

DOUBLE Z and D WITH 'BIG' WINS Elbows, Ankles, Zeros Open Qualifying Door

Hello Again.... The final collegiate conference weekend resulted in Big 10/12 victories for Wisconsin's Double Z (Zach Ziemek) and Kansas State's Double D (Devin Dick). But the weekend's biggest news at the end of the weekend when the dust cleared (and when it stopped raining in the mid-west) was who was in and who was out as NCAA I decathlon qualifiers. Who knew just weeks ago that injured elbows and ankles would be the deciding factor on who punched final Hayward Field tickets to Eugene.

Virtual certain qualifiers when the season began included: 2x indoor champ Curtis Beach/Duke; 2x indoor runner-up Jay Cato/Wisconsin; 7847 performer Austin Bahner/Wichita St; and last year's bronze medalist Marcus Nilsson/UCLA. But Beach, 23, Albuquerque, (PR 8083) never fully recovered from right elbow maladies and his season truncated at the ACC Champs. He'll have elbow surgery next week. Nilsson, 23, Malmö, Sweden, (8104 PR) also ran afoul of an elbow strain and recently took a medical redshirt. He'll return for both indoor and outdoor season in 2015. Cato, 23, Crete, IL, (7616 PR), hurt his left ankle indoors (different from last year's Achilles surgery) that made it hard on non- straight ahead events relegating him to just long jump and pole vault duty. And Bahner, 22, Wichita, never fully recovered from an indoor hamstring.

An so the door was open to additional qualifiers where the final week/weekend



Big 12/Big 10 winners were Devin Dick/Kansas State (left) and Zach Ziemek/Wisconsin (right) who won in Lubbock, TX and W Lafayette, IN respectively.

proved decisive for the 24 spots at the NCAA I champs in Eugene, June 10-11. In fact two-thirds (16 of 24) of the qualifiers will be new to the NCAA outdoor affair.

Here's the story of 'Conference Week Three:'

A quartet of final D-III meets provided a 6635 effort by Bates junior Eric Wainman at the ECAC III affair in Troy, NY. And the JCs went to town. Frenchman Simon Gyllemsten of Vincennes was the NJCAA winner in Meas, AZ with a 6912 score. And the eye-opening news came from Mt. Sac which hosted the Cal CC champs. Cerritos frosh Thoma Cheval overcame a big 9 event lead of Michael Poullard/Mt Sac (2.16m/7-1 high jump) to win, 7175 to 7024.

Yet most of the news was at the D-I level. Western D-I meets dotted the landscape during the early week/weekend. Utah Valley's speedy Mike McPherson won the WAC in Orem, Utah with a PR 7401 effort.

The Mountain West winner was Wyoming soph Kyle Sullivan at 6776 after New Mexico's Richard York ran afoul of a hurdle 'DQ' while on the way to what appeared an easy qualifier (appeared to be in mid-7400 neighborhood). Montana St senior Jeff Mohl won the Big Sky affair in Flagstaff with a 7359 effort, an ultimate qualifier. K'Vonte Scott/Charlotte was the Conference USA champ (6912) in Houston.

Bad weather bedeviled mid-west



L-R: The 2014 NCAA I decathlon will be without Curtis Beach /Duke (elbow); Marcus Nilsson/UCLA (elbow); and Jay Cato/Wisconsin (ankle).

meetings. For example the SEC meet in Lexington, KY was, predictable handled by the Georgia pair of Maicel Uibo (7863) and Garrett Scantling (7675) while Kevin Lazas of Arkansas rested. '13 qualifier Nathanael Franks was 3rd at 7188. At the rainy Mid-American meet in Athens, OH, Buffalo's talented soph Mike Morgan added 1292 points to his PR winning with a 7699 score. A pair of Akron Zips, Alex McCune (7660) and Bryan Jones (7371), went 2-3.

The Big 10 ten eventer in W. Lafayette, IN was dominated by by Wisconsin's 'Double Z', Zach Ziemek, 21, Itasca, IL, who lead the entire way. His 7659 score was 228 points better than Michigan State's Kurt Schneider. Penn State soph Robert Cardina moved to third after apparent NCAA qualifier Luca Weiland, Berlin, GER, a Minnesota frosh, vault no heighted. He had 5305 points in the book before the vault.

The Missouri Valley meet also had rain and Bahner never got untracked. He



New NCAA qualifiers, L-R, include Michigan State senior Kurt Schneider; Texas freshman Wolf Mahler; and Buffalo soph Mike Morgan.

repeated (with 6 teammates in the meet!) but could not improve on an early season 7331 score and finished the weekend as #25 on the NCAA list.

UConn senior Jesse Chapman was the IC4A winner at 6825 in Princeton. Yet the biggest story could be found at Texas Tech U where it was hot and dry both days. The Big 12 Conference produced 4 new national qualifiers. Kansas State senior Devin Dick, 24, Hutchinson, KS, continues to be the events inspiring story. He overcame testicular cancer three seasons ago and PR'd in Lubbock with a 7792 win (with 4 individual event PRs out of the last 6!) while Latvian soph teammate Reinis Kregers (whose 7304 early season effort was surely not going to hold up) was second with a PR 7618 effort. Note: In 2012 Dick's 7425 3rd place effort did not secure an NCAA invite. Also earning NCAA tickets were Texas frosh Wolf Mahler (7602) and Baylor senior Henry Vildsola (7344), both PRs. Heckuva meet.

Next week will feature the national small college champs (D-II, III and NAIA).



Bad luck: Austin Bahner/Wichita St (weather); Luca Weiland/Minnesota (vault nh); Richard York/New Mexico (hurdle DQ) will not be in Eugene.