

BURTON HOOPER, Chairman, AAU Track Committee, and Coach, Citywide AA Team

Neither injury nor age will keep Burton (Burt) Hooper from completing his 33rd year of track competition. That, in short, is the amazing story of Burt Hooper's track career, since he was 13 years old. He will be 47 in November, and although he suffered a leg injury early this year which necessitated it being put in a cast, he is already planning for his next big race.

No man in Honolulu today is better qualified for the position of chairman of the Hawaiian Association AAU track and field committee, for Burt Hooper has devoted practically his entire life to this sport—as competitor, trainer, or coach. He hasn't missed a year of competition since 1913, and he has won so many championships and races that he has lost count of them.

Pacific Coast Track Star

Born in Fresno, California, he attended Polytech High School in San Francisco, where he did, "some running, baseball, football, and swimming."—in the words of Burt Hooper. Then he joined the famed Olympic Club of San Francisco in 1913, and ran in his first AAU meet, the 7½ mile "Dipsea" race. Burt finished in 27th place, but the following year, he chalked up the fastest time for that event. As a member of the Olympic Club, Burt Hooper participated in many dual meets with Pacific Coast conference teams, and entered countless cross-country runs.

One of his outstanding achievements was in the Pacific Coast 10-mile championship race. He won this event eight years in a row, from 1927 through 1934, and his record of 52 minutes, 10 seconds, for that event still stands.

In 1924 he won the 5,000 and the 10,000-meter runs, at the Far-Western Olympic tryouts, but placed fifth in the 5,000-meter event, at the finals in New York, and missed qualifying for the Olympic Team.

It was soon after this that Burt Hooper made his first trip to Hawaii, and he promptly won the first annual Diamond Head run. His first Hawaiian victory was the 3-mile run at the old Fairgrounds, in September, 1924, as a member of the Outrigger Canoe Club.

In the next two years, Burt won numerous Hawaiian AAU distance events, including his first mile victory in the AAU meet, held in 1925. He also won the Diamond Head marathon in 1925, and 1926. He returned to the mainland late in 1926, and the following year, he started his 8-year winning streak in the Pacific Coast 10-mile race. Other major races that he won during this period, included the San Francisco city marathon, the Vallejo 26-mile marathon, and the 15-mile Los Angeles race. He also won the 6-mile AAU championship of the California Association 1929-30-31-32 and '33.

Gained Outstanding Victory in 1939

Burt Hooper returned to Hawaii in 1934, to make his home here, and has competed in Territorial distance races every year. One of his outstanding victories here, was in 1939, when he won the AAU 5,000-meter championship. Last year, he surprised local track circles by winning the AAU one-mile walk.

His first experience as a coach here, was in 1939, when he took charge of the Matson AC team. He coached the outstanding Oahu Railway teams in 1943 and 1944, and recently, he was appointed to coach the Citywide AA Spikemen. His greatest ambition is to develop young marathoners, and he feels that the only way to accomplish this would be to increase the number of track meets in Honolulu.

Burt Hooper has his own cabinet business. His hobbies are hunting, fishing, and wood-carving.