

Exciting moments from the D.C. Striders 1977 season

Glenda Moody and Mike Myers
September 1977



The D.C. Striders 1977 season has just come to a close. We would like to share some of our exciting moments with you. Our indoor season began on January 9 in an auspicious way when the Mayor of Washington, D.C. presented Glenda Moody, founder of the Striders, and several members of the team a proclamation proclaiming the week of January 9-15 D.C. Striders Week in recognition of the work done by the club for young people in the area.

The Striders travelled quite a bit during the indoor season, beginning in late December with a meet in Saskatoon, Canada. Stan Vinson of the Striders was named the outstanding athlete of the meet after winning the 600 yard run and anchoring the mile relay team to victory. After the Canadian meet we returned to the University of Maryland for the CYO Meet, the first major meet of the season in the United States. Fred Sowerby won the 600 yard run and our mile relay team came within three tenths of a second of breaking a world record. This year we hope to break that record. Our mile relay team incidentally was ranked #1 in the country last year by Track and Field News.

From Maryland it was on to Philadelphia where Stan Vinson tied the meet record for the 600 yard run, Freida Davy won the women's 60 yard dash and our mile relay team was once again victorious. Following Philadelphia were meets in Toronto and Montreal at which the Striders were victorious in the 600 yard run and the mile relay.

The big meets of the season were held in New York City at Madison Square Garden, the Olympic Invitational, the Millrose Games and the AAU National Championships. At the Olympic Invitational, the Striders women's mile relay team was victorious and the men's mile relay team won setting a new meet record in the process. The highlight of the indoor season came on January 28 at Madison Square Garden. The meet was the Millrose Games, probably the most prestigious meet of the season, and among the 20,000 people present was Reverend Moon and several guests. Freida Davy tied the meet record in the 60 yard dash, Stan Vinson won the 500 yard run and the Striders mile relay

team broke the Madison Square Garden record which had stood for some 20 years. Also held in New York was the AAU National Championships at which Fred Sowerby of the team became the National Champion in the 600 yard run and our women's mile relay team set a new national record.

The Striders stayed at the World Mission Center for all three New York meets and were both amazed and grateful for the treatment received by the staff and everyone that lived there.

The final meet of the indoor season was held in Canada between the United States and Russia. Stan Vinson of the Striders was chosen as a member of the U.S. team and anchored the mile relay team to victory.

Outdoor season began in early April and we were busy almost every weekend through August as well as having practice every day. The high point of the outdoor season came at the Penn Relays where the Striders won the mile relay, the sprint medley relay and took second in the distance, medley relay in front of 30,000 people. It was the Striders' third consecutive Penn Relay mile relay victory, the first time the feat has ever been accomplished. Other travel for the summer included meets in Tennessee, Virginia, Baltimore, Kansas and California. At the MU National Championships in California one of the young men who we helped put into college after running with our high school team set a new American record in the steeplechase. His name is George Malley and he has since graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and will be running for the Striders again. The team also did some international travel

running in Trinidad, Jamaica and the Bahamas.

The spring and summer months are the period when the D.C. Striders high school-age team runs together. In the early June we used two of our Church buses, driven by Dennis Pearson and Fritz Weiss, to take 60 kids from all different schools to Atlanta, Georgia to compete in the Atlanta Classic, which is a national high school meet. Jesse Williams tied the meet record in the 100 yard dash, our 440 relay team set a new meet record and our high school mile relay team kept pace with our older men's team by setting a new national high school record of 3:10.6. The Atlanta trip is always a wonderful experience for everyone involved. We take three or four coaches from different high schools and kids from many different schools and pull together as one team. Other teams and coaches are very surprised and impressed with the unity of our team because many of the athletes and coaches are in fact rivals during the rest of the season. The kids are pulled together by the heart and the goals of the team and become a family before the trip is over. A very moving and unique aspect of our team is that we pray together as a team before and after the meet.



Despite all of our track victories, the accomplishment that we are most proud of is that over the last several years the D.C. Striders have helped some 600 young people from the D.C., Virginia and Maryland area to receive college scholarships throughout the country, valuing nearly \$8 million. This is really the backbone of our program, helping young people who perhaps wouldn't have the opportunity to go to school to achieve that goal and to help them find their dignity as young men and women.

The final event of the season was the World Cup Games held in Dusseldorf, Germany on September 4-5. The D.C. Striders had four athletes representing the USA and Antigua. Cliff Wiley of the Striders was a member of the 400 meter relay team which set a new world record at the games. Stan Vinson and Cliff Wiley both just returned from a tour of Europe and Russia where Stan was undefeated in the quarter mile and Cliff was victorious in the 100 meter dash in Russia. Of course the goal of any amateur athlete is to compete in the Olympic Games to be held in Moscow in 1980. We are beginning to set our sights on that date to train as many athletes as possible to compete there.

The D.C. Striders now have athletes from seven different countries. Our goal is to expand to twenty one countries by next year. It is a wonderful thing to see the cultural and national barriers being broken down on the team. There is a spirit of brotherhood and love on the team that is noticed and commented on at many of the meets we attend. We hope to become a heartistic standard in the sports world, showing that with God's help, men of different colors and from different countries can work together and succeed together.

The D.C. Striders is organizationally independent from the Unification Church. It is largely supported by contributions from the Unification Church.