

THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

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THE BIGS (10, 12) WERE OH SO CLOSE

Conference Champs End National Qualifying

Hello Again.....the final weekend of collegiate conference meets ended national qualifying on May's 3rd weekend. And two of the meets were suspenseful down to the final steps of the 1500 meters. The Big 12 and Big 10 meets (perhaps that's why they are called *Big*) had all of the drama any multi fans could dream of: with titles, bragging rights, team points and national qualifying swaying in the balance.

This is the year's busiest time.... consider, 53 conference championship meets were conducted in the past 3 weeks (26 at Div I, 9 at Div II, 13 at Div III and 5 NAIA) as athletes positioned themselves for the national collegiate meets. And this does not take into consideration the dozen or so junior college and last chance affairs. Over 600 decathletes went to the starting line at least once in this period. In short, we've been busy.

The past weekend's (May 12-13-14-15) major stories appeared in Columbia, Missouri and Bloomington, Indiana where the annual Big-12 and Big-10 conferences saw two of the closest meets on record. First to Mizzou, where long time Tiger coach Rick McGuire, a supporter of CEs and promoter of the annual Walton meet, was retiring after 23 years as head coach. His protégés, senior Nick Adcock and junior Lars Rise dominated the 14th Big 12 decathlon. Day one offered fine weather and conditions for the eleven competitors. Defending champ Moritz



With 50 meters remaining in the Big 12 decathlon 1500m Missouri teammates Lars Rise (left), 21, Trondheim, Norway and Nick Adcock, 22, senior, Kansas City battled. Adcock fought of the challenge, finished .26 seconds up and won the Big 12 Conference crown by 9 points.



Cleve/Kansas State (8004 in Lubbock in '09) was being cautious with a minor leg injury and did not start. At the break Adcock led speedy Mantas Silkauskas, 4018 to 4011 with Rise another 34 points in arrears. It was much like the Mt Sac Relays in April where Rise prevailed (7693 to 7672) in a Mizzou 1-2 sweep.

The second day two turned cold, raw and rainy, a scene that reminded one ofwell, of November. In the final section of the of the hurdles Silkauskas (who was on K-States winning shuttle hurdle team at Drake) could not get his lead leg over the 6th barrier and went crashing in lane 2. Adcock's fine 14.26 extend his lead but Rise never let him out of site. Three of the field vault no-

heighted but the Missouri pair each cleared 4.70m/15-5. With just the 1500 meters remaining Adcock led by 7 points (7025 to 7018). The tenure of the 1500m went as predicted, with the junior Norwegian pushing and the senior from Kansas City holding on. With 300m remaining Adcock took the lead but Rise fought back and, coming off the final curve, made a desperate dash for the win. Both pounded down the final straight with Adcock slightly pulling away in the final 30 meters. The final margin was 9 points and the winning score for Adcock was a PR 7704, quite good given the conditions. He became just the 2nd Big 12er to win both the indoor and outdoor CE in the same season (Donovan Kilmartin/Texas '06 the other). One can find an interview with Nick Adcock at: <http://all-access.cbssports.com/player.html?code=miss&media=180589>.

As close as the dec was in Columbia, it was even closer in Bloomington where not two but *three* athletes were involved. All three needed an NCAA qualifying score. The antagonists were: **RJ McGinnis**, 23, Burnsville, MN, a Minnesota senior who had won at Drake but his seasonal best effort of 7319 was not likely to hold up as a provisional qualifier. He needed better. He was 2nd a year earlier and 2x Big 10 indoor hept champ with a 7626 PR. **Frank Shotwell**, 22, a Michigan junior from Medina, OH, with a 7362 PR who was the 2008 Big 10 indoor and outdoor champ. **Dave Grzesiak**, 21, Wisconsin soph from Brookfield, WI, with a 7163 PR

With two events remaining Grzesiak, who showed significant vault improvement, led. The javelin then juggled the standings and with one event remaining Shotwell led McGinnis by 23 (just under 4 seconds) and Grzesiak by 34 points. The Wisconsin soph possessed a superior 1500 PR, 4:30.55, 3½ seconds faster than McGinnis and 6½ seconds faster than Shotwell. If all ran up to lifetime bests the



Wisconsin soph Dave Grzesiak, 21, (left) and Minnesota senior RJ McGinnis, 23, (right) finished less than a second apart at the Big Ten decathlon in Bloomington.

final standings would be a virtual 3 way dead heat! And it almost happened just that way.

These hulks of men (McGinnis at 6-3, 210, Shotwell at 6-1½, 210 and Grzesiak 6-4, 200) presented an eerie scene as they shuffled around IU's Billy Hayes track in Bloomington, each pushing the pace, then holding on, then pushing again. In the end Grzesiak managed 4:36.69, about 3 seconds up on Shotwell who struggled down the homestretch. But it was McGinnis who prevailed (4:35.75). He needed about a 3.9 second margin over Shotwell for the win and he just got it...4.1 seconds and won the crown by a scant 2 points. In decathlon language McGinnis won by one step. Overlaying this scene were implications for team scores. (The Gophers edged the Badgers, 145-121). Who wrote this script?

Final Scores:

| | | |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| McGinnis | Minnesota | 7381 |
| Shotwell | Michigan | 7379 PR |
| Grzesiak | Wisconsin | 7364 PR |

And all three got provisional marks certain to punch tickets to the NCAA D-I affair.

The Big 12 and Big 10 were but 2 of the nation's 20 week/weekend decathlons. When the final week/weekend (NCAA D-I) of conference championships began (on May 12) it appeared that a score of 7350 or higher would be necessary to garner one of the top 24 spots to warrant an invite to the national meet (June 10-11, Eugene, OR)

There were other compelling stories and the necessary scores to advance to the nationals changed daily depending upon who did well, who got injured, who no heighted and.....the weather.

Wed-Thurs, May 12-13

The western leagues went first. Little known Nick Trubachik, 21, Estacada, OR and a senior at Portland State notched a NCAA ticket with a victory at the Big Sky meet in Ogden, Utah. His PR score of 7390 appeared



St. David's Grenada native Kurt Felix/Boise St, the '09 JUCO champ from Central Arizona, won the WAC decathlon with a PR 7412 total.

very safe as one of the ultimate two dozen. An hour earlier Grenada junior transfer Kurt Felix/Boise State-Grenada, had used a 64.71m/ 212-4 spear to win the WAC meet in Ruston, LA. His PR 7412 score was also a certain qualifier. New Mexico freshman Richard York came from behind to win the Mountain West champs in Albuquerque. With 2 events remaining Wyoming senior Jay Petsch appeared a certain winner with a 7300+ score. But he fell apart in the final 2 events allowing a popular victory for York.

Thurs-Fri, May 13-14

The SEC meet in Knoxville provided some big scores and one big disappointment. Unsurprisingly Florida soph Gray Horn prevailed over Georgia junior Cory Holman. What was surprising was that the springy Holman led into the final event and Horn's 29 second 1500m margin was necessary for the



Arkansas's Terry Prentice (left), a 4x California state hurdle champ (PR 13.50) and USC transfer, has been converted to a decathlete and was on his way at the SEC meet before a pv no-height. Nick Trubachik (right), Portland State senior won the Big Sky with a PR 7390.

victory, 7652 to 7500, both PRs. Holman's final tally was significant since his 7308 pre meet mark had been "bubble" score. Further, another qualifier appeared in the making for Terry Prentice, Pomona, CA, a 19 year old sophomore from Arkansas whose improvement has been dramatic. But he nh'd in the vault and ultimately settled for a 6650 8th place. But remember the name.

The Mid-American meet in Buffalo was equally important to qualifying. Defending champ Dan Kinsey, 23, a senior at Akron who was 10th at the '09 NCAA meet, badly needed a qualifying score, and at this point that appeared to be about 7350 or better. But it *snowed* in Buffalo on Thursday and Kinsey's 1st day 3475 score found him buried in 3rd place, nearly 300 points out of the lead. His 2nd day was heroic, 3838 points, yet his winning total of 7313 was likely, given what was happening in other meets, to fall well short of an NCAA qualifying mark.

At the Summit League meet in Toledo strong headwinds took Wes Leutz, 21, a junior at North Dakota St, out of the NCAA picture. His 7290 early season score needed improving but, with no chance for a big score he cruised in with a 6807 winning total.

Other D-I collegiate winners included Chandler Rieske/Utah Valley who won the Great West meet in Yankton, SD with 6332; Philip Adam of Rice (already has a qualifier) who won the Conference USA affair without

benefit of a 1500m (6607); and Jordan Briggs of East Tennessee St who captured the Atlantic Sun decathlon with 6237.

Fri-Sat, May 14-15

The Silkauskas hurdle crash in opened another spot. He has a 7700+ PR (at the '09 Big 12 meet) and the K-State soph was an NCAA lock given his 4k+ 1st day in Columbia, MO. And 300 miles south strong thunderstorms



A pair of Ohians, Frank Shotwell/Michigan (left), Medina, and Dan Kinsey/Akron (right), East Liverpool, turned in top efforts at the Big 10 & MAC respectively.

afflicted the Southland Conference meet in Ruston, LA. Defending champ Cory Roberts/SE Louisiana (7451 in '09) and Matt Johnson, a soph at Sam Houston St were well on the way to 7400+ marks when the storms came. Johnson vault nh'd and Roberts ended up winning with 7293 points...no cigar.

With spots opening Big Ten athletes grabbed three and the NCAA field was set. In the final analysis Dan Kinsey's 2nd day in Buffalo had proved just enough and his 7313 proved to be the 24th and final qualifying mark. The day's other two meets, Missouri Valley in Normal, IL, and the IC4A in Princeton, provided good but inconsequential scores. Tom Fitzsimon of Mt St Mary's won the latter (7195) while Dan Gooris, a soph at Northern Iowa won the former (7228) over six Wichita State decathletes who went 2-3-4-5-6-7 for 28 team points, enough to assure a Shocker team victory.

A pair of major last chance meets were conducted last week. After vault no-

heights by vets Chris Helwick and Joe Detmer, opened the door for U of Windsor grad Jamie Adjety-Nelson who won the Wake Forest Deacon meet (May 11-12) with a 7829 total. West Chester grad Eric Broadbent tallied 4k on day one and ended with a 7119 final tally for 3rd. Carolina senior Dan Keller improved his seasonal best to 7467 for 2nd. Helwick's near AR 73.25m/ 240-4 javelin was eye-opening and the week's top individual mark. And, for all of the hoopla, the week's top score came at a small last chance meet in Claremont, CA. The CMS Classic saw eastern vets Mark Jellison (ex UConn) and Andrew Hall (ex-Dartmouth), post PRs, 7781 and 7405. Ryan Pittman of host Claremont-Mudd-Scripps notched a huge PR, 6759, a significant D-III mark.

Quite a week but the decathlon news was not confined to CE marks. A week ago Bryan Clay opened his outdoor campaign with a noteworthy 13.64 hurdle PR at the Oxy invitational. Not to be outdone Oregon senior Ashton Eaton posted a pair of big PRs at the Pac-10 meet in Berkeley: 10.19 100m (+2.7 wind) in the prelims (he ran 10.33 -1.0 in finals for 2nd) and won the hurdle finals in 13.54 (-1.5). 10.19! 13.54! Add a 7.81m/25-7 ½ winning long jump.



Missing the Killer B's

Each season we follow the NCAA-I decathlon qualifying with interest. In 2010 a new qualifying procedure has been instituted impacting (and reducing the size) the field. The final field will be without 3 familiar and expected names, the decathlon's *Killer Bs*: Gonzalo Barroilhet/Florida St, Bjorn Barrefors/Nebraska and Duke's Curtis Beach.

Important dates for the NCAA decathlon:

May 16 Sunday -final day of qualifying
May 18 Tuesday -declaration open
May 21 Friday -declaration close and accepted

entrants posted by 5 pm on NCAA
website

June 10-11 Thursday-Friday NCAA meet in Eugene

As of Monday, May 17 the top 24 qualifiers
are listed below. Remember that this may not
be the final field since some, perhaps due to
injuries, may not declare:

| | | |
|------|----------------|----------------|
| 8310 | Eaton, Ashton | Oregon |
| 7704 | Adcock, Nick | Missouri |
| 7693 | Rise, Lars | Missouri |
| 7667 | Sossah, Mateo | North Carolina |
| 7652 | Horn, Gray | Florida |
| 7628 | Moss, Miller | Clemson |
| 7557 | Morrison, Mike | California |
| 7542 | Otto, Trinity | Texas A&M |
| 7526 | Robinson, Robt | Northridge |
| 7521 | Taiwo, Jeremy | Washington |
| 7500 | Holman, Cory | Georgia |

[11 auto qualifiers]

| | | |
|------|------------------|----------------|
| 7567 | Keller, Dan | North Carolina |
| 7532 | Johansson, Bjorn | Akron |
| 7429 | Bray, Wesley | Houston |
| 7429 | Cleve, Moritz | Kansas St |
| 7412 | Felix, Kurt | Boise St |
| 7396 | Adam, Philip | Rice |
| 7390 | Trubachik, Nick | Portland St |
| 7381 | McGinnis, RJ | Minnesota |
| 7379 | Shotwell, Frank | Michigan |
| 7364 | Gresziak, Dave | Wisconsin |
| 7350 | Smith, Sean | Connecticut |
| 7331 | Ackley, Marshall | Oregon |
| 7313 | Kinsey, Dan | Akron |

[top 24]