



Photography: G.S. Peters

Drew Ryun, at right in left photo, battles to the finish in the 200-meter dash, while Jim and Heather, in right photo, focus in.

## Former Olympian in JC over weekend

# Ryun wants anonymity for kids' sake

By G.S. PETERS

Daily Union sports editor

Not many people noticed the young man who failed to place in the bantam division 800-meter run at the AAU Missouri Valley State Junior Olympic Track and Field meet Saturday.

His was just another face in the myriad of boyish faces that seemed to blend into the crowd of approximately 700 youngsters.

His distinctive features and lengthy stride did not bear witness to his true lineage.

Few people drew any connection between the 10-year-old and a tall man at trackside, who watched the youngster's every movement through a movie camera. Even though he was dressed in a track suit,

it was not his performance on the oval Saturday that which brought him notoriety. Those people who have been involved in track knew exactly who it was.

Drew Ryun was not a big winner at Junior Olympics. But it was not important that he be a big winner on the day. At least, not to his parents — Jim and Anne Ryun.

"I think some people are surprised that we have kids this old," says Jim Ryun, the 36-year-old former Olympian. "We pray (the children) would enjoy their experiences. We love our children, regardless of how they're performing."

Ryun, an all-world miler a few years back, was at the meet Friday and Saturday, to watch his four children compete. His two girls, Heather, 13, and Catharine, 7, were in the walk races Friday night,

while his twin sons, Ned and Drew, 10, were involved in the 200-, 800-meter open and 400-meter relay races Saturday.

While the Ryun children were able to compete with some anonymity, Jim was busy, shaking hands and signing autographs during the day. Much of his time was spent videotaping his kids, who are members of the Lawrence Track Club.

"It's hard to say how much pressure my children feel," he says. "I'm sure there's some they don't realize. But I know they know there is some there."

"It's like today. There are quite a few people who recognized me. I would like to come here and get as little attention as possible, for my children's sake. I'm sure it puts that much more pressure on the boys."

Ryun and his family live in Lawrence where he is a consultant for the Nike Shoe Co. of Oregon. He has been doing some road racing, but most of the born-again Christian's time is spent spreading the word of God.

He and Anne became born-again just before the Munich Olympics in 1972. Bern Taylor, an aquatics instructor at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, and his wife, Clara, got the Ryuns started on the road back to Christianity.

"My goal is to spread the gospel with as many people as I can," Ryun says. "Running is a unique opportunity for me to do this. I want to affect as many people as I can."

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