



## Month That Was

By Alex Wolf-Root

Just as the famed Letsrun.com does a "Week That Was" to recap each week of running news, here I'll be briefly recapping the world of athletics (Cross Country, Track and Field, and Road Racing) in this segment I'm unimaginatively calling the "**Month That Was.**"

The most recent big event was the 5th Avenue Mile. For those of you unfamiliar, NYC shuts down the famed 5th Avenue for a series of mile races, culminating with the professional runners. As usual, the fields did not disappoint. Most relevant to my audience was the performance of Sara "Bei" Hall, a former winner of this event. She battled World Silver Medalist Shannon Rowbury, clocking 4:24.34 to just miss the win by 0.22 seconds. This was her third high-profile 2nd place finish of the year, the other two being the Milrose Mile and the USA Indoor Championships 3,000m.

The men's race saw a phenomenal field that included Olympic Silver Medalist Nick Willis (New Zealand), American 1,500m/5,000m record-holder Bernard Lagat, reigning champ Andy Baddeley, American Mile record-holder Alan Webb, US road mile champ David Torrence, sub 3:30 1,500m Olympian Amine Laalou (Morocco), US Steeple Champ Dan Huling, and Heart and Sole Elite Mile Champion Tim Bayley (Great Britain). The race went out "slow" (for these athletes) at slightly over 2 minutes for the half-way point, and then saw a sub 1:50 finish for the top runners. Lagat and Laalou battled out the last 50 or so meters, with Laalou taking the race in 3:52.83. Behind him it was

incredibly close, with Lagat at 3:53.30, Baddely at 3:53.34, and Webb at 3:53.72. This was an especially good performance for Webb, as he's only raced 4 times this season; his first race in nearly two years was a 1:52 800m just about 6 weeks prior.

NYC wasn't the only location for great road races in September. Across the pond, the Great North Run saw the great Haile Gebrselassie run an insane 59:33 for the half-marathon, making this the sixth time he's broken then hour barrier. The man may be nearing 40, but he's still one of the best runners in the world. Period.

While this is the one of every four years without an Olympics or World Championships, there was still a decently big track event to end off the season: the Continental Cup in Split, Croatia. The highlight, to our audience at least, is likely the double golds by Bernard Lagat in the 3,000m and 5,000m. The 2007 World Champion showed that he is still a major medal threat at these distances, especially as he's said he will move up to the 5,000m for the 2012 Games.

On the college front, some big invitationals have just begun to kick off the season, with the Stanford Invitational being a prime example. While I doubt most here care about the ins and outs of college XC, there were some local athletes taking part. Leanne Fogg (MCHS 2007) placed 21st at 21:29 for the 6km

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distance. This performance helped Cal Poly to a 4th place finish. Another Puma, Calvin Thigpen of UC Davis, continued his recovery (he sat out last season) by placing 36th in a time of 24:34 (sub 5-minute pace) for the 8k course. A duo of Chico runners, Alia Gray (MCHS) and Shannon Rich (Rancho Cotate) placed 44th and 61st, while Joe Withers (Cardinal Newman 2008) placed 85th for Northern Arizona University.

Of course, there was a ton of high school action this month, but I think someone else has that covered.

Hope you enjoyed the Month That Was In Running. If there's anything you want to see focused on in future editions, let me know.

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