

April 20, 1956

Mr. E. L. Wilson
Chairman, U. S. Olympic Committee
Western Conference
LaSalle Hotel
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Thank you very much for your kind telegram yesterday. I am certainly happy, and I speak for all those interested in track and field in this area, that you believe there is a definite possibility we can work out plans for an invitational track meet here in August involving members of the U. S. Olympic Games track and field team.

I should like to outline again the basic idea we have in mind for this meet for your study and suggestions.

First, we believe August 11 would be the best possible date for our local situation in that the Emerald Empire Roundup will be staged August 3-4-5 and the all-star football game comes on the 18th with the pros following with exhibition games which would hurt the draw from the general Portland area. The 11th would also help us here in that after that date we begin to run into a time problem in our ticket office with football and the earlier date would enable us to handle the meet without undue strain on our ticket office staff.

The finances would be handled in approximately the following manner. The Eugene Active Club is willing to secure underwriters to assure a sufficient amount of money to pay all travel expenses of the athletes involved, and the room and board while they are here. All gate receipts over and above expenses involving the participants and the actual expenses incurred by the University of Oregon (cost of tickets, preparation of the field, etc.) would be contributed to the U.S. Olympic Fund.

We should like to have the cooperation of the Olympic Committee and the AAU in securing acceptances from Olympic track and field team members who reside in the Pacific Coast area. We believe this, if the 1956 team follows the form of the 1948 and 1952 teams, will involve 20-25 athletes. We should like to then invite some 20 athletes from the same area who are capable performers who have not qualified for the team. We would also like to have official urging from the Olympic Committee and the AAU in securing the cooperation of these competitors. We fully realize the athletes can't be forced to compete, but would like all help possible. In addition we should like to invite a number of western Canadian athletes to complete the field. Coach Bill Bowerman believes we should have at least four men in each event to have a representative field.

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Coach Bowerman also believes the program should include the standard events (with metric distances) plus the hop, step and jump, the 3,000 meter steeplechase and the 5,000 meter run. He also hopes it will be possible to run both the 400 and 1500 meter relays.

This is the basic plan and I hope it might realize some \$4,000 for the Olympic Fund in addition to providing competition for the Olympic team members from the Pacific Coast when it might otherwise be impossible.

I should like to release this basic information to the newspapers late next week and will do so unless you deem it unwise. The release will indicate that it is a tentative plan, subject to more planning and research. I have talked to Mr. Houston and Mr. Ferris and both indicate their approval of the basic idea. Mr. Bowerman has talked to Mr. Kelley and he has indicated considerable interest.

Thank you again for your interest and I certainly hope everything works out well.

Sincerely yours,

Art Litchman, Director
Athletic News Bureau

AL:ds

cc: Mr. Larry Houston
Mr. Jim Kelley
Mr. Dan Ferris
Mr. Bill Bowerman