

## A Windy Posting

The question of using wind-aided decathlon scores to qualify for the US Olympic Trials/USA nationals has cropped up. Two scores (one auto and one provisional) have been tagged “not qualified” under heretofore an unused ruling. For me the question came at just the wrong time. Simultaneously

- a) the computer system crashed at my place of employment and I was unable to read/send emails, use internet and post on my website.
- b) I am retiring and have been trying to move from my office and 41 years of files, books and folders are who knows where? What a mess.
- c) I am in the process of purchasing new computer equipment but it is still not installed. I have no internet access at my home.

So I knew there was an issue out there but I couldn't address it. Allow me a few thoughts: *First*, wind readings are appropriate for record purposes, and have not been used for qualifying. My recent note in *DECA Newsletter* (Volume XXXIII, Number 19, April(3), 2008) was a reminder of just that and what the rule is since it was changed a few seasons back. *Second*, the use of wind aided marks for qualifying has long been established...as long as I can recall. I quickly checked my results files and my book *American Decathletes, a 20<sup>th</sup> Century Who's Who* (McFarland, 2002). The number and names of Americans who have qualified for the US Trials and USA nationals with wind-aided decathlon scores reads like a who's-who. Here are a few examples.

### US Olympic Trials:

Dan O'Brien (1992)  
Dave Johnson (1992)  
Steve Fritz (1996)  
Chris Huffins (1996)  
Aric Long (1996)  
Ricky Barker (1996)  
Phil McMullen (2004)  
Chad Smith (2004)  
Stephen Moore (2004)

### USA Nationals:

Kip Janvrin (1991, 1995, 1997)  
Brian Brophy (1994, 1996)  
Drew Fucci (1991, 1995)  
Dave Johnson (1987, 1991)  
Gary Kinder (1986)  
Phil McMullen (1998)  
Stephen Moore (1999)  
Dan O'Brien (1991)  
Aric Long (1994)

*Third*, I must admit that I did not notice that in qualifying procedures listed on the USATF website uses a new phrase about combined events qualifying. That's my fault, but apparently no one else read the fine print as well. We were not watching. That's why this is a surprise. It reads:

*Wind-assisted performances will not be accepted. Wind readings of +2.0 or higher will not be accepted for all relevant events except the combined events, which are allowed up to a +4.0 wind reading.*

It turns out that this is borrowed from a new IAAF procedure used in Olympic years (Scott Hall email). So USATF was following the lead of the IAAF. It should be noted that this is new for IAAF and the ruling (just what is a wind aided score) is misstated in the USATF qualifying procedures. Just see IAAF or USATF rulebook or my *Newsletter* regarding both marks over 4.0 mps and total of marks over 6.0mps.

*Fourth*, my concern is not whether it came as a surprise, but whether it is fair. I don't think it is and for good reason. It is impracticable since CE'ers can't do more than a few meets annually. If they run into lots of wind they are screwed. They can't do a meet a week like practically every other T&F athlete. So they need the leeway and this has long been recognized. As well, there is already an inequity in the rule. Let's not use names or meets but there are athletes who have qualified for the US Trials who have more aiding wind than the marks in question. A hypothetical example may be useful...a athlete who has aiding wind marks of, say +3.5,+3.5,+3.5 certainly has more help than someone who has wind readings of +4.3,+0.2,+2.2. The former is in, the latter is out.

*Fifth*, using this ruling for qualifying will put meet directors in an uneasy (almost silly) position of insisting that latter events (usually the hurdles) into the wind so that the reading are legal. Imagine getting a 4.5 reading in the first event. It may be necessary to long jump and hurdle into the wind (how smart is that?) in order to guarantee a legal total under 6.0mps. We have worked (I guess "lobbied" or "complained" may be more accurate) long and hard to get meet organizers to go along with running with the wind, turning directions around, and so on. I'd hate to give up this progress.

*Sixth*, a number of CE meets are still reported without wind readings or only partial wind readings (as is the case this year with some Trials qualifiers). I know this because I retype them all for my *Newsletter* and *Results Page* which are posted on the website: [www.decathlonusa.typepad.com](http://www.decathlonusa.typepad.com). I've been doing this for 39 years. What are we to do about this? I don't have an answer. There may not be an answer.

*Seventh*, so what to do? Just be reasonable. The athlete should appeal. This is especially the case for anyone who meet the "A" standard. The case in point, a 7907 score with less aiding wind than that of other qualifiers seems to me to warrant an appeal to this ruling. I would support an appeal in this specific case, just b/c it's reasonable. It's an "A" standard score for goodness sake.

Finally, this should give pause to those who chase qualifying marks around the nation at sites that advertise "great wind conditions."

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