

Publication History of Who's Who in Oregon Track and Cross Country

This publication has long been a labor of love for all the editors associated with it. As the publication's founders – Roger Shaffer and Jim Crumpton – wrote at the end of the forward to the first edition in 1965: “To the athletes and the true ‘track-nut’, we trust you will find as much enjoyment from reading this as we did in compiling it... which is probably more than we care to admit.”

Jim was a track coach at Eagle Point High School and Roger, his former athlete, was a Journalism major at the University of Oregon when they were first discussing the need for a centralized survey of some sort to provide an overview of competition returning in the leagues and statewide. They sent questionnaires to every school, twice, and then followed up with newspaper research. It took them six months to compile data, sort it into rankings by event, and then type and publish.

1,000 orders for the first edition proved there was a real craving for this information! In the second edition – in response to reader requests – they added both class (freshman, sophomore, etc) and classification (A-2,A-1,etc) rankings, as well as State Championship results, articles, photos and a school directory (at the request of recruitment-minded college coaches, including all Ivy-league schools in 1967!). They also added a ranking of the top-20 dual-meet track teams, which continues to be highly popular over fifty years later!

Following the printing of the 1967 edition, Roger took a two-year leave as he served in the military in Korea, while Jim continued with the publication.

In 1968, Jim wrote “Who's Who was born four short years ago during an idle summer conversation. From that time it has exploded into a project of mammoth proportions. ... The main problem seems to be the additional material we try to add each year. ... The Post Office has advised us that we cannot increase the size much more without the mailing cost being prohibitive. It seemed the decision was to omit a large amount of material or go to a larger book with a price increase. The end result of our problem was to keep all the material and create a 42 page supplemental book entitled “Oregon All-Time Records for High School Track and Field.” This would be their first of occasional supplements. Chris Tarrant (Eagle Point), Tinker Hatfield (Central Linn), Tom Elwood (Canyonville) and Jerry Bennett (Gilchrist) all assisted in some aspect of the layout of this fourth annual publication

The staff of Who's Who was active in the sports leadership, presenting an award, on behalf of the publication, for Coach of the Year in Track, Cross Country, and a Most Inspirational Coach award. They also mailed out several hundred certificates of merit to athletes for an outstanding performance during the season, and entertained the prospect of financially supporting track clubs or groups to aid them with transportation expenses to national meets.

The 1970-1971 edition brought about additional changes. Previously it was published by Jim and Roger themselves on an offset press. Starting with this 6th edition they had it printed commercially in the hope that picture selection would be improved. They removed some previous material (like class lists) to allow room for new material. Another significant modification occurred as well: previously the publication covered academic years (September-June) and consequentially the year in the title pertained to track season in which it covered, but with this edition they chose to cover the calendar year (January-December), and so the year was that of publication, and henceforth a year more than that year which is covered (ie, the 1978 edition covered the 1977 sports seasons). Most importantly, in 1970 they started a

Who's Who for girls. This first edition was a girls-only publication, but for coverage of the 1971 season (and onward) Who's Who would remain coed.

Jim will continue to be editor from the publications founding in 1965 to 1975, near when he moved to southern California to coach at Mt. San Antonio College. Roger, minus his time in the service, will be editor from the publications founding through 1998! His wife Esther will assist him in editing from 1986 to 1998.

In 1981, Roger, by then teaching and coaching at Canyonville, was joined by Kevin Laughrun and Randy Sullivan as editors of 'Who's Who in Oregon Track – All-Time Track Records'. This was to be an update of the 1968 printing.

In 1996 Jim Crumpton, five years after moving back to Oregon and settling in Grants Pass, returned as the editor of the 'Who's Who – History of Cross Country', which was sponsored by the International Sports Exchange and provided free to student-athletes and coaches who requested a copy.

In 1998 Billy Snow and Dave Martin took the reins of the publication, retaining what their predecessors did well and adding new material. Billy was the coach at Sweet Home High School at the time. They guided Who's Who through the OSAA's controversial reclassification (and expansion) of races, and in the forward to their annual book offered commentary and discussion on topics pertinent to the sport, including but not limited to differing proposals to change state qualification standards, time conversions/equivalencies between metric and yard, the rationale of the twelve meet limit, and they weighed the different positions underpinning the redistricting debates. They even commented upon how statewide ballot measures might affect funding for this sport, shifting participation statewide, the effect of the javelin redesign, and the inconsistent quality of Pr recordkeeping by coaches in the era before Athletic.Net. And this was all in the forward to each publication!

In 2009 two other names warranted an expression of appreciation. Tom Crabtree devoted hours into the research of class records, and Carolin Nothiger was two-thirds of the way into her 15+ years arranging and publishing this product.

By 2009, however, declining sales were being noticed, and steadily remained so for a long time. There are several causes suspected for this pattern: (1) the advent of Athletic.Net made the Who's Who seasonal event rankings and championship results redundant; (2) the ease and quick availability of information via the internet is more appealing to some than the encyclopedic nature of Who's Who may be; (3) veteran coaches who had been frequent readers of Who's Who were retiring, being replaced by younger coaches who were unaware or unappreciative of the analysis Who's Who presented, and; (4) since this venture was always about celebrating the sport and never motivated by money, there had never been a concerted effort to advertise Who's Who to coaches. All the aforementioned reasons conspired to question the relevancy of the publication, a question which was never in doubt by those who continued to consume its contents yet which contributed to challenges in bringing new adherents to the publication. By 2013, Who's Who was publishing just half the quantity they had been just fifteen years earlier when Billy and Dave started, and by 2016 they published a mere 50 books.

In 2015 there were discussions about shifting to a digital platform, a topic which was problematic as the editors felt they did not have the technological background to do it right. This dialogue was prudent not just because of escalating printing costs, but also because one of the editor's recent retirement limited access to a printing press. But then Dave Ellingson, a longtime Who's Who supporter, stepped forward with a way to facilitate the continued printing of a hardcopy of the book for a time. Who's Who was being published in small quantity and released a tad later than the editors had planned, but it was still around.

In 2017, John Cornet (xc/tf coach at Phoenix HS) was invited to join Billy and Dave in support of the publication by maintaining and building upon the cross country section of the book. Aided by the data-input and data-sorting work of xc student-athletes Justice Williams and Karli Farrimond, a few new statistical categories – State placers, specifically – pertaining to the Track & Field section of the publication were also created. John set up an online platform through which to make available some of the publications materials which would not be included in the print edition (which was already rather large), and created some historical pieces which had not previously seen print. The idea is not to compete with Athletic.Net (both it and Who's Who offer results of the most recent season), but rather to complement their single-season information and data sorting abilities by also offering historical summaries and narratives not found elsewhere.