

# The Phenom: Alan Webb

**This young runner's enthusiasm has taken him far. Next stop: a world record in the mile.**

**By Peter Gambaccini**

*(In the video above, Alan Webb is introduced by Larry Rawson, ESPN reporter and "The Voice of Track and Field.")*

"I'm on top of the world, baby!" Alan Webb screamed after shattering Steve Scott's 25-year-old American mile record of 3:47.69 in July, running a 3:46.91 on a track in Brasschaat, Belgium.

It was an achievement U.S. distance fans had awaited and expected since 2001, when Webb sent shock waves through the track world by running a 3:53.43 mile when he was a high school senior. Webb, 24, of Reston, Virginia, has had epic highs and crushing lows (most recently, his eighth-place finish in the 1500 at the world championships in August).

With scorching finishing speed and a tactical mastery that displayed patience and maturity, Webb shot past the world's best for victories at the USA Championships in Indianapolis, and a 3:30.54 for 1500 meters in Paris--and he did it with a fist-pumping enthusiasm that electrified the entire track-and-field scene.

The mark he wants next?

"That's easy, man," he says, "world record," which would mean dipping below the current mark of 3:43.13--no easy feat. But Steve Scott himself believes it's within Webb's reach. "When all is said and done," says Scott, "people will consider him the greatest distance runner America has ever had."