

# WORLD HAMMER RE

## OLYMPIC CONTEST NOW A NON-EVENT

A WORLD record in the hammer — the fourth in his career for the dual Olympic champion, Yuri Sedykh — three new national records and a shock defeat for world champion, Eamonn Coghlan in the 5,000 metres, provided sensational fare for a record attendance who turned up in brilliant sunshine to view the Quinnsworth Cork City Sports at The Mardyke last evening.

There was also a shock defeat for the Olympic and world decathlon champion, Daley Thompson, in the 200 metres which went to Ireland's schoolboy sensation, Derek O'Connor, who later ran a wind assisted 10.54 sec. 100 metres behind Ainsley Bennett (Birchfield Harriers) to add to the drama that pertained throughout the evening.

But the stage belonged to the Russian hammer throwers, Sedykh and Sergey Litvinov, the world champion, who beat the world record six times between them before settling for Sedykh's opening throw of 88.34 metres (283'3") after a spellbinding hour in the circle, where the Soviets fought a personal battle of strength, psychology and power that will go down as one of the great contests in the history of world athletics.

No matter what happens in Los Angeles when the Olympics will be staged without the Soviets, the hammer competition may be regarded as a non-event following the performances of the great arch rivals in Cork.

The drama began when the world champion, Litvinov, fouled his opening throw, still with his track-suit bottoms on and then the 6'3" powerhouse, Sedykh, walked coolly into the cage and unleashed a throw of 86.34 metres to beat the world record throw of 84.14 metres recorded by Litvinov 12 months ago.

Martin Girvan, who broke the U.K. record three times this season so far had a throw of 75.14 metres that was to prove his best for the night and give him

third place at the end of the competition.

Litvinov replied with a throw of 85.14 metres on the second attempt to surpass his own record. He still had his track-suit bottoms on and was to keep them on for the remainder of the contest.

Sedykh replied with another massive throw of 85.98 and then Litvinov showed that he was still there with a chance of victory with a third throw of 84.84 metres.

Again Sedykh was better with a throw of 85.16 metres and when Litvinov dropped back to 83.74 metres on his fourth throw Sedykh, with a throw of 84.16 showed that he had done what he came to do.

The remainder of the competition was of little more than academic interest. Sedykh threw 83.30 and fouled his final throw while Litvinov fouled his final two throws, settling for a best of 86.34 metres.

Girvan with a series of 75.74, 75.26, 73.26, foul, 73.08 and 73.48 took third place while Sean Egan of Ireland never came close to his best (71.10) with just one legal throw of 66.92 metres that gave him fourth spot.

The young Kilkenny thrower and Rockwell College star, Gary Halpin, brought his personal best up to 58.08 metres to finish fifth.

A jubilant Sedykh admitted afterwards that while he was pleased with the performance and the fact that he had regained the world record, it would not compensate for missing the Olympic Games and the very real likelihood of a third gold medal.

"It is difficult to speak

about it," he said. "It is not compensation. There is no compensation for that."

Asked if he had expected to beat the world record by so much, he said he had been feeling very good. In fact both himself and Litvinov were in very good form before they left.

"There are no limits to a man's ability," he said. "I always believe that, and I think this proves it."

He said he was happy they had come to Cork. He liked it here. "The invitation to compete came through the Embassy for the Sports Union and it was accepted."

Next week, they will compete in the Talbot Games when Litvinov will attempt to wrest the record back but on this performance he faces a difficult task. Sedykh had always stood between him and outright glory until the world championships last year.

Born in Novo-Cherkassk, the 6'3" Sedykh won the Olympic titles in Montreal and Moscow as well as two European titles.

He has always produced his best on the "even" years. "This is because the major championships always take place in even years," he explained.

He is in the military service, attached to the Central Sports Academy in Moscow and, in his spare time, he listens to music — popular music and old Russian songs.

It is the second time a world record was set in the hammer in Cork — Dr. Pat O'Callaghan did it during his reign in a competition in Fermoy.

"It is nice to come back to where hammer throwing began," said Sedykh.