASH	68 Lorenzo Allen (Casa Grande, Ariz) 6'10"
60 Art Gardenswartz (Highland, Albuq, NM) 48.4	69 Rick Fletcher (Hoover, Fresno, Calif) 6'94"
61 Ulis Williams (Compton, Calif) 47.3	POLE VAULT
62 Bob Hanson (East, Wichita, Kans) 48.0	60 Art Seagren (Pomona, Calif) 13'6"
63 Tom Smith (Lemoore, Calif) 47.3	61 Brian Sternberg (Shoreline, Seattle, W) 14'34"
64 Freddie Banks (Jefferson, LA, Cal) 47.0	co lim Farrell (Edison Tulsa Okla) 14'48"
65 Ron Freeman (Jefferson, Elizabeth, NJ) 46.8	
66 Julio Meade (Jackson, Queens, NY) 46.8	
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	2 110
	67 Bob Sprung (Pomona, Calif) 14'8"
69 Larance Jones (Lemoore, Calif) 47.0	68 Gary Thrapp (E Noble, Kendallville, Ind) 15'0"
880 YARD RUN	69 Casey Carrigan (Orting, Wash) 17'44"
60 Ron Whitney (Downey, Modesto, Calif) 1:54.4	LONG JUMP
61 Tom Sullivan (St George, Evanston, III) 1:50.6	antalii
62 Gene Tetreault (Hartford, Conn) 1:51.9	onto fu
63 Dennis Carr (Lowell, Whittier, Calif) 1:50.8	
	63 John House (Muir, Pasadena, Calif) 23'34"
	64 Ricky Rogers (Ells, Richmond, Calif) 22'11"
66 Rich Mesmer (Shadle Park, Spokane, W) 1:51.7	65 Eric Klein (Ingraham, Seattle, Wash) 24'102"
67 Dave Morton (Memorial, Houston, Tex) 1:51.8	66 Doyle Steele (San Diego, Calif) 25'5"
68 John Drew (Memorial, Houston, Tex) 1:49.5	67 Jerry Proctor (Muir, Pasadena, Calif) 26'54"w
69 Bryan McElroy (Massapequa, NY) 1:49.8	68 Phil Quinet (Homestead, Sunnyvale, Cal) 24'82"
MILE RUN	69 Heulon Hewitt (Merced, Calif) 25'6"w
60 Ben Tucker (Poly, San Francisco, Cal) 4:18.7	TRIPLE JUMP
61 Morgan Groth (Alhambra, Martinez, Cal)4:10.0	
62 Dave Deubner (North, Eugene, Ore) 4:11.2	
63 Wade Bell (Ben Lomond, Ogden, Utah) 4:17.1	66 James Hunter (Central, Omaha, Nebr) 48'53" w
64 Gene McClain (Salina, Kans) 4:13.3	67 Carl Gadson (Taft, Bronx, NY) 48'5"
	68 Milan Tiff (Shaker Heights, O) 49'11"
	69 Zack Gillon (Peekskill, NY) 50'114"w
	SHOT PUT (12 lb)
67 Marty Liquori (Essex Cath, Newark, NJ) 4:08.0	60 Dick Inman (Belton, Tex) 62'11"
68 Clifton West (Kennedy, Sacramento, Cal) 4:14.1	61 Don Castle (Cubberley, Palo Alto, Cal) 65'73"
69 Steve Prefontaine (Marshfield, C Bay, Or)4:06.0	62 Gene Crews (University City, Mo) 62'64"
TWO MILE RUN	63 Bruce Wilhelm (Fremont, Sunnyvale, Cal)63'72"
62 Doug Brown (Red Lodge, Mont) 9:16.2	64 Elvin Bethea (Central, Trenton, NJ) 64'12"
63 Tracy Smith (Arcadia, Calif) 9:17.0	65 Bob Hawke (Butte, Mont) 61'74"
64 Charles Messenger (Kenwood, Balt, Md) 9:17.6	66 Dave Murphy (Sunny Hills, Fullerton, C) 66'112"
65 Jim Ryun (East, Wichita, Kans) 9:04.0	67 Karl Salb (Crossett, Ark) 69'6"
66 Tim Danielson (Chula Vista, Calif) 8:55.4	68 Sam Walker (Samuell, Dallas, Tex) 69'83"
67 Pete Romero (Reedley, Calif) 9:02.8	69 Don Randell (Sunset, Dallas, Tex) 64'3"
68 Scott Hiles (Madison Hts, Anderson, Ind) 8:56.4	DISCUS THROW (3 lb, 9 oz)
69 Fred Ritcherson (Salesian, LA, Calif) 8:55.2	
120 YARD HURDLES (39")	
	and the second
	64 Elvin Bethea (Central, Trenton, NJ) 185'8"
	65 Bob Hawke (Butte, Mont) 187'11"
63 Jerry Saffell (La Porte, Ind) 14.1	66 Mark Lumpkin (Lake Charles, La) 184'4"
64 Earl McCullouch (Poly, Long Beach, Cal) 13.9	67 Mark Debevc (Geneva, O) 191'6"
65 Barry Snyder (Central, Little Rock, Ark) 13.8 66 Paul Gibson (Carlsbad, NM) 13.7w	68 Jim Penrose (Carlmont, Belmont, Calif) 193'0"
66 Paul Gibson (Carlsbad, NM) 13.7w	69 George Amundson (Central, Aberdeen, SD)193'6"
67 Bill Tipton (Central, Pontiac, Mich) 13.4w	JAVELIN THROW
68 Bob Bornkessel (N, Shawnee Mission, K) 13.7	
69 Rod Milburn (Clark, Opelousas, La) 13,4w	
180 YARD HURDLES (30")	
Destand Oral 19 4	67 Mark Murro (Essex Catholic, Newark, NJ)247'4"
60 Mel Relitto Generation, rottalia, Colin 18.8	68 Willis Hall (Pulaski, New Britain, Conn) 220'0"
61 Bill Mackey (East, Bakersheld, Call)	69 Jim Pearce (North, Shawnee Mission, Ks) 242'1"