Lynx System Developers, Inc. Official Newsletter
FINISHLINES
#15

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MEET THE EDITOR

Introducing Nora Courtney

Nora Courtney joins the Lynx staff as our Customer Service Coordinator. She comes to Lynx from a management position with Gap Inc. We are certain that with her customer service expertise she will bring a whole new dimension to one of the most important areas of our business.

Nora has been a major contributor to this issue of Finish Lines and will be taking over much of the responsibility for the Newsletter in the future. If you have stories or information that you would like to see included, please call her or email her: nora@finishlynx.com.

JUST A HIGH SCHOOL TIMING TEAM?

Fastest time EVER on American Soil captured by Timing Team from local High School - see back page for photos.

Bowdoin College's Whittier Field saw history made at the 1998 New Balance Distance Festival, on July 4th. Not only were six meet records broken, but the thousands of spectators and the FinishLynx team from Brewer High School, ME, were on hand to witness a new American Record in the women's 5000m.

The Timing Team (Dave Jeffrey, Glendon Rand, and Chris Libby) were ecstatic following Regina Jacobs' 14:52.49 finish, exchanging high-fives as they waited for the rest of the field.

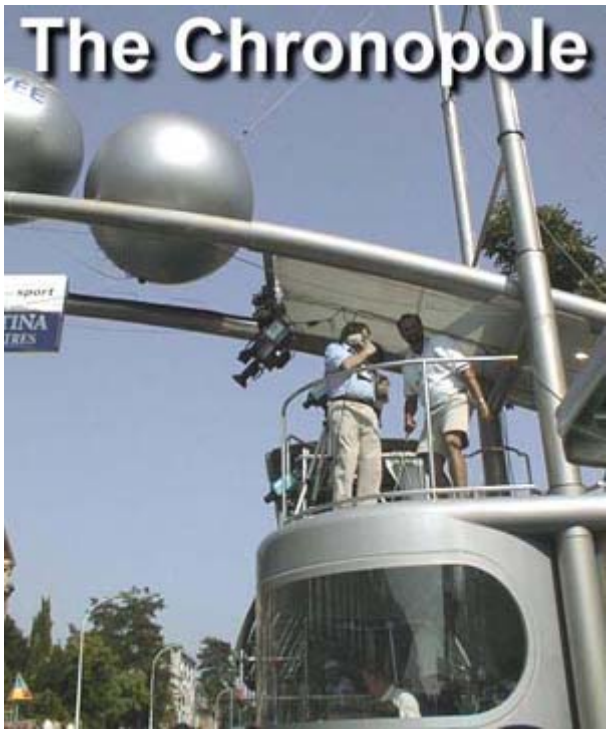
Rand tracked her splits as she stayed on the American record pace through 3000m. At 4000m., Jacobs was a little over the pace, but Rand knew she would break the record in her last 400m. "It was awesome" declared Jeffrey.

John Cochran, a track official who has been refereeing for sixty years, came to verify Jacob's time with the FinishLynx operators. Jeffrey asked him how many American Records he had verified in the course of his long career. With a huge grin on his face, Cochran told him that this was his first.

The next day, Jeffrey and Rand discussed the American record they had been a part of. Despite coaching teams that have won championships, they agreed that "this was probably the best thing we ever did in track and field."

Oh, and with the last race of the day they also timed the first ever sub 4:00 mile in Maine - Jason Pyrah with 3:56.82.

TOUR de FRANCE REPORT



Fred Patton of Phoenix Sports Technology has just returned from the Tour de France.

Fred was working with the Matsport results management team for the early stages of the race. He described the logistics and professionalism of this event as "remarkable". Also remarkable was the ease with which the FinishLynx system and setup were integrated into this well-scripted mobile event.

Fred was very pleased to see the speed of results production from the FinishLynx technology during the mass finishes at the start of the Tour. The final results of the field sprint finishes were produced in an average of 15 minutes. Fred projected that later in the Tour results would be available as the last cyclist crossed the finish line

The results team made use of their broadcast van and the Tour's finish line "Chronopole" shown above. The mobile Chronopole contained housing for the FinishLynx cameras and wiring as well as a broadcast area. After the cameras were set up each day, a plum bob was hung from the cameras so that the man painting that day's finish line could position the center of the line.

Every morning would see the roll out of dozens of broadcast vans and equipment. The television producers were delighted by the speed and quality of the information Matsport were providing them, and live transmission of FinishLynx images rapidly became the norm on European Television transmissions.

HOT OFF THE PRESSES

FinishLynx T-shirts are the hit of the season

This season, we picked a few track and field events (Mt. SAC Relays, NAIA Nationals, National Scholastic Outdoor) at which we tested our theory that it is possible to use your FinishLynx system as a revenue generator.

At these events, we took an extra computer, an image printer (Epson Stylus Color 800) and a T-shirt press (cost about $600) and we sold FinishLynx image prints and T-shirt transfers from our own booth on-site. The extra computer was attached to the

primary timing system computer so that it had immediate access to the images as soon as the race was over.

At Mt Sac, our pricing may have been low, as it did nothing to deter the crowds. We charged $3 per print and $5 to transfer an image on to any light-colored T-shirt. The printer was printing constantly during the entire meet. We could not service demand with only one printer.

Prints were about twice as popular as transfers at this price point. We sold around 200 prints and 100 transfers. Many of the people who bought transfers also bought prints.

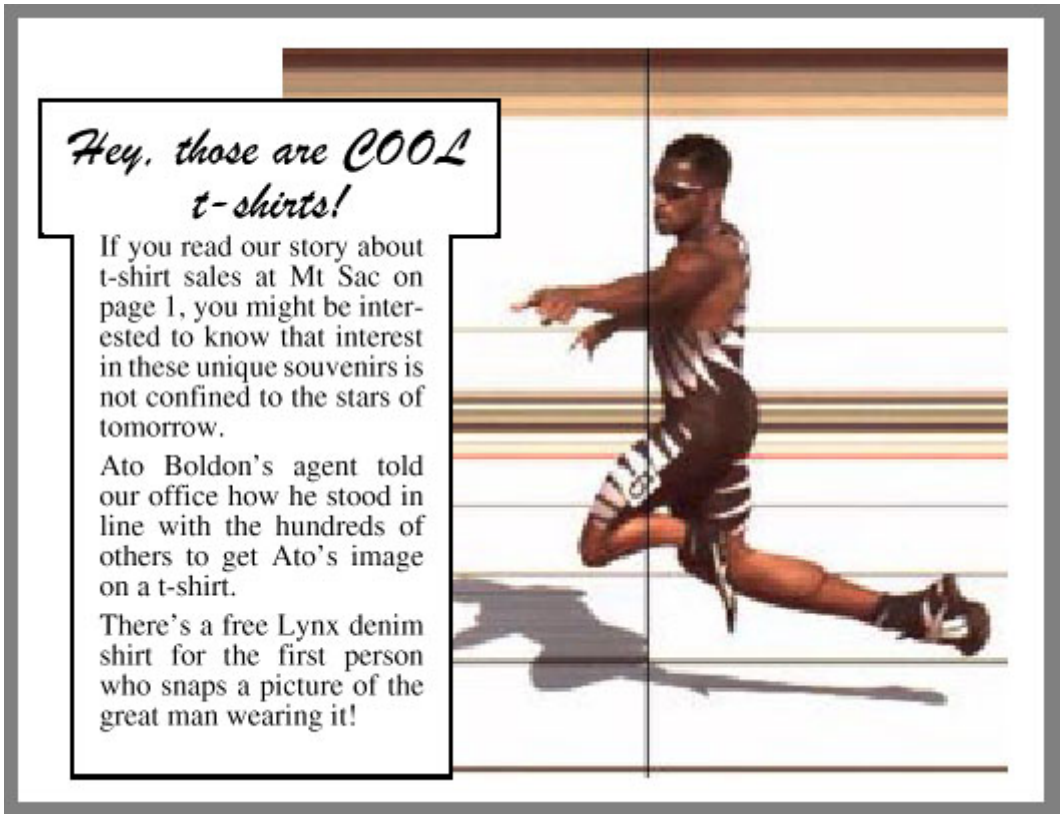
This is an on-site, impulse buy. Once we saw we could not fill all the demand, we offered a way for people to contact us later and have things mailed to them. We received virtually no response to this offer.

An unexpected downside came from the field event participants who wanted pictures of themselves stuck to their T-shirts! Possibly, for the cost of a few handheld digital cameras and some volunteers, you could include them too.

Here is how the finances worked out at ONE meet:

- Transfers (100 @ $1.10) $110.00
- Paper (213 @ $0.15) $31.95
- Ink (1.5 carts @ $25) $37.50
- Total Expenses $179.45
- Total Revenue $1139.00

Net Profit $959.55



FEEDBACK - BAPTISM BY FIRE (WELL, RAIN...AND WIND)

A (surprisingly) cheery report from a new user...

From Howard Nippert - Virginia Tech

> *Sir*
>
> *I just wanted to pass on that [our first] meet went well for us this weekend. The one thing we did encounter, besides storms rolling in and out about every hour, was wind. High wind.*
>
> *On the first day, the wind was setting off the gun sensor. The starter finally angled himself to block the wind past the sensor and we got the heats off. On Sunday, we took a chunk of foam that the system was packed in (about 4" X 4" and 8" long, and cut a hole down into it and then slid the gun sensor in. It never missed a test shot, and after I cut it down to about 5" long, the starters held the small foam block with the gun sensor in it for the remainder of the meet and not one time did it go off prematurely. It seemed to stabilize the sensor and block the wind, without making it less sensitive to the shots.*
>
> *Our track is located at nearly the lowest point in the area and drainage is a problem. Where the timers and official personnel were situated was literally ankle deep in water with table and chair legs underwater. The power did blow at one point, but I had the cameras and ethernet box hooked to the UPS and we never lost a beat. Even when the backup Pyrotimer went down, we rolled with the LYNX.*

From Franciso Ayala in Mexico:

> *THANKS FOR YOUR SYSTEM IS REALLY INCREDIBLE, THE PEOPLE WHEN [THEY] SEE THE PHOTO SAY WHOOOOOO...*

From Ed Scullion in New Jersey:

> *Everything is still going great. Had an interesting thing happen at the NJ State Meet-- our monitor on the backup system went out. What did we do? We kept on taking pictures. We wrote out a list of keyboard commands and our backup operator, who is new with us and has very little computer experience, kept on going. She armed, (captured the picture), cropped, saved, exited, and rearmed all by the keyboard and without a monitor (it was saved via the network to its own directory on the reader computer where it could be read if needed). This went on for about ten races. Let's see someone do that with the old DOS version. Tell that to the next person that says it's too hard to learn how to use FinishLynx!*

As always, Snail Mail, e-mail, telephone, or fax us with your comments, tips, or stories.

ON THE WEB WITH FINISHLYNX

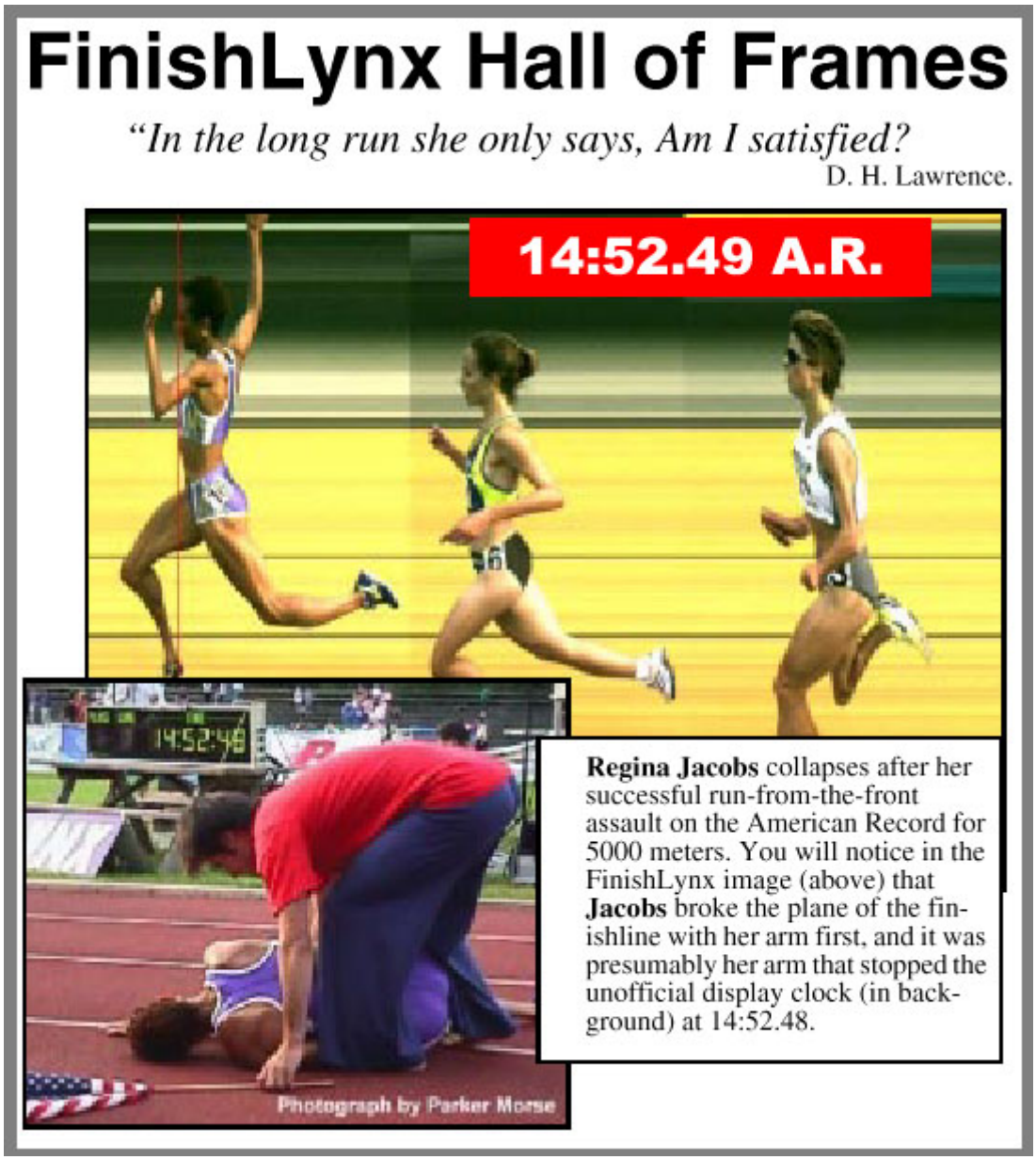
From New Orleans to New Zealand, FinishLynx continues to spread information with unprecedented speed.

Coverage of the USATF National Championships in New Orleans at the beginning of June reached a larger audience thanks to CyberScoreboard.

Our site, http://www.cyberscoreboard.com, logged almost 2000 *unique* visitors over the course of the weekend. Many running events were shown on broadcast television, but internet users were able to follow the entire weekend's results as they were continuously posted to CyberScoreboard.

Also, a great selection of really interesting Horse Racing images from New Zealand can be found in the Gallery section of the Exposures website: http://www.exposures.co.nz/gallery/gallery.htm

Exposures is home to official New Zealand Racing and Trotting Results and, judging by the entries in their guestbook, it is attracting hits from around the world.



Tech Corner

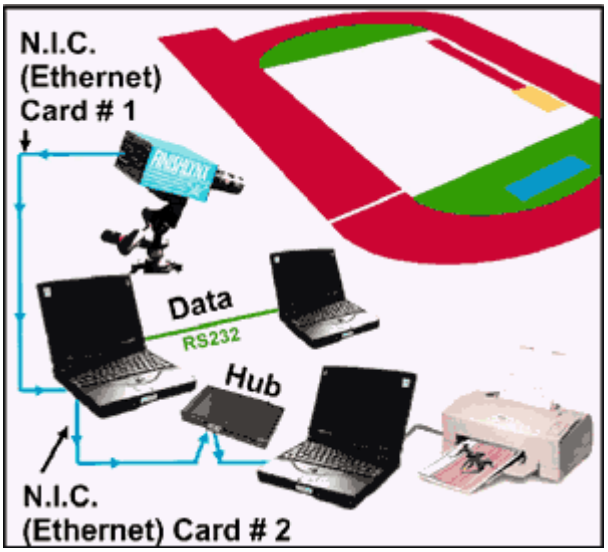
ISOLATE THAT TRAFFIC

by Doug DeAngelis

One of the things we noticed when doing the T-shirt printing experiment (see earlier in this issue) is that having that extra computer on the camera network accessing the images increases the collisions on the network.

This is because EtherLynx cameras generate a lot of data - one high resolution camera has the capability to consume an entire 10Mbps ethernet link! One methodology for dealing with this is to install two network interface cards (NICs) in the computers that are attached to the cameras.

One NIC is then attached to the camera while the other is used to connect to "the network". In this way, you essentially treat the camera-computer connection as its own network, and isolate the traffic on that link.



Brain Teaser

An interesting thing happened to us at Mt. SAC Relays. In one of the distance races, the starter forgot to pick up the gun sensors. Fortunately, we always run a primary and backup system at major events and the backup system got the start anyway. It was sort of a pain, however, because the backup system was not set up to print or connect to the results computer, etc. So we really wanted to do the official results on the primary computer. How did we manage to get correct FAT times from the primary computer without typing them in from the backup or transferring any files?

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