



# FINISH LINES

A Newsletter for FinishLynx and FieldLynx Operators

NUMBER 16, February 1999

## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

By Nora Courtney - Customer Service  
Co-ordinator

I was happy to be a part of the Lynx teams that attended both the USATF Convention in Orlando, FL and the National High School Athletic Directors Show in Las Vegas, NV this past December. It was great to get a chance to speak with some of our current and, hopefully, future customers who were in attendance.

As in the past, we created a lot of excitement showcasing the capabilities of our current products as well as with the introduction of new Lynx products. (See page three of this newsletter for more information.)

I came away from these two events with some great customer stories and suggestions. Let other Lynx operators gain from your experience by keeping those ideas coming. Please call or e-mail me at [nora@finishlynx.com](mailto:nora@finishlynx.com) with any thoughts or suggestions.

Nora.

## FAST SOFTWARE ENGINEERS

Not tracking the Millrose Games on CyberScoreboard? What was your excuse?



James Njoroge

One person who was not following the results of the Millrose Games using the java applet feature of CyberScoreboard was the FinishLynx software engineer who wrote

the applet - James Njoroge. He did have a good excuse though: he was running at the meet.

Unfortunately, Njoroge failed to finish the Wanamaker Mile, dropping out in the closing laps despite looking comfortable in fourth place when he stepped off the track. A bout with the flu negated the level of fitness Njoroge had shown two weeks earlier, when he had run a sub-four minute mile at the Armory in New York (see our story on the Armory).

Njoroge's Java applet <http://www.cyberscoreboard.com/LSB/Live.html> automatically refreshes a screen in your internet browser every time a new result is entered by the FinishLynx operator at the meet. Keep visiting our website for information on when this awesome service will be available to all FinishLynx operators.

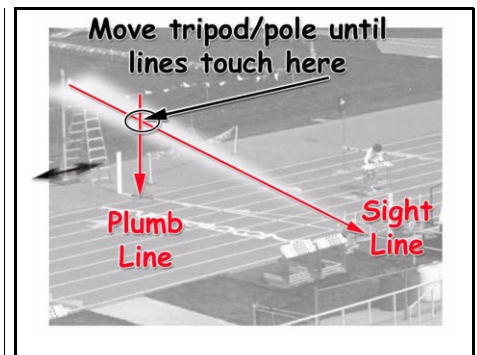
## FLANIK'S FINISHLINE FINDER

Five steps to easier camera alignment.

Greg Flanik gave us a camera setup tip at the USATF convention that we think is worthy of passing on. Flanik says they have reduced their camera alignment time to less than five minutes.

Materials Needed: a length of thin string and a plumb line.

1. Set up the camera on the tripod or camera-pole in the APPROXIMATE position.
2. Connect a long length of string to the camera securing screw (under the camera) and take the other end to the MIDDLE OF THE FINISHLINE ON THE FAR SIDE of the track as shown below. Have a volunteer hold the string taut. (Don't pull the camera over!) **This is the SIGHT LINE.**



3. On the NEAR SIDE of the track have a volunteer hold the plumb bob so that it is suspended DIRECTLY ABOVE THE MIDDLE OF THE FINISHLINE.

**This is the PLUMB LINE.**

4. Carefully move the tripod/pole either to the left or to the right until the two lines touch.

5. The Camera is now in the PLANE OF THE FINISHLINE.

Check that the camera is **level** and pointing directly across the track (you may need to carefully pan the camera from side to side) and it will be correctly aligned.

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## GUNFIRE AT THE ARMORY

No cause for alarm - it's the VERY BUSY starters at this newly revamped state-of-the-art indoor track.



The New York Armory Track

Lynx sales supremo, Kevin McGill had this to say about the new facility: "For those of us old enough to have run in the 168th Street Armory in New York, the rebirth of this site is a pure miracle.

"Dr. Norbert Sander, who used to run on the old wooden floor himself, has spearheaded the fund-raising to first put the Armory back in business as a center for NYC athletics. Now, he has taken it one further step: permanent world class track facility.

"The "new" Armory has a banked Mondo track, and an extensive Lynx System driving the Armory's scoreboard. Since January, 1999, the Armory has been posting some incredible times proving that when one New Yorker named Sander has a dream, watch out, it will come true."

## SPLITS ON THE RACECOURSE

Fiber optic technology helps get split times on a thoroughbred racecourse.

William Randazzo of Pacific Rim Racing sent us details of one of his recent FinishLynx installations at a horse racing venue. The track timing system uses optical fibers to link the sectional photo-beams to a command center, from where the information is passed to the FinishLynx system.

Randazzo notes that the system has the following capabilities:

- 1) Synchronizes and displays Lynx sectional times.
- 2) Synchronizes and displays EtherLynx generated winner's final time at the finish line.
- 3) Fiber optics deliver total protection of control circuits from devastating lightning strikes. Each branch circuit has individual circuit protection for additional sensor protection.
- 4) Practically no limit on the number of sectional timing positions.
- 5) Field circuits are self diagnostic, greatly reducing system maintenance.

Anyone interested in finding out more about this complementary sectional timing for horse and greyhound racing should contact Randazzo at [pac-rim@flash.net](mailto:pac-rim@flash.net)



## RECHARGE, REUSE, RECYCLE

by Doug DeAngelis

OK, so you have taken the plunge and gotten a bunch of those wonderful FieldLynx units. How do you feed their need for power?

I am here to suggest rechargeables. But not the "normal" rechargeable NiCd batteries you may have heard of - rechargeable Alkaline. From what we can tell, rechargeable Alkalines are a good compromise between the wastefulness of a regular old copper-top and the problems of rechargeable NiCd. Rechargeable Alkaline batteries have the following nice features:

- They have no "memory" - they do not have to be fully discharged in order to be recharged to retain maximum lifetime.
- They last almost as long as "regular" alkalines
- They don't lose their power while in storage
- They operate at a full 1.5 volts (compared to typical 1.2V for NiCd)
- They are not so hard on the environment - less waste than a copper-top and no nasty cadmium like a NiCd
- You can still get them at Radio Shack

The primary disadvantage of a rechargeable Alkaline is that they do have a "lifetime" of about 25 charges. Like I said, not a bad compromise considering the advantages.

Since it is not a good idea to take batteries out of a FieldLynx unit for very long, the sensible thing to do is buy at least one more set of batteries than you have FieldLynx units so that you can keep one set in the charger at all times

### Editor's Note:

FieldLynx operators can get a REAL feeling of the power of AAA batteries when they use their FieldLynx units to drive our huge (10ft x 4ft) new Infield Displays. (See next page.)

The crowd at the Dartmouth Relays followed a record breaking shot competition in January thanks to the ability of the latest FieldLynx software to drive these alphanumeric scoreboards.

## THE GREEN MACHINE SAYS "HI!"



Dennis Mitchell with ReactTime prototype.

Lynx previewed their ReactTime false start detection and sprint-training system at the USATF convention this year in Orlando. Track star Dennis Mitchell, the "Green Machine," was one of the convention attendees who was wowed by ReactTime's capabilities.

The personal training module of ReactTime is a small, battery powered unit that clips to practically all makes of starting block. Through a speaker the unit gives the "Start" and "Set" commands and then simulates the firing of the starter's gun. The athlete's reaction time is displayed on the unit, and can be downloaded to a computer for later evaluation by coaches etc..

When six, eight, or more of the units are linked together, they form a state-of-the-art false start detection system - at a price that compares VERY favorably with other systems on the market.

We sent Dennis a copy of the picture above and he had this to say:

"Hi! Great photo!!!!!! thanks for the E-mail I thought that you guys forgot about me for a minute.... I am looking forward to having the opportunity to bring the ReactTime here to Gainesville Fl. The product will cut down hours of guess work at the track for me. Tell everyone I said hi, and if I can do anything else for you just let me know.

Dennis M. GREEN MACHINE!!!!!!!!!!

**Lynx System  
Developers, Inc.**



# NEW PRODUCTS

- Special Feature - Special Feature - Special Feature

- They can be driven directly by FinishLynx or FieldLynx. No dedicated computer needed.
- Visible at more than 400 feet.
- Each line has TEN 10" digits. Total line length is more than 8 feet.
- Comes with a simple bolt-together stand with pneumatic wheels for increased mobility.
- Generic Serial Data Interface.
- Can be used for field event performances, results, or running times.
- Customizable indicator boards.
- As used on the 1999 Golden Spike Tour - Chase Millrose Games, L.A. Invitational, adidas D.C. Invitational, and USATF Championships.

## FINISHLYNX 32 VERSION 2.0 OFFICIALLY RELEASED

*Windows 95/98/NT compatible software is now available.*

Hot on the heels of the Version 1.2 release comes another opportunity to upgrade your FinishLynx software - FOR FREE.

Version 2.0 incorporates all the advantages of 1.2 - multi-language support and on-line help for example, but it also includes the ability to use FinishLynx Plugins. It also fixes a bug in Windows 98 which could have caused problems with USB support.

There are currently two plugins available ACM (Virtual Photobeam and Automatic Capture Mode) and MRE (Multiple Region Enhancement). Keep checking our website for more plugins as they become available.

These plugins, which are offered for sale, continue the modular concept of FinishLynx technology - you are only ever buying the additional features that you need.

## ACM (VIRTUAL PHOTOBREAM AND AUTOMATIC CAPTURE MODULE)

*Software so smart it takes your pictures for you.*

With this plugin, the camera can be configured to take pictures AUTOMATICALLY - without the need for the capture button. The plugin also has the built-in ability to use the camera as a surrogate photobeam to drive running-time clocks, and to pre-crop the image IN THE CAMERA before any data is sent to the Lynx computer.

Unbelievable as this may sound, the camera now KNOWS when there is activity at the finish line - without the use of chunky photo beams or other optical/

mechanical triggering devices - and takes the picture of the finishers.

All in all, it is possibly the most revolutionary advance in digital photo-finish technology since the first FinishLynx system.

## MRE (MULTIPLE REGION ENHANCEMENT)

With this plugin, the operator can select different horizontal bands of image on the screen to enhance. The principal advantage of this feature is when areas of the finish line are in strong sunlight and/or shadow.

Instead of juggling with exposure settings, the operator exposes the bright areas of image and sets up an enhancement region to cope with the darker areas. This feature can be a real time saver in application after application.

## INFIELD DISPLAYS

*Unbelievable performance, quality, and versatility at a truly unbelievable price.*



With the Scoreboard plugin for your FieldLynx unit, you can now drive a scoreboard display of the type used at the Nagano Olympic Games.

These portable, one, two, or three, line alpha-numeric boards are available to Lynx customers at a price unmatched in the industry.

## GETTING YOUR NEW SOFTWARE

*Its FREE from our website.*

Customers and users can upgrade their software, obtain the on-line help files, and a printable version of the manual all from our website.

The files are on our server at <http://www.finishlynx.com/customsoft/Windows/Version2.0/>.

There is no charge if you download the files from our website.

For those of you who want to have the software on floppy disk, the program files, the help files and a printed manual can be ordered through our office. There is a \$50 shipping and handling charge for those of you who choose this option.

## ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS

*Get automatic email notification of new products, software upgrades, special offers and FinishLines.*

If you have an email address and you would like to be on our priority contact list, send an email to [nora@finishlynx.com](mailto:nora@finishlynx.com) with the word "Newsletter" in the subject line.

We guarantee that your email address will not be made available to anyone else - we hate spam, too!



## ASK NEXUS



### Auto Capture For The IMac or G3?

A long-time Mac FinishLynx customer wrote and asked us if the Auto Capture feature described on page three of this newsletter would be available any time soon for the Mac platform.

The head of our product development team replied as follows: "Unfortunately, the EtherNet camera and auto-capture are intimately connected. Auto-Capture depends on the camera's ability to process image data in real-time; only the EtherNet cameras are powerful enough for that. So, until we have an EtherNet version for the Mac, your wishes will not be fulfilled. Pray for a revival of the platform when MacOS-X hits."

## FEEDBACK

Notes from our customers.

Glendon "Buck" Rand sent us this report of his first indoor season's experiences with FinishLynx for Windows: "...We did 10 regular season meets, Easterns, and the State A meet at Bates. At some of the regular season meets where all 16 teams competed, we averaged 130+ races a night. We had a great clerking and starting crew and started most races 10-15 seconds after the previous race ended. WE DID NOT MISS A SINGLE RACE ALL SEASON! Not bad considering we probably did over 1000 races. The Windows software is awesome, quite a change from the Mac version. Having a laptop was great and the display clock was greatly

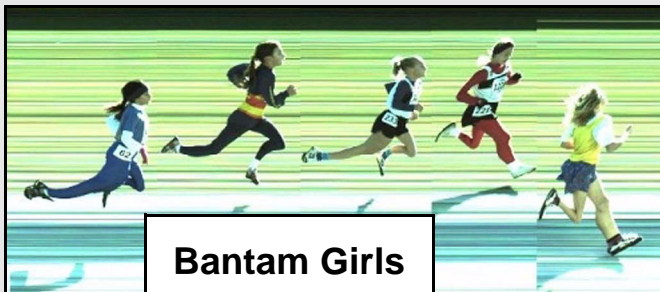
appreciated by the spectators, coaches, and athletes. It just seemed like every meet we had things under control and it was almost too easy...

Ray Carlson of Lisle High School had the first correct answer to our **Brain Teaser** in the last issue of FinishLines:

Get the correct first place finish time from the backup system. Assign whatever start

time you had on the primary system that was closest to the correct start time to the event. Manually calculate the difference in finish time of the first place between the 2 systems. Make sure that you take it to as many decimals as possible. On the primary system, enter that time into the offset of the Results Filters, click on the offset box, and click OK. . - **Congratulations, Ray.**

# FinishLynx Hall of Frames



**Bantam Girls**

Over 2700 athletes competed in the USATF National Junior Olympic Cross Country Championships on Saturday, December 12th in Lisle, IL.

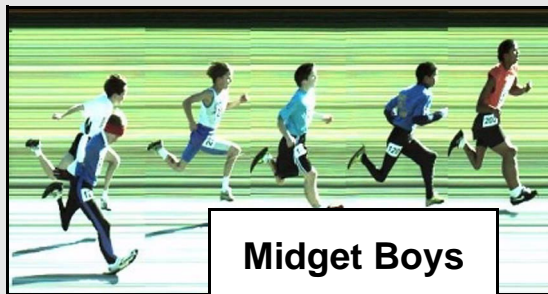
The Lynx Timing Team from Lisle High School was on hand to capture the event. In a break from tradition, the two camera FinishLynx sys-

tem was used to sanity check the results being produced by the officials in the chute.

While video cameras were still used at the event, Ken Jakalski chose to not use voice recorders to supplement the results recorded at the chute finish. He argued to the officials that, "We have two Lynx systems here, let's let Lynx do what it can do."

What Lynx and its operators did do was capture image of every runner in the ten races. When questions came in from coaches about the results produced from the chutes, the FinishLynx images were consulted.

In many cases, disputed results were confirmed as correct by the Lynx image. In still more, however, chute results were changed to match the times and positions recorded by the Lynx crew. The USATF officials were duly impressed when they saw how satisfied the club coaches were with the final results generated using FinishLynx as the primary validation system.



**Midget Boys**

■  
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