

THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

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NCAA I QUALIFYING COMPLETE

Cepeda, Hines, Hoskins, Angy Win Major Conference Crowns

Hello Again....The extended weekend of Wed/Sun, May 9-13 is the year's busiest since it is the last opportunity to qualify for the NCAA I championships in June. Fifteen Division I conferences held their multi-event champs in this period in a mad dash to fit athletes into the top 26 listing which is offered an invite to the NCAA's.

The Big Sky meet (Pocatello, ID), the WAC affair in Fresno, CA and the Mountain West in San Diego started the marathon weekend. By Thursday afternoon they were completed and Nathan Capps/Idaho St (7033), John Strang/Utah St (6770) and Brian Walsh/USAFA (7321) were the respective winners. The surprise was in the Mountain West where 6-6 Norwegian senior Olav Row of Wyoming ran up a huge PR (7222) to qualify for the NCAA's. BYU's Justin Palmer did not contest.

On Thursday, May 10 three more Div I leagues began their multis, with the Mid-American going in Miami, OH, the SEC in Tuscaloosa, AL, and Conference USA getting under way at Rice University. By Friday, the predictable had occurred in the first two leagues: at MAC Kent's Chris Caine managed a 7202 win for a return trip to Sacramento, and at the SEC meet the awesomely talented Jangy Addy of Tennessee (7461) prevailed over Florida freshman Mike Morrison (7316). The marks were PRs for both who each had tough springs, pot-marked by injuries and non-heights. Chris Helwick, a Tennessee senior and one of the Sacramento favorites did not compete.

But the final event in Houston left everyone shaking their heads. With an event to go Houston junior Jarrett Flax held a 359 point lead and, as it ultimately turned out, needed but a 5 minute 1500 to qualify for the NCAA's. His



Raven Cepeda/Northern Iowa (top left), won the Missouri Valley Conference crown with 7838. Neil Hines/Iowa State junior (upper right), captured a quality Big 12 meet in Lincoln with a 7508 PR. Brandon Hoskins/Liberty (bottom left) was the IC4A champ with 7463, 2 points more than that of Jangy Addy/Tennessee (bottom right) who was the SEC winner.

6:19.53 clocking left him with the victory (6754) but well short of a qualifying score.

Two additional meets were also conducted on Thursday-Friday: The all divisions new Englands were held at Dartmouth in Hanover, NH and a last chance qualifier was conducted at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. In Hanover Coast Guard Academy cadet Steve Blum

won (6460) and Dan Keller, a freshman at UNC, won the UNC Elite affair with 6194.

Seven additional conferences began their championship affairs on Friday morning (May 11). By the end of the day some big scores were in the offing. Wisconsin senior Nathan Brown, who matches Wyoming's Roe for size, ran up more than 4000 points on day one. Come-backing Brandon Hoskins of Liberty was in control of the IC4A meet with a score just under 4K. Northern Iowa's raven Cepeda held sway at the Missouri Valley affair at Drake and at the Big 12 champ in Lincoln, NE under sunny skies, the first day scores were so good that the number of possible NCAA qualifiers reached double digits.

When the dust cleared on Saturday (May 12) the NCAA field was set. A trio of mid-level Div I leagues also completed their combined events and offered no qualifiers: Matt Vining of Arkansas State won the Sun Belt title in Lafayette, LA with 6867; Brian Taylor/Southern Utah was the Mid-Continent champ (6782) and East Tennessee's Nick Chernikow captured the Atlantic Sun meet in Johnson City, TN.

Meanwhile, there were fireworks at the remaining for majors. Hoskins was the first to qualify as his 7463 score at the IC4As at Princeton won by over 600 points. Duane Hynes of the host school withdrew after eight events.

At State College Nate Brown was cruising along when he cam a cropper in the vault. His NH was devastating to himself and the Badger's chances to repeat as NCAA team champs. To his credit he stuck with the event and finished 4th with 7025 points. A PR 4.45m/14-14-7 ¼ effort would have given him a score well in excess of 7700. Teammate Joe Detmer won the title with an eased up 7278 effort. (ed note: somehow we must get Brown to the USATF meet in Indy in late June)

Cepeda, who has stamped himself as one of the NCAA favorites with his Drake relays win, pushed his PR to 7835 while winning the Missouri Valley title. UNI coach Travis Geophert was looking for yet another Div I qualifier in the person of sophomore mat Clark who has big league 1500 skills. As it turned out, and unknown at the time, Clark needed a time of 4:07.00, just off the CR, to qualify. Both athlete and coach thought 4;10 was possible in Des Moines, and Clark bounded off at the pistol. He looked fine until he hit a wall 150 meters out and he staged down the stretch, loosing valuable seconds, finishing in 4;18.31 for a 7072 PR score. Wow.

Meanwhile, 200 miles west in Lincoln, Nebraska, the entire Big 12 field was on its way to

Sacramento. Steady junior Neil Hines/Iowa State, claimed a 7508 PR score for the win. Behind him five others whose season scores gave no indication of qualifying, put up big marks: Lee Martin of Nebraska (7322 PR), Bjorn Sommerfeldt/Missouri (7283), Skyler Reising/Nebraska (7244 PR), Texas frosh Shawn Schmidt (7221 PR), and Adam Fretwell/Kansas St (7197 PR). As it ultimately turned out three others (Andrew Webb/Texas (7th with 7079), Josh Kirk/Kansas (9th with 7064) and Oklahoma's Mitch Henry (dnf'd) also had season score that will get them to Sacramento. So the league qualified nine! An entire spring a bad Mid-Western weather was forgotten on Saturday afternoon in Lincoln.

Saturday also witnessed the start of multis at the only Div I non-league, league meet, the Independent Div I affair in Davis, CA. By Sunday Tad Rud/North Dakota State, who has the shortest name in combined events today, was a winner (6492).

WHEW! Most of these meets had potential qualifiers. In a space of five days thirty three athletes with a reasonable chance of Div I qualifying toed the line at 16 different locations. As it turned out the 26th best score (7152) belonged to Josh Kirk of Kansas. The box below offers what the author thinks will be the NCAA field. Here

NCAA Div I Decathlon List

7946	Arnold, Jake	Arizona
	Baton Rouge	3/30
7838	Cepeda, Raven	Northern Iowa
	Des Moines	5/12
7732	Helwick, Chris	Tennessee
	Knoxville	4/12
7508	Hines, Neil	Iowa St
	Lincoln	5/12
7463	Hoskins, Brandon	Liberty
	Princeton	5/12
7461	Addy, Jangy	Tennessee
	Tuscaloosa	5/11
7353	Palmer, Justin	BYU
	Provo	4/26
7342	Buteaux, Brandon	Tex-San A
	Austin	4/5
7334	Walsh, Brian	USAFA
	Azusa	4/12
7322	Martin, Lee	Nebraska
	Lincoln	5/12
7316	Morrison, Mike	Florida
	Tuscaloosa	5/11
7310	Sossah, Mateo	N Carolina-FRA
	College Park	4/20
7296	Detmer, Joe	Wisconsin
	Auburn	4/7

7283	Sommerfeldt, Bjorn Lincoln	Missouri-NOR 5/12
7286	Hustedt, Josh Berkeley	Stanford 3/29
7244	Reising, Skyler Lincoln	Nebraska 5/13
7243	Calvo, Kyle Princeton	Pennsylvania 4/13
7226	Webb, Andrew Austin	Texas 4/5
7222	Roe, Olav San Diego	Wyoming-NOR 5/10
7221	Schmidt, Shawn Lincoln	Texas 5/12
7219	Henry, Mitch Austin	Oklahoma 4/5
7214	Conrad, Steven Berkeley	California 3/29
7202	Caine, Chris Miami, OH	Kent St 5/11
7197	Fretwell, Adam Lincoln	Kansas St 5/12
7175	Koskenoja, Tyler Scottsdale	Dartmouth-CAN 3/22
7152	Kirk, Josh Lawrence	Kansas 4/19
(26)		
	(NCAA I: A = 7500, B = 6900)	

Confessions of a Decathlon Internet Junkie

I have to admit more than a passing interest in collegiate decathlon results. Having to announce the NCAA Div I meet in Sacramento next month I follow the meet results and careers carefully to prepare. And there are a few athletes I've gotten to know quite well and must confess to 'rooting' for them in the qualifying run-up. So, when '*qualifying weekend*' arrived this year, with both reasons in play, I was at the Dell laptop scanning for news and results.

Early in the week I prepared a master list of every possible conference decathlon and last chance qualifier-16 of them, and listed sites, start times, schedules, all obtained from the host institutions web sites. Most were easy to navigate and understand.

I also prepared a list of all the major players, with PR scores and individual event marks, everything that was necessary to evaluate who was doing well and who was not so as to predict final scores. I was ready, perhaps over prepared.

I felt that there were at least 30 Div I athletes who had a shot at qualifying who had not yet attained a qualifying score, likely somewhere between 7150 and 7200. I felt that anyone with a seasonal score of 7250 or higher was safe, and those in the 7200-7250 range would be, perhaps, on the qualifying fence. For the past 4 years, ever since the NCAA went with an expanded field, 26 decathletes have been selected. The NCAA decathlon will be held on June 7-8 on the campus of Sacramento State U. The final day of qualifying was Sunday, May 13, and the majority of NCAA I conferences conducted their championship meets on this extended weekend, defined as Wed-Sun, May 9-13. Then I looked up what had made it in the past few years:

2003	7259	26 accepted (no NCAA indoor heptathlon)
2004:	7292	26 accepted (20 > 5400 indoors)
2005:	7145	26 accepted (14 > 5400 indoors)
2006:	7127	26 accepted (18 > 5400 indoors)
2007:		(21 > 5400 indoors, 81 > 5000)

That is also exam week at my university. Could I administer and mark exams, complete final grades and still follow the qualifying?

Day One (Wednesday, May 9)
Three conferences, all in the far west, started their league meets with combined events. One major contender did not start but two other I had hardly heard of were

doing really well. An easy day on only first day results.

Day Two (Thursday, May 10). Now its got interesting (and time consuming) as four more leagues and one last chance qualifier were scheduled to start. I jumped from one league meet to another on the internet following the progress of seven conference affairs simultaneously. *Trackshark.com* was very useful as I bounded from site to site. Some sites or timing services were excellent and provided results as soon as the event was completed. Hooray for *Flash Results*. Some were maddening slow. I began my vigil at 10 am with an eastern meet and ended at 9:pm with the western conferences' final day. Some athletes were doing well, others not, and hour by hour I changed my forecast of the 26th score. And where was that damn last chance qualifier? The meet might have been titled 'elite' but the reporting was anything but. And then there was the 300 point PR score on the West Coast by an athlete who had not contested a decathlon before this weekend. *What was going on out there?* Decathletes who I expected to qualify did not, and those I did not expect to qualify did. At this point I thought 7200 was still necessary.

Day Three (Friday, May 11) I had two final exams to administer so I took the laptop to the classroom and periodically checked results beginning at 9 am I took the laptop to the exam room . There were 5 meets in their 2nd day and 7 more beginning, a dozen in all. Three additional 7200+ scores came out of the Thur-Fri meets, no surprises there. Early in the evening I looked at one nine event score and predicted a 7200 final tally only to be shocked an hour later when the 1500m final times were posted....6:19? What the hell had happened? Scratch one potential qualifier.

I also began to check the weather channel periodically looking for forecasts for places like southeastern Nebraska, Des Moines, Iowa, central Pennsylvania and central Alabama, all sites of major decathlons. The weather was universally good. I even got to phoning some coaches to obtain updates on their athletes conditions. I was eating meals in my office, grading papers and checking scores (some life, huh?). But I was overdoing it. On one results page I was looking at ten event scores (in the 6800-6900 range) but, thinking they were nine events scores, I was projecting final tallies for three athletes well into the 7300 range. I did not wait for the final scores and went home depressed, feeling it would now take @7250 to qualify.

Day Four (Saturday, May 12) My spirits lifted when I saw the final scores from a major conference and noted my error. Only a pair had qualified, not five. What a roller coaster. I watched the progress of three major conferences on Saturday (I had given up on another since they waited until 9:30 pm the night before to post first day scores that could have been available 5 hours earlier. Saturday was make or break day. At one conference it was all make, as seven put up PR scores and nearly the entire field qualified. Disheartening news cam from another league when the leader and overwhelming favorite no-heightd in the vault. O my! Only a single qualifier from a power conference! Then I recieved an email from a coach wanting to know the collegiate record for the dec 1500m. Emails kept me posted on that league's results when the league website failed to provide results. And on the website of a major relay meet too? PR score, but no record and no qualifier. Wow. I had spent, with the exception on church and two meals, spent

the better part of the day in my office working scores. Getta life!

Day Five: (Sunday, May 13)

Results of one tardy league were posted *the next day*. Go figure. One good score and that was that. One final non-league conducted its decathlon on Sat-Sun and when I did my final tally 7152 was the cutoff score. In all, ten qualified on the final weekend. I did final grading and searched for the tardy results.

Overall reporting of decathlon results has improved dramatically in recent years making it possible, in many cases, to follow the events in reasonable time. No longer does one need to wait a few days for the mail. On the other hand, it does become obvious which timing services, collegiate websites and conference websites are on top of this and which are not. Two sites continue to misspell 'decathlon.' And I should be thankful that only two timing services listed and provided results *out of order* while 2/3rd offered results smartly. One should feel grateful.

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