

Racking Up The Sub-4:00 Miles

ALL TRACKS are not created equal, so when collegians go hunting for indoor qualifiers, they now gravitate towards the oversized ovals, which clearly have an advantage over legal-sized tracks.

That hunt has led to the biggest rash of new American members of the sub-4:00 club ever seen indoors. No fewer than 9—post-grads as well as current collegians—have joined the group already in '08, all but one of them on a giant-sized installation.

Pomona-Pitzer alum Will Leer led off the charge on Washington's 307m setup with his 3:59.83. That made him club member No. 296. No. 297 was Georgetown's Andrew Bumbalough (3:58.46 on Yale's legal 200m installation), followed by Kentucky's John Richardson (3:59.35 on the Wildcats' 290m monster).

Seattle then claimed three more as Michigan State alum Steve Sherer (see sidebar) ran 3:56.00 to beat BYU's Kyle Perry (3:59.16) and Arizona State's Kyle Alcorn (3:59.82).

The final three came on Notre Dame's 352-yarder, with the Wisconsin pair (see sidebar) of Jack Bolas (3:59.40) and Brandon Bethke (3:59.85) bracketing Jordan Fife (3:59.75) of Brooks Indiana.

WR For Longhorn Distance Medley

Texas's concentration on one event paid off at the Tyson Collegiate meet as the surprising

Longhorns lowered the World Record in the distance medley to 9:25.97.

"We came in looking for an automatic qualifier," UT coach Bubba Thornton told the *Daily Texan*. Oh, they got that—in the process of cutting the World and Collegiate Records down from Michigan's 9:27.77 in '04, as well as Stanford's '00 U.S. best of 9:28.83.

Kyle Miller led off with 2:54.1 and Danzell Fortson covered his two laps in 46.90.

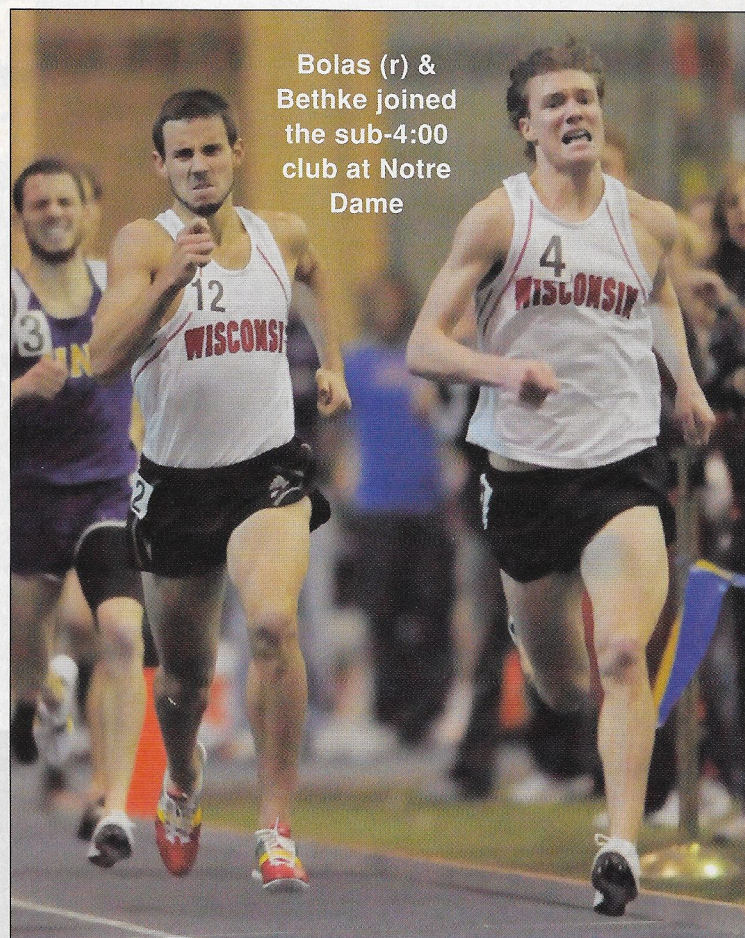
Jacob Hernandez—who had PRed in winning the 800 at 1:47.89 the night before—clocked 1:47.00 for his leg before turning the stick over to mile star Leonel Manzano.

"I heard fans and my teammates shouting times and saying that I was on

pace for a World Record," said Manzano, who did just that with his 3:57.96.

"I just told myself to run hard and fast and not worry about that. I just needed to stay calm and finish the race for my teammates. It was amazing. We're all still in disbelief."

Thornton said, "Each [runner] performed to [his] ability. We saw the potential all season, so it was just a matter of it coming together at the right time."



Bolas (r) & Bethke joined the sub-4:00 club at Notre Dame

Wisconsin's Fab-Five Milers

by Don Kopriva

"Meyo" and "Mile" obviously match up well for Wisconsin's precocious young milers, who for the second straight year strutted their stuff in the signature event at Notre Dame's Meyo Invitational, with four of the Badgers' Fab Five posting PRs, two under 4:00.

This time, the sophomore duo of Jack Bolas and Brandon Bethke sandwiched former Indiana State star Jordan Fife in a fast-closing finish.

Racing in front of an enthusiastic crowd and even athletes in other events pausing to watch, Bolas took the lead with 200m left, followed quickly by Bethke, and sprinted home in 3:59.40, holding off Fife (3:59.75) and also his teammate (3:59.85).

Yearlings Bethke, Bolas and teammate Craig Miller first surfaced as strong mile futures in this same meet last year (*Wisconsin's Hot Frosh Mile Trio*, March '07 issue) when they finished 2-3-5, in times ranging from 4:01.81 to 4:02.60.

Even so, that's still not all there is for Wisconsin, which based on the Meyo results could run a very credible 5 x mile relay. Prize frosh Evan Jager won the "slow" section in

4:03.73, with soph Ryan Gasper a step back in 4:03.98.

Miller, twice an NCAA qualifier last year, has been slowed early but rabbited the 3K at Meyo before clocking a 4:06.58 at Washington the next week.

Says Bolas, who credits Bethke with keeping him calm before the race, "What I wanted to do was compete and I knew that if I did the time would come. My nickname in high school was 'Nervous Nellie' so I'm really happy to have Brandon around."

When Bolas moved, he just knew it was the right time, although he "never heard a single split." The move, he admitted, proved "decisive but I didn't think I would hold it the entire stretch. I was going all-out."

Bethke and Bolas are mutual admirers. "I only heard 3:02 so I knew we had to get running that last lap," says Bethke. "I knew Jack would hang on me early, I'd pull him through and then he would show me the way to the finish. It felt really smooth and I saw Jack go and just followed him."

"We complement each other. I keep him cool.

He gets really nervous... so we're kind of the perfect mix going into the races."

Wisconsin distance coach Jerry Schumacher, himself a former All-American miler, appreciates the intricacies of the event and what his young charges face.

"The whole point of it was to race the field," he explains. "I tell them to compete and put themselves in position to win. The hardest part is knowing how to win the race. They did that better today than they ever had."

"Compared to last year, they're slightly better athletically, but they're miles ahead of knowing how to react to pace and how to react to situations. It's reflected in the results. It's a great starting point and something for them to build off."

With four sophs and a yearling who could combine for, say, a 20-minute 5 x mile, Schumacher has a lot to look forward to as his young runners become mature racers.