

THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

DECA Newsletter

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EATON: 8023 at OREGON RELAYS

Clark Edges McGinnis at Drake

Hello Again....Oregon Junior Ashton Eaton posted the nation's top score with a win at the Oregon Relays in Eugene on a busy decathlon weekend of April 22-26. The 8023 score overshadowed a high scoring 100th Drake Relays meeting where Northern Iowa senior Mat Clark edged Minnesota junior RJ McGinnis as both posted NCAA auto qualifiers.

For decathletes the weekend ended the collegiate Relays and Invitational season and the major meets (Oregon and Drake Relays and BYU's Robinson affair) provide lots of qualifying marks. But the major news was the effort by Eaton, 21, who notched his 3rd consecutive 8k effort dating back to an 8055 win at the '08 NAAs and a PR 8122 at the US Olympic Trials.

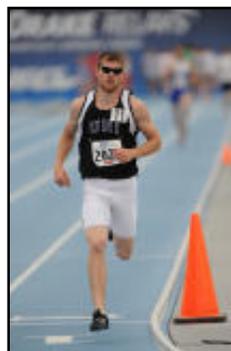
"People are beginning to realize what we are doing as a team and they are seeing where we are going," said Eaton. "That is because the top athletes here at Oregon are taking the rest of the team with them and everyone is jumping on the success train." The mark included a javelin lifetime best of 53.70m/ 176-2 and stamps the Bend, Oregon native, as the prohibitive NCAA favorite. Teammate Marshall Ackley, Alyssa, OR PR'd with a national D-1 provisional 6933 effort.

In Des Moines collegians Clark and McGinnis got by post grad Derek Gearman and the issue was not settled until the final two laps of the 1500 meters. Clark's endurance skills surfaced and his 4:16.89 was 32+ seconds better than McGinnis. The



Oregon's Ashton Eaton ran up 8023 points to win the Oregon Relays in Eugene and post the nation's top early score.

Northern Iowa senior needed a 28 second margin for the win and his 7663 was a near PR. McGinnis's 7626 score was a lifetime best. Jon Hilton's 6970 5th place effort became the top NAIA seasonal score and Concordia's Brock Solveson posted an auto D-III mark.



Northern Iowa's Mat Clark ran 4:16.89, enough to capture the decathlon at the 100th Drake Relays in Des Moines.

Clark was the 4th athlete with UNI ties (current coach Travis Geophert and former teammate Raven Cepeda) to win at Drake in

the past 6 years. Clark, who overcame knee and shoulder injuries, was down 300 points with two events remaining and realized he'd need a strong 1500m. A year earlier he drafted off of Joe Detmer and PR'd in 4:12. This year he did it alone. "On the last lap I just bit my tongue and pushed. When I crossed the line I looked back to see where he (McGinnis) was and he was right where I thought he'd be for me to get that 28 second margin. I was pretty nervous until it was over."

Meanwhile, on the same two days (22-23) under clear skies, BYU's Estonia soph Meelis Kosk PR'd to win the Roby Invitational in Provo edging early leader, Utah State's John Strang, 7270 to 7180. Idaho State's Levi Keller got an NCAA provisional with a 3rd place 6967. In other minor meets, Matt Haskins of Cornerstone College won the



Don Cooper/Samford (l), the Milesus, NY freshman, was unlucky in the Southern Conference discus, but Meelis Kosk/BYU (r), a sophomore from Parnu, Estonia, won in Provo with 7270 PR score.

Gina Relays at Hillsdale, MI with a PR 6193, sure to be an NAIA qualifier. Penn's Max Westman won at home Penn Relays and 3 conference championships were settled: Western Oregon's won the Great Northwest Conference, Jeff Hester/Pt Loma was the Golden State Conference winner, while Sean Reardon/ Western Carolina set a Southern Conference meet record 6493 to get by Don Cooper, an exciting frosh talent at Samford U, who, holding a significant lead, no marked in the discus in Statesboro, GA.

