

It's a new record!

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There's an old saying: Records are made to be broken.

This means that accomplishments and achievements that set the bar in a particular activity will eventually be surpassed by someone else.

There will always be someone who will come along, determined to do better than a previous record holder.

I have been following high school track and field closely this year and was impressed by the level of competition of some of our local athletes.

The Central Western Ontario Secondary Schools Association (CWOSSA) is a regional competition where district champions compete after winning at the District level. If you qualify at CWOSSA, you move on to the Western OFSAA, and then to the provincial OFSAA competition.

When I was going over this year's statistics, I was surprised to see the winning time in the senior men's 100-meter dash was 10.78. This time was posted by Kowen Moore, from Grand River Collegiate Institute in Kitchener.

The top four in the event finished only .16 seconds apart. That's a blistering fast time over 100 meters.

Moore's winning time is only 1.20 seconds off of Usain Bolt's world record of 9.58 seconds.

However, to put it into perspective, a person finishing the 100 meters with a time of 10.78, would still be around ten meters behind Usain Bolt at the finish line.

Some world records seem unbeatable, but there will always be someone who will try to get their name in the record books. In sports, physical conditioning is of course very important, but along with that, mental preparedness is equally important.

Prior to the 1950s, it was generally believed that running a mile in a time of under 4 minutes was just not attainable by a human being.

However, middle-distance runner Roger Bannister, believed it could be done. Other runners at the time were also making attempts to break that record.

On a blustery and windy day on May 6, 1954, Bannister ran the mile with a time of 3:59.4 seconds, to create a new era in track history.

Felix Baumgartner, the Austrian daredevil, set out to break a few records and he set the bar pretty high ? literally.

On October 14, 2012, Baumgartner stepped out of his space capsule-like balloon gondola at an altitude of 127,852 feet.

He was free-falling for a record distance of 119,431 feet before deploying his parachute. His free fall lasted for 4 minutes and 19 seconds. Not only did he break the record for the highest altitude jump, he also became the first person to break the sound barrier outside of a vehicle as the limited air at that altitude provided little resistance as he fell.

I watched the entire event as it streamed live. It was quite a sight to see Baumgartner fall forward from the platform on his gondola

and finally disappear as he plummeted toward Earth.

Baumgartner broke a 42-year-old altitude record held by Josep Kittenger, a U.S. Air Force officer who made a jump from 102,800 in 1960.

However, records were made to be broken, and Baumgartner's new outstanding record was broken just over two years later when Alan Eustace made a free fall from an altitude of 135,890 feet.

Oddly enough Eustace was not a known daredevil. He was a computer scientist, who for some reason, got it into his head that he could break this record ? and he did.

Annie Edson Taylor set a record ? sort of ? when she became the first person to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel on October 24, 1901. Annie wasn't some young daredevil. She was 63 years old when she performed her stunt, and it was her birthday.

Apparently she had fallen on hard times, and she somehow came up with the idea of going over the falls in a barrel as a way to make money. No one had even considered the stunt before she decided to do it.

Annie's barrel was literally a barrel. It had wood staves and was held together by metal hoops.

She had several delays when trying her stunt because no one wanted to be part of something they figured would result in her death.

Miraculously, Annie survived the plunge relatively unscathed. However, she didn't get rich from her efforts. She died penniless, and members of the public pitched in to pay for her funeral.

The plunge over the cataract did spur others to try a similar feat. Over the years different people have tried the Niagara plunge with different contraptions.

Some lived, some died.

No matter what record or feat someone accomplishes, there will always be someone else who will come along and achieve the next level.