

# Olympians get primed at the right time



Kurt Hegre — The Fresno Bee

In sync. Fresno State's Whylin Bratton, far right, takes the lead in a 100-meter heat over teammate Jon Spencer and Nevada's John Burrell.

■ Andrew Valmon runs a meet record 45.27 in the 400, German hurdler wins 110 high hurdles and a fast men's 100 and far women's triple jump highlight track and field meet.

**By Andy Boogaard**  
The Fresno Bee

"Prime Time" began at 4 p.m. Saturday in the Bob Mathias Fresno Relays, and for a couple of hours it appeared it would be a night of near misses for the featured performers in the open division.

Olympian Regina Jacobs, for example, had a time of 4 minutes, 15.71 seconds in the 1,500 meters, missing the meet record of 4:15.67. German Olympian Florian Schwartoff ran 13.40 in the 110 hurdles, missing the meet record of 13.34.

By a few hundredths of a seconds, they were denied \$500 bonuses, the reward for setting meet records in the open division.

Then, darkness set in and, like the Fourth of July, fireworks began.

First, Andrew Valmon, a two-time Olympic gold medalist with the United States in the 1,600 relay, clocked 45.27 in the 400. That broke Lee Evans' 21-year-old meet record of 45.34.

Moments later, American record-holder Sheila Hudson leaped 44 feet, 5½ inches in the triple jump, breaking her own meet standard of 44-2 set in 1988.

Then, they lined up the field for the men's open 100, and USC's Jeff Laynes set an estimated crowd of 5,500 abuzz with a blistering 10.17. The fans roared their approval when the unofficial clock at the finish line read 9.88.

That time would prove to be false, but the Trojans' senior still eclipsed Eddie Hart's meet record of 10.21, a mark that had stood since 1978.

A 10.17 is fast in anybody's book, but it certainly is remarkable for a meet held so early in the outdoor season. And if that

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# Relays: USC's Laynes rips off 10.17 in 100

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wasn't enough, the stout 5-foot 10-inch, 180-pounder was competing with a pain in his lower back.

"Didn't expect it," he said when informed of the official time. "Just tried to relax and not to pamper [the injury]."

Because he's an amateur still competing on the collegiate level, Laynes could not accept bonus money.

"There will be more money," he said. "The Lord has blessed me. I'll just keep running."

That may also extend to football, a sport he has not played since Oakland High School four years ago.

"I'm considering playing defensive back next season," he said. "A couple of coaches have talked to me about it."

Laynes, who received inspiring pushes from Cal State Los Angeles' Brian Bridgewater (10.25) and former FSU sprinter Anthony Barnes (10.25), was named the outstanding male performer in the collegiate division.

Named top female performer in the collegiate division was FSU junior Tanya Dooley, who won the 400 in a personal record 53.60 and contributed legs on Bulldogs victorious 400 and 1,600 relays. She ran a bold anchor in the 1,600, overcoming a 10-meter lead by Nevada-Las Vegas with a 52.2 split.

## Top prize

Although narrowly missing the hurdles meet record, Schwartoff walked away with the sweepstakes check of \$4,000. That was the top prize from a \$10,000 purse that was offered to the top five finishers, as determined by the Finnish Scoring Tables. The scoring system, created in Finland, awards points for certain marks in each event, then those marks are compared with each other.

Schwartoff's hurdles time was worth 1,150 points. Valmon (1,115) received \$2,000 for second, followed by Barnes (1,097, \$1,500), Nigeria Olympian discus thrower Ade Olukoju (1,094, \$1,000) and Robert Reading (1,083, \$750), who placed second to Schwartoff in 13.69.

Schwartoff, a fifth-place finisher in the 1992 Olympics, had immediate plans for his earnings.

"First of all, I'm going to dinner with my girlfriend," he said.

That's Birget Bauer, a German who's studying at FSU for a semester.

## Relays highlights



**Tanya Dooley**

■ **TANYA DOOLEY** wins the open/intercollegiate 400 in 53.60 seconds and anchors Fresno State's winning 1,600 relay team to win female athlete of the meet honors.

■ **BRYAN WILKINSON** of Merced High runs the 800 meters in a meet-record 1 minute 49.58 to win high school boys outstanding athlete.

■ **JEFF LAYNES** of USC runs a 10.17 for a meet record in the open 100.



**Sarah Dawson**

■ **SARAH DAWSON** of Hoover High runs a 5:01.10 1,600 and is named female high school athlete of the meet.

■ **ANDREW VALMON** clocks 45.27 in the 400 to break Lee Evans' 21-year-old meet record of 45.34.

■ American record-holder **SHEILA HUDSON** leaps 44 feet 5½ inches in the triple jump, breaking her own meet record.

"It will also pay for my plane flight," said Schwartoff, who will return to Germany today.

The meet was his first in the United States, and his first outdoor competition since August. His personal record of 13.13 ranks eighth all-time in the world.

"I'm surprised I ran this good, my peak in the outdoor season isn't until August," he said.

Running in Lane 2, Schwartoff glided over the hurdles with his 6-foot 7-inch, 180-pound frame, dominating what meet officials considered the highest-quality event of the day.

## Pulled away

Valmon, a Seton Hall graduate who ranked fifth in the world last year at 44.51, ran well considering he wasn't pushed down the stretch. It was a good start in his mission to compete in the 1996 Olympics at Atlanta.

Now living in San Luis Obispo, he said:

"I want to make an honest effort to crack the top three in the world. Not that the two gold medals weren't exciting, but I want to get one on my own."

