

13th Annual American Legion Armistice Day Race

Saturday, 11 Nov 1950 at Legion Hall in Uptown Butte

The course used the previous two years was slightly altered this year. The race again started and finished in front of the Legion Club at 16 E. Broadway, proceeding on Broadway to Gaylord, south on Gaylord (passing by Park this year) to Mercury, west to Wyoming, south to Gold, west past Butte High to Idaho, north in front of Butte Central to Broadway, and then to the finish.

The new route shortened the course by two city blocks, by going in front of Butte Central rather than behind it on Washington Street.



Despite Cold War tensions and the United States' involvement in the ongoing Korean War, normal Armistice Day festivities remained, including the American Legion's annual 11-bomb salute to combat vets, a foot-race for high school boys, open houses for vets and their families, and public dances. Four junior-league football games were also planned for play at Naranche Stadium, but they had to be postponed when Friday's thaw coupled with a sudden temperature drop to leave the field chunked with ice.

Race Chairman C. Owen Smithers with the assistance of previous race-winner Martin Kearney, and many other Legionnaires ensured that, ice or no ice, the boy's race started through the slippery streets during a snowstorm immediately following the 11 a.m. bomb salute.

A pace car driven by Police Chief Bart Riley and accompanied by Mayor Thomas R. Morgan lead the now three-time race winner, Lester Sodja, trudging through the course in 17:00 to lead his Butte High team to victory by a scant 11 to 10 point margin over Butte Central. Points were assigned to each of the first six finishers on a 6-5-4-3-2-1 scoring basis.

With the win the Bulldogs claimed temporary possession of the three-year-old Jack Pachico Cup which involves the two rival schools in an 11-year competition to see which school scores the most team points in that time period. The eventual winning team gets to retire the trophy to their school. The Purples currently lead that series by the grand score of 41 to 22.

Sixteen runners started the race, and all finished.

Team Scores: Butte High, 11; Butte Central, 10.

HS Boy's 2.7 mile: 1, Lester Sodja, 17:00; 2, John Courtney, BC; 3, Lloyd Brynie, BH; 4, Jerry Winston, BC; 5, Tom Quinn, BC; 6, Claire Upton, BH; no additional finishers listed.



Lester Sodja, picture during track & field season in the earlier, and warmer month of May, 1950.