

THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

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HELWICK, RANDOLPH MAKE NOISE Trials Next & a Word about Wind

Hello Again..... we use this newsletter to catch up on all the decathlon news we have overlooked in the past few weeks as we prepare for the US Olympic Trials in Eugene, Oregon on June 29-30. "The Trials", as they always have, will take center stage and a field of 18 will go to the starting line with what is likely to be a sellout crowd at Hayward field on the University of Oregon campus. All the qualifying meets, the arguments about standards, wind, timing and the like will be put aside as America's top dozen-and-a-half all-around athletes will attempt to impress the scoring tables. Oh my, will it be exciting!

Bryan Clay, off his IAAF indoor world title, will be the favorite both in Eugene and in Beijing. Bryan, 28, has all the credentials for the win and a big score. Keep your fingers crossed for favorable conditions. The sentimental favorite will be Tom Pappas, who grew up in Oregon, schooled at Lane CC, and at 31, is looking for a pair of Ripken-like records: a third Olympic berth and a 6th national title. Equally noteworthy-- in terms of local support-- will be new NCAA champ Ashton Eaton, a sophomore at Oregon whose 8055 score in Des Moines last week opened eyes. All in all, this will be a terrific meet. Check my posts, *A Decathlon Guide to the Trials*, and a *History of the US Olympic Decathlon Trials*, both of which are posted on the website.



Sunday, June 29, 2008

10:00 am 100 meters
10:50 Long Jump
Noon Shot Put
1:15 pm High Jump
4:00 400 meters

Monday, June 30, 2008

11:30 am 110 m Hurdles
12:20 pm Discus
1:35 Pole Vault
4:45 Javelin
8:35 1500 meters



Chris Helwick (l) and Chris Randolph (r) were two of a new wave of 8000 point scoring American decathlete.

In the meantime, lots of other things have occurred in the past few weeks. First, Chris Helwick, fresh from his initial 8k score in Winston-Salem, won the 13-man Panamerican meet (formerly NACAC) in Santo Domingo, DOM. Down by 5 points with an event remaining, Chris bolted a fine 4:22.60 1500m to edge Brazilian Ivan Scoffaro, 7820 to 7783. Chris Randolph, after 2 years of battling hamstring woes, got

untracked with a 7747 score for the bronze. Come-backing Chris Boyles scored 7650 for 6th.

Two weeks later, keeping a watchful eye on Trials qualifying, Randolph, the 2006 NCAA Div II champ from Seattle Pacific, started a meet at George Fox College in Newberg, Ore. After posting a 4177 first day score, then seeing Eaton (who was immediately below him on the qualifying list and 18th) score 8055 to win in Des Moines, Chris kept going and put up his first 8k effort, 8066.

In the past 2 months the US has added five new 8000 point scorers, more than we added in the past 5 years (Abdur-Rahim, Helwick, Addy, Eaton and Randolph). Even more interesting was the score in Newberg for Lysias Edmonds, 25, 6-1, 170, a former Northern Arizona vaulter and kick-off returnee who netted 7722 points in his first ever ten-eventer. His 5.20m/17-³/₄ vault clearance surely helped. It appears, at this juncture, that Edmond's score will fall just short of an invite to the Trials. The final shake-out will depend upon declarations.

US Olympic Trials Qualifiers List:

Qualified Automatically >7900

2007

8493	Clay, Bryan	Nike	
	Hypo Bank, Götzis		5/27
8352	Pappas, Tom	Nike	
	USATF, Indianapolis		6/23
8215	Arnold, Jake	Arizona	
	NCAA, Sacramento		6/7
8134	Terek, Paul	Asics	
	MultiStars, DeSanzano		5/6
7963	Detmer, Joe	Wisconsin	
	NCAA, Sacramento		6/7
7901	Harlan, Ryan	unat	
	Pan Am, Santo Domingo		5/26

2008

8371	Hardee, Trey	NIKE	
	Texas R, Austin		4/3
8106	Abdur-Rahim, Mustafa	ASC-elite	
	McKinley, Alamosa		4/19

8066	Randolph, Chris	Club NorthWest	
	George Fox, Newberg		6/13
8055	Eaton, Ashton	Oregon	
	NCAA, Des Moines		6/12
8017	Helwick, Chris	Team Wick-Set	
	Deacon, Winston-Salem		5/16
8010	Addy, Jangy	Tennessee	
	SEC, Auburn		5/17
7907w	Cebulski, Joe	Tri Valley	
	TGA, Dallas		6/08
	[13]		

Provisional Qualified [provisional standard = 7600]

2007

7871	Richardson II, Chris	unat	
	Mt SAC R, Azusa		4/12
7838	Cepeda, Raven	Northern Iowa	
	Missouri Valley, Des Moines		5/12
7804	Boyles, Chris	CBO-Elite	
	USATF, Indianapolis		6/23
7664	Hines, Neil	Iowa State	
	NCAA, Sacramento		6/7

2008

7877	Olkowski, Ryan	unat	
	Deacon, Winston-Salem		5/15
7803	Morrison, Mike	Florida	
	Mt Sac R, Azusa		4/18
7800	Hoskins, Brandon	Liberty	
	Texas Relays, Austin		4/3
7787	Moody, Ricky	Washington St	
	Texas R, Austin		4/3
7722	Lysias Edmonds	Ariz Puma	
	George Fox, Newberg		6/13
7694w	Chisam, Matt	unat	
	TGA, Dallas		6/08
7691	Clark, Mat	Northern Iowa	
	Drake R, Des Moines		4/24
7675	Kilmartin, Donovan	Texas	
	Big 12, Boulder		5/17
7657	Adcock, Joe	Missouri	
	Big 12, Boulder		5/17

And finally, although you may have seen it as a separate post, my thoughts on the decathlon wind readings controversy is appended.

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 20th 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)

Note that many of these were Olympians....

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. 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.”

Frank Zarnowski
May 19, 2008