

Straight, but Not Really True

It Was Only the Latest in an Off-Beat Series of Track Promotions
—Then Steve Scott Ran a 3:31.25 Downhill Mile in New Zealand

By MAL FLORENCE, *Times Staff Writer*

The next edition of the Guinness Book of World Records will include a statistic that should delight trivia buffs: What is the fastest mile ever run?

Excluding gazelles and cheetahs, it will be the 3:31.25 time recorded by Steve Scott on April 3 in Auckland, New Zealand.

But Scott's time in the Queen Street Mile can't be accepted as an official world record because the race was on a straight, downhill course, not a regulation track.

Still, Scott's time was 16.08 seconds faster than Sebastian Coe's world record of 3:47.33 and one wonders just how fast a man can run regardless of the conditions?

Ray Flynn of Ireland, who was third in the race with a time of 3:32.75, called it one of the most exciting experiences in his life.

"There were 40,000 people lining the street," said Flynn, "and it was very exciting. It was a great feeling tearing down the straight . . . I realize there will be a lot of skepticism about the time, but a race is a race. It still is going to be counted as the fastest time between two points."

Flynn said that a bakery, which promoted the Queen Street Mile, was so pleased with the response that it plans a similar race next year. Same for a Sydney, Australia, promoter. The Fifth Street Mile was held in New York last September with Sydney Maree winning in

3:47.52. So the straight mile, gimmick or not, is taking off.

"There was a drop off of about 220 feet from the start to the finish, but the drop was very steep at the beginning," Flynn said. "We went through the first quarter in about 48 seconds, but the junior runners in the race went through even faster. The experienced runners in the race, Steve, John Walker and myself, didn't want to go too fast on that hill."

Flynn said the veteran runners were leaning backward to keep from pitching forward on their faces onto the asphalt.

"There is no strategy in a race like that," Flynn said. "There was no holding back. Scott was in the lead after the first quarter but Walker took over at the half mile. We didn't think we could stay with him but he tied up a little bit in the last quarter."

"Steve was about 15 yards back in fourth place but he made an almighty sprint in the last 250 yards to win."

Australia's Michael Hillardt was second in 3:32.25.

The splits, supplied by Flynn, were mind boggling: 48 seconds for the first quarter; 1:43 for the half mile (the world record is 1:41.73); 2:35 for three quarters of a mile, and 3:18 for 1,500 meters (the world record is 3:31.36).

"Track and field needs some sort of sensationalism to bring the crowds back," said Flynn.

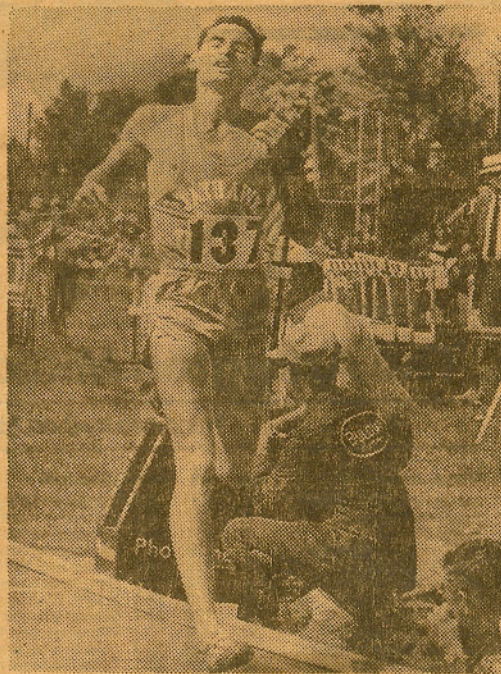


Steve Scott's time in the New Zealand mile was 16.08 seconds faster than Sebastian Coe's record—but it doesn't count.

The Mile Records From 1931 to 1981

From Ladoumegue to Coe

Time	Name	Country	Year
4:09.2	Jules Ladoumegue	France	1931
4:07.6	Jack Lovelock	New Zealand	1933
4:06.7	Glenn Cunningham	U.S.	1934
4:06.4	Sydney Wooderson	Britain	1937
4:06.2	Gunder Hagg	Sweden	1942
4:06.2	Arne Andersson	Sweden	1942
4:04.6	Gunder Hagg	Sweden	1942
4:02.6	Arne Andersson	Sweden	1943
4:01.6	Arne Andersson	Sweden	1944
4:01.3	Gunder Hagg	Sweden	1945
3:59.4	Roger Banninster	Britain	1954
3:57.9	John Landy	Australia	1954
3:57.2	Derek Ibbotson	Britain	1957
3:54.5	Herb Elliott	Australia	1958
3:54.4	Peter Snell	New Zealand	1962
3:54.1	Peter Snell	New Zealand	1964
3:53.6	Michel Jazy	France	1965
3:51.3	Jim Ryun	U.S.	1966
3:51.1	Jim Ryun	U.S.	1967
3:51.0	Filbert Bayi	Tanzania	1975
3:49.4	John Walker	New Zealand	1975
3:49.0	Sebastian Coe	Britain	1979
3:48.8	Steve Ovett	Britain	1980
3:48.53	Sebastian Coe	Britain	1981
3:48.40	Steve Ovett	Britain	1981
3:47.33	Sebastian Coe	Britain	1981



Jim Ryun in his college days at Kansas.

NAME	COUNTRY	TIME	YEAR
Sebastian Coe	Britain	3:47.33	1981
Steve Ovett	Britain	3:48.40	1981
Sebastian Coe	Britain	3:48.53	1981
Steve Ovett	Britain	3:48.8	1980
Sebastian Coe	Britain	3:48.95	1979
Steve Ovett	Britain	3:49.25	1981
John Walker	New Zealand	3:49.4	1975
Mike Boit	Kenya	3:49.45	1981
Steve Ovett	Britain	3:49.57	1979
Steve Ovett	Britain	3:49.66	1981
Jose-Luis Gonzalez	Spain	3:49.67	1981
Steve Scott	United States	3:49.68	1981
Mike Boit	Kenya	3:49.74	1981
Steve Cram	Britain	3:49.95	1981
John Walker	New Zealand	3:50.12	1981
John Walker	New Zealand	3:50.26	1981
Todd Harbour	United States	3:50.34	1981
Steve Cram	Britain	3:50.38	1981
Thomas Wessinghage	West Germany	3:50.56	1979
John Walker	New Zealand	3:50.58	1981
Eamonn Coghlan	Ireland	3:50.6	1981
Jose-Luis Gonzalez	Spain	3:50.87	1981
Thomas Wessinghage	West Germany	3:50.91	1981
Thomas Wessinghage	West Germany	3:50.95	1981
Filbert Bayi	Tanzania	3:51.0	1975
Jim Ryun	United States	3:51.1	1967
Steve Scott	United States	3:51.11	1979
Jim Ryun	United States	3:51.3	1966
Steve Scott	United States	3:51.48	1981
Sydney Maree	United States	3:51.48	1981
Steve Ovett	Britain	3:51.6	1980
Pierre Deleze	Switzerland	3:51.77	1981
Steve Scott	United States	3:51.8	1981
Suleiman Nyambui	Tanzania	3:51.94	1981
John Walker	New Zealand	3:51.98	1981
Ben Jipcho	Kenya	3:52.0	1973
John Walker	New Zealand	3:52.0	1977
Craig Masback	United States	3:52.02	1979
Eamonn Coghlan	Ireland	3:52.11	1981
Marty Liquori	United States	3:52.2	1975

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No World Record

Scott Runs a Mile in 3:31.25 Downhill

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP)—Steve Scott, taking advantage of a straight, downhill course, ran the fastest mile in track history Saturday, winning the inaugural Queen Street Mile in 3 minutes 31.25 seconds.

The time was 16.08 seconds faster than the world record of 3:47.33 held by England's Sebastian Coe.

Scott's time will not count as a world record, however. The race was straight, not on a closed track, and the course, down the main street of New Zealand's largest city, gave runners an advantage because it dropped more than 200 feet in altitude in the first 400 yards.

Scott's best mile was a 3:49.68 in 1981. In last year's Fifth Avenue Mile, a straight race in New York, Scott was timed in 3:53.84, finishing seventh behind winner Sydney Maree's 3:47.52.

Australia's Michael Hillardt was second, Ray Flynn of Ireland third and former world mile record-holder John Walker of New Zealand fourth.

The women's race also produced a fast time as local girl Christine Hughes won in 4:02.8. The world record is 4:20.89, held by Lyudmila Veselkova of the Soviet Union.