

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA'S TRACK CHAMPIONSHIPS: A Look at Some of the Nation's Finest.

By Mike Kennedy
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The MAN from Sacramento is here.

The Yellowjackets, led by Ken Robinson and Sharon Ware, have flown in from Berkeley with hopes of winning two team championships.

The lady's from University and Alemany are in attendance and will battle for a third time this season in a race that could well produce a national record.

It's the California Interscholastic Federation State Track and Field Championships, long regarded as the best high school meet in the nation, this weekend at Cerritos College. Qualifying for all events but the 3,200 will be run Friday with an all-finals program scheduled for Saturday.

Last Friday night at Modesto College in the Sacramento Section final Kevin Willhite raced to a 21.01 nation-leading 200 meters despite being totally unpressed. He also won the 100 in 10.46. The multi-talented junior from Cordova High School (a suburb of Sacramento) is 6-0, weighs 190 pounds and last fall gained over 1,800 as a running back. The marks didn't come as a complete surprise since earlier in the season he had wind-aided hand times of 10.2 and 20.4. If Willhite is to become a state champion he will have to defeat Berkeley's Robinson who won the 200 last year and was second in the 100. Earlier this season Robinson ran 10.39 to beat Willhite, but since that time Robinson has been running with a slight injury. Robinson has not run a serious 200 this year, but has a 400 time of 46.8.

If Berkeley's men and women are to win team champions they will need outstanding efforts both from Robinson and Ware. In addition to Robinson, who also runs on the state-leading 400 relay (41.1) and will run on the 1,600 relay (3:11.7), the Yellowjacket men have potential point winners in Pete Richardson and Johnny Langerston in the 800, Walter Murray in the 300 low hurdles and both relays.

In last year's meet Ware won the 100 in 11.42, a state and National Federation record, and finished second in the 200 to Olympian Sherri Howard of Kennedy High School in Granada Hills. This weekend the Berkeley senior is matched against Sherri's sister Deanean, another Olympian, who has run 11.77 and 23.40. Ware has run 10.59 and 24.04 this season but has an all-time best of 11.34 and 23.62. Berkeley lost to Kennedy by six points last year but if the Yellowjackets

can hold on to the baton in the 400 and 1,600 relays they stand a good chance of reversing that decision.

Polly Plumer of University High in Irvine and Vickie Cook of Alemany High in the San Fernando Valley are two of the best distance runners in the nation. In last year's state meet Plummer just edged Cook in the 1,600 with a stunning sprint over the final 100 meters. (Continued on page 13)



Livermoore High School's Jessica Spies will have plenty of company in the State Finals, Women's 800 Meter race.

Fine Flicks By Don Cosney

California's Track Championships . . .

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Plummer was timed in 4:46.71 and Cook clocked 4:47.31 for the two best times in the nation. The two have met twice this season with Cook winning over 1,500 at San Jose (both were timed in 4:25.9) and Plumer prevailing over 1,600 in Southern Section final (4:45.06 to 4:45.21). Earlier this year Cook, competing unattached, ran 4:40.2 for 1,600. The pending national record is 4:41.08 set earlier this year by sophomore Kim Gallagher of Upper Dublin in Fort Washington, Pa.

Several other national records could be seriously challenged. In two of the last three state meets the national record has been broken in the four-lap relay. In 1978, at Bakersfield, Los Angeles Banning broke the mile relay record with a 3:11.52 and last year at Berkeley, Centennial shattered that mark with a 3:10.37 for 1,600 with the Yellowjackets just .05 behind running an all-junior team. Berkeley's team is no long intact but the current foresome is potentially even faster. In the North Coast Section finals Berkeley ran 3:11.7 and that was *without* Robinson. Add to a Robinson-anchored quintet, teams from Long Beach Poly (3:12.55), Muir (3:12.61), Centennial (3:12.72), Compton (3:12.96), Pasadena (3:13.12), Crenshaw (3:15.75), Oakland (3:15.9), Locke (3:15.92) and Cordova (3:16.7) and you have the best high school four lap relay race ever assembled.

Two other national interscholastic records that could also be broken are in the men's and women's 800. In the past, in quality women's 800 races, the first lap has been run in 61 or 62 seconds. Last week at Berkeley junior Jessica Spies of Livermore went by 400 meters in 59.3 and 600 meters in 1:31.5 and won unpressed in 2:09.0. Based on the Southern Section final last Thursday Spies will have plenty of company in the state final. Donna Curtis of Culver City had the same time as Spies at 400 and 600 meters and was closely followed by Rennie Durand of Laguna Beach. Curtis just managed to hold off Durrand, 2:06.01 to 2:06.42. The National Federation record is 2:04.5 set by Joetta Clark of Columbia High in Maplewood, N.J. last year. Mary Decker of Orange has the best time ever by a prep (2:02.3).

The men's National Interscholastic Federation 800 record is one of the oldest on the books, a 1:48.8 for 880 yards set by Richard Joyce of Sierra High in Whittier at the California State meet in Bakersfield in 1965. Joyce was unpressed in that race after a 49.2 first lap. Two weeks ago Eddie Davis of Compton won the Southern Section 4-A race in 1:49.43 for the best time in the nation. This weekend Davis is matched against Berkeley's Richardson who was second in last year's

state meet in 1:50.19 losing by .04 to the closing burst of speed from Tulare's Pete Quinonez. A slightly faster opening lap (52 seconds) could result in not only a new Federation record but also challenge the all-time prep best of 1:47.9 set by El Cerritos' Dale Scott in open competition in 1972.



Jim Hicks by Don Gushny

Berkeley High School's Ken Robinson, will attempt to pace the Yellowjackets to the State Championship.