

Davis Latest U.S. Hurdle Prodigy

by Steve Bailey

Wayne Davis may have been five feet, nine—or, more precisely, 9½—_inches tall when he won the World Youth Championships 110 hurdles in a World Record 13.18. But just a few weeks later, still shy of his 16th birthday and the start of his junior year at Raleigh's Southeast High, Davis could already claim to be 5-10.

That fractional gain might not mean much to most people, but to an athlete confronting 36-inch hurdles in the Youth ranks, but 39s in high school and one day soon, 42s, an inch one way or the other can be a barrier or a blessing. It can also be the impetus to keep junk food at a minimum.

U.S. athletes of Davis's age are already racing over 39-inchers, so Davis was relieved to see his competitors on the start lists in the Czech Republic, had best times in the high 13s despite the lower barriers. Davis had set a soph-class record 13.65 in winning the Nike Outdoor Nationals with 39s.

In Ostrava, Davis's main concern was older and taller countryman William Wynne, who had set an AYR in the 400H at the USATF Juniors.

"I thought since the hurdles were shorter, he might do better," explained Davis. "But it helped me better than him. I'm shorter, he had to tuck more."

Davis blasted the field with a World Youth record of 13.18, breaking the '04 mark of 13.22

by Greece's Konstadinos Douvalidis. Wynne, who would set another AYR with a 49.01 win in the 400s, ran 0.26 well back in 2nd.

That advantage of being shorter, however,

something he developed mostly on his own.

Davis may have inherited his keen analytical mind from his father, a civil engineer and former Under-18 national soccer player



The still-growing Davis is master of the 36-inchers, but the 39s and 42s await

evaporated two weeks later when Davis was back in the states at 39" hurdles, with Wynne's USATF Junior Olympics intermediate 110H meet record on the chopping block. Davis ran a non-pressed 13.74, but shaved off only 0.08 from last years' Wynne.

It was less than satisfying for Davis after Ostrava, but a record nonetheless. "Right now I don't feel close to the hurdles because of my height," he said. "I looked at the race and you can see going over each hurdle I take a jump and then fall down. If I gain one inch that will help out a lot."

Said Davis's club coach, Steve McGill, "I think he has another inch to go." McGill believes that's enough to break all the records Davis has in his sights. "Wayne uses records as his inspiration. That's how his mind works. It won't work for most athletes, but with Wayne it works."

According to McGill, Davis is such a student of the event that when told of something new to work on, he understands it at once and masters it right away. Davis' incredible start is

in Trinidad, who let Davis Jr. gravitate to his own athletic interests.

"I am already taller than him," Davis said, "but I still have peach-fuzz on my face. Some of my classmates can grow a beard already." With his grandmothers nearer on both sides of five feet and his grandfathers six feet and up Davis likes the odds for a six-plus frame.

Substituting oranges for the fries and Doritos can't hurt, and an inch can help a lot.

— Youth Boys Winners —

Ostrava, Czech Republic, July 11–15 (athletes born '90 or later)—

100(-0.4): 1. Lee (Jam) 10.51. 200(-0.2): 1. McKenzie (Jam) 20.67. 400: 1. Clarke (GB) 46.74. 800: 1. Kibet (Ken) 1:49.99. 1500: 1. Ndunge (Ken) 3:44.27. 2000St: 1. Lamiso (Ken) 5:30.81. 3000: 1. Salel (Ken) 7:57.18.

110H(36"/0.914m)(-0.2): 1. Davis (US) 13.18 WYR, AYR (old WYR 13.22 Douvalidis [Gre] '04; old AYR 13.29 Richardson [TxHS] '03). 400H(33"/0.84m): 1. Wynne (US) 49.01 AYR (old AYR Wynne 49.70 '07). 10,000W: 1. Yemelyanov (Rus) 41:49.91. SpMed(100-200-300-400): 1. United States 1:51.34 (Sweeney, Gilstrap, Wynne, Fortson).

HJ: 1. Wang (Chn) 7-3¼ (2.22). PV: 1. Weiler (Ger) 17-3 (5.26) (MR). LJ: 1. Konishi (Jpn) 24-8¼w (7.52). TJ: 1. Taylor (US) 52-5¼ (15.98).

SP(5kg/11lb): 1. Stori (Ger) 70-2½ (21.40). DT(1.5kg/3.3lb): 1. Nesterenko (Ukr) 224-10 (68.54). HT(5kg/11lb): 1. Martyniuk (Ukr) 249-7 (76.09); ... 4. McCullough (US) 244-7 (74.54) (x, 2AY) (f, f, 239-7 [x, 2AY], 242-5 [x, 2AY], 244-7, f). Qual: McCullough 249-3 (75.98) AYR (old AYR 237-11/72.53 McCullough '07). JT(700g/1.54lb): 1. Laaksonen (Fin) 261-6 (79.71). Oct: 1. Brathwaite (Bar) 6261.

— Youth Girls Winners —

100(-0.9): 1. Phillip (GB) 11.46. 200(-1.9): 1. Leoncio (Bra) 23.50. 400: 1. Baraley (Ukr) 53.57. 800: 1. Lavric (Rom) 2:04.29. 1500: 1. Cherotich (Ken) 4:15.47; 2. Hasay (US) 4:17.24 (x, 5 HS). 2000St: 1. Chepkurui (Ken) 6:22.30. 3000: 1. Cherono (Ken) 8:53.94 (MR).

100H(30"/0.762m)(-1.3): 1. J. Purvis (US) 13.41. 400H: 1. Muhammad (US) 57.25. 5000W: 1. Kalmykova (Rus) 20:28.05 WJR, WYR (old WJR 20:31.4 Stankina [Rus] '96; old WYR 21:05.41 Stankina '94). SpMed(100-200-300-400): 1. United States 2:05.74 (Goodman, A. Purvis, Kraiss, Alexander).

HJ: 1. Mamlina (Rus) 6-2¼ (1.89). PV: 1. Parnov (Aus) 14-3¼ (4.35) (MR) (missed WYR 14-5½/4.41). LJ: 1. Klishina (Rus) 21-2¼ (6.47) (MR). TJ: 1. Alcántara (Cub) 44-8¾ (13.63).

SP: 1. Hryshko (Blr) 52-2½ (15.91). DT: 1. Fischer (Ger) 168-7 (51.39) PR. HT: 1. Perie (Rom) 211-11 (64.61) (MR). JT: 1. Brits (SA) 169-8 (51.71). Hept: 1. Cachová (Czr) 5641.