

RACE WALK OPPORTUNITIES IN THE USA

By Vince Peters, USATF National Chairman of Race Walking (18 January 2011)

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Though he isn't an American, and not even a race walker, Steve Cram, the great British distance runner said something extremely relevant, "There is a time when most athletes reach a crossroads in their career. Even the most talented need to realize that success at the highest level requires a new set of parameters in training and attitude and that without devotion - bordering on obsession - the path desired by most remains impossible to find."

Steve Cram was talking about stepping it up to the **next level**.

Because even if you possess all the knowledge about how to train, and are blessed with the ability to walk with a perfect technique, you cannot get to the next level without a dedication from within. And that dedication can only be accomplished with a single-minded purpose in establishing priorities, managing time, and setting of goals.

For teenagers the first next level after obtaining success via USATF Junior Olympics or in a HS program is earning a spot on the USA Junior Team. For those already there it may be race walking at the collegiate level. Certainly, for everyone, it is moving into the Open Ranks and competing on one of the numerous USA teams that compete internationally. And someday, certainly in everyone's dreams, lays the attainment of the ultimate level – a walk to the Olympic medal podium.

What does it take to move to the next level?

Dedication, talent and hard work are givens. These are all factors that you, with help from your coach, can control. The one that comes from outside is **Opportunity**. For without opportunity there isn't anything for your devotion to be focused on. No opportunity – no justification for short or long term goals, no motivation to obtain the next level.

There are five (5) basic opportunities of which I want to make you aware through this letter:

- Collegiate Walking
- The USATF Race Walk Grand Prix Circuit
- Al Heppner College Scholarship
- Getting into the USA National Championships
- International Teams

1) Collegiate Walking

Competitive walking at the collegiate level is an opportunity awaiting all high school age athletes. The hand out "**A Letter To High School T&F Athletes About Race Walking In College**" provides detailed information about the current status of race walk opportunities at the collegiate level. It also provides a large number of contacts for obtaining additional information about the colleges.

How fast a walker must you be to get into the elite field of 20 that competes at the NAIA Collegiate National Track & Field Championships in the race walk? Most top HS walkers are already there.

The 2011 qualifying standards are:

RW Qualifying Standards For 2011 Collegiate T&F Nationals				
Race Distance	Men		Women	
	Automatic	Provisional	Automatic	Provisional
INDOORS: 3,000 meters for men & women	15:00.00	16:10.00	17:59.00	18:50.00
OUTDOORS: 5,000m for men & women	25:59.00	26:30.00	28:15.00	29:45.00

2) Race Walk Grand Prix Circuit

The USA Track & Field RW Grand Prix Circuit is a collection of races throughout the year at which an athlete can score points based upon his/her finish in that race. Four categories are maintained encompassing junior and open men and women. The top 3 finishers in each at the end of the year will be recognized by an award. Top three men and women in the open division also receive a cash awards at a season ending recognition ceremony.

The individual events comprising the Grand Prix Circuit are identified in the Composite Schedule for the year. This is available on-line at:

<http://www.usatf.org/events/2011/USARaceWalkingGrandPrixSeries/>

While the Junior Division of the circuit doesn't offer any prize money, the open division does. For those athletes who have completed their collegiate eligibility there is be over \$50,000 in prize money awarded annually.

3) Al Heppner Scholarship

While not under the precepts of USATF, all college and high school athletes need to know of the existence of the Al Heppner Scholarship. Named in the memory of one of our National team members who died in 2004, this scholarship is awarded annually to a college sophomore, junior, or senior who has exhibited excellence in the class room and in race walking. Athletes applying for the scholarship must have completed a 20k race and write an essay about their ambitions within race walking. Deadline for applications is October 1st. For more info go to:

<http://www.eracewalk.com/>

<http://www.eracewalk.com/Nari.htm>

In 2010 this scholarship was worth \$2,500 to the winner. Past winners include:

- 2004 – Anne Favoloise, University of Wisconsin - Parkside
- 2005 - Maria Michta, CW Post University, NY
- 2006 - Patrick Stroupe, Central Methodist University, Missouri
- 2007 - Maria Michta, CW Post University, NY
- 2008 - Chris Tegtmeier, Concordia University, Nebraska & Lauren Forgues, University of Phoenix
- 2009 – Chris Tegtmeier, Concordia Univ., Nebraska & Miranda Melville, Univ. of Wis. – Parkside
- 2010 – Katie Burnett, William Penn University, Iowa.

4) USA National Track & Field Championships:

The 2010 National Championships in Track & Field will be at Eugene, Oregon's fabled Hayward Field – Steve Prefontaine's home turf. Qualifying for Junior and Senior men and women is outlined in the following table. It is thru this competition that most international teams are picked. Junior men and women (14-19 year olds) compete at the 10k distance. Senior Men and Women compete at 20k:

	3k	5k	10k	20k
Junior Men	15:00	26:00	55:00	X
Junior Women	16:30	28:30	59:45	X
Senior Men	X	23:30	48:20	1:39:50
Senior Women	X	26:00	54:00	1:52:00

5) International Teams

There are usually several team opportunities each year. The tables below outline the possibilities:

Opportunities in Odd Numbered Years (2011, 2013, ...)					
Division	Team	Month	Distances Contested	Selection Method	2011 Date
U17	World Youth T&F Meet	July	10,000m Boys 5,000m Girls	USATF Junior Nationals	June 25-26
U19 Open	Pan American Cup	March	Jr M&W – 10k Open M &W - 20k Open Men only – 50k	Pan American Cup Trials 10k Pan American Cup Trials 20k USA 50k Nationals	Feb 13 Feb 13 Jan 23
U19	Junior Pan Am T&F Meet	July/Aug	Jr M&W – 10k	USA Junior National T&F Meet	June 25-26
U19	USA – Canada Junior Dual	August	Jr. Men 10k; Jr. Women 5k	USA Junior Nationals T&F Meet	June 25-26
U23	U23 NAAC Cup	August	Men 10k; Women 10k	Performance List	July 1
U23	World University Games *	July/August	Men 10k; Women 10k	USA T&F Nationals/Performance List	June
Open	World Championships	July/August	Open M &W - 20k Open Men only – 50k	USA T&F Nationals USA 50k Nationals	June 25-26 Jan 23
Open	Pan Am Games	July/August	Open M &W - 20k Open Men only – 50k	USA T&F Nationals USA 50k Nationals	June 25-26 Jan 23
Open	NACAC Championships	July	20k M&W	USA T&F Nationals/Performance List	July 1
Open	IAAF RW Challenge Final *	Sep	Open M &W - 20k Open Men only – 50k	USA T&F Nationals/Performance List	June/July Jan/Feb

Opportunities in Even Numbered Years (2010, 2012, ...)					
Division	Team	Month	Distances Competed	Selection Method	Month
U17	World Youth Olympics	August	10,000m Boys 5,000m Girls	USATF Youth Trials	April
U19 Open	World RW Cup	Feb/April	Jr M&W – 10k Open M &W - 20k Open Men only – 50k	World RW Cup Trials 10k World RW Cup Trials 20k USA National/Olympic Trials 50k	March/April March/April Jan/Feb
U19	USA – Canada Junior Dual	August	Jr. Men 10k; Jr. Women 5k	USA Junior Nationals T&F Meet	June
U23	U23 NAAC T&F Meet	August	Men 20k; Women 10k	Performance List	July
Open	Olympic Games (every 4 years)	Aug./Sep.	Open M &W - 20k Open Men only – 50k	USA T&F Nationals USA 50k Nationals	June/July Jan/Feb
Open	IAAF RW Challenge Final *	Sep	Open M &W - 20k Open Men only – 50k	USA T&F Nationals/Performance List USA 50k Nationals	June/July Jan/Feb

* Teams for these competitions are not currently funded for 2010

World Champs & Olympic Games Qualifying Competitions -

The list that was submitted to the IAAF identifying the competitions held during 2011 within the United States at which an athlete can walk an IAAF ratified mark for the 2011 World T&F Championship or the Olympic Games (2012) is below:

The events currently on the USA list are:

50k USA Nationals, Irvine, California, January 23

20K – West Regional Champs, Irvine, California, January 23

20k World Cup Trials – Coconut Creek, Florida – 13 February

20k USATF Nationals, Eugene, Oregon – 25-26 June

30k USATF RW Nationals, Valley Cottage, NY – 30 October (Will have 20k and 50k options)

These events will meet the IAAF mandated requirements of being conducted on a course measured by an IAAF/AIMS A or B measurer, and be judged by a minimum of three IAAF walking judges (Level II or III).

The **IAAF Pan American Cup** will be held in Columbia, on March 25-26, 2011. The qualifying standards for the 16-19 years olds eligible to compete (cannot turn 20 in 2011) are: 54:30 for junior women & 49:00 for Junior Men. Three junior men and 3 junior women comprise the traveling team. Performances must be achieved during the competition.

USA OLYMPIC TRIALS:

Qualifying for the 2012 USA's Olympic Trials in the 20k and 50k will be somewhat simpler. The athlete need only achieve the standards below in a USATF sanctioned race with 5 judges for a track race and a minimum of 6 judges for a road course in accordance with USATF rules. Races conducted on a road must be held on a USATF certified course.

The following are the 2012 standards:

USA 50K Olympic Trials (Men only) - 4 hours 45 minutes.

USA 20K Olympic Trials - Men - 1 hour and 36 minutes

USA 20K Olympic Trials - Women - 1 Hour and 48 minutes

The qualifying period for the USA's 50K Olympic Trials started on 1 January 2010. Qualifying for the USA's 20k Olympic Trials for men and women will commence on 1 January 2011. Qualifying period for the 2012 Olympic Games will start on 1 January 2011 for the race walks. Standards are to be announced by the end of April 2011.

IAAF 2011 World Championship Standards

Women's 20K

'A' standard - 1:33:30

'B' Standard - 1:38:00

Men's 20k

'A' standard - 1:22:30

'B' standard - 1:24:00

Men's 50k

'A' standard – 3:58:00

'B' standard - 4:09:00

Anticipated 2012 Olympic Standards

Women's 20K

'A' standard - 1:33:30

'B' Standard - 1:38:00

Men's 20k

'A' standard - 1:22:30

'B' standard - 1:24:00

Men's 50k

'A' standard – 3:58:00

'B' standard - 4:09:00