

The “Track & Field News” website: www.trackandfieldnews.com

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Introduction

The magazine “Track & Field News” (T&FN) declares itself to be “The Bible Of The Sport”. Since its founding in 1948 it has provided detailed coverage of U.S. high school, collegiate and professional action during their peak seasons. It also gives readers very detailed information about the European circuit. Its coverage of the World Championships in Athletics and Olympic Games is also the most comprehensive to be found in print anywhere.

The T&FN website reflects the magazine’s mission of furthering the sport of athletics, both enhancing the print offering for those subscribers who sign up for the magazine’s free eTrack service and providing a source of information for those who choose to follow the sport solely at the surfing level.

T&FN also has a large selection of books and videos for sale through its e-store, and since 1952 has taken almost 20,000 fans on tours to major athletics meetings around the globe (see corresponding buttons in the top horizontal menu bar).

Structure of the T&FN homepage

The T&FN homepage is clearly and logically laid out. When opening it, the first thing that attracts the visitor’s attention is the video being played right in the centre of the page. It is one of several videos showing highlights of recent events. On the top of the page, just below the two horizontal menu bars, there are three sections: “Today’s Top Headlines,” “The

Day’s Best Reading,” And “Results Links.” By browsing through these sections visitors can right away bring themselves up to speed with the latest developments in the athletics world. Website visitors who want to delve deeper into the site’s content can find their way by using the top horizontal menu bars.



Figure 1: The T&FN entry page

Searching the contents of the T&FN website

By clicking the buttons in the top horizontal menu bars, visitors may access the various services offered by the page:

- Through the “Message Boards” button, users can get into contact with other users, e.g. to get answers to their questions, or they can start or participate in discussions on various topics or problems.

- The "Tours" and "e-Store" buttons give users the opportunity to sign up for tours to track-and-field events or to buy or subscribe to products offered by T&FN.
- After clicking the "Subscribe" button, T&FN subscribers can renew their magazine subscription, and new customers can order a new subscription.
- The "From the Editor" button provides access to the magazine's editorials from 1997 to the present.
- By clicking the "Calendars" button users can receive the latest information about important track-and-field meetings in the United States and around the world.
- The "Lists," "Yearly Leaders," "Records," "Rankings," and "Formcharts" buttons are for visitors who are interested in track-and-field results, statistics, and predictions.



Figure 2: T&FN Photo Galleries

- After clicking the "Galleries" button, visitors can view numerous "PhotoRuns" of important track-and-field meetings back to 2012.
- The "Archive" section includes
 - a complete listing of past T&FN covers, statistical information which is somewhat different from what is normally expected (e.g., "History's 1378 Sub-4:00 Milers," "All-Time Pre Classic Sub-4:00 Performances List & Stats," "Fastest Miles Annually In The Sub-4:00 Era," "Progression Of The Fastest En Route 3-Lap Times," or "Athletes With Same-Year NCAA/USATF Titles"),
 - results (e.g. "A History Of The US Olympic Trials," "USA National Championships History," "A Statistical Review Of The Early Women's Collegiate Championships," "All-Time Olympic Top 8s Plus Americans (1896-2012)," "All-Time World Championships Top 8s Plus Americans (1983-2013)," etc.), and
 - compilations (e.g. "All-Time T&FN World Athletes Of The Year," "All-Time T&FN World AOY Top 10 Voting," "All-Time T&FN U.S. Athletes Of The Year," or "All-Time T&FN High School Athletes Of The Year," "History Of T&FN's High School All-America Teams," etc.).
- The "For Subscribers Only" button requires T&FN subscribers to register to access the eTrack archives, renew their T&FN subscription and/or manage their account information.

Another helpful button is included in the bottom menu bar. By clicking the "Technique" button, users get access to a selection of technique articles from back issues of the "Track Coach" magazine, the official technical periodical of USA Track & Field. The articles, which run the gamut from sprint training to jumps and throws tips to biomechanics and plyometrics, are downloadable as PDFs.



Figure 3: TF&N "Site Search" field

The "Links" button also included in the bottom menu unfortunately provides access to only commercial links, i.e. selected companies offering track & field equipment, implements, merchandise and services.

For all users who want to search more selectively for a specific topic, the "Site Search" button in the top horizontal bar may be helpful. When clicking this button, a search field will open in which users can enter a single search word or a search phrase they want to obtain information about.

Conclusion

In summary, the T&FN website provides detailed information on past, current and future athletics events and about topical aspects in connection with the US and international scene in general. The mixture of text-based statistical, journalism-style and technical contents on the one hand, and photos and videos on the other, is both informative and entertaining. The design of the website is fully customer-oriented with all of the frequently requested topics consistently being brought to the front. The website is clearly structured, well arranged, and its contents is easily accessible. All this considered, the T&FN website is a must-view for everyone interested in international athletics.

Reviewed by Jürgen Schiffer